

Why we travel. And does it change? Tourists' motivation and tourists' motives in Germany

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Abstract

The paper discusses one of the basic preconditions and determinant of tourist behavior: travel motivation: Why do people spend an awful lot of money and their precious time plus physical and psychological efforts in order to have a few days outside their lovely home? Answers come from different perspectives, from academic scholars as well as from market research. The complexity of the motivation for travelling does not make obtaining reliable knowledge about it easy. A proven but also limited strategy is asking people directly about their motives. Every year, e.g., the "Reiseanalyse" survey [www.reiseanalyse.de] collects data about aspects which are particularly important for the persons surveyed when they are on holiday. We will focus on the possible contribution of quantitative consumer surveys to a deeper understanding of the driving forces in tourism. The empirical source is found in 45 years of the "Reiseanalyse" survey.

Some insights:

- In combination with other factors, the holiday motives control on the one hand both the decision to take a holiday and to do a trip (desire to travel) and on the other the choice of destination, the way the holiday is organized, and what to do there.
- There is not a single, but many motives for a person's holiday travel behavior, which are of varying importance and may also be conflicting with one another. During a specific trip, it will usually be possible to fulfil only some of the motives. For the tourists, this means that they not only must find a product that matches their motives; they also must select those of their motives that should be satisfied now.
- The more than four decades time series of data on motives in the RA indicate a stable tourism demand in terms of quantity as well as quality. These customers can be relied upon. Holiday travel is at the top of their consumption priorities.
- Over the past four decades, the development of the holiday motives and expectations shows that customers have become more demanding. The basic motives for holiday travel are not going to change in the next ten years, either. People want relaxation, no stress, to be able to do what they like, and get away from their everyday life while at the same time finding fresh strength to master it. According to this data, there can be no question of a fundamental change of holiday values.
- It is likely that further differentiation will take place regarding the expectations of how these basic motives are to be realized on the specific holiday trip. Here, too, the great travel experience results in knowledgeable customers, which in turn leads to growing and more detailed expectations concerning their holiday.
- A characteristic of the future demand is that customers will be exacting and flexible in the way they act, based on a wide range of holiday interests and motives (multi-optionality).
- Tourists travel to live up their holiday motivation. "Hot topics" like mobile technology, sharing economy, sustainability, safety etc. are important as "facilitators". However, they are not key factors in maintaining demand for the future.

Keywords: Tourist motivation, motives, tourism demand; holiday travel behavior, Germany