



The different shades of responsibility: Examining domestic and international travelers' motivations for responsible tourism in India



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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 9 September 2014

Accepted 20 September 2014

Keywords:

Responsible tourism

Push-pull typology

Motivation

India

Segmentation

Factor analysis

Cluster analysis

ABSTRACT

To address the scarcity of research concerning the demand side of responsible tourism, the present study examines the motivations of domestic and international travelers in India. Data were collected using an Internet survey distributed via e-mail and Facebook to the clients of five responsible tourism operators in India. Using Dann's push-pull typology, factor analysis uncovered nine underlying motivations for responsible tourism, with significant differences between domestic and international travelers for these factors. Cluster analysis revealed three distinct segments of travelers – Responsibles, Novelty Seekers, and Socializers – that differ in their core underlying motivations for responsible tourism and in their socio-demographic characteristics. The study contributes one responsibility-specific push and one pull factor to the literature about travel motivation. Also the findings suggest that operators and destination marketers must develop their products and marketing communications to address the heterogeneity of motivations underlying responsible tourism.

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1. Introduction

The field of tourism has made significant progress in motivation theory over the past few decades. This is not surprising since “travel motivation is probably the most critical factor in understanding tourist behavior” (Li, Cai, Lehto, & Huang, 2010, p. 336). The most notable theories and scales of travel motivation include Cohen's (1972) typology of tourist roles, Plog's (1974, 2001) psychographic type model, Dann's (1977) typology of push and pull motivations, Crompton's (1979) conceptual framework of motives impacting destination selection, Iso-Ahola's (1982) social psychological model of tourism motivation, Beard and Ragheb's (1983) leisure motivation scale, the travel career ladder (TCL) and travel career pattern (TCP) approaches proposed by Pearce and colleagues, and Fodness' (1994) leisure travel motivation scale.

This study uses the most widely accepted paradigm in the study of travel motivation (Prayag & Hosany, 2014) – Dann's (1977) typology of push and pull motivations – to examine the motivations for responsible tourism. According to the present authors, the characteristics of

responsible tourism are most effectively outlined in the 2002 Cape Town Declaration on Responsible Tourism in Destinations. These characteristics encompass the principles of the sustainable development agenda i.e. that tourism should be developed in a manner that is economically, environmentally and culturally beneficial. In this regard, the present study does not attempt to muddle through the semantic complexities surrounding the distinction between sustainable and responsible tourism. Instead, the authors take a broader view of responsible tourism as a paradigm, “a way of doing business” as opposed to a distinct product category such as ecotourism, cultural tourism or voluntourism. Thus, “all forms of tourism can be better and more responsible if we, individually and collectively, take responsibility” (Goodwin, 2011, p. 1).

Despite its emergence as an important philosophy and practice of tourism development in many parts of the world, very little is known about the demand side of responsible tourism: the consumer. This deficiency in one's understanding of the phenomenon is significant, since the “responsible tourism approach works best when it engages the consumer, enabling the traveler, the holidaymaker, to have a better experience” (Goodwin, 2011, p. 5). However, to engage consumers, one must first understand why they participate in more responsible forms of tourism. After all, is not travel about having fun? Self-indulgence? Getting away from it all? Experiencing something new? Creating memorable experiences with family and friends that can then be shared with others? If so, does the suggestion that one has to “be responsible” when traveling make the whole experience seem burdensome? What does it even mean to be responsible? These are all questions that

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travelers are likely to ask themselves before they decide to “become responsible travelers”. Then it is only logical that the providers of such experiences understand these motivations from the consumer’s perspective.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the motivations for responsible tourism in India. The more recent emergence of the BRIC countries – Brazil, Russia, India, and China – as economic powerhouses in the world has significant implications for the tourism industry. However, much of the focus on these countries has been from the perspective of outbound tourism, given the large portions of their populations who are now traveling internationally (ITB Berlin, 2012). While research about outbound tourism is undoubtedly important, there remains a need to understand the consumers of tourism within these countries, if their tourism industries are to move towards more sustainable forms of development. This need is particularly pressing in the Indian context because its significant economic growth since the 1990’s has been questioned about its level of social sustainability (Sen, 2005). Moreover, research on the motivations of international and domestic travelers within India and in the context of responsible tourism is limited. The present addresses this criticism by answering the following research question in the Indian context: Why do travelers participate in responsible tourism experiences? In addition to the theoretical interest about this topic, the study has practical relevance to the providers of responsible tourism experiences; it helps them understand the factors that are critical to the development and marketing of their products. The fundamental proposition of this study is that the motivations of the consumers of responsible tourism are heterogeneous and that the recognition of such heterogeneity must underlie any attempts to engage these consumers.

2. Literature review

2.1. Push and pull of travel motivation

Dann (1977) introduced the concept of push and pull motivations in an attempt to address the neglect of the sociology of tourist motivation. He initially suggested the need to concentrate on only the push factors, such as anomie and ego-enhancement, arguing that these dealt with tourism motivation per se: they induce in an individual the innate desire to travel (Dann, 1981). These were seen as preceding the pull factors, which are external and related to the attractiveness and specific features of the destination such as sunshine, relaxed tempo, and friendly natives. Pull factors induce the traveler to go to a particular destination once the prior decision to travel has been made (Dann, 1981). Similarly, Crompton (1979) suggested the need for the tourism industry to “pay greater attention to socio-psychological [push] motives in developing product and promotion strategies” where the emphasis must shift “from the destination itself to its function as a medium through which socio-psychological needs could be satisfied” (p. 408). Contemporary researchers have taken a more balanced perspective, arguing that understanding both push and pull motivations is critical to the design of effective marketing strategies (Kim, Jogaratnam, & Noh, 2006; Pesonen, Komppula, Kronenberg, & Peters, 2011).

Researchers in tourism have used the push–pull typology most extensively as a market segmentation tool (Frochot & Morrison, 2001). More specifically, the typology has been used to segment the consumer base in one of four ways – segmenting tourists from a specific source market, tourists to a specific destination, tourists traveling for a specific product within a destination, or any combination of the three ways mentioned.

2.1.1. Motivation segmentation using the push–pull typology

Cha, McCleary, and Uysal (1995) provided an example of the use of motivation segmentation from a source market perspective. They used a factor-cluster approach to segment the Japanese outbound pleasure travel market and identified three distinct groups: sports seekers,

Novelty Seekers, and family/relaxation seekers. They suggested that their findings be used by destination marketers to formulate product development and promotion strategies. Yousefi and Marzuki (2012) provided an example of the second type of motivation segmentation: tourists visiting a specific destination. They found that the push factor of novelty and knowledge seeking and the pull factor of cultural and historical attractions were most important to inbound tourists to Penang, Malaysia. Based on their findings, they suggested the need for marketers to match tourists’ motivational drivers with the destination’s activity offerings.

While studies of the first two types of segmentation are useful, recent work in travel motivation has been conducted from the third perspective of examining the motivations for traveling for a specific tourism product within a destination. Such research tends to provide specific, action-oriented information to tourism operators and destination marketers. For example, to assist three national reserves in north central Kenya in developing a tourism strategy, Beh and Bruyere (2007) used a factor-cluster approach to segmentation and identified three groups of visitors who were labeled Escapists, Learners, and Spiritualists. Similarly, much segmentation research has been conducted in the context of rural tourism in Portugal (Kastenholz, Davis, & Paul, 1999), Korea (Park & Yoon, 2009), and Spain (Devesa, Laguna, & Palacios, 2010), among others. The most recent applications of the third perspective have examined newer, lesser explored tourism markets and products, such as Ye, Qiu, and Yuen’s (2011) exploration of the push and pull motivations of medical tourists to Hong Kong, Pan’s (2012) study of the push and pull motives of overseas Taiwanese voluntourists, and Kim and Ritchie’s (2012) classification of golf tourists into distinct typologies. The present study is consistent with this third perspective and examines the motivations for participating in responsible tourism in India.

2.2. Motivations for responsible tourism

As previously mentioned, responsible tourism is not a type of tourism per se. It is a paradigm, a way of conducting business in which responsibility towards the destination’s ecology, culture, and its communities takes precedence. According to Krantz and Chong (2009), the notion of responsibility can be a component of existing product segments such as nature-based, cultural and community-based, volunteer and educational, backpackers and youth, adventure, and high-end tourism. Given this understanding, it is appropriate to examine the literature that has addressed this concept of responsibility from a tourist’s perspective.

2.2.1. Responsibility from the tourist’s perspective

The idea of a more responsible traveler perhaps has been most extensively addressed in the domain of eco/nature-based/protected area tourism. For example, Wight (1996) found that travelers from the United States and Canada increasingly sought products that respected the environment. She also noted that these ecotourists had a “common desire for authenticity, immersion in the cultural and/or physical environment, and the pursuit of environmental and experiential quality” (Hall & Weiler, 1992, as cited in Wight, 1996, p. 7). Her work provided initial evidence of the need to address the environmental and socio-cultural dimensions of responsibility in tourism. Tao, Eagles, and Smith (2004) found that Taiwanese ecotourists shared many of the characteristics found in the North American market. Contemporary profiling efforts include those by Dolnicar and Leisch (2008), Kwan, Eagles, and Gebhardt (2008), and Marques, Reis, and Menezes (2010), among others. These segmentation studies in the domain of eco/nature-based/protected area tourism have been consistent in their focus on the motivations associated with the environmental and sometimes the socio-cultural dimensions of responsibility in tourism. The need for economic responsibility towards local people/host communities rarely has been addressed (Reino & Schröder, 2009).

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