



Research Paper

The relation between push motivation and activity consumption at the destination within the framework of a destination card

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ABSTRACT

This research analyses the influence of tourist' psychological motivation visiting a destination on their actual travel behaviour and the use of this information for bundling tourism attractions and services in a destination card. The relation between push motivation and activity consumption at the destination is recognized in the literature. The paper extends this evidence by introducing activeness indicators measured according to the amount and type of activity participation normalized to the length of stay. Regarding destination cards the paper investigates, through the use of ordered logistic regressions, four requirements (monetary, timesaving, informational and customization), defined as the benefits of a card tourists may find important. The model results show a significant relation between card requirements and both activeness and motivation, suggesting that destination cards need to be based on natural and cultural attractions, whereas entertainment, sport and social activities can be only additional benefits on discounted price. The data has been collected in the Ticino region, Switzerland. The sample refers to 586 face to face interviews with tourists visiting the area.

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1. Introduction

Integration between destination marketing and management has been the focus point of a wide range of literature in tourism (Buhalis, 2000). Being on holiday, tourists are consuming a bundle of services, they perceive the destination as an integrated product. Therefore, implementing strategies to attract tourists cannot be realized by a single actor, but rather by means of common efforts of *Destination Management Organizations* (DMOs) and local operators. The importance of collaboration and the stakeholders' involvement in policy making is frequently mentioned in the literature (Palmer & Bejou, 1995; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Wang & Xiang, 2007; Wang, 2008; Haugland, Ness, Gronseth, & Aarstad, 2011). Different forms of tourism marketing alliances between the private and the public sectors are mutually beneficial for both; attracting more tourists can improve the financial results of private operators and can bring social enhancements to the public ones (Palmer & Bejou, 1995). Due to the variety of products involved in tourism and the differences in competences, implementing collaborations within a destination is a complex issue. The role of DMOs is to set strategic objectives for the operators at a destination and help to achieve their common goals

(Buhalis, 2000). DMOs are increasingly involved in retailing function at a destination (Buhalis, 2000), however they usually do not promote individual products, but rather assist the interaction between the tourist and the suppliers. Destination cards are a good example of public–private initiatives in destination marketing and management, used as a marketing tool worldwide, at destinations of any size, with the aim of facilitating the visit of tourists in the production and consumption of their experience and therefore increase the usage of tourist services at a destination. In most cases, destination cards are dedicated to cities and include public transport and major attractions, while regional destination cards have more complex structures, especially when the region accommodates heterogeneous types of tourists, consuming different services. Destination cards are commonly issued by DMOs in collaboration with tourism stakeholders at the destination. Although integration in tourism marketing and management is often discussed in the literature, little research effort has so far been directed towards analysing their practical implication in terms of destination cards. The topic is investigated and described mainly in the German and Italian speaking context by Pechlaner and Zehrer (2005) and Martelloni (2007).

This paper, being a part of the research project aimed to design a new destination card for canton Ticino, Switzerland, proposes an exploratory study of the topic. In particular, the objective is to profile tourists who can be interested in purchasing a regional destination card by investigating their purpose of visit and the activities they are undertaking at the destination. In order to

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reach this aim, multivariate statistical methods are proposed to analyse the destination cards in relation to motivation and activity consumption. Therefore, before looking at the effects on the card itself, the first topic to be tackled is the influence of psychological motivation of tourists to go on a specific holiday on their actual travel behaviour. A further aspect to be tackled is the understanding whether the tourist motivation, other than the socio-demographic profile, can help to define targeted services at the destination. Hence the relation between the motivation of taking a holiday and the involvement in holiday activities needs to be explored. The relation between push motivation and activities undertaken at the destination is recognized in the literature (Lee, O'Leary, Lee, & Morrison, 2002). This research aims to extend this evidence by introducing activeness indicators measured according to amount and frequency of participation, incorporating the length of stay. By analysing the level of activeness of tourists through their actual usage, we can better understand their engagement in activities available at the destination. Further on, knowing the intensity of usage of tourist activities during a holiday is very important to study destination cards. Hence the indicator of activeness is developed, tested with motivation components and used to reach the main objective of this research. Indeed, the main contribution to the tourism literature and practice is expected regarding the following aspects of destination cards: What are the most important requirements of regional destination cards? Which type of tourists value more important the different benefits derived from a destination card? What kind of attractions can be included in a destination card? Through exploratory factor analysis, ordinary least square and ordered logit regression techniques a survey dataset is analysed to answer these questions within the case of canton Ticino, Switzerland.

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 the literature concerning destination cards and the relation between motivation and activities is provided. Description of the data and method used are then outlined in Section 3, whereas results and the implications are proposed in Section 4. Finally, Section 5 presents the conclusions of the research.

2. Literature review

Pechlaner, Abfalter and Raich (2002) explain the phenomenon of destination cards through the resource based view, as the task of card managers is to combine the core competences in the area and to integrate the different branches into one offer. By analysing empirical and theoretical studies on destination cards by Pechlaner and Zehrer (2005), the following objectives of developing a destination card can be identified: (1) to add value to the experience of visitors, (2) to increase the usage of tourism products and services in the region, (3) to valorise minor, less visited attractions, (4) to redistribute tourist flows, (5) to meliorate the organization of the tourism experience, (6) to improve the perception of the destination brand, (7) to promote the region; as a destination card is an integrated marketing product, it increases tourists' awareness of the attractions and activities in the region, (8) to monitor the tourist experience: the microchip used in smartcards can collect different tourist data, such as the way of moving around in the region, the services used and the expenditure. Additional objectives of a destination card might also include the possibility: (1) to increase the length of stay of tourists, as the higher awareness of activities and their presence in the cards, as well as cheaper card fees for longer stay can lead to extension of stay, (2) to increase tourist expenditure in the region, (3) to increase the use of public transport and therefore reduce the pollution from private transport use, as in most cases

unlimited usage of public transport is included during the validity of destination cards, (4) to reach new segments of visitors through more targeted marketing. Examples of these cards are present worldwide with differences regarding the mode of usage, the type of offer, the validity and price. Pechlaner and Abfalter (2005) propose an empirical research on the design of destination cards with only cultural services. Beritelli and Humm (2005) asked the card providers of the destinations, analysing also the attractions and activities included in the cards. Russo and Van der Borg (2002) mention destination cards among best practices while testing "visitor-friendliness" in urban destinations for cultural tourism.

The review of the literature continues with studies on motivation and activity participation at the destination, as they are crucial for consideration in the case of a new destination card. Motivation has been often used for tourism marketing purposes and product development (Bansal & Eiselt, 2004; Zhang & Marcussen, 2007), in fact Lee et al. (2002) confirm that awareness of the tourists' motivation provides the base for a sound marketing strategy, as it is related to travel behaviour and activity pursuit at the destination. As destination cards are tools for engaging in activity consumption, not only the type of activities tourist would be interested in, but also their motivation for taking a trip should be also investigated. The distinction between pull and push motivations have been examined in several tourism contexts (Bieger & Laesser, 2002; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Pearce, 2005; Uysal & Jurovski, 1994). Push motivation is the internal force, which represents the benefits sought by the tourists for going on a holiday or taking alternative activities, while pull motivation is related to the destination choice itself. Therefore, push motivation is antecedent of pull factor in terms of logic and time, and although activity participation can be explained by a mix of push and pull factors, it seemed to be more motivated by the former construct (Lee et al., 2002). This relation between motivation (mostly push factors) and tourist activities consumed at the destination has been examined by different measures in the literature. While motivation is mostly measured on a Likert scale ranging from not at all important to very important (Gitelson & Kerstetter, 1990; Yoon & Uysal, 2005), the measurement of activities is not as standard. In particular, Brey & Lehto (2007) are examining whether tourists are involved in the same activities in their everyday life as in the holiday. While they measure daily activities on a four-point Likert scale according to frequency, tourist activities are recorded with binary, yes or no possibilities. Zhang and Marcussen (2007) find that activities have effect on satisfaction; less active tourists are less satisfied with the destination. They measure level of participation in an activity according to a five-point scale with no-low-high interpretation. Lehto, O'Leary and Morrison (2004) find that prior visit to the same destination has a higher effect on activity participation than age. They measure activity breadth by adding up the number of factors in which any of the activities are practiced by the respondents. Repeaters become specialists in terms of activities; they participate in fewer activities but more profoundly. Another way to measure activities is to perform it in terms of involvement, as behavioural differences can be linked to the degree of engagement. From the 1980s activity involvement is widely researched through Consumer Involvement Profile (CIP) from a marketing study of Laurent and Kapferer (1985), Havitz and Dimanche (1979) and Gursoy and Gavcar (2003). Tang, Manthiou, Morrison, Shin and Chiang (2012) acknowledge that "activity" is often investigated through factor analyses and used for tourist segmentation in the literature. They explore activity preference on a five-point Likert scale stating importance and analysing them through a second-order factor model. Dolnicar and Laesser (2007) measure activities pursued during the trip in terms of intensity,

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