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Why Do People Travel?

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Describe the strengths and weaknesses of Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Analyse Dann's push-pull model
- Apply Crompton's motives
- Critique Iso-Ahola's optimal arousal model
- Apply Pearce's evolving travel career ladder/pattern.

Introduction

Understanding why people travel for pleasure has been the focus of tourism research since the earliest days of tourism academia. Iso-Ahola (1983:50) states *"while many questions about recreational travel remain to be raised and answered, perhaps the most fundamental of them all are the ones that deal with motivation."* As Song and Bae (2018) note in their review of the literature, motivation influences destination choice, perceived benefits, satisfaction and on-site experiences.

A number of increasingly sophisticated models has been developed over the years that has attempted to develop a comprehensive theory of tourist motives. Initially models were adapted from consumer behaviour literature. Recently, though, tourism specific theories have been developed. The task has been challenging for the underlying reasons to travel are covert in that they reflect individual's private needs and wants (Pearce, 2005). Many individuals have difficulty articulating the reasons why they travel (Crompton, 1979), potentially leading to method and response bias if the reasons are posited in a closed ended questionnaire. As a result, many of the earliest attempts to examine the issue conflated motives with activities pursued and trip purpose (see Lundberg 1971), while other popular

models tended to identify unmet needs as motives, even though they are different (Tasci & Ko, 2017).

Another challenge with trying to identify motives is that different disciplines adopt different approaches to explore this concept. Jamal and Lee (2003) argue, for example, that social psychology and sociology represent the two major discipline areas that have influenced this area of research. Sub-disciplines within each host discipline, in turn direct studies. As a result, the study of motives is typical of Smith et al.'s (2013) type two theory where many legitimate, but competing models and/or theories exist. For example, Dann (1981), Page (2019) and Jamal and Lee (2003) identify a range of approaches that have been adopted over the years, including:

- Travel as a response to what is lacking yet desired;
- Destination pull in response to motivational push;
- Needs based approaches where pleasure travel is a means to satisfy unmet needs;
- Intrinsic motivations as reflected by a desire to obtain some reward for travelling;
- Values based approaches;
- Disequilibrium and the need for a break;
- Motivation as fantasy and a liminal break;
- Expectancy based approaches which look at achieving outcomes as a prime motivation;
- Quest for authenticity and a search for one's centre;
- Motivation as a trip purpose, etc.

An additional challenge in developing motivation theory was highlighted by Pearce (2011:43) who stated

"The criteria for a sound motivational framework highlight some of the unique attributes of tourism ... its episodic, dynamic, relationship-dependent, future-oriented and varied character ... Good motivation theory [thus] needs to be multi-motive, dynamic, measurable and relatively easy to communicate. In addition, it is most essential that the approach functions as an organiser and synthesizer of existing information, with a desirable characteristic that it has a future-oriented or predictive capacity."

This chapter explores the evolving literature on motives from Maslow through to the Travel Career Pattern proposed by Pearce and his colleagues.

Before beginning though, it is important to define terms. Dann (1981) explains that etymologically motivation is derived from the Latin word *'movere'* to move. Pearce (2005:54) defines motives as the forces that drive travel behaviour. They can be biological and socio-cultural. Iso-Ahola (1982:257) defines them as internal