

UNDERSTANDING TOURIST EXPERIENCES TRUE THE LENS OF FAMILY COMMUNICATION EN TOUR

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Abstract

Experiences are what tourists are seeking, consuming, and evaluating, and as processes and memorable events the essential basis for value propositions. Tourists' experiences have been studied by personal interviews, self-administered questionnaires, observations, travel diaries, narratives, and photograph sorting techniques, often with an explicit stated task - to report on experiences. There are less unobtrusive methods, such as, GPS tracking to monitor behavior, and laboratory experiment to measure emotions. These types of studies, in combination with those more traditional ones, appear to be promising, but are very expensive and therefore often practiced on small samples. To studies family communication en tour is here proposed as an alternative approach to get insight into tourist experiences. It is assumed that family members share information and communicate on peak experiences but also discuss more mundane aspects en tour. Thus, the aim of this study is to enhance our understanding of tourist experience influencing factors en tour by listening to family communication. This study benefits from a three-pronged research approach. A tentative theoretical model based on tourism and service marketing theories is aligned with findings from an exploratory qualitative study of 64 families. The seven tourist experience influencing dimensions explored; weather and nature, price and money issues, politics, society and culture, food and accommodations, activities and hobbies, and private issues, are decomposed and translated into question items for the succeeding quantitative study to be launched in May-June 2014.

Key words: Tourist experiences, family communication, three-pronged research approach