

Travel Motivations of Tourists to Selected Marine Destinations

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is well known for its favourable climate, wildlife and golden beaches. Adding to this, its long summers make its coastline (over 3500km) even more attractive to tourists around the world, and so are transforming the South African coast into a major marine tourism attraction. Along this lengthy coastline lie numerous marine destinations attracting thousands of tourists. These destinations offer various activities such as scuba diving, snorkelling, swimming, world class surfing and whale watching to tourists. When trying to capitalise on these assets, marketers clearly state that it is necessary to understand the market that uses them and the reasons people travel. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to determine the travel motives of tourists to selected marine destinations.

Five surveys were conducted at marine resorts by means of a structured questionnaire. Two hundred and two (202) questionnaires were completed at Hartenbos, 210 at Jeffrey's Bay, 333 at Margate, 237 at Amanzimtoti and 153 at Plettenberg Bay. The statistical analysis entailed descriptive statistics and a factor analysis of the five surveys. The results revealed similarity regarding escape and relaxation as travel motives when compared to other research. However, time usage and personal attachment were unique motives identified by this study.

A combination of psychological motives and of more tangible aspects should be used in tourism marketing strategies in order to attract a higher number of visitors to marine destinations. These results will, therefore, assist marketers and product developers of marine destinations, particularly with the marine tourism product being very similar. Copyright © 2010 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism comprises the world's largest industry, and beaches (marine tourism) are considered as one of the major attractions of this industry (Phillips and House, 2009). In fact, Eagles and McCool (2002) state that the growth rate of marine tourism has exceeded that of most other forms of tourism. Asafu-Adjaye and Tapsuwan (2008) found that marine tourism is making a significant contribution to the global economy. Basiron (1997) and Orams (1999) define marine tourism as 'the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside their normal environment and activities within a marine setting'. In South Africa, marine tourism includes such aspects such as ocean and coastal water sports, hotels and restaurants, beach resorts, recreation, fishing boat operators, cruise ships and charter yacht companies. These activities and products can be found along South Africa's coast line of more

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without an understanding of the consumers' (tourists') travel motivations. In this case, what motivates tourists to travel to marine destinations?

Exploring travel motivations is therefore critical in effective market segmentation and it is an important part of any tourism marketing strategy (Slabbert, 2002). Further, Saayman and Van der Merwe (2007) state that different tourist attractions or destinations lead to different motives and that travel motives in respect of one destination might not be applicable to another.

The aim of this paper is to determine the travel motives of tourists to marine destinations situated on the Indian Coast Line of South Africa. In order to achieve this, the paper will be structured as follows: first, a review of relevant literature will be discussed, followed by the research method chosen and the results of the study. The implications of this study will culminate in the conclusions and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Travel motivation refers to a set of needs that cause a person to participate in a tourist activity (Swanson and Horridge, 2006). Geen *et al.* (1984; cited in Chen *et al.*, 2008) define travel motivations as the operation of inferred intrapersonal processes that direct, activate and maintain behaviour. Motivation is referred to by Pearce (1982), cited in Yoon and Uysal (2005), as psychological/biological needs and wants, including integral forces that stimulate, direct and amalgamate a tourist's behaviour and activity. Thus, travel motivation refers to the reasons tourists decide to engage in something, the time they are willing to expend to sustain the activity and how intensely they are going to pursue it (Mill and Morison, 1985; Dörnyei, 1994). Motivation also reflects numerous sets of needs that will subsequently affect individuals' choices in various ways. The fact that individuals do differ impacts on tourists travel motivations and subsequently will affect individual choice in various ways (Chen *et al.*, 2008). Park *et al.* (2008) state that a desire to meet these needs for relaxation triggers a decision to engage in certain behaviour to meet these needs. Marketers in the tourism industry

stimulate these individual (tourist) needs by marketing tourism products that meet those needs.

By studying travel motivations, the fundamental starting point in understanding the psychology of tourist travel behaviour is brought to the light (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2003). An in-depth literature review was conducted on travel motivation and revealed that there is a range of travel motives (see Table 1). For the purpose of this research, travel motivations were categorized according to different tourism offerings/products, that is, leisure travel, events and festivals, nature and parks, marine and shopping (Table 1).

Table 1 clearly indicates that some travel motivations occur regularly, for example, those of relaxation, socialization, novelty, family togetherness and escape. These are somewhat independent of the destinations, while others are more destination/product related (learn about nature, photography, climate, culture and festival attributes).

When focussing on travel motivations of marine destinations, the following became apparent: Molera and Abaladejo (2007) identified five marine travel motives to Murcia (Spain) situated along the Mediterranean Sea, those of nature and peacefulness, physical and cultural activities, family, trip features and rural life. Saayman *et al.* (2009) also identified five travel motivation factors to two marine destinations in South Africa, escape and relaxation, destination attractiveness, socialization, personal attachment, site attributes and trip features. Yoon and Uysal (2005) who researched travel motivations of tourists to Northern Cyprus (in the Mediterranean Sea) identified eight 'push' motivational factors (excitement, knowledge/education, relaxation, achievement, family togetherness, escape, safety/fun and away from home and seeing). They also identified nine pull motives (modern atmosphere and activities, wide space and activities, small size and reliable weather, natural; scenery, different culture, cleanness and shopping, night life and local cuisine, interesting town and village, and water activities). Research conducted by Kozak (2002) regarding travel motivations of tourists to Mallorca (Spain) revealed motives such as culture, pleasure seeking/fantasy, relaxation and physical.

Table 1. Summary of research on travel motivations

Researchers	Leisure travel motives
Crompton (1977); Loker and Perdue (1992); Fodness (1994); Oh <i>et al.</i> (1995); Jang and Wu (2006); Bansal and Eiselt (2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Escaping from the everyday environment</i> • Discovering and evaluating of oneself • Recreation and travelling • Status • Regression • Strengthening of family ties • Facilitating of social interaction • Excitement and escape • Adrenalin excitement seeking • Naturalist (those who enjoyed nature surroundings) • Knowledge seeking • Utilitarian function (punishment, minimization)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilitarian function (reward maximization) • Safety/comfort seekers • Culture/history seekers • <i>Novelty/adventure seekers</i> • Luxury seekers • Cleanliness and safety • Facilities, events and costs • Natural and historic sites • Ego-enhancement • Self-esteem • <i>Relaxation</i> • <i>Socialization</i>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Events and festival travel motives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excitement • External • <i>Socialising</i> • <i>Relaxation</i> • <i>Family togetherness</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social/leisure • Festival attributes • Event excitement/attraction • <i>Cultural exploration</i> • <i>Novelty</i> • <i>Escape</i>
	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel motives to marine destinations</p>
Kozak (2002); Yoon and Uysal (2005); Molera and Albaladejo (2007); Saayman <i>et al.</i> (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Pleasure seeking/fantasy • Relaxation • Physical attributes • Climate • Destination attractiveness • Adventure • Personal attachment • Site attributes • Personal • Education • Rural life
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sites and festivals • Excitement • Knowledge and learning experience • Achievement • <i>Family togetherness</i> • <i>Escape</i> • Safety • Fun • Nature and peacefulness • Trip features
	<p style="text-align: center;">Travel motives to nature areas and parks</p>
Tao <i>et al.</i> (2004); Kim <i>et al.</i> (2006); Saayman and Van der Merwe (2007); Saayman and Saayman (2008); Kruger and Saayman (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning about nature • Participation in recreation activities • Change from home or work • To be free • Seeing as much as possible • Being entertained • Being physically active • Experience new and different lifestyles • Feeling of mastery and achievement • <i>Socialization</i> • Attributes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Family togetherness/socialization</i> • Site attraction • Festival attraction • <i>Escape from routine</i> • Activities • Attractions • Nostalgia • <i>Novelty</i> • Photography
	<p style="text-align: center;">Shopping travel motives</p>
Swanson and Horridge (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desire for escape • Rest • <i>Relaxation</i> • Prestige • Health and fitness • <i>Adventure</i> • <i>Social interaction</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tangible resources (beaches, recreational activities and cultural attractions) • Traveller's perceptions and expectations (novelty, benefit expectations and marketing image).

Table 2. Survey summary

Marine destination	Date of the survey	Number of questionnaires distributed	Number of questionnaires included in data analyses
Hartenbos	2–6 April 2007	340	202
Jeffrey's Bay	4–8 April 2007	250	210
Plettenberg Bay	26 September–1 October 2008	200	153
Margate	28 March–3 April 2008	350	333
Amanzimtoti	21–28 July 2008	250	237

Kruger and Saayman (2010) found that travel motives of tourists visiting Tsitsikamma National Park, situated on the Indian Ocean in South Africa, were motives such as knowledge seeking, nature experience, photography, escape and relaxation, park attributes and nostalgia.

Taken together, the analysis of marine travel motives revealed different destinations and products have different travel motives. Saayman *et al.* (2009) agree and state that the travel motivations of tourists to two marine destinations in South Africa revealed that there are similarities as well as clear differences. This background formed the basis for this research that will assist product owners, government institutions and marketing agencies in developing better marketing strategies for marine tourism destinations situated along the Indian Ocean.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

Exploratory research was conducted by means of five surveys distributed at the beaches of Hartenbos, Plettenberg Bay, Jeffrey's Bay, Margate and Amanzimtoti. The questionnaire was developed by means of a comprehensive literature review and was based on the research by the authors listed in Table 1. The questionnaire had two parts; Section A focused on the demographic profile of visitors to these marine destinations, while Section B focused on the travel behaviour, with specific reference to travel motivation, of visitors.

Fieldworkers were selected to distribute the questionnaires during the day amongst tourists spending time on the various beaches. In all cases, sampling was based on the willingness and availability of tourists to complete the

questionnaires. Two surveys were undertaken in 2007 and three surveys in 2008. Table 2 provides a summary of the places of distribution, the number of questionnaires distributed and the number of questionnaires that were included in the final statistical analyses.

The data for all surveys were captured in Microsoft® Excel®, and the descriptive statistical analyses were performed by using the Statistical Programme for Social Sciences (SPSS 16.0™). A total of 1135 questionnaires was used in the final statistical analyses. The statistical analyses included both descriptive analyses and a factor analysis. This latter is explained in more detail in the section that deals with the results.

RESULTS

The results comprise two sections — first, a demographic profile of visitors to the marine destinations, and second, motives for visiting marine destinations based on a factor analysis.

Demographic profile and travel characteristics of tourists

Descriptive analysis (Table 3) indicates that a higher percentage of females participated in the survey than males. The average age of visitors to marine destinations is 38 year of age. Marine destinations are traditionally considered family destinations, and these results support this notion. The results indicated that a large percentage of visitors are married, well educated and Afrikaans-speaking. Most tourists to marine destinations originate from Gauteng and the Free State provinces. Research by Petrosillo *et al.* (2007), who determined a market profile of tourists to marine resorts in

Table 3. Demographic characteristics

Attribute	Percentage: N = 1136
Gender	
Male	44
Female	56
Age	
<18	2
18–30	22
31–40	33
41–50	28
51–60	8
>60	5
Average age	38
Language	
Afrikaans	69
English	29
Other	2
Marital status	
Married	73
Not married	20
Other	7
Province of residence	
Western Cape	14
Eastern Cape	4
Northern Cape	2
Free State	22
Gauteng	33
Mpumalanga	6
Limpopo	5
KwaZulu-Natal	5
North West	18
Other	2
Education	
No school	2
Matric	38
Diploma/Degree	38
Post graduate	11
Professional	8
Other	3

Italy, supports the fact that marine tourists are well-qualified and fairly young. The demographic profile of visitors can lead marketers in determining where to locate the market.

The travel characteristics of tourists to marine destinations revealed that most tourists travel in groups of between four and five people (Table 4). Again, this emphasizes the family experience. The statistics showed that the average length of stay at marine destina-

tions is nine nights with an average spending of R6431.81 (US\$918.83).

Motives for visiting a marine destination

This section focuses on exploring the underlying patterns of the reported travel motivations by means of a factor analysis.

To determine the appropriateness of principal component analysis (data reduction

Table 4. Travel characteristics

Characteristic	Percentage N = 1136
Group size	
1-3	23
4-5	49
>5	28
Number of nights stayed:	
1-3	11
4-6	23
7-10	38
>10	28
Average expenditure per trip	R6 431.81

Table 5. Component correlation matrix for marine destinations

Correlation matrix	1	2	3	4
1	1.000	0.092	0.284	0.198
2	0.92	1.000	0.030	0.125
3	0.284	0.030	1.000	0.061
4	0.198	0.125	0.061	1.000

procedure) for the collected data, a correlation matrix for the motivational data, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and the Bartlett test of sphericity were examined. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy aims to examine whether the strength of the relationship between variables is large enough to proceed to a factor analysis. The measure obtained was 0.810, which is highly acceptable. The Bartlett test was found to be significant ($p < 0.00001$) and therefore the data reduction by principal components would again be legitimate. A factor analysis with varimax rotation was performed on 16 motivational factors for all five destinations. The varimax rotation method was chosen due to there being very little correlation between factors (see Table 5). The factor analysis was performed to identify the underlying dimensions of the respondents' motivation to visit these marine destinations. An eigenvalue of 1.0 was used for factor extrac-

tion criterion and loadings of 0.30 were used for item inclusion. This resulted in four factors for travel motivations to marine destinations. The four factors for marine destinations accounted for 51.29% of the total variance.

The factors were labelled according to similar characteristics as follows: *Destination attractiveness* (Factor 1), *Escape and relaxation* (Factor 2), *Time utilization* (Factor 3) and *Personal attachment* (Factor 4). Eigenvalues for these factors ranged from 1.12 to 3.85. Cronbach's coefficients were also examined for each factor to check the reliability of the data, and to serve as a measure of internal consistency amongst the items. However, the Alpha values should be interpreted with caution where a limited number of items (statements) are loaded successfully onto the same factor. All the Cronbach Alpha values were above 0.4 (see Table 6). The mean values per factor were also calculated, and it is clear that respondents considered the usage of time as very to extremely

Table 6. Factor analysis of travel motives

Factor label	Factor 1: Destination attractiveness	Factor 2: Escape and relaxation	Factor 3: Time utilization	Factor 4: Personal attachment
Many activities for my children	0.750			
Great accommodation and facilities	0.644			
Safe holiday destination	0.639			
Various attractions in surrounding area	0.556			
Association with language and culture of destination	0.524			
Affordable	0.518			
Climate	0.455			
Distance of the destination	0.364			
To relax		0.824		
To get away from regular routine		0.821		
Family recreation / spend time with someone special		0.566		
Explore a new destination			0.767	
For events in the area			0.718	
Spend time with friends			0.548	
Grew up spending my holidays at the destination				0.778
I own a holiday home at the destination				0.773
Cronbach's alpha	0.722	0.545	0.713	0.511
Mean value	3.42	2.90	4.16	2.13

important (4.16) followed by destination attractiveness (3.42) as important to very important, and escape and relaxation (2.90) and personal attachment (2.13) as less important to important.

Based on the correlation matrix shown in Table 5, it is evident that these factors are all distinct factors measuring different components of visitor motives.

From the analysis of the results, the following findings can be reported:

First, in terms of studies conducted on travel motives in leisure, event, marine, nature and shopping tourism — relaxation and escape were the most common (see, for example, Crompton [1977]; Loker and Perdue [1992]; Schneider and Backman [1996]; Saayman and Van der Merwe [2007]; Swanson and Horridge [2006]). This study was no exception. The mean

value for Factor 2, however, was 2.90, which is low compared with the other factors, but reveals that escape and relaxation are still important motives in tourism, specifically marine tourism.

Second, the way tourists use their time was identified as the most important travel motive with a mean value of 4.16. The combination of exploring new destinations, attending events in the area and spending time with family and friends that when taken together, lead to the motive 'time utilization' are unique to this study and were not found in any other study conducted.

Third, destination attractiveness is the second most important motive with a mean value of 3.42 and included various aspects such as accommodation and facilities, safety, affordability, climate and so on. These have been

labelled by Swanson and Horridge (2006) as tangible resources. The literature review indicated similar motives such as climate (Bansal and Eiselt, 2004), facilities (Jang and Wu, 2006) and destination attributes (Kozak, 2002).

Fourth, this study identified personal attachment as a motive, which comprised two aspects — growing up with a specific destination as well as owning a holiday, or second, owning home at the destination. This motive has not been found in similar research, thereby adding a new motive.

Fifth, most of the motives identified by this research were similar to those found by research conducted in leisure travel, that include both psychological and attraction related motives (see Table 1). However, travel motives somewhat unique to nature based products included the learning experience (Bansal and Eiselt, 2004; Tao *et al.*, 2004; Yoon and Uysal, 2005), participation in activities (Saayman and van der Merwe, 2007; Saayman and Saayman, 2008) and attractions (Saayman and Van der Merwe, 2007; Molera and Albaladejo, 2007; Kim *et al.*, 2006). Socializing (Backman *et al.*, 1995; Schneider and Backman, 1996; Lee *et al.*, 2004) however seemed unique as a travel motive for events and shopping.

Last, as motives tend to be somewhat psychological in nature, this study highlighted the importance of those tangible aspects such as accommodation, activities and attractions, thereby supporting the push and pull theory (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979). Pull factors are external forces aroused by the object, product or destination (e.g. climate) that encourage tourists to visit a certain destination. Push factors are internal forces, psychological in nature (e.g. relaxation) creating the desire to travel. A combination of push and pull factors should therefore be used in marketing strategies to attract visitors.

IMPLICATIONS

Based on the results and findings of the research conducted at these marine destinations, the following implications can be identified:

The results give marketers and product developers clear indicators of issues that should be taken into consideration when developing marketing strategies and products.

An important indicator is the destination attractiveness for visitors. The latter includes aspects such as the safety of visitors, a variety of activities for children, quality accommodation and a variety of things to do. The activities could be either on or off the beach.

Further, the results also indicated that visitors wanted to explore new things, destinations and events, as well as spending time with family and friends. Therefore, in order to remain competitive, marine destinations will have to add new products and experiences to their existing product offerings. This could also imply the re-packaging of existing products and offerings, or the hosting of events, as this too seems to be an effective way to attract marine tourists.

Finally, it seems that, as all five marine destinations offer similar natural products (e.g. good swimming, surfing, fishing, sunbathing and beaches), the challenge lies with man-made products, specifically, how to remain competitive. This aspect of uniqueness is also paramount in the development of a positioning strategy that distinguishes one destination from another. When the results are compared with similar research, the sense is that the use of the tourists' time, and the variety of activities and attractions on offer to them, seem to be the most important results.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this research was to determine the travel motives of tourists to selected marine destinations. Results indicated four distinct travel motives, some of which confirm previous findings but additionally, identify the unique motives of personal attachment and of time utilization. Results also confirmed that motives are product or destination specific, which in turn implies that each destination has their own specific motivators. These motivators are useful in product development, as well as for developing marketing strategies. The results also indicated that marine tourists are seeking a variety of activities and things to do — much more than other types of tourism products.

One of the major problems experienced in this research was the inconsistent use of

descriptors of the motives, and that even common concepts such as relaxation and escape are used to describe different statements. Therefore, this aspect needs attention by researchers across the globe.

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