

Tourist motivation narrative



Tourist motivation is the reason why a tourist will make the decision to choose one destination over another and the attributes that governs that behavior. This is important to the tourist professional for a number of reasons. The tourist professional must have an understanding of what drives the tourist to initiate the vacation and then match a destination that fits with the tourist's travel motives.

A good fit may ensure that the guest will enjoy the vacation and either come back year after year or book another trip with that professional. The tourist professional also needs to have information about tourist motivation in order to market specific destinations and design appropriate tourist packages. In this paper I will interview a person who traveled on an international vacation and find out why they chose that destination. Using two journal articles and notes from class, I will explain the push pull theory and why it fits best with this person's motivations for travel. I will also explore some downsides of the theory. I spoke to my mother and asked her when she last took an international vacation.

She told me that she went to Ecuador to travel with and visit my brother 2 years ago. I asked her what her main motivation for traveling to that destination was. She told me that since my brother was living there she wanted to explore and learn new things together with him. She also told me that she wanted to experience an unfamiliar culture and meet new people.

She was looking for excitement in a foreign country where English was not the main language. The push pull theory fits best with my mother's travel motivations since her initial decision to travel was motivated by her desire to

travel with my brother. The family and relationship building was the “ push” that established her motivation for traveling to Ecuador. She might not have considered this country if my brother did not live there. She was also motivated by the excitement of being in a different culture and the possibilities of meeting new people.

The “ pull” was the actual choice of Ecuador which satisfied my mother’s need to be with her son (push) and explore new and exciting places (pull). If my brother lived in an area where English was the spoken language and whose culture was very similar to her own, my mother might not have chosen to travel with him at that time. The pull of a different culture and the novelty it held was a motivating factor. Financial resources are another factor that plays into the ability of the traveler to choose a specific destination. This is not addressed in the push pull theory but it was a consideration for my mother when she traveled to Ecuador. She was able to afford the trip because she stayed with a family in the city and Ecuador was not an expensive country for travel.

I would suggest that affordability can also be a motivating factor in the destination decision. I believe this omission is a downside to the push pull theoretical model. The push pull theory states that the push motives are the social psychological motivators that determine the need for a person to travel. These are the internal factors. The pull motives define the characteristics of the actual destination itself.

The push motives include escape, social interaction, enhancement of family relationships, prestige, regression and self evaluation. The pull motives

include the cultural, novelty and educational pieces of the destination (Crompton 1979). The traveler may want to get away from his/her home and escape a boring environment; he/she may want to relax by not doing anything and lying on a beach or by trying new things; he/she may want to learn more about himself/herself by being in a different environment, going to lectures and museums and exploring new possibilities or self reflecting in a quiet secluded environment. Crompton (1979) points out that many times professionals view these motivators separately and do not see them working together. He states (1979, p. 421) that “.

.. destination decisions were usually energized by several motives acting in tandem. ” Many of the push motives may work together to form the motivation for the traveler’s decisions.

The downside of this theory is that unless specifically mentioned, each motive in the push section may be viewed as a separate entity in a list and not integrated when reviewing the destination decision. The pull and push motives themselves may not be seen as interrelated. Crompton indicates that the travel industry too often makes the assumption that travelers always want to see and do things constantly. They focus only on the pull factors and not the traveler’s push motivators. Cultural attractions and structured activities may not be what the traveler is looking for on a particular destination.

Crompton suggests that travel professionals need to focus more on the social and psychological reasons that people choose travel and once that is understood then destinations can be tailored to meet these needs. They may

also need to help the traveler explore their motives for travel. He indicates that many travelers may not be aware of their socio psychological reasons for travel. After being interviewed for the study, many travelers said that they had never thought about their motives for travel and learned a lot about themselves through the interviewing process (Crompton, 1979).

Crompton also points out that travel needs do not have to be place specific.

The motivations for travel can be satisfied by a variety of places and can be tailored to the specific needs of the client. One can escape to a small town or rural area in order to find a simpler lifestyle and also find the pull of culture through local craft fairs or markets rather than going to European museums. Travel professionals cannot pigeon hole travelers based on this theory. They need to look at how the push and pull motives are interrelated and mesh them together. Personal motivations may also change over time and according to a specific trip. My mother might not have had the same internal motivators for her trip to Ecuador when she was 25 years old as she had when she was 50.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) looked at the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty using the push pull model. They stated that the tourism studies looked at motivation and satisfaction separately and that a person's satisfaction with their travel destination contributed to destination loyalty. This loyalty determined whether a traveler will revisit the destination and/or make recommendations to friends and family. The push pull theory did not extend its' construct to include satisfaction or destination loyalty. Yoon and Uysal state that " the results and effects of the motivation studies of tourist behavior require more than an understanding of their needs and wants.

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In tourism destination management, maximizing travel satisfaction is crucial for successful business. " They suggest that destination marketers evaluate their client's push pull motivators since these can increase consumer satisfaction with the destination. This study also supported Crompton (1979) indicating that tourist professionals need to appeal to the traveler's internal motives for travel. They found a positive relationship between the role of push motivation and destination loyalty.

This paper looked at the push pull theory of motivation and its' correlation to my mother's travel to Ecuador as well as the importance of the theory to the travel industry. My mother's internal motivation for the trip was a big push for the destination. However, as mentioned earlier, I believe that the issue of affordability and financial resources needs to be placed somewhere in this construct. Tourist professionals should review this theory and spend more time with their clients to determine their internal motivations for travel.

This will assist them not only in maintaining customer satisfaction and destination loyalty but will also assist them in marketing strategies.

Bibliography Crompton, J. (1979). Motivation for pleasure travel. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 6, 408-424. Yoon, Y.

& Ulysal, M. (2005). An examination of the effects of motivation and satisfaction on destination loyalty: a structural model. *Tourism Management*, 26, 45-56.