

What motivates different age groups visit bath for leisure purposes?

[Life](#)



Introduction to Urban Tourism

Urban areas often emerge as a central hub which connect surrounding areas and open them up to business opportunities, trade and information exchange and utilisation (Page & Hall, 2003). Urban areas, unlike rural areas, are known to be densely populated areas. With an area of such importance, it can be expected that services to support different kinds of transactions would emerge (Law, 2002) for example, people will be more likely to live there and businesses would be set up.

Urban areas also serve another purpose. They serve as a meeting place for a highly diverse crowd of people in several different capacities, be it leisure, business, education or even health (Page & Hall, 2003). Cities often hold records of culture and heritage of the people who inhabit it or have previously done so. They are also said to usually have a wide range of leisure facilities (Law, 2002). For whatever reason, visitors show interest in a city and cities exploit these visitors as much as they can. While this sort of interaction has been occurring for centuries, academic study of it has only recently been recognised.

This is where urban tourism as we know it today stems from (Selby, 2004). Given that urban areas are defined as such, saying that urban tourism is simply tourism of any kind which takes place in urban areas (towns and cities), however, from an academic point of view at least, urban tourism is more complicated than that when considering all the possible aspects and perceptions on the demand and supply side, in policies and planning, and everything else in between (Law, 2002; Page & Hall, 2003; Selby, 2004).

Looking at it from this perspective, urban tourism may be defined as the combination of several forms of tourism (such as heritage and cultural, place-specific and special interest, business tourism, etc) concentrated geographically and managed by an interlinked network of government organisations, planners and specialised firms (Ashworth, 2009; Law, 2002).

This report talks about tourism and urban areas in from a demand side point of view. More specifically, it will be discussing the motivating factors that affect tourism in urban areas. The focus will be the tourists of the city of Bath and what inspires demand for the destination.

Aim of the Research

The aim of this research is to investigate what motivates people in different age groups to visit Bath. This research also aims to confirm or disprove the belief that older age groups are more motivated to visit Bath.

Objectives

Find relevant literature on what motivates tourists and what determines the demand of the destination

Investigate which age groups visit Bath and their reasons for doing so

Arrive at a conclusion on why different age groups visit Bath

Literature Review

Tourism is a general term for a range of activities which are the determinants of a destination's demand. These determinants can be placed in three broad categories; economic determinants; socio-psychological determinants and; exogenous determinants (Page & Hall, 2003, Page, 2003).

These categorisations imply that a tourist might be in a city due to its economic convenience, its potential socio-psychological effects or due its business environment and its prospects (Page & Hall, Managing Urban Tourism, 2003).

A decision to spend one's disposable income on one leisure activity rather than another, on entirely different alternatives, involves several "psychological determinants" (Kotler et al, 1996). Psychological determinants of tourism demand are most closely linked to leisure tourism (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Ryan (2003) suggests that taking a holiday enables a tourist to fulfil deep psychological needs. These needs might be anything from wanting to gain some social status to simple relaxation (Kotler et al, 1996).

Within the socio-psychological category as a determinant of demand, there are a number of variables which can be studied (Kotler et al, 1996).

Tourist motivation and behaviour are ultimately determined by these variables (Ryan & Glendon, 1998). However, demographic variables and motivations will be most closely considered.

These needs have been further elaborated by other authors, sometimes under different headings (Page & Hall, 2003; Ryan, 1991; Kotler et al, 1996; Holloway & Robinson, 1995). In these sub-categories, it is easy to see that determinants are interrelated and sometimes overlap each other (Ryan, 1991). A psychological need to escape one's everyday surroundings might lead to falling into a majority demographic due to the sort of holiday a destination offers (Ryan, 2003; Page & Hall 2003).

In the discussion of the determinants of demand, the motives for visiting are rarely ignored. The variables that affect demand in general are categorized by Holloway & Robinson (1991) as psychographic and demographic. Looking at the psychographic variables, tourists visit a destination due to certain factors which are categorized into either push factors or pull factors (Page, 2003).

Researchers focusing on tourist motivation often hold the belief that a tourist might be “pushed” to leaving the area where they usually reside, and therefore escape, or “pulled” by the desire to be at another location (Ryan, 2003; 84; Goossens, 2000). Therefore, a push factor indicates that a tourist's motivation for going on a vacation or to escape their usual routine or environment (Goossens, 2000; McCabe, 2000). It may even indicate a journey of self-discovery or re-discovery as a group, in a family for example (Kotler, 1995; Ryan, 2003). The pull factor, however, signifies that a tourist's motivation is more adventurous, meaning the tourist “seeks new experiences” (McCabe, 2000; 1049).

There is reason for the pull motives to be researched as extensively as it is. This is because when a tourist is pulled to a destination, it shows that there are certain elements about it that are attractive (McCabe, 2000).

Therefore, for marketing purposes, researchers tend to focus on what makes a destination attractive (Goossens, 2000). However, this has led to a substantial gap between the amount of research done between push and pull factors of motivation (Goossens, 2000). The research covering the

motivation of the 'escapist tourist' has been somewhat neglected in comparison.

The demand for a destination is usually affected by various categories of demographics, most notably the status or income demographic, the gender demographic and the age demographic (Lee & Hwang, 2010). In the age demographic, segmentation is taken in six groups, namely the infants, tweens and teens, young adults, early middle ages, late middle ages and over 65's (Kotler et al, 1996).

An alternative is Pooler's (2002) segmentation into three key, all encompassing, groups. These groups are the baby boomers and seniors, who, in this day, are represented in Kotler et al (1996) as late middle age and over 65 (Lamb et al, 2008); generation X, the generation after the baby-boomers classified as young adults and early middle aged (Kotler et al, 1996; Lamb et al, 2008) and finally; Generation Y, often associated with young adults, teenagers and preadolescents and called the Internet generation (Lee & Hwang, 2010), who in this age, statistically (Pooler, 2002) more computer literacy than the previous generation did at the same age (Lamb et al, 2008).

Pooler (2002) and Lamb et al (2008) draw attention to the characteristics of each of these three groups and how they are motivated. For example, generation Y spends more on entertainment and clothing. The group also centres a lot of activities on one form of technology and are more susceptible to internet marketing (Lamb et al, 2008). The baby boomer generation however have a need to interact and require more attention (Lamb et al, 2008). Generation X, where generation Y and baby boomers meet, are

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generally disloyal to brands and are most known for their extensive product search when deciding on any product (Pooler 2002; Lamb et al, 2008).

In terms of research on tourist motivations as they relate to specific destinations, Kozak (2002) has studied push and pull motivations of German and British tourists in two popular holiday destinations. The study found that pleasure and relaxation were the highest ranked motivations in both groups in both destinations. This suggests that the major motives for taking a holiday, regardless of nationality and destination, was the need to relax, possibly with loved ones, and escape from stressful situations to seek pleasure (Kozak, 2002). It was also found that, again regardless of the nationality, the tourists in both destinations were drawn there mainly because of the weather. These findings imply that tourists prefer to spend time in more temperate regions when they are on holiday (Kozak, 2002).

Among the variables discussed, this research project, the focus will be mainly on the socio-psychological elements of a city's demand, specifically within certain age groups. Within these age groups, the research will be examining how demand determinants differ within different age groups. More specifically, it will be exploring the various motivating factors and how they affect each age group, as well how different they are.

Background

With a declining wool industry, Bath had to find alternative means of boosting its economy in the mid-18th century. This was when the city began to focus on the largely underdeveloped spa trade (Hirschfelder, Borsay, &

Mohrmann, 2000). Bath began re-branding itself as a tourism city. Though the city had always had these spas, it was only at this time they were specifically developed for mass commercialisation (Hard & Misa, 2008).

Within thirty years, the city had become the foremost “ health and leisure resort in Britain” (R. & Russell, 2010, p. 18). This fame was however, short-lived. Although many European resort cities benefited in the long run from using celebrity culture as a marketing tool, Bath was not one of them (Borsay, 2000). In the mid-nineteenth century, Bath’s allure was lost as people became uninterested in the medicinal qualities of its spas and moved on to the next craze.

The city itself was also revitalized, with many support facilities also being developed simultaneously. Like most other European destinations of its type, Bath was mainly marketing itself as a fashion resort (R. & Russell, 2010). The trend at that time was the ‘ medical’ or ‘ cold’ baths which allegedly improved the health (Hard & Misa, 2008). The market segments that were interested in this trend included celebrities and the celebrity-minded (R. & Russell, 2010). Naturally, high class facilities were developed to support the main market.

Though, Bath has been credited as being an early example of a modern tourist industry (Hard & Misa, 2008), the tourism industry’s structure has changed since its fame declined. Bath has therefore found new ways to market itself. It focuses mainly on historic tourism (Page & Hall, 2003), marketing its roman heritage more than any other aspect (City of Bath, 2008). Today, Bath’s early retirement or retirement age-groups are

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increasing (City of Bath, 2008), suggesting the market would be shifting to meet the demands of a growing population (Kotler et al, 2005), in turn, attracting tourists in similar age groups.

Methodology

Based on the research design of Kozak (2002), which studied the tourist motivations by nationality, A 33 item questionnaire was formulated. This comprised three sections. The first contained 8 general demographic questions about the respondent as well as the level of familiarity they have with the city of Bath.

The next two sections outlined potential pull and push factors and used a 5-point Likert scale to determine the level to which the respondent was influenced. It is suggested that respondents are more likely to understand a questionnaire with words rather than values (Haley & Case, 1979). As such, the questionnaire was designed with words representing the figures on the scale and presented thus: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree (5) strongly agree.

The second section consisted of 10 potential push factors. This section was again based on Kozak's (2002) design, excluding factors which were not applicable to a non-temperate region. These included enjoying good weather, engaging in sports and experiencing nature. These are not actively present in the chosen destination and were therefore removed from the list of items.

In the final section, a 15 item table of potential pull motives were outlined. Though Kozak (2002) uses open-end questions to determine what the pull motives of respondents are, in this study, a table was formulated and respondents were to use the Likert scale to demonstrate their opinions. The reason for this modification is the presence of a list of factors which were generated from Kozak's (2002) open-end questions. The list outlines what the most common pull motives are. Therefore, the list was used as a reference point for the table in this section.

Following, the completion of the questionnaire design, a pilot test was conducted. 5 questionnaires were given to 2 staff members who had visited Bath previously, 2 staff members who had not ever visited Bath, and a Lecturer of the Hospitality and Tourism department at St. Patrick's College London. These questionnaires were assessed for content and accuracy of the questions.

Data Analysis and Results

The data analysis was conducted using pie charts and tables. Section one was represented in 8 pie charts (appendices 1-8) which illustrate the characteristics of the respondents. In sections two and three, the numerical values of the Likert scale were put in tables and subsequently put in stacked bar charts (appendices 9 and 10). During the data collection, 150 questionnaires were filled in by visitors in Bath. Out of this sample, 8 (5%) questionnaires were unusable due to the fact that they were wrongly filled in. The 142 questionnaires were further divided into those who were in Bath specifically for leisure purposes, which was 86 (58%) of the respondents.

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Analysis of the remaining 142 questionnaires more than half of the respondents, 34% could be said to be within the retirement age of over 45 years. The 17% made up the baby boomer generation of over 55 years. Those in the middle age bracket who are described as the generation X in the literature review made up 38% of the respondents. Those aged 25 and under were under made up a relatively high 28% of the respondents. They were the highest percentage out of all the age groups that answered the questionnaires.

In section 2, the five age groups in the questionnaires were put into three broader age groups of under 25 years (generation Y), 35-44 years (generation X) and 45 years and over (baby boomers), as discussed in the literature review. This section asked respondents to rate push motives. In the generation Y group, the motives with the highest agreement rate were to spend time with loved ones (67. 3%); to get away from home (67. 3%); to have fun (61. 9%); and to relax (57. 9%). Those with the lowest agreement rate were to be active (9. 7%); to socialize with tourists like me (10%); and to experience culture first-hand (12. 3%).

The generation X group had the highest agreement rate for the motivating factors of having fun (64. 5%), spending time with loved ones (56. 4%); and relaxing (54. 2%). The group's motives with the lowest agreement rate where to socialize with tourists (12. 4%) and to be active (15. 9%). Finally, in the baby boomer group, respondents were most motivated by the need to relax (78. 3); to spend time with loved ones (55. 9%); and to experience heritage and culture first hand (51. 6%). The where least motivated by the

need to socialize with tourists of similar interests (3. 6%); to seek adventure (9%); and to learn and experience new things (11%).

During the analysis of section 3, it was discovered that there was insufficient data to analyse as a significant number of the questionnaires (34) had not been filled or were ticked as “ someone else’s decision”. In at least two of the age groups, the sample size was insufficient to come to a reasonable conclusion. For this reason, section 3 was analysed collectively. There was no special analysis for each age group. sOn average the highest rated pull motives which had a agreement rating of at least 40% were cleanliness (51. 3%); attraction range (43. 8%); accommodation (42. 2%); and the Roman Baths (41. 7%). The lowest rated were weather (4%) and nightlife (13. 9).

Discussion and Conclusion

From the findings, it can be assumed that the perception of older tourists visiting Bath more frequently than younger ones might be wrong as over 50% of the respondents were under 34 and only 17% of the respondents could be at retirement age. The implication is that an older resident population may not necessarily translate to an older tourist population (Lynch, Duinker, Sheehan, & Chute, 2011). The initial perception might have been born from the idea that an older age group is usually attracted to a historical tourist destination (Lynch, Duinker, Sheehan, & Chute, 2011), which is what the City of Bath is. Apart from this misconception, it would seem that Bath’s residents may be mistaken for tourists more often than not, as observed during the data collection period.

In addition, more than half of the respondents were under the age of 34, which contradicts the city's resident demographics report which suggest that there is a decline in the number of people that fall under this age bracket, due to a number of them moving out of the area. It is possible that while Bath residents in this age group relocate, they still keep in touch with family and friends in the area and visit on a regular bases, which would explains the high number of tourists in the group. This is back up by the results of the survey which show that 56.3% agreed that they were in Bath to spend time with loved ones.

The most significant push motive was the need to relax. This has also been observed in Kozak's (2002) study, where the significance of relaxation in the motivations of a holidaying tourist was noted. However, contrary to Kozak's findings, escape motives hardly influenced the decision of the respondents in Bath. This may be due to how different destinations in both instances are. The majority of the respondents were home visitors, with only 6% of internationals making up the respondents. In Kozak's study, 100% of the sample population were away visitors. Kozak has also noted the link between an away holiday and the escape push motive. In this study, it is suggested that tourists are more likely to go farther if their motivations are escape related.

Rather than the escape motive, it would seem the visitors to bath were more influenced by the need to spend time with someone, be it those living in Bath or those visiting with family. The large number of home visitors could possibly be the reason for this.

Limitations

This study was limited by various factors. The city of Bath attracts a variety of tourists. One of the major limitations during data collection was the language barrier between the researcher and many of the tourists. Because the data collection tool was in only one language, a significant section of the target group was not able to answer the questionnaire. In addition, as the data was collected during an off-peak period, there might have been a significant loss of certain key respondents.

Beyond these two factors, the sample size might have been insufficient when considering that Bath host hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. In the future, it is hoped that another survey examining the leisure motives of visitors with families in Bath would be conducted as it seems this is a key area which should be explored further.

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