Understanding the Importance of Study of Tourist Behaviour and its Relevance in Growth of Tourism: A Study of Elements Influencing Tourist Behaviour

Dr. Sandeep Guleria
Vice Principal, ITFT College, Chandigarh
drsandeepguleria19@gmail.com

Abstract

Tourism is one of the most dynamic industries. In this, many factors are associated with it, which lead it to grow. There is one of the major factor without which the existence of tourism cannot be thought of. And that factor is 'Tourist' or consumer in this industry. The ups and downs in the industry depend mainly on consumer, who is also known as "the king" in any business. So, study of consumer behavior in tourism projects the growth, trend and future of tourism industry. The term ' consumer behavior ' is defined as the behavior that consumers display in searching for purchasing; using evaluating and disposing of products and services that one will satisfy their needs. Consumer behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. The present paper suggests some of the elements which influence the tourist behavior and ultimately effects the tourism generation of the region.

Key words: Consumer behaviour, Travel motivation, Tourist decision making process, Tourist satisfaction, Travel Pattern

Introduction

The topic of tourist behavior depends upon, interacts with, and occasionally determines other components of tourism. Tourist behavior is powerfully connected to and often contingent upon marketing activities: it strongly shapes the wellbeing of many small businesses, and it can generate considerable socio-cultural and environmental impacts. What tourists do, and why they do it has fascinated a lot of people. What tourists think, how they feel and what influences their thoughts and feelings is especially fascinating to tourists themselves, to the people who manage their behavior and to analysts studying contemporary life. One of the common questions for this kind of research is who is interested or concerned with tourist behavior. The answers provided identified an array of interested parties: tourists themselves, tourist business operators, public management agency personnel, tourism researchers and analysts and, occasionally, media figures and politicians. This kind of broad answer to such a basic question has shaped the range of topics and studies. Further, it allowed the presentation of key topics to vary and hence meet some different kinds of needs likely to be expressed by interested parties. By way of contrast, few people in the tourist business are likely to be overly concerned with how much tourists learn, or what skills they develop during travelling, whereas interpretive officers working in public management agencies might find this to be core information that helps them appraise their own performance. In a less functional mode, tourists themselves may be quite interested in their own ability to cope in a cross-cultural encounter, and find it rewarding to analyse their experiences and read about and compare them with them

with the adventures and misadventures of others. There are several critical dimensions that create differences between tourist behavior and consumer behavior. One such major difference lies in the extended phases that surround tourist activities. Clawson and Knetsch (1966) identified five such phases. They noted: (1) and anticipation or pre-purchase (2) a travel to the site segment, (3) an on-site experience, (4) a return travel component, and (5) an extended recall and recollection stage.

Consumer behavior, as a field of inquiry with its own journals, text-books and courses, is centrally focused on the choices of products and the satisfaction with products. In each phase of tourist behavior outlined by Clawson and Knetsch, some differences from the standard consumer behavior studies can be noted. In the first anticipation phase, many tourists plan for the fantasize about their forthcoming travel for months, sometimes years ahead. While this might be similar for the purchase of a motor vehicle, it is somewhat absurd when applied, for example, to purchase hair shampoo or groceries. Models of behavior built on the latter examples are unlikely to be relevant to tourist behavior. For both the travel to the site and the return travel phases of tourist behavior there is no sensible analogy in the consumer behavior literature. Yet, the anticipatory elements of tourist experiences are heightened by the need to access the visited location and such travel is often an integral part of the total experience. Further, and from a business perspective, the expenditure that travelers must make to access the on-site experience. Another marked difference between much consumer behavior and tourist behavior is that the latter is a part of a very social business. Tourism is a people-to-people business in both its consumption and its production. Tourists are frequently with others, and often jointly decide upon and frequently share their tourist experience. The businesses that serve tourists (the hotels, the airlines, the tour operators, the attractions) and the larger visited community (who are sometimes passive extras in the total tourism production) are inherently performers on a social stage (Crang, 1997). It is therefore important to treat models of consumer behavior built on non-social modes of production and consumption with some caution if attempts to extrapolate them to tourist choice and satisfaction are attempted. There is also a view that the study of tourist behavior is rally market research. There is a considerable interest in tourism studies in the analysis of markets. Nevertheless much of the published tourism work is reflective and contains more ideas to understand both the segments identified and the marketing implications than studies done within the commercial consultancy world. For example academic research studies in tourism markets have incorporated such ideas as convergence and divergence of segments (Pizam, 1999a), cross-cultural market variability (Richards & Richards, 1998), and the discriminatory power of different segmentation approaches (Moscardo, Pearce & Morrison, 1996). The further elaboration of how commercial market research differs from academic studies in tourist behavior can be achieved by understanding the importance of conceptual schemes in the construction and interpretation of market related research in this field.

Importance of Tourist Behaviour

As people have their different motivations for travel, accordingly their consumer behavior is shaped. For example an allocentric tourist feels very happy or relaxed in places where there is solitude and no traffic, where as a psychocentric tourism will behave differently in those places as the motivation for travel behind both the type of tourist is different. Similarly the behavior of a business tourist and a vacationer would be different for same destination. In most of the businesses, nowadays maximum emphasis is laid on marketing tactics to counter the competition in the market. In this practice, major part of finance is carried out from the firm. If repeat purchase or visitation by the tourist would occur then it would reduce

the cost of the marketing. In other sense we can say if we get a loyal customer for a product, that would be beneficial for the business as well as for the entire industry. To make the customer loyal we need to study or know the psyche of the customer. In that we have to take many aspects of consumer behavior and other factors which affect the consumer behavior, like service quality, product quality, price, emotions, age, habit of customer and seasonality. Once we come to know the reason behind repeat visitation or destination choice, it will help to promote even those destinations which have potential but still those are not doing up to the mark. All tourism markets can be deconstructed into two basic dimensions: whether people have visited before (first/repeat) and the role played by the destination (main/secondary). As such, all destinations attract four basic types of tourists: first-time main-destination visitors (FM), repeat main-destination visitors (RM), first-time secondary-destination travelers (FS), and repeat secondary-destination travelers (RS).

Tourism will be successful when the tourists feel satisfied with their visit; therefore here lies the importance of studying the attitude and satisfaction level of the tourists. Attitudes have been seen to be of considerable value in understanding the prediction of tourist behavior, whereas the study satisfaction level will act as feedback from the tourist side, which is important for successful tourism development. Raj, (2004)

Review of Past Research

Tourism is one of the most dynamic industries. In this, many factors are associated with it, which lead it to grow. There is one of the major factor without which the existence of tourism cannot be thought of. And that factor is 'Tourist' or consumer in this industry. The ups and downs in the industry depend mainly on consumer, who is also known as "the king" in any business. So, study of consumer behavior in tourism projects the growth, trend and future of tourism industry. The term ' consumer behavior ' is defined as the behavior that consumers display in searching for purchasing; using evaluating and disposing of products and services that one will satisfy their needs. Consumer behavior focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. Many scholars have attempted to study the various aspects of consumer behavior. But when we come in tourism the no. of researches are countable and there is no such research in which all the factors which influence the tourist behavior, has been carried out. Schiffman,(2008) states that savvy marketers today realize that in order to outperform competitors they must achieve the full profit potential from each and every customer. They must make the customer the core of the company's organizational culture, across all department and functions and ensure that each and every employee views any exchange with a customer as part of a customer relationships between marketers and customers are customer value, high levels of customer satisfaction and building a structure that ensures customer retention. Customer value defined as the ratio between customers' perceived benefits (economic, functional and psychological) and the resources (monetary, time, efforts) used to obtain those benefits. Customer satisfaction is the individual's percepts of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectation. Jones (1995) states that companies should strive to create apostles, raise the satisfaction of defectors an turn them into loyalists, avoid having terrorists or hostage. For the last factor 'customer retention', Reichheld et al (1993) state that marketing efforts aimed at attracting new customers are expensive; indeed in saturated markets, it may be impossible to find new customers. Moutinho (1987) suggested the analysis of consumer behavior requires the consideration of various processes internal and external to the individual. To understand behavior, it is necessary to examine the complex interaction of many influencing elements.

This study deals with determinants of behavior, culture and reference group influences the relationship between individuals and their environments, perceived risks and family decision processes. It concludes with an illustration of tourism behavior modeling. Most of the studies in which consumer behavior in tourism as discussed, are focused on mainly single aspect, i.e. Psychological factor. But in reality it depends upon the union of many factors.

Understanding the urge to travel and Travel Motivation

Tourism is the concept, which involves a number of factors like social, psychological, and economic forces that are major determinants of travel. The need influences the behavior as it is accentuated by Hudson (1999) that need is a force influencing motivation aggregated into behavior. One of the earliest theories related to human needs as listed by Maslow (1943) highlights the ladder of needs like physiological, safety, love, esteem and needs for self-actualization. Thus, attaining each step of the need ladder force fulfills a higher level of need. As critics of the Maslow's theory, Witt and Wright (1992) strongly criticized that the theory is irrelevant due to non-consideration of needs like dominance, abasement, play and aggression. These needs have much stimulation to undertake travel. On the other hand, Mill and Morrison (1985) linked the Maslow's hierarchy of needs with travel and tourism motivation. Similarly, Dann (1977) agreed to the argument bringing in two factors push and pull as the major contributors for travel decisions. Crompton (1979) agreed with Dann (1977) with regard to the push and pull factors as the internal and external travel motivational forces. While the latter identifies seven push and pull categories of motives and the former emphasizes on the nine factors. However, Crompton (1979) mentioned that push motives comprise to escape from mundane environment, self-evaluation, relaxation, prestige, family relations and social interaction while pull factors included novelty and education as the factors to allure the visitors to places of the tourist interest. Mannel and Iso-Ahola (1987) explained about the push and pull factors as two types of personal and interpersonal needs fulfilled through travel. They were intended to define that travelling for the motivation of escaping from the personal and interpersonal rewards in different environments. Further, personal rewards consist of self-determination, sense of competence, challenge, learning, exploration and relaxation whereas interpersonal rewards are achieved through social interaction.

Decision Making Behavior of Tourists

In the study of tourist behavior, decision making is one of the important elements in it. And to understand tourist decision-making process, the context must be considered. The context refers to the external variables affecting what and how the tourist thinks, feels, learns, and behaves. A basic distinction between, environmental or situational influences and, social and cultural influences is made before discussing the dimensions a group adds to the decision-making process.

Group (family) Decision Making: Family is a major reference group since it is the source of most of our norms. Also, the family functions as a decision-making unit, where the important decisions of life, including consumption choices are discussed. Note that as far as vacation of concerned, parties of friends or special interest groups also represent relevant decision making units. The level of communication, the mode of decision making and the result of confrontation are important determinants of group decision processes. The topic of the tourist's decision making process has been investigated in several papers and monographs in the past two decades. The great majority of these, however are restricted in scope since they are limited to some specific macro or micro aspect of the decision process (Brent Ritchie, 1994).

General models are rare. Efforts to integrate the elements described in the first section in a global decision-making process come, to a large extent, from three authors: Crompton, Moutinho and Woodside.

The Dynamics of Tourists' Travel Planning Behavior

Arch G. Woodside, Ilkka A. Ronkainen (1980) analysed the characteristics and travel behavior of 2,436 respondents with respect to their use of planning assistance for vacation travel. Differences were detected between the three planning segments: self-planners, motor club users and travel agent users, e.g., travel agent users traveled more often by air and for multiple purposes. Substantial similarities were found between self-planners and motor club users. In general, the use of professional planning assistance increased as the distance to be traveled increased. The findings support the development of specific marketing programs developed for the motor clubs and travel agent users by destination managers. Academics and marketers know relatively little about how national culture affects the way people plan and spend in the $448 billion international travel and tourism economy. From a matched sample of 1042 German and Japanese visitors to the US, R.Bruce Money, John C Crotts (2003) explored the relationship between the cultural dimension of uncertainty (or risk) avoidance with information search, trip planning time horizons, travel party characteristics (e.g. size of group) and trip characteristics (e.g. length of stay). Results show that consumers from national cultures characterized by higher levels of uncertainty avoidance use information sources that are related to the channel (e.g., travel agent), instead of personal, destination marketing-related, or mass media sources; they also more frequently purchase prepackaged tours, travel in larger groups, and stay on average a shorter time and visit fewer number of destinations. Contrary to expectations, they do not spend more time making the decision to travel or making their airline reservations.

Tourist Behavior at the Destination

Hallab, Zaher A.A.(1999), in his dissertation (An exploratory study of the relationship between healthy living and travel behavior) mentioned, Selby, Hayllar and Griffin (2008) in a critique of textual and representation studies note that there is a tendency for such studies to read landscapes on behalf of people, rather than seeking to understand how they experience such places. They argue that understanding the tourists' perspective and aspects of the way in which they visit places, such as their spatial movements, the time they spend and study of tourism. The information can be used for such purposes as informing location choices for restaurants, accommodation or attractions in order to maximize exposure to visitor traffic. Government agencies and destination managers can use the information to inform planning decisions, redirect visitor flows to avoid overcrowding, minimize adverse impacts on sensitive sites, concentrate marketing activities, inform transport policies and more broadly distribute expected benefits. In evaluating patterns of international tourist flows Mansfeld (1990) suggests that tourism space can be viewed in three ways: actual space which denotes the area that accommodates tourism activities and has clear geographical boundaries; functional space which views tourism space as including both generating and attracting areas; and perceived space which refers to the personal perceived images of space that tourists have on an individual level. McKercher and Lau (2008) explain that generating and attracting areas can be analyzed at various scales including inter and intra-destination.

Tourist Satisfaction

There are many definitions of satisfaction. Moutinho (1987) notes that satisfaction is primarily a function of pre-travel expectations post-travel experiences. Similarly, Pizam, Neumann and Reichel (1978) define tourist satisfaction as the results of the comparison between "a tourist's experience at the destination visited and the expectations about the destination. The greater the disparity between expectations and experiences, the greater the likelihood of dissatisfaction" (Pearce, 1991:168). The normative standard definition put forward by Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1982) states that satisfaction refers to the comparison of expectations with experiences in terms of performance. Thus satisfaction will occur when experience differs negatively from expectations. An individual's expectations are confirmed when a service performs as expected and negatively disconfirmed when the service performs better than expected (Oliver and Desarbo, 1988). This definition has been criticized for assuming that expectations are adequate predictors of satisfaction. In fact some evidence suggest that the most satisfactory experiences may be those that are not expected (Arnould and Prince, 1993). Pearce (1980) noted that tourist satisfaction is dependent on pre-travel favourability toward the destination visited, which contributes to post-travel favourability toward the destination visited: "If the pre-travel favorability is initially high, tourists will be mintally prepared or set to evaluate the visited people positively" .Based on the statements mentioned above, the expectations and the experiences of tourists will greatly affect their levels of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the holiday. Satisfaction is thus a multi-faceted concept and should be assessed by referring to many individual aspects of the holiday encounter, for example services and facilities. In this way, an indication of the aspects of the holiday responsible for satisfaction or dis- satisfaction may be obtained. Satisfaction with hosts is a critical component of tourist holiday satisfaction. Hosts are referred to as service providers for the purpose of this research. Tourists are in close contact with these service providers. Perceptions of these providers affect holiday satisfaction and may influence the desire for repeat visitation. According to Gee (1986), tourist perceptions of hosts are the most important overall tourist perceptions.

Conclusion

Consumer behaviour in tourism is influenced strongly by Psychological factor, Cultural factor and Social factor. Psychological factors include Motivation, Perception, Ego involvement, Loyalty and Commitment. The set of basic values perception, wants and behavior are learned by a member of society from family and other important institutions. Culture is most basic cause of person's wants and behavior. Every group or society has a culture influences on buying behavior may vary from country to country.

Tourist motivation and decision strategies differ between products that differ in their level of importance or interest that they entail for the consumer. Motivation is the drifting force within individual that impels him to action. This driving force is produced by state of uncomfortable tension which exists as the result of an unsatisfied need. All individuals have needs, wants and desires. The individual's subconscious drive to reduce need-induced tensions results in behavior that he or she anticipates will satisfy needs and thus bring about more comfortable internal state. Tourist behavior is also influenced by social factors, such as (Groups), Family and status. Some primary groups include family, friends, neighbors and coworkers. Some are secondary groups, which are more formal and have less regular interaction which includes organizations like religious groups, professional association and trade unions. Tourist Behavior is also very much affected by local or host community as the views and facts given by the host community to the tourist plays a vital role in their decision strategy. The study of expenditure pattern and visitation pattern of the tourist at a particular destination will be helpful for the prediction of the growth of tourism at that

destination. Marketers want to retain their customer, as making new customer is bit tedious and expensive for them. So, they use to satisfy their existing customers. For that to know the behaviour of their customer for buying the product is very essential. Tourism will be successful when the tourist feels satisfied with their visit; therefore here lies the importance of studying the attitude and satisfaction level of the tourists, and tourists and tourists are satisfied when they got the good value for money, enjoyable atmosphere, feel secure and go back with memories of the place visit.

References

- Arnould, E.J. and Price, L.L. (1993). River Magic: Extraordinary Experience and the Extended Service Encounter, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 20, pp. 24-45.
- Brent Ritchie, J. R. (1994). Research on leisure behavior and tourism – state of the art. In R.V. Gasser and K.Weiermair (Ed.), Spoilt for choice. Decision making processes and preference change of tourists: Intertemporal and Intercountry perspectives (pp.2-27). Thaur, Kulturverlag, Germany,
- Bruce R. Money and John C. Crotts (2003). *The effect of uncertainty avoidance on information search, planning and purchases of international travel vacations,* Journal of Tourism Management, Vol. 24 (2), 191-202.

- Cadotte, E.R.; Woodruff, R.B. and Jenkins, R.L. (1982). Norm and Expectations Prediction: How different are the measures? In proceedings of the seventh annual conference on Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior, H.K. Hunt and R.L. Day (Eds.), Indiana University, School of Business Bloomington, Indiana.
- Clawson, M. and J.L. Knetsch (1966). Economics of Outdoor Recreation. Resources for the Future: Washington, D.C.
- Crang, P. (1997). Introduction: cultural turns and the (re)constitution of economic geography, in LeeR and Wills J eds Geographies of Economies Arnold, London, pp. 3-15.
- Crompton, J.L. (1979). Motivations for pleasure vacation, Annals of Tourism Research, 6, pp. 408-424.
- Dann, G. (1977). Anomic, Ego-enhancement and tourism, Journal: Annals of Tourism Research, Volume 4, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China, pp. 189-194.
- Gee, C. (1986). Marketing to International Visitors, Unpublished Manuscript, university of Havaii, Havaii.
- Hallab, Zaher A.A.(1999). *An exploratory study of the relationship between healthy living and travel behavior,*dissertation submit to faculty of Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Blacksburg, Virginia.
- Hayllar, B. and Griffin, T. (2008). *A Tale of Two Precincts.* In Tribe, J. and Airey, D. (eds.). Developments in Tourism Research. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 155-171

- Hudson, S. (1999). Consumer Behaviour Related to Tourism. In Pizam, A., and Mansfeld, Y., (ed), Consumer Behaviour in Travel and Tourism pp.7-32.New York, The Haworth Hospitality Press.
- Jones, Thomas and Sasser Earl W. (1995). *why satisfied customers defect ?* Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Publishing, New York, pp.-88,89.
- Mannell, R. C. &Iso-Ahola, S. E. (1987). *Psychological nature of leisure and tourism experience,* Annals of Tourism Research, 14, 314-331
- Maslow, .H. (1943). *A theory of human motivation,* Psychological Review, 50, pp. 370-396.
- Mill, R.C. & Morrison, A.M. (1985). The Tourism System, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
- Moscardo, G., Morrison, A. M., Pearce, P. L., Lang, C.-T. and O'Leary, J. T. (1996).

Understanding vacation destination choice through travel motivation and activities. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 2(2), 109– 122.

- Moutinho, L. (1987). Consumer Behavior in Tourism, Journal: European Journal of Marketing. MCB UP Ltd. Volume 21, Issue 10, Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK pp. 5-44.
- Moutinho, L. (1987). Consumer Behavior in Tourism, Journal: European Journal of Marketing. MCB UP Ltd. Volume 21, Issue 10, Bradford, West Yorkshire, UK pp. 5-44.
- Oliver, R.L. and Desarbo, W.S. (1988). Response Determinants in Satisfaction Judgements, Journal of Consumer Research, Vol. 14, pp. 495-504.
- Pearce, P.L. (1980). Favorability – Satisfaction Model of Tourists Evaluations, Journal of Travel Research, Vol. 19, pp. 16-20.
- Pearce, P.L. (1991). Introduction: the tourism psychology conservation, Australian Psychologist, Vol. 26, pp. 145-146.
- Pizam, A. (1999). A Comprehensive Approach to Classifying Acts of Crime and Violence at Tourism Destinations. Journal of Travel Research, 38: 5-12.
- Pizam, A., Neumann, Y., &Reichel, A. (1978). *Dimensions of tourist satisfaction with a destination area,* Annals of Tourism Research, 5(3), 314–322.

- Raj, Aparna (2004). Tourist Behavior,Kanishka Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, p-281.
- Reichheld, Frederick F. and Sasser, Earl W. (1993). zero-defections: Quality comes to services, Harvard Business Review, Harvard Business Publishing, New York, pp. 105-111.
- Richards, G. (1996). Skilled consumption and UK ski holidays. Journal of Tourism Management, 17(1), 25–34.
- Schiffmann, Leon G. and Kanuk, Leslie Lazar (2008). *Consumer Behavior*, Pearson Education Inc. and Dorling Kindersley Publishing Inc. Delhi, p-23, 28.
- Witt, C. & Wright, P. (1992). *Tourist Motivation: Life after Maslow.* In P. Johnson and Thomas (eds.), Choice and Demand in Tourism, (pp. 33-55). London: Mansell.