

# An overview of tourist motivation tourism essay



Tourist motivation is seen by many writers as one of the key elements in understanding tourist decision-making behaviour. A sound understanding of travel motivation plays a critical role in predicting future travel patterns and destination selection. The big answer to the basic question, “ why do people travel?” has occupied the minds of tourist researchers for many years. Many different motives compel people to travel. Various methods have been employed to uncover travel motives. The following literature will shed light on various theories that can be used to have a knowledge why people travel to urban destination.

Tourist motivation can be defined “ as the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behaviour and experience.” (Pearce, Morrison & Rutledge, 1998). Put simply, motivation is a state of arousal of a drive or need which impels people to activity in pursuit of goals. Once the goals have been achieved the need subsides and the individual returns to the equilibrium-but only briefly because new motives arise as the last one is satisfied. As cited in Seaton (1997) motivation of the individual person to travel, to look outside for what he cannot find inside have been largely created by society and shaped by everyday life. Gray’s (1979) travel-motivation theory, poses only two main motives for travel. One is the desire to go from a known to an unknown place, called in Gray’s theory “ wanderlust”“. The other motive is what Grays called “ sunlust”. This generates a trip to a place which can provide the traveler with specific facilities that do not exist in his or her own place of residence. Some of the motives which determine their travel choices are recreation, pleasure, new experiences, cultural interest, shopping.

The existence of internal and external factors which motivates human behavior is assumed by many authors. Kotler (1982) for example, stipulate that motivation can be caused by the result of internal and external stimuli. Internal stimuli arise from personal needs and wants that can be physiological, social, egocentric, safety, and self-actualisation. External stimuli arise from marketing. Travel motives can be personal (personal training, compensation, rest and knowledge) or interpersonal (resulting from social relations) (Dann, 1977, Yoon and Uysal, 2005). Dann (1977) classifies personal motives as those that predispose the individual for travelling, escape from daily routines, the desire to escape from solitude while interpersonal motives arise from the need to seek some form of social recognition that is obtained through travel.

According to the 'push' and 'pull' concept, Crompton (1979), push factors explains the desire for travel while the pull motives have been used to explain the actual destination choice. Nine motivations of leisure travelers were identified and classified seven as socio-psychological or push motives and two as cultural or pull motives. The seven push motives were, escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The pull motives were novelty and education.

Maslow (1943) identified two motivational types: tension-reducing motives; arousal-seeking motives. There are five needs forming a hierarchy, progressing from the lower to the higher needs. At the bottom are the basic needs for food, water and air. Then, above them is the need for safety,

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security, and protection. The higher needs in this hierarchy only come into focus when the lower needs in the pyramid are met. Once an individual has moved upwards to the next level, needs in the lower level will no longer be prioritized. Cooper et al (2005) questioned Maslow's theory saying that why and how Maslow selected the basic five needs remain unclear, although Page (2003) feels that it has relevance in understanding how human action is understandable and predictable compared to research which argues that human behaviour is essentially irrational and unpredictable. Though much criticism about Maslow's theory, the tourism literature has borrowed a lot from Maslow since he provides a convenient set of containers that can be relatively labeled and provide a useful framework for understanding psychological motivational factors in tourism. Thus, for example, although the apparent purpose of a trip may be for shopping, the underlying psychological motivation may be to impress their neighbours and gain higher social status. Iso-Ahola (1982) says that tourists will switch roles while on holiday, and that over time different needs will arise. Single motivation may not always act as the determining factor for travel. If within the holiday, the initial needs are satisfied, other motivations might emerge. Indeed, it is congruent with Maslow's theories of needs to argue that if initially there is a primary need for relaxation while on a holiday, the satisfaction of that need will create awareness of other needs such as exploration of place as a means of acquiring a sense of belonging or to enable processes of self-actualisation to take place.

Dann (1981) has identified seven elements of tourist motivations: travel as a response to what is lacking yet desired; destination pull in response to

motivational push; motivation as fantasy(engage in behaviour and activities that are culturally unacceptable in their home environment like prostitution and gambling); motivation as classified purpose(VFRs); motivational typologies; motivation and tourist experiences; motivation as auto-definition and meaning (the way in which tourist define their situations and respond to them).[Page & Connell, 2003].

Beard and Ragheb (1983: 225), propose four motivational needs which came from the work of Maslow (1970). These are: the intellectual component (such as learning, exploring, discovering, thought or imagining), the social component where individuals engage in leisure activities for social reasons. This component includes two basic needs (need for friendship and interpersonal relationships and the need for the esteem of others), the competence-mastery component assesses the extent to which individuals engage in leisure activities in order to achieve, master, challenge and compete. The activities are usually physical in nature and finally the stimulus-avoidance component of leisure motivation which assesses the drive to escape and get away from over-stimulating life situations. It is the need for some individuals to avoid social contacts, to seek solitude and calm conditions; and for others it is to seek to rest and to unwind themselves. These four motivations form the foundation of their Leisure Motivation.

P. Pearce (1988) using the concept of a travel ladder when investigating motivation for tourism, suggested that motivation are multivariate and dynamic, changing particularly as a result of ageing and lifecycle stage, as well as being influenced by other people. He proposed the following motivation categories: relaxation, stimulation, relationship, self-esteem and

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development, fulfillment. In Pearce's model, the motivations listed can be divided into two categories. The needs may be self-centered or directed at others. Thus, for instance, relaxation may be a solo exercise where the holiday-maker seeks a quiet restful time alone or it can be relaxation in the company of others, springing from the need for external excitement and desire for novelty. Stimulation can be self-directed which springs from the concern for own safety, or it can be directed toward others arising out of the concern for other's safety. Relationship can be self-directed which means giving love and affection and maintaining relationships, or it can be directed at others which means receiving affection, to be with group membership. Self-esteem and development maybe self-directed like development of skills, special interests, competence and mastery, or it may be directed at others like prestige, glamour of travelling. Fulfillment is totally self-directed as it fulfils individual dreams, understands oneself more and experience inner peace and harmony. There are some criticisms against Pearce's travel motivations. For example, Pearce argues that stimulation may be understood along a dimension of risk and safety of self or others. However, it might be argued that there is a real and distinctive difference between these two motivations.

Chadwick (1987) provided a simplified categorization of why people travel under three main headings. These are as follows: Pleasure: leisure, culture, active sports, visiting friends and relatives, Professional: Meeting, missions, business, etc, other purposes: Study, health and transit.

Classifying tourist behaviours have important implications for the study of the impact of tourism on destination. Shaw & Williams (2002) opines that <https://assignbuster.com/an-overview-of-tourist-motivation-tourism-essay/>

many of the typologies are based around identifying the significant traits of tourists. According to Klenosky (2002) travel behaviour is motivated by two sets of factors, one that influences or pushes a person to consider travelling outside his or her everyday environment and another set that attracts or pulls that person to visit a particular destination.

Several sociological theories have been put forward in the tourist literature in an attempt to explain motivation. Cohen (1972), in his early studies subdivided tourist into four types based on motivation. He asserted that all tourists are seeking some element of novelty and strangeness while, at the same time, most also need to retain something familiar. He distinguished tourist using sociological principles into organized mass tourist, individual mass tourists, explorer and drifter. Hence, at one end of his continuum was the 'organized mass tourist' seeking familiarity in the holiday surroundings, while at the other end, the drifter is willing to accept far more strangeness.

Smith (1977) provided a more detailed variant of Cohen's tourist typologies. Smith (1977) identifies 7 categories of tourist who have been termed as "interactional typologies": explorer, elite, off-beat, unusual, incipient mass, mass, and charter. However, Plog (1990) criticised the validity of Smith's typology.

Shaw & Williams (2002) argued that Plog's typology is built upon asking tourists about their real general "lifestyles" or value systems, often using perceptual information derived from in-depth interviews. Plog suggested two set of individual: allo-centric and psycho-centric. The latter are concerned primarily with the self, are inhibited and non-adventurous. In term of tourist

behaviour, psycho-centrics want the familiar and are unlikely to travel great distances to explore new tourism destinations. Conversely, the former are confident, naturally inquisitive and seek out the unfamiliar when travelling. This typology can be used to examine tourist motivations as well as attitudes to particular destinations and modes of travel.

Johns & Gyimothy (2002) states that Plog (1973) used a psychometric scale to categorise tourists into allocentric, midcentric and psychocentric, depending on individual's relative focus on their own culture and the one they are visiting. Psychocentrics tourists like nice swimming pool; well organized trip; good facilities; pub lunches. Cooper et al (2005) feel they are conservative in their travel patterns. However, Cooper et al (2005) questions the applicability of the typology. They feel that tourists may on a second visit travel to nearby psychocentric-type areas, whereas the main holiday maybe in an allocentric-type destination. Gottlieb(in Davidoff and Davidoff, 1983) as cited in Seaton(1997), suggests that there are two kinds of tourists-those who seek a pampered lifestyle beyond their means in everyday life while the latter, having access to material luxuries in their everyday life, seek simpler, more primitive contacts in their leisure(e. g. on safaris, roughing it' on adventure holidays, etc).

Shaw & Williams (2002) states few problems associated with tourist typologies. Firstly, typologies are relatively static models due to lack of information (Lowyck et al, 1990). Secondly, individuals change as tourists over time. Changing patterns of tourist behaviour do not exist in sufficient detail or scale. Tourist typologies offer just mere generalities. According to Shaw & Williams (2002) these typologies are beneficial despite their



limitations. They provide insight into motivations of tourist and their behaviour.

An insight of the various types of tourism purpose and motivation is crucial for those planning and marketing tourist destinations. All service providers and tourism planners must know why people want their products. However, there are many problems of determining tourism motivations. According to Seaton (1997) people rarely think about the underlying reasons for their actions. Motivations for activities may not bear too much self-critical scrutiny like sex tourism. Again tourism motivations often include contradictory impulses. Seaton (1997) typifies two such sets of opposing desires: Novelty and adventure (exploring a new place) vs. Familiarity and security (staying in a hotel with familiar comforts). Another problem is that it is often difficult to distinguish individual motives from socially constructed vocabularies of motives. People often give reasons for doing things that they have been programmed to give, none of which may constitute the real reason for a trip. According to Page (2003), if we are able to understand what prompts people to leave their homes and travel to new places, then we may be able to develop approaches that will help us to manage the tourists and their impacts and plan an enjoyable experience for them. More fundamentally, understanding tourist motivation may help to explain why certain places are more developed as successful tourism destination than others and then continued to grow, stagnated or declined as tastes and fashions changed.