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CONSUMER MOTIVATION IN A TOURISM CONTEXT: CONTINUING THE WORK OF MASLOW, ROKEACH, VROOM, DECI, HALEY AND OTHERS.

Pandora Kay
Victoria University

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Abstract

This paper examines the literature on understanding and measuring consumer motivation and the application of these theories and procedures to understanding and researching tourist motivation. The application of consumer motivation theory to tourism is considered especially relevant, because motivation is considered a critical variable in the tourist decision-making process.

When understanding and predicting consumer and tourist behaviour, some measures are considered superior to others and this will be examined in this paper. Also many measures of motivation are often used as one of the segmentation bases for tourist and other consumer markets, thereby indicating a strong relationship between motivation and market segmentation, also to be discussed in this paper.

The purpose of this study is threefold: (1) to investigate what standards or consensus for determining consumer motivation have emerged in the academic marketing literature, (2) to review the theoretical knowledge about approaches and procedures for determining and measuring consumer motivation in general and their application to understanding tourist motivation (3) to suggest implications for future research of consumer motivation in a tourism context.

Introduction

Tourist motivation studies embody an amalgam of ideas and approaches, constituting what Cohen (1974) would refer to as a “fuzzy set” of definitions and descriptions (p.528). Cohen’s criticism of definitions, concepts and descriptions, was based on clarifying, ‘who is a tourist?’, whereas the conceptual clarification almost thirty years on, continues to relate to clarifying ‘why do people travel?’. In 1971, Lundberg first posed this basic question and lamented the paucity of research on tourist motivation (1972). Almost a decade later, Dann (1981) called for conceptual clarification about tourist motivation and its implications for research. In his appraisal of tourist motivation literature, explanation for lack of consensus over definition is attributed to a multidisciplinary treatment and plurality of theoretical perspective within a given discipline. There is consensus, however, that a grasp of “motivation” tells us “why” an individual or group have behaved or are about to perform an action (e.g., Dann 1981, p.202).

More than 30 years later, the tourism, travel, leisure and event tourism literature is replete with articles explaining why people travel or why tourists participate in particular activities, and to understand why people do these things, tourist motivations have been studied. A summary of the earliest studies of tourist motivation and

reviews of tourist motivation literature is provided in Table 1. The aim of this paper is to identify the application of consumer motivation to the field of tourist motivation and review what approaches and procedures have been used. The relevant literature examined in this paper is from tourist motivation in the first instance, then comparisons are made with the relevant theories identified from consumer motivation literature.

Table 1: A summary of the earliest studies of tourist motivation and reviews of tourist motivation literature

Author	Major tourist motivation issue addressed	Research Type
(Lundberg 1971)	Used 18 motivational statements including educational, cultural, relaxation, pleasure, ethnic, and sociological motives.	Empirical
(Cohen 1974)	Clarification of who is a tourist and inclusion of typologies based on different tourist roles	Conceptual
(Cohen 1979)	Describes tourism as spanning a “range of motivations” from the sphere of leisure to religion	Conceptual
(Crompton 1979)	Identified 9 motives for pleasure travel: 7 of which are classified as ‘social psychological’ and two as ‘cultural’ (novelty and education)	Exploratory/Empirical
(Dann 1981)	Appraisal of tourism motivation literature and research methods. includes push and pull factors as a basis for tourist motivations.	Conceptual/Review
(Iso-Ahola 1982)	Rejoinder to Dann’s (1981) survey of literature on tourism motivation including a social psychological model of tourism motivation	Conceptual
(Witt & Wright 1992)	Review of content theories of motivation and applies expectancy theories of motivation to explain tourist motivation	Conceptual/Review

Through a review of the relevant literature, numerous theoretical approaches to tourist motivation can be identified. At least three different approaches are identified in Table 1: social psychological theories (Crompton 1979; Iso-Ahola 1982); content theories (Witt & Wright 1992); and expectancy theories (Witt & Wright 1992).

The tourist motivation literature overall, reveals four main approaches (Table 2), each of these being based upon earlier motivation theories from other consumer behaviour literature as summarised in Table 3. At least two, are seemingly opposing theories of motivation: needs-based - largely based on the work of Maslow (1943); or values-based – largely based on the work of Rokeach (1968), although some studies refer to both (e.g., Muller 1991). Others believe expectancy theory from work motivation is an appropriate framework for understanding tourist motivation (e.g., Witt & Wright 1992). Benefits sought or realised are also often used as measures in travel motivation research (e.g., Pearce & Caltabiano 1983; Frochot & Morrison 2000) and sometimes are linked with needs and Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory (e.g., Pearce & Caltabiano 1983).

These four approaches to tourist motivation will be discussed in this paper with comparisons of their use in other marketing literature. Some of their advantages, disadvantages, problems, issues and challenges are included in this discussion. Additional approaches that have been used in tourist motivation research and other approaches of possible relevance to tourist motivation are then briefly considered. From this review of various approaches, recommendations for future tourist and consumer motivation research will be made.

Table 2: A summary of key studies in the tourist motivation literature

Author	Major consumer motivation issue addressed	Research Type
(Pearce & Caltabiano 1983)	Needs-Based Inferred travel motivation from travelers' actual experiences which were coded in classification of travel motivation based on Maslow's analysis of needs. Results indicated that positive and negative tourist experiences highlighted different need structures.	Empirical
(Madrigal 1995)	Values-Based Personal values, traveller personality type and leisure travel style based on LOV and Plog's personality type.	Empirical
(Skidmore & Pyszka 1987)	Segmentation of the US international pleasure travel market based on VALS	Empirical
(Pearce & Caltabiano 1983)	Benefits Sought or Realised Combined Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (see above) and benefits realised	Empirical
(Driver, Brown, & Peterson 1991)	Identified five generally recognized categories of experiential benefits in leisure research: psychological, sociological, psycho-physiological, economic, and environmental	Conceptual
(Frochot & Morrison 2000)	A review of benefit segmentation to tourism research identifying four types of applications: destination marketing, targeting specific markets, attractions/events/ facilities, and traveller decision making processes; general characteristics, challenges, issues, advantages and disadvantages.	Conceptual/Review
Expectancy Theory-Based (Witt & Wright 1992)	Apply expectancy theory to a model of holiday preference and choice	Conceptual

Table 3: A summary of key consumer motivation theories and studies of relevance to the tourist motivation studies

Author	Major consumer motivation issue addressed	Research Type
(Maslow 1943)	Needs-Based Hierarchy of needs	Conceptual
(Murray 1938)	Classification of needs	Conceptual
(McClelland 1955, 1965)	Trio of basic needs/McClelland's theory of learned needs: needs for power, affiliation and achievement	Conceptual/Empirical
(Rokeach 1968, 1973)	Values-Based Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) consisting of 18 personal values and 18 social values	Conceptual/Empirical
(Mitchell 1983)	Values and Lifestyles (VALS)	Conceptual/Empirical
(Kahle & Kennedy 1989)	List of Values (LOV)	Conceptual/Empirical

(Haley 1968)	Benefits Sought or Realised Benefits sought by toothpaste market, measured by consumer value Conceptual/Empirical systems and consumer perceptions about various brands in product category of interest.
(Vroom 1964)	Expectancy Theory-Based Expectancy theory in relation to work and motivation Conceptual/Empirical
(Deci 1985)	Refined and expanded expectancy theory in relation to motivation. Conceptual/Empirical

Needs-based Motivation

That the concepts of satisfying needs or desires and the equilibrium that results from meeting needs are fundamental to most theories of motivation, is widely stated in the tourist motivation literature. Shoemaker (1994) claims there is an implicit assumption in all tourist motivation studies, that the consumer will choose the destination or type of holiday or vacation that will best satisfy his/her desires or needs. Yuan and McDonald (1990) restate Crompton's (1979) concept of equilibrium that results when no discrepancy exists between the preferred behaviour and actual behaviour. Simply stated, "equilibrium exists to the extent that physical, social, and psychological needs are met. Pleasure travel is assumed to be goal-directed, aimed at satisfying these unmet needs" (p. 42). This concept of equilibrium is inherent in most theories of motivation (Yuan & McDonald, 1990).

Maslow's (1943) hierarchical needs theory, although developed in the field of clinical psychology has become widely influential as the best-known general theory of motivation and has been applied to explain motivation in many social disciplines, and areas such as business, marketing and tourism. Murray's classification of human needs (1938) is an extensive list of physiological and psychological needs that stimulated research into specific needs such as the needs for achievement, affiliation and power (e.g., McClelland 1955, 1965).

Needs-based motivation theories have been criticised in the tourism and other consumer motivation literature. While they have been acknowledged as useful for drawing attention to the wide variety of different needs that can motivate human behaviour (e.g., Witt & Wright 1992), predicting the effects of motivation on behaviour requires more than an understanding of human needs, because, "a knowledge of people's needs will not necessarily tell us what they will actually do to fulfil such needs, or indeed whether they will do anything at all" (p.44).

Specific criticisms of Maslow's hierarchy theory include its acknowledged strength of being sufficiently generic to cover most lists of human needs, means that the concepts are too general (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997). Whether needs conform with Maslow's proposed prepotency hierarchy has been questioned (Mowen & Minor 1998) and even Maslow questioned the hierarchy upon which his theory is based (1943). Another hierarchy-related criticism is that it cannot be tested empirically as there is no way to measure precisely how satisfied one need is before the next higher need becomes operative (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997). Furthermore, Maslow's theory does not take

into account heroic and altruistic behaviour as other theories can do (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997), nor incorporates other important needs such as dominance, abasement, play, and aggression (Witt & Wright 1992) that are included in Murray's classification (1938).

Despite these criticisms, Maslow's hierarchy is considered a useful tool for understanding consumer motivations, developing marketing strategy, appropriate advertising appeals and as the basis for market segmentation and product positioning because consumer goods often serve to satisfy each of the need levels (Schiffman & Kanuk 1997). Maslow's need hierarchy has been called an 'emotional trigger' that enables marketers to communicate with their target audiences on a personal, meaningful level that goes beyond product benefits (Schrocer 1991).

Witt and Wright (1992) conclude that, "the study of needs can at best only provide a partial explanation of motivated behaviour" (p.44). In particular, the way in which an individual's needs may be translated into motivated behaviour is necessary when researching tourist motivation and other such factors must be taken into consideration if the explanation of tourist motivation is to be of use in predicting behaviour (Sharpley 1994).

Values-based Motivation

Although abstract in nature, valid and reliable measures for personal values have been developed. One of the most commonly used of these measures is the Rokeach Value Survey (1968), consisting of 18 instrumental values (ideal modes of behaviour) and 18 terminal values (ideal end-states of existence) (Madrigal & Kahle 1994). Despite the widespread use of the RVS predominantly in the North American context, two other measures were developed in response to criticisms of the RVS: the Values and Lifestyles (VALS) (Mitchell, 1983) and the List of Values (LOV) (Kahle & Kennedy 1989). The LOV scale is an abbreviated version of Rokeach's personal value scale but is also based on Feather's (1975) the work on values and Maslow's (1954) study of motivation and personality (Kahle, 1986).

In a comparative study of VALS and LOV, mixed support is indicated for both of these measures (Novak & MacEvoy 1990). More contemporary literature indicates that the LOV is now used more frequently than VALS due to its superiority in relation to its reliability and validity (Daghfous et al. 1999) and its parsimony (Madrigal & Kahle 1994; Madrigal 1995). An acknowledged feature of the VALS typology, is its foundation in social value rather than personal value, which is useful in developing and implementing advertising messages serving the intrinsic motivations of the target market (Ekinci & Chen 2002).

There has been considerable research undertaken in relation to the impact of personal values on tourist motivation and consumption behaviour including travel behaviour (Pizam & Calantone 1987), travel decisions (Pitts & Woodside 1986), vacation activity preferences (Madrigal & Kahle 1994), and vacation motives (Thrane 1997).

Personal values have been used extensively in consumer behaviour literature for market segmentation purposes (Ekinci & Chen 2002, as they are "determinants of attitudes and behaviour and hence provide a stable and inner-oriented understanding of consumers" (Kamakura & Novak 1992, p. 119). They have also been used for

tourist market segmentation purposes. Pitts and Woodside (1986) used personal values based on the RVS to identify travel/leisure “benefit segments”, Skidmore and Pyszka (1987) used VALS to segment to US international pleasure travel market, Madrigal and Kahle (1994) used LOV value-system segmentation to predict vacation activity preferences, Ekinci and Chen (2002) used LOV in an attempt to detect segments in British holidaymakers to Turkey. Value systems such as RVS, VALS and LOV are preferred to single values for predicting behaviour and identifying segments (Madrigal & Kahle 1994).

Benefits Sought or Realised

From the outset in 1961, benefits sought research was used by a number of America’s largest corporations as a superior approach to market segmentation with the strength being that it relied on causal factors than descriptive factors and therefore was a good predictor of future consumer behaviour (Haley 1961 cited in Haley 1971). Firstly it was undertaken as experimental research based on attitudes toward brands within a product category, but by 1972 it is described as consumer value and perception based (Haley 1961 cited in Haley 1971).

While benefit segmentation has been applied to many other markets and studies particularly from the 1980s onwards, its greatest attention and application has been in the fields of travel, tourism, leisure and recreation. One reason for this interest is its focus on travelers’ motivations which have always been portrayed as a critical variable in the tourist decision making process (e.g., Crompton 1979; Lundberg 1971). That there is a widely held belief of some association between tourists’ motivations and benefits sought has been acknowledged (Frochot & Morrison 2000), but the exact link is still to be tested and proven. Frochot and Morrison (2000) claim Lundberg’s (1971) tourist motivation research is an example based on benefits even though they are not directly called ‘benefits’ in the study.

Benefit segmentation has been noted as being better at predicting and explaining behaviour than other measures which merely describe it, such as personality and lifestyles, volumetric, demographic, or geographical measures (Loker & Perdue 1992, p.30, based on Haley 1985).

In a review of its application to tourism research in 2000 (Frochot & Morrison 2000), three types of applications are identified: attribute-based (e.g., using a destination’s or tourism services’ attributes or features as the benefits); psychologically-based (e.g., “grouping customers on the basis of the importance they attach to a combination of sensory, rational and emotional benefits expected from the product or service” Lewis 1981, p.43); or a combination of both. Another typology identifies two contrasting operationalisations of benefits emerging in the tourism literature (Tian et al 1996): before the 80s, benefits were almost exclusively defined in terms of visitors’ ratings of desired amenities and activities (e.g., Crompton 1979); since the 80s some researchers conceptualise the tangible attributes as being merely conduits that have the potential to facilitate desired experiential and psychological benefit outcomes (e.g.. Iso-Ahola 1982; Pearce & Caltabiano 1983). By 1991, five categories of experiential benefits are generally recognized: psychological, sociological, psycho-physiological, economic, and environmental (Driver, Brown, & Peterson 1991).

Pearce and Caltabiano's (1983) research emphasises a strong association between travel motivation, benefits realised, and consumer needs. They noted that previous, "research concerning travel motivation has frequently assumed that tourists are able and willing to articulate their travel needs." (p.16). They argue that influences about travel motivation inferred from tourists' actual experiences may provide fresh insights and their results indicated that positive and negative tourist experiences were not the inverse of one another but rather highlighted different need structures.

One issue in tourism benefit segmentation research is the timing of the collection of benefit statement ratings with some based on benefits sought (i.e., prior to visitor departure) and others on benefits realised (i.e., after trip is completed or based on past trip). Examples of the former include Crompton (1979) and Crask (1981) on primary motivation for vacation travel, Gitelson and Kerstetter (1990) investigation of the relationship between socio-demographic variables, benefits sought and subsequent vacation behaviour, and more recently, Jang et al., (2002) in their benefit segmentation of the Japanese pleasure travel market. Examples of benefits realised research are Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) who infer travel motivations from actual travel experiences, Woodside and Jacobs (1985) who study benefits realised by major travel market, and Shoemaker (1994) who segments the US travel market by benefits realised.

In terms of tourism benefit research areas of interest, while there has been a lot of research about festival and event motivation, not much to date has been specifically benefit-related nor has benefit research been greatly applied to specific market segments such as ecotourism, adventure tourism, or cultural tourism nor to specific nationalities (Frochot & Morrison 2000).

Expectancy Theory

Predicting the effects of motivation on behaviour also requires an understanding of the processes whereby needs are transformed into motivated behaviour and, in particular, of the way people's expectations give motivated behaviour its direction (Witt & Wright 1992). Needs-based theory of motivation is largely based on a content theory of motivation and ignores more recent development in motivation theory such as work motivation theory, expectancy theory or VIE (valence-instrumentality-expectancy) theory (e.g. Vroom 1964 and refined and expanded by Deci 1985).

Vroom (1964) applied expectancy theory to the theory of work motivation and put forward two equations the first of which has been used to explain or predict occupational preference and job satisfaction, the second being to explain or predict occupational choice, remaining in a job and job effort. Expectancy theory, through the concepts of valence (attractiveness), instrumentality (for achieving other outcomes) and expectancy expresses the idea that motivation is a function of the attractiveness of the outcome and the expectancy of achieving that outcome.

Witt and Wright (1992) suggest at the theoretical level expectancy theory enables many of the existing concepts in the study of tourist motivation to be incorporated within a single theoretical framework i.e., need theories such as Maslow and Murray; emotional aspects of tourist motivation – the needs which instigate the desire to travel in the first

place – with the cognitive aspect – the decision making involved in choosing whether to do on holiday and, if so, where. They further claim that occupational (or holiday) preference and occupation (or holiday) choice seem to have the greatest relevance to tourist motivation.

Witt and Wright (1992) propose an expectancy model of holiday preference and choice, which incorporates needs, attractiveness (valence) of holiday attributes, relative preference of different holidays, and the influencing factors of knowledge of holiday destination characteristics; limiting factors such as cost, others' preferences etcetera; expectations; and instrumentality of holidays for providing attributes. All of these will be further influenced by a variety of sources including brochures, guide books and other people's experience, and also by the individual's own experience of previous holidays of the same or a similar type; hence the feedback loops built into the model. All of these also result in a theoretical choice of holiday which acknowledges the importance of both push and pull factors.

Witt and Wright's expectancy theory of tourist motivation emphasises the relationship between motivation, preference and choice. It is fundamentally a needs-based model than a values-based model of tourist motivation that then looks at attractiveness, instrumentality and expectations of outcomes as well as the influencing factors of knowledge of tourist product characteristics and other limiting factors (barriers or constraints). Gnoth (1997) takes an alternative to view to motivation and expectation formation, the operationalisation of which he bases on both the behaviourist notion of drive reduction and the cognitivist constructs of attitudes and values.

A limitation of the expectancy theory and model, is that the complexity of expectancy theory makes it difficult to use the model to predict individual behaviour (Witt & Wright 1992), and difficult to measure because there are so many variables. This complicated method of analysing motivation, serves to highlight that tourist motivation is, itself, a complex subject (Sharpley 1994).

Other Approaches to Tourist Motivation

A frequently mentioned approach, in addition to the four main approaches already discussed, is push and pull factors, which have been referred to within the previous discussion. The push-pull framework is considered by some as a useful approach for examining the motivations underlying tourist and visitation behaviour (e.g., Crompton 1979; Dann 1977; Dann 1981; Kim et al 2003). Crompton (1979) identified nine motives for travel: seven of which were socio-psychological or push motives and two cultural pull motives being novelty and education. In this framework, push factors refer to the specific forces that influence a person's decision to take a vacation, while pull factors refer to the forces that influence the person's decision of which specific destination should be selected (Kim et al 2003, p.170). This theory emphasises two stages in a decision to travel, push factors occur first and are those that make you want to travel, pull factors affect where you travel, given the initial desire to travel. Some argue that the motivation to travel can only relate to push factors (e.g., Witt & Wright 1992), others see push factors in terms of needs (e.g., Pearce 1982). Maybe pull factors, could be reconsidered as preferences for satisfying motives, drives or needs.

Many other factors and concepts have also been identified as relevant to tourist motivation including emotions (e.g., Gnoth 1997), novelty (e.g., Crompton, 1979), authenticity (e.g., MacCannell 1976; Sharpley 1994; Gnoth 1997), hedonism (e.g., Krippendorf, 1984) and the role of preferences (e.g. McCool & Reilly 1993; Lang & O'Leary, 1997).

Other Theories of Consumer Motivation of Possible Relevance to Tourist

Motivation

Another trend in consumer research over the past 20 years has been moving away from developing broad theories of motivation such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) and McClelland's social needs (1955, 1965) toward creating more restricted midrange theories that explain narrower facets of human behaviour (Mowen & Minor 1998). Of the six midrange theories Mowen and Minor highlight because these are supported by research and they are fairly confident of their validity, three could be of possible relevance to tourist motivation: motivation for hedonic experiences (e.g., Holbrook & Hirschman 1982; Hirschman & Holbrook 1982); motivation to avoid risk (e.g., Dowling 1986) and the associated role of information is consumer risk perception (Bettman 1975).

In particular, hedonic consumption research has focused on desires to experience emotion and desires for leisure activities and these desires could be directly tourism-related. With hedonic relevance coming from the product's symbolic value and the emotion it is anticipated to elicit in the consumer (Mowen & Minor 1998), hedonic consumption research has focused on products that are intrinsically more emotionally involving than packaged goods, examples being movies, rock concerts, theatre, dance, pornography, and sporting events. These products could also be tourism-related.

Conclusions and Implications

The foregoing review has highlighted some of the key approaches and some associated measures of consumer motivation research used in the field of tourism or of potential relevance. It has also uncovered several issues, problems and potential disadvantages of the various approaches.

Two main marketing applications and purposes of consumer and tourist motivation theories and research have been identified in this paper, i) understanding why consumers behave as they actually do, seek or intend to, in order to predict future buying behaviour, and ii) as bases for market segmentation of tourist markets which is primarily undertaken for the further purpose of enabling the development of more efficient and effective tourism marketing especially communication, promotional strategies, advertising campaigns and product positioning.

While there is clarity about what consumer motivation is, this being an understanding of why people behave as they do, and consensus about its continuing significance in the consumer decision-making process and relevance to marketing practices, to date there is no single standard or consensus about the best way to understand or measure consumer or tourist motivation. Rather, several widely used approaches and

procedures have emerged, but as identified in this paper, some 'fuzziness' between them is still in evidence.

The implications for future research of consumer motivation in a tourism context, are that for the time being, all four approaches are of continuing relevance and there is a considerable body of knowledge to underpin the proposed use of any one or combination. In particular, human needs, values, benefits and expectations have been considered useful for understanding consumer motivations, developing marketing strategy, appropriate advertising appeals and as the basis for market segmentation and product positioning. However, other factors and concepts of particular relevance to tourist motivation have also been identified: emotions, novelty, authenticity, hedonism and the role of preferences. These are largely conceptual propositions, still to be empirically researched, and midrange theories of consumer motivation could be of particular relevance to this future research.

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