2 Tourism Motivation

Introduction

Tourists are motivated to be involved in tourism for a variety of reasons. An obvious motivation is to have an enjoyable experience, but there are many different ways to achieve this. Some people will be happy to lay in the sun on a beach and do very little, however, others may want to be very active and spend time climbing a mountain. Getting away from the 'normal' environment of home or work, in other words, following the dictum, 'a change is as good as a rest' can be another reason for being involved in tourism. In reality, it is often a combination of factors that leads people to travel, although some of these factors may be more important than others. In the first part of this chapter, tourism motivation is discussed; the second section is concerned with how motivation can be converted into demand.

Key perspectives

In any tourism journey, there is likely to be at least one factor, and quite possibly a number of reasons which, when combined, can be considered as the motivational factors for the trip. These can be characterized as *push* and *pull* factors. The *push* factors are a number of perceived negative aspects about the location in which the potential tourist currently finds himself or herself and which will contribute to a desire to leave this place. The *pull* factors are perceived positive factors of a potential or real destination. The nature, extent and significance of particular push and pull factors will vary according to the particular tourism context.

The use of the terms *push* and *pull* is linked closely with the psychological model of tourism motivation developed by Iso-Aloha (1980), who was one of the first researchers to investigate tourism motivation in depth and detail. The two dimensions in the model can be summarized as *seeking* motives and *escaping* motives (Pearce, 1993). In Iso-Aloha's model, individuals seek personal and interpersonal rewards, which they hope to find in the place that is exerting the pull, and at the same time wish to escape personal and interpersonal environments, or what can be considered as the push aspect of the current location of the potential tourist.

The main criticism of Iso-Aloha's model is that with only two dimensions, it is somewhat limited. Having only the concepts of push and pull may oversimplify a complex process. However, investigating motivations in an attempt to understand the behaviour of tourists has always been important in tourism research (Ryan, 1997). Understanding what motivates tourists can help with their categorisation, as well as provide a better understanding of their impacts, which in turn can help with planning and management. Knowing the motivations can also help link the desires of tourists with where they wish to travel to and the activities in which they want to engage, which is important for tourists themselves and the tourism industry.

Tourist behaviour can be influenced by a number of demographic factors, including gender, age and ethnicity, but also cultural conditioning, social influences, perception and education can be very significant (Mason, 2020). However, as Crompton and McKay (1997) indicated motives generally precede the decision-making process that leads to particular types of behaviour.

Psychological and sociological theories

The related fields of psychology and sociology have provided the foundations for many researchers to develop significant theories on motivation. For example, in the field of cognitive psychology, motives are viewed as largely a function of what will happen when humans behave in a particular way, or putting this more formally, the expected consequences of future human behaviour (Dunn-Ross and Iso-Aloha, 1991). In this sense, motives can be considered as internal factors that have initially aroused a person, and following on from this internal reaction, these factors then direct the individual's behaviour (Iso-Aloha, 1980). In summary, it is possible to suggest that the key components of a general psychological model of motivation are:

  i) *needs* and *motives*,
  ii) *behaviour* or *activity*,
  iii) *goals* or *satisfactions* and
  iv) *feedback* (Harrill and Potts, 2002).

The link between these concepts are as follows: *motives* (or needs) drive behaviour, this behaviour has certain *goals*, the overarching one of which is to achieve *satisfaction*.

The concept of feedback relates to whether satisfaction has been achieved, or not, in the particular context. Mannell and Kleber (1997: 190) indicated the conceptual relationships very well, when they stated:

*People who have a strong need or desire to be with others (*motive*) may attempt to engage in leisure activities, such as going to bars and drinking, that allow them to increase their interactions with other people (*behaviour*) in hopes of developing more friendships (*goal and satisfaction*).*