

Tourist Behaviour: An Overview of Models to Date

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Abstract. Consumer behaviour, either in tourism or other contexts of consumption, is a key indicator of the quality, effectiveness and suitability of work in tourism or other activities. Tourist behaviour occurs in the planning and implementation stages of the holidays, and also after the return home. In order for the tour operator or destination to assess the relevance of its marketing and operational approaches to the development, marketing and implementation of tourism activities, it is necessary to recognise the different forms of behaviour in each stage.

This article discusses the theoretical bases of tourist behaviour. Only by knowing the fundamentals of tourist behaviour, as well as knowing how to observe and measure them, can we effectively plan offers and other sales activities in tourism. Theoretical foundations are crucial in empirical research/the measurements of tourist behaviour, as they reveal the concepts that should be measured, and usually also the ways to measure them. This article will summarise the key features and useful values of theories that were most frequently tested in the context of tourism, as well as those that include concepts relevant to the behaviour of consumers in the context of tourism.

Keywords: tourism, tourist behavior, motivation

1 Introduction

The behaviour of tourists is the most important indicator or predictor of future tourist behaviour. Taking into account the social role of the tourist, the behaviour of an individual tourist can also be an indicator of the behaviour of others. With their behaviour, tourists set the social norms of behaviour in the context of tourism. These norms are also followed by other consumers; those who do not yet engage in travel or tourist behaviours, as well as those who do.

Tourist behaviour is the context of consumer behaviour in the purchase, uptake and abandonment of tourist services. Services are considered to be intangible, which makes them more difficult to market. They also have an additional complicating factor, since they are generally located away from places where consumer behaviour occurs.

The manifestations of tourist behaviour are diverse and, in principle, take place in several phases. Each phase contains the processes of planning, decision-making, and purchase. For example, tourists may plan their holidays directly with the provider (e.g. book a room directly with the hotel), or indirectly through a tourist services intermediary (e.g. book a room through a travel agency). There are also various methods and tools for planning, such as by phone, in person, or over the internet. In the phase

of experiencing the holiday, tourists make use of tourist experiences, available either for a payment or free of charge. Simultaneously, the tourist also carries out the activities of planning, informing and deciding on their further undertakings (their future behaviour) at the destination. In the post-holiday phase, tourists engage in various activities that will ultimately have an impact on their own future behaviour, as well as that of others. This diversity of the manifestations of tourist behaviour, in its various stages or phases, complicates the approaches to observing it, but at the same time also demonstrates the importance for the provider or destination to monitor tourist activity. Knowing the behaviour of tourists is a key element in the assessment of the work of planners and providers of tourist services so far, as well as in the planning and implementation of tourist services in the future.

Tourist behaviour is also a key factor for the successful development of tourism services, therefore an understanding and knowledge of tourist behaviour is an indispensable element in the development of tourism. Knowing the behaviour of tourists has practical value for all tourism stakeholders (Pearce, 2005). Most commonly, the data on tourist behaviour is relevant for the providers of tourist services, as knowledge of behaviour enables the planning of business strategies and the designing of tourist products. The public sector, especially tourism institutions and organisations, use the data on tourist behaviour to plan the developmental and marketing strategies of destinations and tourist regions. Information on the behaviour of tourists is also useful for the general travelling population (i.e. tourists), as it facilitates holiday planning, especially in areas facing specific and problematic tourist behaviour.

Tourist behaviour is the consumption of both everyday and unusual products and services outside of the environment of everyday life. For an objective, credible and applicable understanding of tourist behaviour, it is critical to recognise the key aspects that separate the behaviour during tourism from the behaviour in the everyday environment.

2 Theoretical bases

Consumer behaviour is the process of selecting, purchasing and using a product or service in order to satisfy one's needs and desires. While doing so, the consumer wants to maximise their benefits and minimise the time spent. There are several groups of factors that affect consumers. These factors are: social (e.g. position in society and family), cultural (values, habits, attitudes ...), personal (gender, lifestyle, education, age ...), psychological (skills, perception ...), and economic (purchasing power, price ...) (Cobble, 2011). Peter and Olson (2002) propose a model for consumer behaviour in which they include the importance of information. They qualify consumer behaviour as a cognitive process. Through this process, the consumer normally decides how to solve their problems.

Erasmus et al. (2001) consider that it is necessary for the study of consumer behaviour to adapt to the specific situations or products that are the subject of purchase. Individual decisions in the decision-making process can be more or less risky, depending on the final product. Their model of consumer behaviour also includes all the steps that occur well before the purchase and afterwards.

Different approaches or models have been used in studying consumer behaviour. Each model includes different variables. Bray (2008) describes five models in detail. In the first one, the customer is presented as economical and frugal (*homo economicus*). In this model, the consumer behaves rationally. They are considered to be aware of all the purchase options and able to evaluate and analyse them, ultimately making an optimal decision. In practice, however, such a model is not very realistic, since the consumer does not usually have all the information, is not sufficiently motivated, or does not have enough time to identify the optimal option, therefore settling on any purchase that will satisfy their needs and desires. The second model is based on the psychodynamic perspective of the consumer. In accordance with this model, the behaviour of the consumer depends more on personality

traits and even the subconscious, less so on the awareness of the individual or the environmental effects. The third model stems from the Behavioural Approach. Contrary to the previous approach, the authors of this theory argue that behaviours and behavioural patterns can be learned and that this is largely dependent on environmental factors. The behaviour of the individual is shaped by experience and learning. The fourth model can be labelled as cognitive. Cognition comprises the conscious and unconscious processes in the brain, through which we understand, process, analyse, store, and share information or knowledge. In this model, an individual consumer may be characterised as a processor of information. The fifth model is discussed on the basis of the humanistic approach. This theory emphasises characteristics that are unique to an individual customer (these vary depending on experiences, opinions, values ...) and highlight the growth and self-realization of the individual.

Below, we will focus on tourists – that is, consumers in the context of tourism. We will present the theoretical foundations for tourist behaviour. Theoretical foundations are crucial in empirical research / the measurement of tourist behaviour, as they reveal the concepts that should be measured, as well as the ways to measure them.

2.1 Tourist behaviour

Some standard conceptual models (competition, innovation, consumer behaviour) were formed through research separate from tourism, so we need to be attentive when applying these models. Scott et al. (2014) mention that a few recent studies have discussed whether it was even viable to use classical marketing concepts for the study of tourist behaviour, since this may cast doubt on the validity and the possibility of application of these models for tourism.

Some authors have therefore attempted to form models that would have been more useful in tourism.

Moutinho (1993) believes that the process of a purchase in tourism has some special features in relation to other types of purchases. It is, after all, an investment where we do not expect any return other than satisfaction. The purchase is planned for a longer period of time and is usually financed with savings. On the one hand, tourists are becoming more experienced, flexible and resourceful, but on the other hand this also makes them more demanding. Tourist behaviour research must, therefore, take all this into account. Many factors affect the individual tourist. For the stakeholders on the supply side to know how to prepare an effective marketing strategy, they need to understand the tourist's perception of a tourist destination, journey, distance, and advertising. It is also important to know how decisions about the trip are made and how they are influenced by personal factors. Other influence factors include motivation and mood. Broadly speaking, the research also has to include the factors generated by economic and social changes. These include, for example, the rising price of energy, the trend of smaller families, new possibilities of communication, opportunities for education and so on. And finally, there are the environmental or social effects, such as the role of the family, the role of other groups of people, the role of social status, and the role of culture.

In a review of the literature in the field of tourist behaviour, Dimanche and Havitz (1995) divided the studies into four groups; based on self-involvement (ego involvement), loyalty, family influence on decision-making, and the search for novelty.

Quite a few years later, Scott et al. (2014) also focused on the to-date studies of tourist behaviour and divided them into four categories, namely: (1) studies that apply one or more concepts of consumer behaviour (i.e. marketing or management) to tourism, (2) studies that deal with the influence of satisfaction on loyalty, but unfortunately comparisons between them cannot be made due to differences in the context of research, (3) quantitative research, which is subject to the experimental concept of research and as such may result in several mistakes, and (4) a small group of longitudinal

and fairly comprehensive studies aimed at understanding the whole process of tourist behaviour. In these tourist studies, they identify 9 key concepts relevant to tourist behaviour.

- The **decision-making** of the tourist is complex and includes planned, unplanned and impulse purchases. In some models, decision-making appears as one of the initial stages of the purchase, while some authors even include it as a central element of the model of tourist behaviour.
- In the marketing field, **values** largely influence the consumer when choosing between product categories, brands and attributes. Values are what guides the consumer and directs their actions, behaviour, emotions and judgement (Crick-Furman and Prentice, 2000 in Scott et al., 2014).
- **Motivation** has always received a great deal of attention from tourism academics, given its importance in marketing decisions such as segmentation, product development, advertising and positioning (Bieger and Laesser, 2002 in Scott et al., 2014).
- **Self-concept** - many researchers have investigated its influence on the image and the selection of the destination and travel intentions - and **personality**, which can be seen as a part of self-concept. Personality is an important factor in the processes of decision-making, attitude changing, innovation perception, and risk-taking (Kassarjian, 1971 in Scott et al., 2014).
- **Expectations** can be unfulfilled, reached, or exceeded. A tourist experience that meets or exceeds their expectations will always remain in their memory as positive. Expectations are based on previous experience, personal (word of mouth) and impersonal (advertising) sources, personal characteristics (gender, ethnicity), and motivation (Sheng and Chen, 2012, and Zeithaml et al. 1993, in Scott et al., 2014).
- **Attitude** is sometimes defined in research as the relationship with the key attributes of an object (e.g. the characteristics of a tourist destination can form the image of a destination), or more broadly as a general attitude. Gnoth (1997, in Scott et al., 2014) calls for a better understanding of attitudes in light of emotions and values. Measuring the tourist attitude towards the services, destinations and trademarks of tourism providers is challenging, since it also needs to consider the mood and emotions of the tourist at the time of the measurement.
- **Perception** is one of the most interesting concepts in marketing. Tourist perception studies are mainly focused on risk and security perception, including the perception of crime (George, 2010 in Scott et al., 2014), and the perception of terrorism or epidemics of certain diseases (Rittichainuwat and Chakraborty, 2009 in Scott et al., 2014).
- **Satisfaction** and the data on consumer satisfaction are important information. Researchers agree that satisfaction is actually related to the assessment of a purchase or the assessment of individual elements of the purchase.
- **Trust and loyalty** are inter-related elements in models of consumer behaviour. There can be no lasting loyalty without trust (Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol, 2002 in Scott et al., 2014). McKercher et al. (2012 in Scott et al., 2014) believe that the study of tourist loyalty must take into consideration the uniqueness of the tourism industry. They mention vertical (tourists can be loyal to providers of tourist products from various tourism sectors at the same time), horizontal (tourists may be loyal to several providers of the same tourist products) and experiential (tourists can be loyal to a particular form of holiday) loyalty.

Woodside and Lysonski (1989) model is titled ‘A general model of traveller destination choice’. With this, they wanted to describe awareness, preference and choice among competing destinations. In designing the model, they took into account the results of research in cognitive and behavioural psychology, marketing and tourism. The model includes 8 dimensions and 9 connections. Marketing variables and the characteristics of the individual impact destination awareness. The dimension of emotions and memories includes positive and negative emotions that tourists link to a destination. This dimension, together with destination awareness, formulates the traveller destination preferences,

which in turn determine their intentions. The final phase of the model, the choice, largely depends on the intentions and the situation.

Li et al. (2013) examined the effect of belonging to a certain generation on tourists and found that different generations possess different histories of destination visits, exhibit different wishes and preferences for the future, and also follow different criteria for the assessment of tourist destinations. They also partially confirmed the claim that different generations use different sources of information, and that they have different preferences for activities during the trip.

Mathieson and Wall (1982) have proposed a 5 phase model for the consumer behaviour of tourists. In the first phase, an individual recognises their need or wish to travel. In the second phase, they collect all the necessary information and evaluate each option. In the third phase, they decide between the different alternatives. In the fourth phase, they prepare to travel and experience the journey. In the final, fifth phase, they can assess their satisfaction.

2.2 Motivation and tourist behaviour

Motivation is one of the key explanatory variables of tourist behaviour and is, therefore, a very common theme in research in the field of tourism. The “who”, “when”, “where” and “how much” are quite easy to determine; a much greater challenge is presented by the question “why” (Crompton, 1979). Not only in tourism but in other areas of research, motivations are usually based on Maslow’s theory of the hierarchy of needs (1970), probably due to its simplicity.

Crompton (1979) proposes a model of push and pull. Like some authors before him, he primarily operates on a foundation of the socio-psychological characteristics of the tourist, and the culture and attractiveness of the actual destinations. Individuals travel because they are pushed to do so by factors related to themselves, but at the same time they are pulled by factors (tangible factors such as natural and cultural resources, as well as innovations, benefits, expectations and destination images) that we can attribute to the destination itself. In most tourists, we can observe both groups of factors. Crompton (1979) carried out 39 unstructured interviews with randomly chosen adult tourists, with the aim of creating a model of travel motivations. The results of the interview analysis are seven socio-psychological factors (push factors) and two cultural factors (pull factors) derived from the destination. The first category includes (1) an escape from the perceived everyday environment (an individual chooses to travel because they seek to temporarily change both their home and work environments), (2) research and self-development (some people also benefit from travelling by exploring themselves), (3) relaxation (includes both physical and mental relaxation; an individual may devote their holiday to their hobbies and interests), (4) prestige (some interviewees even place prestige above everything else, but it became apparent that the more that an individual travels, the less important this factor becomes), (5) regression (returning to the past, far from everyday tasks; this factor could be called nostalgia according to some answers), (6) the strengthening of familial ties and relationships (many decide to travel because they see it as an opportunity to strengthen family relationships), and (7) socialization (establishing new relationships and expanding the social network; several interviewees also expressed the need for socializing and getting to know the local population). The second group of pull factors may be classified as (1) novelty (new experiences; it turned out that some interviewees consider the possibility of new experiences with the risk of travelling to an unknown destination when deciding to travel) and (2) education (tourists decide on some destinations because of their desire for new knowledge and new information, so they visit museums, workshops and the like).

Dann (1981) similarly notes that researchers of tourist motivation mostly deal with two groups of factors, including factors stemming from the individual and from their home environment, as well as factors arising from the selected destination. In his study, he presents seven different perspectives:

- Travel as a response to what is lacking yet desired (our work/home environment does not provide everything we need or want and a part of this can be fulfilled by the holiday)
- Destination pull in response to motivational push (specific attractions at the destination convince the individual to choose a particular destination, after they have decided to travel somewhere else; destination pull factors, such as sunny weather, a comfortable hotel, friendly locals, etc., can strengthen the push factors)
- Motivation as fantasy (a tourist seeks to solve all the problems of everyday life and satisfy all of their fantasies by travelling)
- Motivation as a classified purpose (individuals often travel with a specific purpose, e.g. business, pleasure, shopping, studies, etc.)
- Motivational typologies (some authors have tackled the question of what the ideal motivation is)
- Motivation and tourist experiences (what motivates the tourist is the desire for an authentic and unique experience)
- Motivation as auto-definition and meaning (the way in which tourists define a situation helps us understand their motivation better than by merely observing them).

Iso-Ahola (1982) says that motivation is affected by two groups of factors – that is, a group of seeking factors and a group of escape factors. The individual is motivated by the set goals and the rewards received on achieving the said goals. These rewards may be internal (feelings, skills, competences) or external (an escape from the everyday environment and routine). A few years later, Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) upgraded this theory and agree that people are motivated to seek holiday activities that enable them to distance themselves from personal and social (interpersonal) problems, and on the other hand gain some personal or social rewards (which arise from social interactions).

2.2 The theory of planned behaviour

In connection with consumer behaviour, there is often a mention of the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). This was created as an upgrade of the theory of reasoned action (TRA). The authors of the TRA are Ajzen and Fishbein (1980), whose model was developed with the aim of describing the behaviour of the individual in the purchase process. The TRA assumes that the individual's behaviour in the decision-making process is under the supervision of their intentions, and that it generally stems from the intensity of their efforts to reach a specific decision. In accordance with this theory, individuals behave rationally and according to motivation in the decision-making process, and are ultimately able to reasonably choose between different options. The TPB, as an extension of the TRA, also includes unintended behaviours. In addition to the control of intentions, we therefore also need to account for unintentional behaviour when examining the behaviour during the process of determination. For individuals, this means that they may be able to have greater control over one behaviour than another.

The left side of the model comprises three concepts. These are behavioural beliefs (which include beliefs in the consequences of a specific behaviour), normative beliefs (beliefs in the normative expectations of other persons), and control beliefs (belief in the existence of factors that may facilitate or impede the process of behaviour).

Additionally, the TPB includes three conceptual intention determinants, namely attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control. The attitudes in this model include negative and positive attitudes toward the implementation of an intention. Social norms and all other societal pressures belong under the subjective norms. These arise from normative beliefs and motivation. Perceived

behaviour control represents the individual's perception of their ability to perform a given behaviour. Perceived behaviour control is more pronounced when the individual is presented with more sources and thus more options.

Ajzen and Driver (1991) also applied the TPB model to the field of tourism, more specifically to the spare time activities of the individuals. With a sample of 146 undergraduate students, they carried out a study, specifically in order to analyse the relationships between behavioural, normative and control beliefs on the one hand, and participation in five leisurely recreational activities (activities on the beach, running, climbing, cycling and sailing/rowing) on the other. The study showed that the behavioural, normative, and control beliefs constitute the foundations for views, subjective norms and perceived behaviour control. Correlations between individual beliefs and activity have indeed proved to be weak, but in most cases statistically significant. An analysis of the responses showed that respondents participate in recreational activities, especially when they expect certain benefits from being supported by friends and family. At the same time, respondents believe that they possess enough resources to actively participate in activities.

Han and Kim (2010) upgraded the TPB model and applied it to a tourist lodging service, specifically examining the purchase intent of guests in "green" hotels. According to the authors, adding individual dimensions to the TPB model is congruent with what was written by Ajzen (1991), who says that the modifying and adding of other links to his model is certainly possible, especially if it turns out that the modified model carries a better explanation. In their study, Han and Kim (2010) analyse the results by using all three models mentioned so far (TRA, TPB and their extended TPB) and prove that, for the purposes of their study, the extended model is the most appropriate. The inclusion of additional dimensions and new connections statistically increases the guests' intention to visit a "green" hotel.

Tsai (2010) focused on individual tourists in his study. He used a slightly modified TPB model. For readers who would like to test the TPB model themselves and perhaps explore the planned behaviour of consumers in tourism, let us add that this paper presents variables that can be used in the exploration of planned behaviour.

2.3 The self-congruity theory

Boksberger et al. (2011) focus in their study on the question of what extent it is possible to transfer the theory of self-congruence to the field of tourism (here, the brand is the tourist destination itself). Their study focuses on three research questions:

- RQ1: To what extent is the self-congruity theory applicable in destination selection?
- RQ2: Do some individuals always choose destinations that are congruent with their self-concept, while others do not?
- RQ3: Do the individuals exhibiting a high level of congruence between the self and the destination differ from those with a low level of congruence?

One of the conclusions they reach is that the theory of self-congruence does not apply in tourism. It has also emerged that the results are highly dependent on the accuracy and precision of the measurement. It is therefore recommended for researchers in this field to present their methods of measurement in addition to the results of their studies. The authors have also not been able to identify factors that would explain in which cases the theory of self-congruity holds true and in which it does not. As a result, they have failed to give any recommendations to destinations on how to appeal to particular segments of tourists.

There have also been empirical attempts to explain the behaviour of tourists using other theories, such as the Cognitive Dissonance Theory (e.g. Juvan and Dolničar, 2014), the Attribution Theory (e.g.

Kang, Steinb, Yoojoung & Lee, 2012), and the Self-Identity Theory (Desforges, 2000 Harnng, 2009). These are theories that follow the belief that internal factors (e.g. self-identity, beliefs, etc.) affect the behaviour of an individual in different contexts of life, and consequently may affect the behaviour in the context of tourism. Empirical support for all the theories in the field of tourist behaviour is extensive, but its reliability and validity may vary depending on the context of applied research and the methodological approach. Empirical evidence on tourist behaviour is primarily based on the planned behaviour or behaviour intention, which are psychological factors directly related to behaviour but do not represent the actual behaviour. This is the key weakness of many theories, namely the relationship between behavioural factors and a specific behaviour.

3 Conclusion

Consumers in the tourism sector are represented by a highly diverse (i.e. heterogeneous) groups of tourists, which are constantly changing in terms of personal features, personality traits and behavioural characteristics. Knowing the consumer is the only reliable source of information for successful long-term business in tourism. In light of this, the behaviour of tourists should be validly, reliably and constantly monitored.

Monitoring tourist behaviour is a key factor in the planning of tourist services, wherein we follow the argument that the analysis of the behaviour indicates the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities in the development, marketing and implementation of tourist products; and that the analysis of tourist behaviour indicates the behaviour of current and future tourists. Monitoring the behaviour of tourists illustrates the manifestations of behaviour, the individual behaviour factors, and the consequences or effects of tourist behaviour. In this context, it is necessary to make clear distinctions between the concepts of behaviour and to take this into account when designing a system for monitoring tourist behaviour.

Empirical research on tourist behaviour is varied, but it is becoming apparent that there is a low level of reliability and validity of the findings about tourist behaviour, which allows the conclusion that little is actually known about tourist behaviour, or rather that the confidence level of knowledge about tourist behaviour is very low.

Tourist service providers and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of tourist services (e.g. organisations for strategic development and marketing in tourism) are faced with many challenges in providing reliable, valid and useful ways to monitor tourist behaviour. The process of monitoring tourist behaviour is time-consuming and financially demanding, which is why there are many adapted forms of monitoring tourist behaviour that result in information that is partially or completely useless for making business decisions. In other cases, providers or tourist organisations do not even address the monitoring of tourist behaviour themselves. Faulty or incomplete data does not provide a good basis for business decisions in the tourism sector, which may be the reason for the decline in tourist activities and the business performance of tourist activities. Increasing competition in the tourism industry shows that without adequate information about tourist behaviour today, a successful tourist destination will not have the basis for efficient decision-making tomorrow.

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