

TRIP EXPERIENCES AND TOURISTS' MOTIVATION

Joseph S. Chen, Ph.D., CHA

Assistant Professor, Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 351 Wallace Hall, Blacksburg, VA 24060

Alan R. Graefe, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, School of Hotel, Restaurant and Recreation Management, The Pennsylvania State University, 201 Mateer Building, University Park, PA 16802

Deborah L. Kerstetter, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor, School of Hotel, Restaurant and Recreation Management, The Pennsylvania State University, 201 Mateer Building, University Park, PA 16802

Abstract: Little evidence exists to support the proposition that travel experiences may affect tourists' motivations. This study found that there was a significant difference in travel motivation between tourists who had an experience visiting other routes similar to the route they currently visited and tourists who did not have this experience; "interest in the site" represented the largest difference in the reason for visiting.

Introduction

In tourism study, many scholars studying the effect of previous trip experience on choice behavior have found that past trip experience may impact an individual's choice decisions (Kando and Summers, 1971; Schreyer, Lime and Williams, 1984; Mazursky, 1989). Schreyer et al. (1984) developed the Experience Use History (EUH) theory that suggests previous participation in recreational activities may be utilized as an indicator of the amounts and types of information a person can draw on to make decisions with regards to leisure behavior. They further asserted that EUH may serve as an indicator of motivations for visiting. Beaulieu and Schreyer (1984) expressed the significance of users' experience on choice behavior more directly. They stated that one of the most important factors affecting choice behavior should be the amount and type of experience a person has with an activity. Due to the deficiency in the research on the impact of both types and amounts of experience toward tourist motivation, this study investigated the relationship between trip motivations and types and amounts of previous trip experience. It is hoped that this study will furnish scholars and industrial professionals with better insights about tourist behavior in the context of heritage travel and further assist them in service delivery and strategy development. Consequently,

a research question - "Are there any differences in the number of trips and types of experience to historic sites among the tourists who had different reasons for visiting the heritage attraction?" was developed.

Methods

This study used data derived from a visitor survey conducted for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission (SPHPC) concerning industrial heritage tourism in southwestern Pennsylvania. Samples were collected through personal interviews and follow-up mail surveys from May 27 to October 15, 1995. This period was chosen because it is the major travel season in southwestern Pennsylvania. This seasonal demand for travel has been observed by Weiner (1980) who revealed that diversity of programming lends itself to deluxe, moderate or modestly priced tourism and supports the major May to October travel season. The survey sites are located along a designated route - the Path of Progress- in southwestern Pennsylvania. The total number of on-site interviews was 1778. After eliminating local visitors from the sample, this study included 1320 visitors for the data analyses.

Three variables representing tourist motivation, number of travel experiences and type of travel experiences were developed. In regard to the data analysis of the differences in the number of trips among tourists with different reasons to visit the heritage destination, one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. The variable concerning tourist motivation was derived from an open-ended question asking "what influenced you to visit the site" in the on-site questionnaire. The dependent variable was, "What is the number of total trips to historic sites you made within the last 12 months?" This dependent variable was a continuous variable which ranged from 0 to 98. As for the data analysis of the differences in the reason for visit among tourists with different types of experience, the test of homogeneity (chi square) was employed. The variable in connection with the type of experience was derived from a question asking "have you visited any other designated heritage routes similar to the Path of Progress in the past 12 months?"

Results

Results from the ANOVA (Table 1) indicated that there were no significant differences ($p=.15$) in the amounts of travel experience among tourists stating different reasons for their visit to the site. Regarding the test of the difference in reasons for visit between tourists who had experience visiting other routes similar to the route they currently visited and those who did not have this experience, the chi-square statistic (Table 2) showed that there was a significant difference ($p=.04$) based on previous experience at similar sites.

A two-way contingency table of reason for visit (Table 2) and visit to other designated routes was developed to further examine the relationship among each sub-population. Between the tourists who had visited another designated route similar to the site they currently visited,

and those who did not visit another designated route, "interest in the site" represented the largest difference (4.7%) in the reason for visit. About 41% of the tourists who had visited routes similar to the Path of Progress stated that having interest in the site influenced their visit to the site. However, only 36% of the tourists who had not visited similar designated routes regarded interest in the site as the reason for visiting the site. "Having knowledge of the site" accounted for the second largest difference (4.5%) in the reason for visit. About 9% of the tourists who had not visited other designated routes stated "having knowledge of the site" influenced their visit to the site. Only 4.3% of the tourists who had visited other designated routes stated having knowledge of the site influenced their visit to the site.

Table 1. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Trips to Historical Sites among Tourists Having Different Reasons for Visiting

Total Trips	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between Groups	189.75	5	37.95	1.59	.15
Within Groups	15310	645	23.74		
Total	15500	650			

Table 2. Crosstabulation of Reasons for Visits between Tourists Who Visited Other Routes and Those Who Had Not

Reason for Visit	Visited Other Routes		%
	Yes	No	
Interest in Site	36.4	41.1	37.5
Families and friends	22.7	21.4	22.4
Promotional Information	10.3	13.9	11.2
Recreation	12.1	8.9	11.4
Been Here Before	9.7	10.4	9.8
Having Knowledge	8.8	4.3	7.7
Total	100	100	100

Pearson Chi-Square (X^2) = 11.484 d.f. = 5 P = .04

Conclusion

The evidence suggests that previous trip experience had an impact on tourists' motivation for visiting a site only if tourists had visited other sites similar to the site they currently visited, while the number of previous trip experiences did not affect tourists' motivation for visiting. The study findings reported here were consistent with the research conducted by Schreyer et al. (1984) showing that the type of past experience affects tourists' travel behavior. For future research, tourism scholars may further explore the impact of previous trip experiences on other behavioral issues such as travel preferences, trip satisfaction and decision-making that promise to refine behavioral theories in the context of pleasure travel.

References

- Beaulieu, J. T., & Schreyer, R. (1984). Choice of wilderness environments. In Stankey, G. H. & McCool S. F., (Ed.), Proceedings-Symposium on recreation choice behavior (pp. 38-45). Ogden, UT: USDA Intermountain Research Station.
- Kando, T., & Summers, W. C. (1971). The impacts of work on leisure: toward a paradigm and research strategy. Pacific Sociological Review, 14, 310-328.
- Mazursky, D. (1989). Past experience and future tourism decision. Annals of Tourism Research, 15(3), 333-345.
- Schreyer, R., Lime, D. W., & Williams, D. R. (1984). Characterizing the influence of past experience on recreation behavior. Journal of Leisure Research, 16(1), 35-50.