

Factors impacting Belarussian tourists while choosing Latvia as an outbound tourism destination

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Abstract

Push and pull forces act separately and people travel because they are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decisions. Yoon and Uysal (2005) added that the push motivations are emotional and internal aspects of the individual which lead to travel decisions. Pull factors have become significant and require consideration in regards to sustainably attracting new and repeat tourists.

Introduction

An understanding the factors that influence peoples' choices of their holiday destinations can play a key role in planning activities more effectively by the tourism authority. According to Adair (1990), motivation covers all reasons which influences the way an individual acts. Consequently, without a tourist's motivation to travel there would be no travel industry. However, every destination is becoming more and more competitive and each individual has the opportunity and freedom to choose from several destinations (Crompton, 1992). Destination marketers and planners are making considerable efforts to study and understand the tourism process and are trying to gain insight into why people engage themselves in travelling to a particular place. This study explores the motivation of long-haul, leisure and pleasure travellers from various countries supplying tourists to Mauritius. Although motivation is only one of variable explaining tourist behavior, it is considered to be one of the most elementary one because of its impelling and compelling force Iso-Aloha, (1982).

The motivation factor

Mill and Morrison (1998) argue that motivation arises when an individual wants to satisfy a need. According to Moutinho, (2000) motivation is a situation which drives an individual towards an action that is likely to bring satisfaction. In psychology and sociology, the concepts of motivation are directed towards emotional and cognitive aspects or internal and external motives. Internal motives are associated with drives, feelings and instincts whereas external motives involve mental representations such as beliefs or knowledge (Uysal and Yoon 2005). These factors all exert pressures on the human mind which influence the individual to carry out an activity to satisfy a need.

Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory can be seen in a hierarchy of five categories. The most basic category of needs is that of physiological consisting of items such as hunger, thirst and sleep. Ascending stepwise the other needs are safety, social belongingness and love, esteem, and self actualization. Human needs normally follow this order while satisfying the lower level need first and then moving to a higher order need. However, there may exist cases where higher level needs prevail even though lower level needs have not been met. Despite these criticisms Maslow's theory is often used explain the hierarchy of human needs.(Cosenza & Davis,1981)

Motivation to travel

Motivation for travel is considered as a key factor in explaining tourist behaviour (Mansfield, 1992). Motivation being an important factor influencing an individual into action, it would be

useful to understand how a particular decision is arrived at. Examples of definitions relating to travel motivations are:

- The set of needs and attitudes which predispose a potential tourist to act in a specific goaldirected way” (Pizam et al., 1979).
- “People’s motivations to travel begin when they become aware of certain needs and perceive that certain destinations may have the ability to serve those needs” (Lubbe, 1998).
- Lundberg (1976) points out that what travellers call their motivations "maybe only reflections of deeper needs, needs which he himself does not understand, may not be aware of, or may not wish to articulate."

In literature related to motivation, it has been acknowledged that certain forces drive an individual to act. Dann (1977) coined these forces as push and pull forces leading people to travel. The push forces are related to the desire to travel of the tourist while pull forces are associated with the qualities of the destination which tend to attract the tourist.

Push factors

According to Uysal and Hagnan (1993), push and pull forces act separately and people travel because they are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decisions. Yoon and Uysal (2005) added that the push motivations are emotional and internal aspects of the individual which lead to travel decisions. Push motivations can to be socio-psychological influences onto leisure travellers about their choice of a destination. Dann (1977) suggested two factors as push travel motives: anomie and ego-enhancement. Anomie means the desire to transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life, where the tourist simply wishes to run away from routine. On the other hand egoenhancement originates from the need of recognition, which is gained through the status conferred by travel (Fodness, 1994). Crompton (1992) developed a conceptual framework based on Dann’s (1977) study that would integrate push motivations of travellers.

The influencing factors he found were: the desire for escape from a perceived mundane environment, rest and relaxation, prestige, regression, health and fitness, adventure and social interaction, enhancement of kinship relationships, exploration and evaluation of self, and excitement. Yuan and McDonald (1990) identified five push factors from 29 motivational items in their study throughout four countries. The push dimensions were escape, novelty, enhancement of kinship relationships, prestige, and relaxation/hobbies. The findings showed that the most important factors in pushing the individual to travel for an overseas holiday were firstly novelty and followed by escape.

Pull factors

What makes an individual travel is not only the psychological push factors. Swarbrooke and Horner emphasized the importance of range of motivators related to consumers in the tourism industry, which could be categorized into those motivating a person to take a holiday and those motivating a person to take a particular holiday to a specific destination. It is essential for tourism marketers to investigate not only why individuals travel and what they intend to do on a holiday in relation with their internal drive but also on their motives related to tourist destinations (A. Plangmarn, 2012).

Pull factors have become significant and require consideration in regards to sustainably attracting new and repeat tourists. It is particular in this era in which there are both higher competitiveness in the industry itself, and various internal and external constraints that may restrict

individuals' affordability and demands of traveling. Pull factor characteristics refer to "place" as a tourism product that defines a destination.

Pull factors can be classified into tangible and intangible cues of a specific destination that attract individuals to realize their needs of a particular travel experiences (A. Plangmarn, 2012). Attractiveness, activities and appreciation offered by tourist destinations are part of the 10 As framework suggested by Morrison (2013) as important attributes that enhance tourists' satisfactory experiences in traveling in a destination. Attractiveness attribute of a destination refers to the number and geographic scope of appeal of the destination's attractions. Activities attribute present the extent of the array of activities available to tourists within the destination. The feeling of the levels of welcome and hospitality contribute to the appreciation attribute

Uysal et al (1993) classified tourist destination experience offered to tourists into 2 categories. The first was called service infrastructure category consisting of transportation and travel services, accommodation services, food and beverage services, shopping services and recreation and attraction services. The second was destination environment category that focused more on physical and situational conditions that consisted of natural environment, political and legal factors, economic factors, social factors, cultural factors and technological factors. These categories explained the pull factors of a tourist destination that affect tourists' perceived experience towards particular destination as well as decision making to choose that destination for their holiday.

Research methodology

Tourism researchers have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of tools and techniques from various disciplines to study tourism (Smith, 1995). To select methods appropriate for studying tourism requires the acknowledgment that there is a tradeoff between the various methods, and the need to select the option that can be most suitably applied (Walle, 1997). Research into how a destination develops and why it changes in the way it does requires a multi-method approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative elements. This multi-method technique has been selected as the appropriate approach to address the aim of this study. Change in a destination can be measured using quantitative techniques, but understanding the underlying reasons for the change requires a qualitative approach.

The use of a quantitative method for tourism research is appropriate when the questions posed can be suitably and conveniently analyzed by these techniques. Such a method also necessitates that adequate, rigorous data can be collected (Walle, 1997). The main advantages of this scientific method are the methodological exactness of the techniques and the expression of the output is in a quantifiable form. The tradeoff is that some research issues may not be able to be addressed as the method is not an appropriate method of inquiry for all issues (Walle, 1997). Quantitative research involves the identification and definition of variables and variable categories (Brannen, 1992). Sources of quantitative data are natural social settings, semi-natural settings, artificial settings, and social artifacts. Types of social artifacts include official statistics, public documents, private documents, and personal records (Blaikie, 2000). The researcher "looks through a narrow lens at a specified set of variables" (Brannen, 1992). This illustrates why the qualitative context is vital in ensuring that the quantitative data is placed in the 'big picture'.

Belarus tourists motivation to travel to choose Latvia as an outbound tourism destination

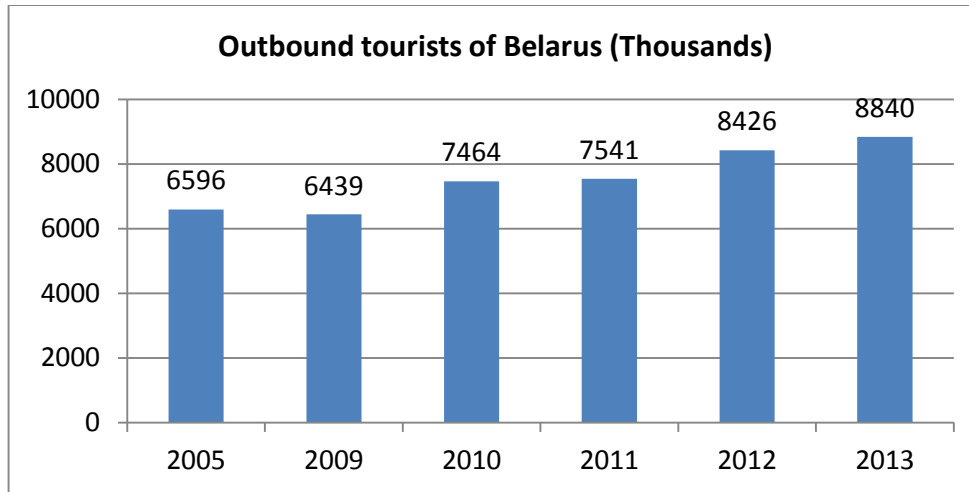


Figure 1 Outbound tourists of Belarus in the 2005 – 2013 (National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus)

The figure one shows the total amount of travelers departing from Belarus to other countries between 2005 and 2013. The data obtained from National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus and is considering as secondary data for the research. It's clearly seen that Belarus people travel a lot to the each last year. According to the data, between 2005 and 2009 were declined of total travelers, in 2005 there were 6596 thousands of travelers and only after 2009 there had been reversed of travels. After the worldwide crisis of 2008, there is uptrend of travels from 2009 till the end.

Analyses of factors to choose Latvia as a tourism destination

On this chapter will be analyzing which factors mostly affected on Belarus people travel to Latvia. And by asking wide range of varieties questions to the respondents will be summarizing the conclusions and suggestions to the main bodies of Belarus tourism organizations. As well as data obtained through the questions and analyzed and showed in the table with explanation. In total there are 48 responded to the questionnaire through the online.

Variables	Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	27	56%
	Female	21	44%
Marital Status	Single	22	45%
	Married	15	33%
	Divorced	11	22%
	Widowed	0	0%
Age	Under 18	2	4%
	18-30	24	50%
	31-44	17	36%
	45-54	5	10%
	Older than 55	0	0%

Table 1: Responds of demographic questions

As seen from the demographic questions (Table 1) it can be concluded that number of the female respondents is 21 or 46%, and the number of the male respondents is 27, which is 54% of the total amount of the respondents. Twenty two of the respondents were single, fifteen are married, eleven are divorced, and none of them was widowed. Only two persons were under 18, and the opposite elderly people whose age is more than were not present, the biggest part consisted of mostly youngest generation who are between 18-30 years old- 24 people, followed by 17 people who were 31-44 years old and 5 people who were 45-54 years old.

Variables	Options	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Is it your first time visiting to Latvia?	Yes	14	28%
	No	34	72%
Whom have you traveled with?	Family	11	22%
	Partner	4	8%
	Parents	12	25%
	Friends	11	23%
	Alone	8	18%
	Travel Group	2	4%
Why have you traveled to Latvia?	Escape daily routing	7	15%
	Family togetherness	8	17%
	Shopping	1	2%
	Studies	5	10%
	Visiting friends, relatives	14	29%
	Business	3	6%
	Other	10	21%
What motivate you to travel?	Price	9	19%
	Nearby location	13	27%
	History and heritage	3	6%
	Ease of access	10	21%
	Recommendations of the others	5	10%
	Tour operators/travel agencies	8	17%
How long have you stayed?	1 nights	19	40%
	2-3 nights	11	23%
	4-7 nights	8	17%
	8-14 nights	4	8%
	14-21 nights	1	2%
	More than 21 nights	5	10%
What mean of transportation have you used?	Plane	2	4%
	Train	13	27%
	Couch	23	48%
	Personal car	10	21%
How have you organized your trip?	By phone or email	8	17%

	Myself	14	29%
	Travel agency/tour operator	7	15%
	Online reservation system	11	23%
	Was not booked in advance	3	6%
	Other	5	10%
Were you satisfied with your trip?	Yes	39	81%
	No	9	19%

Table 2: Responds of the main questions

Most of the respondents- 34 people said that they have been in Latvia before, as it's not their first time visit, and only 14 visited county for the first time. During their visit 12 people came with their parents, 11 came with friends and another 11 with their family, 8 of them came alone, 4 with a partner and only 2 with the travel group.

When participants were asked about the reason of their travel, majority- 14 people came to visit their friends and family, followed by 10 people who came for other different reasons- such as wellness or health, 8 for the family togetherness, 7 got bored and came for the escaping daily routine, 5 for studies, only 3 for business matter and only 1 for the shopping.

The main motivations for visiting Latvia on the first places was the nearby location – for 13 people, ease of access for 10 people, price – for 9 participants, for eight people it was tours operators/ travel agencies, recommendations of the other- 5 people, and 3 people history and heritage.

The duration of the stay mostly was only one night – 19 people, followed by 11 people who answered 2-3 nights, 8 people said 4-7 nights, 4 answered up to 2 weeks, only 1 up to 3 weeks and 5 people who were student logically is staying more than 3 weeks. For most of the people came with the bus, followed by 13 people who came with train, flowed by 10 who came with their own car, and only 2 by plane.

Most of the trips were organized by the people themselves -14 people, online reservation system – 11 people, flowed by 8 who arranged their trip by phone or email, 7 chose the travel agency option, only 3 people came spontaneously.

In the end, majority- 39 people were very satisfied with their trip to Latvia, and 9 were not quite satisfied.

Conclusions

1. Following conclusions were made after studying the answers of the participants of the surveys. According to the answer above, most of the Belarussian tourists stay not more than 1 night, and majority of them have used Latvia as a transit zone to go to other destinations with the low cost airlines. One of the participant have mentioned that he came to Latvia for the first time, stay only one night and then travelled to Dublin with Ryanair. Therefore, it can be said that Latvia should be promoted more, an advertised as an

interesting destination where people can stay more than 1 night even if they came for the further travels.

2. Also while studying the answers of respondents, people mentioned that because the airline tickets are too expensive people tend to travel by bus. But the bus is traveling through Vilnius which takes too long and creates inconvenience to the tourists. Although, if we take in account that there's a train between Minsk and Riga, it's still more expensive than the bus tickets, therefore most of the tourists chose to travel by bus. Some of the respondents said that travel by their private car, but it was the cases when people came to visit their friends or relatives.

3. During the research process it was clear that the visa regime creates some problems to the tourists. As it's very time consuming to get the documents, and wait for the response from the Embassy. Participants mentioned that especially when they were travelling for the business matters that created some issues, because of the slow work of the embassy they had to change the times of their business meetings and travel dates in general. One of the participants even mentioned that if Belarus would join the Schengen zone as Georgia did, it would be quite comfortable and convenient to travel to Latvia, as they would save quite a time from getting off the embassy hurries.

Recommendations

1. In accordance with the research it can be suggested to the Latvia tourism board to have promotion and advertisement campaigns in Belarus, and not only there but in the countries nearby as well, in order to motivate people to stay in Latvia bigger time period. Therefore, they have present Riga and other regions as an interesting place with nice attractions, so that more people would be motivated to come and stay in Latvia.

2. A very effective option to attract more tourists would be opening low cost flights between Latvia and Belarus. Furthermore, the flights will be cheap and short, which will attract more people. On more advantage of that will be the fact that people from the CIS countries would travel to Latvia using Minsk as a transit zone, and both of the countries would benefit from that.

3. In order to enhance the social, political and economic relations between Belarus and European Union countries, Belarus should join the Schengen countries union. Joining the Schengen countries would increase Belarus trade opportunities as well as increase the tourist numbers in times, in this both of the countries- Latvia and Belarus would economically benefit from that. But this process would take too long time, although it might be very effective.

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