A study of Motivations Influencing in Youth Traveler Decision Behaviors: Focusing on College Student Market

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to apply a conceptualization of the travel motivations in relation to decision-making. Study of the relationships between motives and the decision-making process in regard to travel is popular topics within the context of tourism. Accordingly, the current study implemented an empirical approach to examine the underlying dimensions of motivations in tourists’ travel decisions. This study explored travel motivations at the final stages of the travel decision-making process so that scholars and tourism managers may recognize the importance of motives in decisions.

The class-room surveys were implemented based on instructors’ on-going classes. The survey instrument consisted of a five-page questionnaire asking respondents a number of questions regarding their travel motives and intention to take a vacation trip. A factor analysis was employed at the evaluation stages to identify the underlying travel motivational dimensions. As a subsequent statistical tool, a logistic regression analysis was also employed for the purpose of predicting what variables influence the respondents’ intention to take a vacation trip.

The results of the hypotheses tested suggest that respondents perceived specific motivational dimensions in their travel decision-making process. It can be concluded from the results of this study that respondents perceived specific types of travel motives in their final travel decisions.

Keywords: Travel motivation, Travel intention, Decision making, Travel behavior

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I. Introduction

Tourism research has been confined to the boundary of families, elderly and retired groups, and working adults without making the distinction between various segments of the travel market. Despite the substantial growth of youth travelers in tourism and the significant economic impacts of this segment on the tourism market, however, research has not paid attention to this portion of the potential market, especially with respect to its patterns, travel behavior, travel motivations, or decision-making process. Traditionally, youth travelers tend to be limited in many ways unlike other group of travelers such as elderly travelers. One possibility behind this reasoning is that these are groups of people constrained by financial burdens, the other is that the level of contribution to economic impact is not significant.

It is suggested that an interest in youth traveler motives might provide an overview of the principal travel decision behaviors. Travel motives may explain tourists’ initial decision of whether or not to take a vacation trip and further contribute to explaining tourists’ behavior. Within the context of tourism, motivations (e.g., personal needs, wants, and goals within individuals’ minds and bodies) were described as internal psychological factors (Fodness, 1994). It is noted that individuals’ tension or anxiety tends to lead to actions that release the latter which, in turn, satisfy their needs and wants. Uysal and Hagan (1990) defined motives as internal forces in accordance with external goals and incentives that direct human behaviors. Similarly, Iso-Ahola (1982) noted that motives are an individual’s internal factors that direct his/her behavior patterns. Thus, travel motivation is considered as a psychological factor in understanding why people intend to take a pleasure vacation trip. Researchers have attempted to identify the underlying dimensions of motives that typically explain the reasons for travel. In the literature review of tourism motivations, a common theme suggests that motives for travel are explained by internal factors that lead to the desire to take a trip, whereas external factors draw people to the tourism destination (Hudman & Hawkins, 1989; Fodness, 1994; Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002).

The review of literature pertaining to this study illustrates that travel and tourism research has investigated motives associated with travel decisions. However, tourism researchers have failed to identify the specific types of motivational attributes while considering travel destinations that affect tourists’ determination in the travel decisions. The review of present literature reveals a lack of empirical evidence on the effects of travel motives influencing on youth travelers’ choice of tourism destinations. In order to bridge this discrepancy, this study was undertaken to identify the specific types of travel