Tourists' Selection Criteria and Motivation.
Does Nationality Matter?

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Abstract

Purpose - The aim of this study is to investigate the most important criteria that prompted tourists to visit a destination. In the present paper we will attempt to examine the factors affecting tourists to select a destination, the factors motivating tourists to select a destination and if nationality as a parameter affects the choice of the destination by the tourists regarding the features and the benefits of the destination and as well as the motivations of the tourists.
Design/methodology/approach – An empirical study was carried out using a sample of 165 tourists of three nationalities. Data was collected from tourists through personal interviews with the use of a structured questionnaire and was analyzed with the use of Exploratory Factor Analysis, ANOVA and cross tabulations.

Keywords: Destination, selection criteria, tourism marketing.
JEL Classification: M310, Z3, Z130

1. Introduction

All over the world, there are plenty of tourist destinations and each of them is offering a variety of products and services in order to attract visitors. This gives tourists the opportunity to choose a destination that meets their interests and motivates them to travel (Jonsson & Devonish, 2008). According to tourism marketing literature, the attributes of a destination which are more frequently identified as "destination selection criteria for tourists" are accessibility, availability of facility, quality of service, affordability, destination image, attractions and entertainment and safety/ security (DiPietro *et al.,* 2008). Tourism marketing is a management philosophy that, in light of the tourism demand, is trying to predict and choose the tourism products on a market according to the intentions of an organization in order to increase its profit (Seaton & Bennett, 1996). Within services, tourism has an important role, which is constantly lauded as the biggest industry in the world and is an important component of the global economy. However, according to Fyall and Garrod (2005) what is debatable is the extent to which the concepts of marketing can be applied to tourism as in other service sectors such as financial services and retailing industry. According

to Morgan *et al.,* (2002), the conventional tourism marketing tends to focus on confirming the intentions of tourists than to convince them to consume different products.

Tourism is the fastest growing industry and hence the need for marketing becomes imperative in tourism sector. Marketing is necessary in tourism as it is an industry where the customer has a huge variety of choices. The choice of destination for the purpose of tourism is widespread as more and more countries and resorts around the world expand their tourist industries (Bhatia, 2006). Tourism and hospitality have emerged as important economic activities because peoples' expectations for recreation have been increased over the past years (Alistair, 2006).

2. Literature Review

2.1 The tourist as a customer

The customer is an individual who, through a decision - making process, acquires goods and services for personal consumption. When tourists visit a certain destination, they never behave the way they behave in their place of residence. There are many reasons for this. They always want to live another experience in their tourist destination and depending on the experience, their nationality and their behavior; they may be slightly different (Dasgupta, 2011). The most important and most well known criteria affecting the tourists – customers' behavior are: The decision – making process (Cohen *et al*. 2013), their values, (Pizam & Calantone, 1987), their personality (Cohen *et al*. 2013), their expectations (Cohen *et al*. 2013), their attitudes (Getz, 1994), the level of satisfaction (Moutinho, 2007), and the level of trust (Cohen *et al*. 2013). On the other hand, other factors affecting tourists' behavior are: The family environment ((Martinez & Polo, 1999 and Moutinho, 2007), their culture (Power, 2010) and the social classes (Cooper, 1981 and Seaton και Bennett, 1996).

2.2 Tourists' Motivation

Motivation is the need that leads a person to act in a certain way in order to satisfy a desire. Many different reasons and incentives motivate people to travel. Although the decision to satisfy needs is based on various psychological variables, in fact, the overall human behavior can be an incentive (Correia *et al.*, 2007). But what actually makes a tourist want to travel? From an anthropological point of view, tourists are motivated to escape their everyday routine looking for new experiences (Yoon and Uysal, 2003). According to Cohen *et al.,* (2013), the relationships between tourists' motivation and behavior have been rarely studied. Most studies focus on motivation itself ignoring how motivation is formed. Motivation in tourism includes a wide range of human behavior and experiences. A list of tourism motivation includes rest and relaxation, recreation, socializing with friends, adventure activities in nature and escape from the everyday life. The main tourist incentives can be grouped into the following four categories: Natural incentives related to physical relaxation and rest as well as to sports activities, cultural incentives related to the human desire to travel in order to meet other countries and their cultural heritage, interpersonal incentives related to peoples' desire to visit relatives or friends and finally incentives which

affect peoples' standing and prestige and are related to needs of self-esteem and personal development (Bhatia, 2006).

Nowadays, motivation can be considered the following:

• Exploring nearby and distant regions has become the purpose of travel as well as knowing other countries, places, civilisations or people.
• The religious faith as a tourist motivation in participation in religious festivals or cultural events and ceremonies.
• The trip purpose sports which includes trips made in order to enjoy the travel itsame (Bhatia, 2006).

2.3   Tourists' nationality

After an extended literature review in tourism marketing literature a question arising is if nationality -as a variable- affects tourists' motivation? In marketing literature many researchers have used nationality in order to determine the culture or the origin of tourists. Furthermore, nationality is sometimes denoted by the residence of tourists (Pearch, 2005) while because of the rapid globalization and the increasing development of multiculturalism the concept of nationality gradually disappears (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Pizam and Reichel (1996) in their research on perceptions of tourist guides to tourist groups from different countries, found that nationality should be considered alongside with other variables such as personality, lifestyle, social class and culture. Jonsson and Devonish (2008) indicated that nationality can be measured in conjunction with age, and should be taken into account in predicting tourists' motivation. According to Jafari (2000), tourists are influenced by many cultures and from this point of view he argues that there is a "tourist culture", which consists of hotels and airports, attractions and restaurants. Koreans are loyal to their sociocultural identity and reluctant to accept anything that does not have enough in common with the Korean lifestyle. This is why they insist on visiting Korean restaurants and prefer to travel in groups and not individual (Pizam & Sussman, 1995). According to Maoz (2007), American tourists are interested in the interaction and socializing with other tourists. Nationality also seems to have a significant influence on the way that tourists interpret the environment of the destination related to their cognitive and emotional components. Therefore, nationality can be used as an effective variable of market segmentation in order a researcher to comprehend the factors influencing tourists' preferences (Prayag & Ryan, 2010).

2.4   Destination's selection criteria

Destination can be the part where tourists intend to spend their time away from home and may be a city, a region, an island or a country. Destination can be considered a single location or a combination of areas as part of a tour or even a cruise (Jafari, 2000). But how tourists select their destination? The maximization of tourists' utility is the most common decision rule. Another very common selection rule is expectations. Different characteristics of different destinations are the basis for different expectations (Pizam & Mansfeld, 1999). Expectations can be ideas and beliefs that keep the tourists in their minds about a destination. Some researchers

believe that the image of the destination is the main factor "in the decision of where we will travel". Image is often considered to be "more important than reality" as image in the mind of tourists affects the planning process of their vacation (El Kadhi, 2008). Echtner and Ritchie (1991), about the image of destination used some characteristics to measure the image of the destination. Some of these characteristics are: The landscape and natural sites, the level of prices, the climate, the sports facilities or activities, architecture and buildings, historical monuments, museums, beach, shopping, accommodation, exhibitions held in cities, festivals and others. On the other hand, Beerli and Martin (2004) identified and classified the above mentioned characteristics of destination's image in the following nine categories: Natural resources, Leisure tourism and Entertainment, the Natural Environment, the General Infrastructure such as development and quality of roads, airports and harbors, culture, history and art, the Social Environment such as hospitality and friendliness of local people, poverty, quality of life, language barriers, Tourist Facilities such as hotels and facilities, service provided, number of beds, categories and quality facilities, Political and economic factors and finally the Atmosphere of the place (luxurious, modern, part with good reputation, family place with character) (Beerli and Martin, 2004; Rajesh, 2013).

3. Research methodology and the questionnaire

The purpose of this paper is twofold. Firstly, the present paper aims to investigate the factors which led tourists to choose their destination and secondly to discover the motivation that prompted tourists to visit Greece and particularly Thessaloniki. A special survey instrument was developed for the present survey. In order to measure the selection criteria through which tourists choose a destination, the Kozak's (2002) scale was adopted while for the measurement of tourists' motivation, Jun and McCleary's scale (1999) was adopted respectively.

4. Data Collection, Sample, Research Hypothesis, Analysis and Results

The data collection method selected was the personal interview. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed while 165 were returned completed, rate responding to 55%. 61 questionnaires were completed by Cypriots (36,97%), 56 of Greeks (33,94%) and 48 from American tourists (29,09%). The questionnaires were distributed to hotels according to the number of tourists who had made reservations to these hotels and belonged to one of the three mentioned nationalities. For the analysis of the questionnaire's responses Cronbach's a analysis was employed to test the reliability of scales as well as Exploratory Factor Analysis in order to explore all factors which led tourists to choose their destination and one-way ANOVA to test possible differences among the three nationalities. Data was analyzed with the use of SPSS Statistics, version 22.0.

95 of the respondents were females and 70 were males, rates responding to 57,58% and 42,42% of the sample respectively. Regarding the age of the respondents, we observed that 23.64% of respondents were under 30 years old, 23.03% were between 30 and 40 years, 16.36% were between 41 and 50 years, 10.30% were between 51 and 60 years and finally 26.67% were more than 60 years old.

Cronbach's a test for both constructs of our questionnaire indicated in the first part about destination's selection criteria of tourists good reliability (Cronbach's a = 0.747). On the other hand, the second part of the questionnaire about tourists' motivation to visit Thessaloniki, Cronbach's a test indicated excellent reliability (Cronbach's a = 0.802).
The first research question arising is which are the key factors which affect tourists to select a destination.
So the first research question is:

RQ 1: Which are the key factors which affect tourists to select a destination?

The first Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed in order -the authors- to identify all factors affecting tourists to select a destination (Table I). The results indicated that the main factors that determine tourists' selection for a destination are: Social characteristics of the destination such as customs procedures and political stability (factor 1), leisure activities and entertainment activities (factor 2), total costs depending on value (factor 3) and finally the availability of hotels (factor 4).

Table I - Exploratory Factor Analysis for destination selection criteria

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.819
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	336,377
	df	66
	Sig.	,000

Rotated Component Matrix				
	Factors			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Customs procedures	,764			
Sightseeing, cultural, historical, other extracurricular attractions	,704			
Crime rate	,630			
Political environment	,629			
Stability of currency and exchange rate	,624			
Climate	,509			
Availability of night life activities		,744		
Availability of recreation facilities such as golf, swimming, tennis etc		,678		
Popular image of location		,669		
Transportations costs			,797	

Overall value and level of cost			,786	
Availability of hotels				,861
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.				
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.				

The second research question arising is which are the key factors which motivate tourists to select a destination.
So the second research question is:

RQ 2: Which are the key factors which motivate tourists to select a destination?

The second Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed for the investigation of the factors which influence tourists' motivation to visit a destination. The results (Table II) revealed four factors which can be described as: Sports activities (factor 1), emotional refreshment and relax (factor 2), visits in historical sites (factor 3) and entertainment and fun (factor 4).

Table II - Exploratory Factor Analysis for tourists' motivation

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.719
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	539,644
	df	55
	Sig.	,000

Rotated Component Matrix				
	Factors			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
To engage in sports	,777			
To get close to nature	,768			
To be active	,733			
To relax		,829		
To become emotionally and physically refreshed		,812		
To spend time with people cared deeply about		,663		
To visit historical and cultural sites			,901	
To increase knowledge of new places			,873	
To seek adventure				,826
To have fun				,726

To mix with fellow tourists				,590

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The second purpose of the present research was the identification of possible differences between the tourists' groups for both constructs (destination's selection criteria and motivation).

So, the third research question is:

RQ 3: Is there a statistically significant difference between the population means of the answers to questionnaires regarding the nationality of tourists?

The results of the one-way ANOVA performed within our survey indicated that among the three nationality groups there is a statistically significant difference of population means (Sig. < 5%) for the following questions of destination's selection criteria:

Table III – Analysis of Variance among the three nationalities

Availability of hotels	(Sig. = 0.042)
Cultural, historical and other attractions	(Sig. = 0.000)
Popular image of the location	(Sig. = 0.003)
Customs procedures	(Sig. = 0.029)
Availability of nightlife activities	(Sig. = 0%).

Furthermore, the results of the one-way ANOVA for the motivation indicated statistically significant difference of population means (Sig. <5%) for the questions:

To visit historical and cultural monuments	(Sig. = 0.000)
To increase my knowledge of new places	(Sig. = 0.000)
To see other tourists	(Sig. = 0.003)
To search for adventure	(Sig. = 0.000)
To entertain myself	(Sig. = 0.000)
To escape from home	(Sig. = 0.007)
To renew myself emotionally and physically	(Sig. = 0.012)
To chill	(Sig. = 0.000)
To deal with sports	(Sig. = 0.000).

In order to further explore the differences between the three nationalities, the authors performed cross tabulation test with the use of SPSS. The results indicated significant differences among the three groups for both destination's selection criteria and motivation (Tables IV and V).

Table IV – Cross - tabs for Selection Criteria

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	68,267	64	,334
Likelihood Ratio	89,083	64	,021
Linear-by-Linear Association	,053	1	,817
N of Valid Cases	165		

Table V – Cross - tabs for Motivation

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	102,770	98	,351
Likelihood Ratio	121,489	98	,054
Linear-by-Linear Association	1,520	1	,218
N of Valid Cases	165		

5. Conclusions, Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The purpose of the present study was twofold. On the one hand the authors tried to identify the factors leading tourists to select a destination and their motivational characteristics for this choice and on the other hand to explore possible differences in how tourists select and get motivated based on their nationality.

The results of the paper made clear that the main factors for tourists' destination choice are the customs procedures, the cultural and historical attractions, the low crime rate, the constant political environment, the stability of currency and exchange rate, the availability of night life activities and of recreation facilities, the overall value and level of cost and finally the availability of hotels. All these characteristics were grouped into four factors (table I). The results also revealed that tourists are motivated through some particular characteristics such as sports occupation, nature exploring, relaxing, becoming spiritually and physically refreshed, visiting new places, having fun and meet new people. Similarly these characteristics were summarized in four factors (table II). Another interesting finding of the present

academic effort is that tourists who visited Thessaloniki based on their nationality, show differences in destination's selection criteria. Regarding the tourism destination selection factors, we conclude that in most of these a few differences appear with respect to the nationality of the tourists. In particular, visiting historical and cultural monuments seems to be an extremely important factor for the Americans and tends to be insignificant for Greeks and Cypriots. A large variation in significance also appears in the motivation related to emotional and physical renewal, where while for Greeks this parameter is very important; it appears to be trivial to Americans and Cypriots. The motivation for relaxation which seems to be very important for Greeks and Cypriots is almost insignificant for the Americans. One also important conclusion of the present research is that tourists are not satisfied from the city based on their nationality and their personal beliefs. Also, according to the data analysis, the tourists who participated in the research cover a wide range of the "age scale" and they seem to have a high educational level. The three nationalities examined in this study belong to the top five nationalities visited the destination selected in the past years. This is the exact reason that Greek, Cypriots and Americans were selected. This is an important element in order to further investigate the significance of factors and motivations that drive tourists to choose and visit a site.

The most important limitation arising is that the present endeavor took place in three nationalities (Greeks, Cypriots and Americans). Thus, it could be repeated in the future taking into account tourists of more/ other nationalities. Another suggestion is that the study can be replicated in other countries and tourists' destination criteria and motivation can be associated with other variables such as tourists' gender, age, profession, income and cultural background. Other variables whose association with destination selection and tourists' motivation may be of academic interest are market segmentation and destination loyalty.

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