

MALAYSIAN TOURISTS' MOTIVATION TOWARDS OUTBOUND TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

The Malaysian outbound tourism market is recognized as one of emerging consumer demand based on the amount of expenditure reported. Despite this, research relating to the motivations for Malaysian outbound tourism, especially the push and pull factors are scarce. Therefore, it is necessary to understand why people travel and choose a specific international destination, and in line with this, this paper conceptually examines the influence of culture, demographic variables and tourists' motivations in destination selection.

Keywords: motivation, push factor, pull factor.

INTRODUCTION

The World Tourism Organization (WTO, 1995) defines tourism as “travelling for leisure, business and other purposes for not more than one year”. The definition of tourism has been split into different dimensions that include international tourism (sometimes referred to as outbound), and national tourism (sometimes referred to as domestic tourism). International tourism concerns the concept of outbound tourism which involves people moving out of their country of origin to a particular country. National tourism, on the other hand, involves the movement of people within their own borders for the purpose of pleasure or leisure. Meanwhile, inbound tourism involves tourism by non-resident visitors within the country of reference.

Despite the availability of many kinds of tourism activities in Malaysia, the question of why Malaysian tourists wish to go abroad can be asked. This is proven by the limited contribution of the domestic tourism sector based on the increasing desire for outbound tourism among Malaysian tourists recently. Lee et al. (2002) identified the various needs and motives that force travellers to seek out specific leisure activities and experiences. Therefore, understanding the motives of tourists is considered an important factor in developing the tourism sector of any country. According to Jefri (2001), understanding peoples' motives is

important in promoting tourism, since it provides a better explanation of the motives behind tourists' behaviour, and enables tourism planners to predict tourists' actions. In fact, there have been great efforts in the existing literature of tourism that deals with the motives and desires of tourists to suggest different motives and desires.

Likewise, Mansfeld (1992) proposed that the ways in which people set objectives for their choice of destination and how these objectives are then reflected in their choice of travel behaviour can be revealed through an analysis of the motivational stage. In addition, it is essential for tourism marketers to be able to measure the motives in operation regarding certain kinds of type of travel behaviour, including the destination choice and the activities to be pursued in the holiday destinations (Lee, *et al.*, 2002). Similarly, the study of motivations based on the concept of push (internal desire) and pull (destination attributes) factors has met with general acceptance in extant tourism research (Kim and Lee, 2002).

According to Yuan and McDonald (1990), travelling motives might be different for tourists from one country to another. There have been a number of studies in several countries which investigated the tourism motivations of outbound tourists using the push and pull theory (Cha *et al.*, 1995; Jamrozy and Uysal, 1994; Jang and Cai, 2002; Josiam *et al.*, 1999; Kozak, 2002; Pyo *et al.*, 1989; Smeaton *et al.*, 1998 and; Yuan and McDonald, 1990; Zhang and Terry, 1998; Abdulraheem Alghamdi, 2007), but researchers have paid scant attention to studying the motivations of Malaysian outbound tourists, whose expenditure is expanding year by year. Hence, this paper will assess the 'push' and 'pull' motivations (explicit and implicit) that drive tourists to go abroad and examine the relationship between culture and tourism motivations (explicit and implicit). Lastly, this study will also examine the influence of tourists' motives (explicit and implicit) on destination selection.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Moutinho (1987) classified motivation as a state of need and condition that exerts a "push" on the individual towards certain types of actions that are seen as likely to bring satisfaction. Moreover, Pizam (1979) defines tourism motivation as a set of needs which predisposes a person to participate in a tourist activity. Furthermore, tourist motivation can be defined as "the global integrating network of biological and cultural forces which gives value and direction to travel choices, behaviour and experience" (Pearce *et al.*, 1998, p215).

Moreover, enormous numbers of studies in the field of travel motivation have emerged in the last 30 years (Crompton, 1979), in which researchers have attempted to answer the question of why people travel. In many of these studies, researchers have tried to discover two forces associated with motivation namely push and pull forces. Push motives have been used to explain the desire

to go for tourism, while pull motives have been used to explain the selection of destination (Goossens, 2000). Push forces are associated with the decision as to whether or not to go and pull forces are associated with the decision as to where to go. Thus, these two decisions are being made at two separate points in time (Klenoski, 2002). Pull factors have to do with tangible attractions that are associated with the destination, while push factors are associated with intangibles such as the motives, needs and interests of the traveller (Kim and Chalip, 2004). Therefore, many researchers contend that the push and pull force approach to decision-making in travel offers the best way of explaining and predicting individuals' travel decisions (Kim and Chalip, 2004; Kim *et al.*, 2006).

Additionally, literature on the push and pull approach proposes that people are first of all pushed by internal desires or emotional factors such as the need for escape, relaxation, adventure, prestige, knowledge and so forth (Balogul and Uysal, 1996). Then, they are pulled by external or tangible factors such as natural and historical attractions, expenditure, sport and outdoor activities etc. (Balogul and Uysal, 1996). However, it should be noted that they actually inter-dependent, as individuals, be it consciously or unconsciously, base their travel decisions on both, and take them in a two-step process (Kim *et al.*, 2007). Push factors offer insights into tourists' internal stimulants to travel and are useful in explaining the desire to go on holiday in general. Crompton, (1979) argued that "Push factors refer to the specific forces in our lives that lead to the decision to take a vacation. Moreover, most push factors are origin-related and involve socio-psychological concerns and intrinsic desires such as the need for escape, relaxation, adventure, prestige, family and friend togetherness, sport, enjoying natural resources.

On the other hand, pull factors offer indications as to what external attributes attract tourists and make them desire to visit specific places (Klenoski, 2002). He then argued that: "Pull factors refer to those that lead an individual to select one destination over another once the decision to travel has been made." They often involve tangibles and other elements such as the availability of recreational facilities, historical values, marketing image etc. They emerge as a result of the attractiveness of the chosen area (Uysal and Hagan, 1993). After all, they were reflected in terms of the features, attractions, or attributes of the destination itself, such as historical attractions, natural environment and weather attraction, expenditure, low travel cost and so forth.

In reviewing the literature, it has been found that demographic factors significantly influence tourists' motives (Baloglu and Uysal, 1996). Additionally, Oh *et al.* (1995) argued that differences between tourists in terms of tourism motivations (push and pull factors) emerge due to differences in their demographic characteristics such as age, gender, marital status, income and education. Understanding the motives of tourists is therefore considered an important factor in developing the tourism sector of any country. According to Hanafiah (2007), understanding peoples' motives is important in promoting

tourism, since it provides a better explanation of the motives behind tourists' behaviour, and enables tourism planners to predict tourists' actions. In fact, there has been a great effort in the existing literature of tourism that deals with the motives and desires of tourists to suggest different motives and desires (Moutinho, 1987).

PUSH AND PULL FACTORS THEORY

Most of the discussions in the tourist motivation literature have tended to revolve around the theory of push and pull motivation (e.g. Crompton, 1979; Kim and Lee, 2002; Oh, Uysal, *et al.*, 1995; Yoon and Uysal, 2005). The theory assumes that people travel and choose their destinations according to different push and pull motivational variables. Basically, this is a two-step process involving push factors which motivate an individual to leave their home, and pull factors which draw an individual to travel to a specific place.

By using the correlation analysis, Kim *et al.*, (2003) examined the relationship between push and pull factors. The result indicated that the pull factors, 'key tourist resources' and 'information and convenience of facilities' both have significant positive correlations with all four of the push factors (family togetherness and study, appreciating natural resources and health, escaping from everyday routine, and adventure and building friendship). As mentioned above, most of these studies concentrated on positive and reciprocal relationships between the two categories of factors, using an **"integration model of explicit motives"**.

This model, as can be seen in Figure 1.1, suggests that tourists' push factors, such as novelty experiences (e.g. experiencing new and different lifestyles), escape (e.g. having a change from a busy job), knowledge seeking (e.g. going to places that one has not visited before), fun and excitement (e.g. finding thrills and excitement), rest and relaxation (e.g. just relaxing), and family and friend togetherness (e.g. visiting friend and relatives) are integrated with pull factors which include, for example, archaeological buildings and places, cleanliness and safety (e.g. personal safety, environmental qualities, purity of air, water, and soil), easy access and an economical deal (e.g. availability of pre-trip and in-country tourist information., the best deal available), outdoor activities (e.g. outdoor camping in the wilds, activities for the entire family), and a sunny and exotic atmosphere (e.g. exotic atmosphere, good weather).

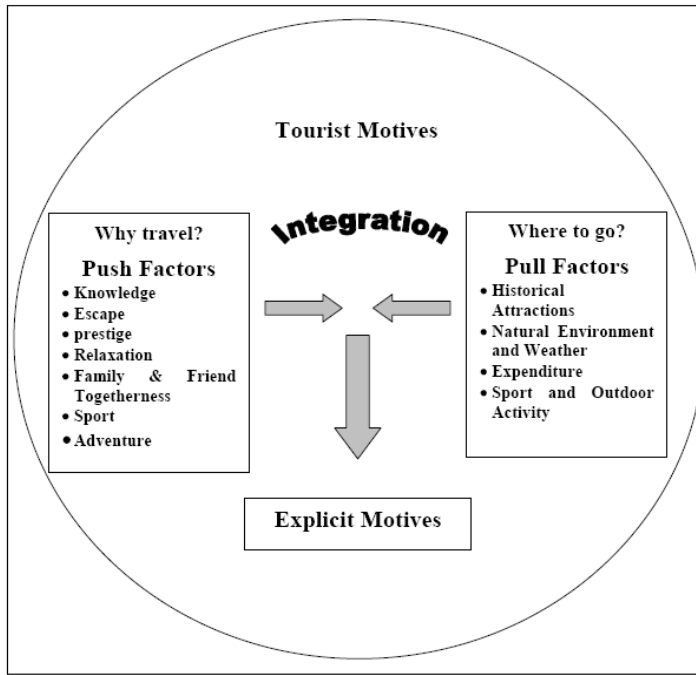


Figure 1.1: Integration Models of Explicit Motives

Above all, this “**integration model of explicit motives**” has been supported explicitly by most previous studies, especially in the Western context. According to Kelnosky (2002), he suggested that push and pull factors should not be viewed as being entirely independent of each other but rather as being fundamentally related. In a recent study, Kim and Chalip (2004, p.695) also argued that “*push and pull factors are thought to work together to determine travel intentions and destination choice*”. This integration was suggested to explain the motives for travel and for selecting specific destinations and services.

However, Klenosky (2002) argued that pull factors refer to those that lead an individual to select one destination over another once the decision to travel has been made. They often involve tangibles and other elements such as the availability of recreational facilities, historical values, marketing image etc. They emerge as a result of the attractiveness of the chosen area (Klenosky, 2002). Ideally, they are reflected in terms of the features, attractions, or attributes of the destination itself, such as historical attractions, natural environment and weather attraction, expenditure and low travel cost.

In relation to the above statement, Uysal and Jurowski (1994) found a correlation between the push and pull factors. They found that two of the pull factors (entertainment/resort and rural/inexpensive) could be explained by the push factor (escape). The results also suggest that rural/inexpensive areas may

have the potential to attract those motivated by variables in the heritage/culture factor grouping, which includes local crafts, festivals, events, theatre, and cultural activities. Similarly, Kim and Lees (2002) supported the findings of Uysal and Jurowski (1994) and argued that the relationship between the two groups of factors is often positive. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation between four push factors (family togetherness and study, appreciating natural resources and health, escaping from everyday routine, and adventure and building friendship) and three pull factors (various tourism resources, information, the convenience of facilities, and easy access to national parks) had been identified. The only exception was the correlation between the pull factor of “easy access to national parks” and the push factor of “family togetherness and study”.

Similarly, Bogari *et al.*, (2003), using correlation and regression analysis, found a significant positive relationship between push factors (cultural values, usefulness, knowledge, social and economic factors, family togetherness, interest, relaxation, and convenience of facilities) and pull factors (safety, activity, beach ports/activity, nature/outdoor, historical/cultural, religious, budget, leisure and upscale). Additionally, by using the correlation analysis, Kim *et al.*, (2003) examined the relationship between push and pull factors. The result indicated that the pull factors, ‘key tourist resources’ and ‘information and convenience of facilities’ both have significant positive correlations with all four of the push factors (family togetherness and study, appreciating natural resources and health, escaping from everyday routine, and adventure and building friendship).

As a result, it shows that most of these studies concentrated on positive and reciprocal relationships between the two categories of factors, using an integration model of explicit motives. This model, suggests that tourists’ push factors, such as novelty experience (e.g. experiencing new and different lifestyles), escape (e.g. having a change from a busy job), knowledge seeking (e.g. going to places that one has not visited before), fun and excitement (e.g. finding thrills and excitement), rest and relaxation (e.g. just relaxing), and family and friends togetherness (e.g. visiting friends and relatives) are integrated with pull factors which include, for example, archaeological buildings and places, cleanliness and safety (e.g. personal safety, environmental qualities, purity of air, water, and soil), easy access and an economical deal (e.g. availability of pre-trip and in-country tourist information., the best deal available), outdoor activities (e.g. outdoor camping in the wilds, activities for the entire family), and a sunny and exotic atmosphere (e.g. an exotic atmosphere, good weather).

TOURISTS’ MOTIVATIONS AND DESTINATION SELECTION

In order to improve income from tourism and to determine marketing segments, recently marketing planners have been interested in understanding why people choose particular destinations. Mansfeld (1992) suggested that an analysis of

the motivational stage can reveal the way in which people set goals for their destination choice and how these goals are then reflected in both their choice and travel behavior. As well as this, it can provide tour operators, tourism planners, and others tourist-related institutions with a better understanding of the real expectations, needs and goals of tourists. Such an understanding is essential to create travel products designed to meet these needs and expectations.

Mansfeld (1992) also argued that there is a strong link between travel motivations and destination choice. This was confirmed by Jang and Cai (2002) who studied travel motivations associated with British outbound pleasure travellers and, suggested that it is vital for destination marketers to establish a strong fit between their destination attributes and the motivations of their target markets through effective marketing and promotional programs. In addition, in terms of the role of push and pull factors in the destination choice of tourists, the tourism literature emphasizes the importance of both push and pull factors in shaping tourist motivations and hence in choosing vacation destinations (Crompton, 1979). According to him, travel motivations including push and pull factors have an influence on the decision to select a tourist's destination.

Yuan and McDonald (1990) examined travel motivation and destination choices, using the concept of push and pull factors. Five push factors were identified including escape, novelty, prestige, enhancement of family relationships, and relaxation/hobbies. Pull items included budget, culture and history, nature, ease of travel, cosmopolitan environment, facilities, and hunting. Differences found among the four countries were culturally defined. The authors concluded that, although individuals may travel for similar reasons, reasons for choosing particular destinations and the level of importance attached to each factor might differ.

CONCLUSION

Earlier research into travel motivations tended to concentrate on human needs and desires (push factors), but more recent researchers, beginning with Crompton (1979), have pointed to the association between these push factors and pull factors involving the attractions and amenities of a particular destination as influencing a tourist's choice of a destination. Push motives have been used to explain the desire to go on a vacation, while pull motivations have been used to explain the choice of destination. Moreover, the literature on the push and pull approach suggests that people are initially pushed by internal desires or emotional factors such as the need for escape, rest, relaxation, adventure, prestige, and social interaction.

After a review of the literature on research in tourism motivation, it was noted that most of the studies were based on a quantitative approach to identify tourism motivations. It can be identified from previous literature that various push factors, such as escape, prestige, sport, and adventure drive tourists from several

countries to travel overseas and they are pulled by various pull factors such as natural environment, weather and expenditure. The relative importance of such factors varies according to the nationality of tourists.

Therefore, there is a need to investigate the motives of Malaysian tourists visiting other countries despite heavy promotion by the government of Malaysia of inbound and domestic tourism. It is important to understand the pull and push factors that motivate Malaysian tourists to visit other countries rather than visiting domestically. Nevertheless, the above conjectures have yet to be empirically investigated.

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