

Travel decision making determinants: a starting point for building an effective marketing strategy .

محددات اتخاذ القرار بالسفر: نقطة انطلاق لبناء إستراتيجية تسويقية سياحية فعالة.

Boulkroune randa*, beredjam hanen
University Of-Annaba- ALGERIA.

Received: 2020/02/25 Accepted: 2021/03/01

Abstract: The main aim of this research was to define some attributes that visitors consider before making a travel decision to any tourism destination. We were particularly interested in this topic because people are constantly travelling from one place to another, and everyone is also one of them. When we go to sea port, airports and other means by which people travel we would see thousands of people. It is fascinating to know why people travel and how they decide which place to visit. We have had our answers to these questions by conducting this research and discussing some points "reasons "that should be considered when they set up their tourism marketing strategies. We think they are important for any tourism industry in the world today.

Keywords: travel decision, tourism destination, tourism marketing strategies, tourist.

Résumé : L'objectif principal de cette recherche était définir certains attributs que les touristes prenaient en compte avant de prendre une décision de voyager à une certaine destination touristique pour la visiter. Nous nous sommes particulièrement intéressés à ce sujet, car les gens se déplacent constamment d'un endroit à un autre, et chacun en fait partie. Lorsque nous allons dans les ports maritimes, les aéroports et autres moyens par lesquels les gens voyagent, nous en voyons des milliers. Il est fascinant de savoir pourquoi les gens voyagent et comment ils décident le lieu à visiter. Nous avons obtenu nos réponses à ces questions en effectuant cette recherche et en discutant de quelques "raisons" qui devraient être prises en compte lors de la définition de leurs stratégies de marketing touristiques. Nous pensons qu'ils sont importants pour toute industrie touristique dans le monde aujourd'hui.

Mots-clés: décision de voyage, destination touristique, stratégies de marketing touristiques, touriste.

ملخص الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الدراسة هو تحديد بعض الشروط الأساسية المتحكمة في عملية اختيار السائح لوجهته و التي يأخذها بعين الاعتبار عند المفاضلة بين البدائل المقترحة أمامه، وقد اهتمت الباحثتان بهذا الموضوع خصيصا نظرا لكون السياحة أصبحت من ضمن اهتمامات و أولويات أغلب الأفراد في الفترة الأخيرة، فالكثير يريد قضاء عطلة خارج الديار. و منه و من المهم جدا على المسوق أن يتعرف على الأسباب الحقيقية التي تدفع الأفراد إلى السفر و الكيفية أو التي يتخذون من خلالها

* Boulkroune Randa . boulkroune.randa@gmail.com

هذا القرار بالسفر إلى وجهة معينة، حيث أن هذه الأسباب و الدوافع تعتبر من العوامل و المحددات الرئيسية لبناء الإستراتيجية التسويقية السياحية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الوجهة السياحية، قرار السفر، السائح، الإستراتيجية التسويقية السياحية.

I- Introduction :

We would often hear statements like: "I would love to spend my honeymoon in a beautiful place". "I hear people from that part of the world behave differently, I would love to see for myself", "My friend told me the weather there is good, maybe I should have that feeling as well", "My boss says business there is unique", "It has a magnificent display of nature, I would love to have pictures of that", Out of curiosity and many other reasons people travel. Movement from one place to another is becoming very common and increasing too. Nowadays, many countries either that they are developed or underdeveloped, popular or unpopular they attract people from different places all over the world who seem to have developed a rapid desire to travel to any part on the planet. As a result, those countries are being visited. There are many strategic a very common locations in the world like island, Malaysia, Indonesia, china, Europe, new-York, middle east... places with well known history, destinations that display a variety of nature features or reserves and mostly those with completely different cultures which make people confused about what destination they would choose to visit and spend some time there./ however, the decision to choose a destination to visit does not stand alone , it depends on some smaller decisions like: how to get there?, when to get there? And how living there? The world tourism organization clearly points out this point of view when it claimed that there are other service industries associated with tourism including transportation services, accommodation, which refers to hotels and resorts, entertainment venues like parks, shopping center... so, under this conditions, tourism marketers and organizations should think deeply about what the tourist want and estimate before they build their strategies. Tourism marketing should not be limited with opportunities and destination's attributes and attractions, t should focuses on the reasons that makes can't wait to visit that place and makes a final decision to pack his travel bag and be ready to go. This research seeks to discuss some points (reasons) visitors take in consideration when they choose a particular destination in the other side marketers should consider it necessary prior when they build their strategies. This leads us to the following research question:

What makes visitors choose a particular destination?

This problematic would include sub questions like:

- ✓ What makes visitors satisfied ?
- ✓ When visitors would like to visit some places ?
- ✓ What push visitors to travel ?
- ✓ What makes a destinations stand in visitor's mind as they decide to invest their time and money ?

To answer these questions and clarify the research problematic, we derived this study into three axes:

I. Tourism marketing destination;

II. Tourism marketing and decision making;

III. Reasons that are crucial and highly considered when building marketing strategy.

I. Tourism marketing:

Tourism is undergoing profound and broad changes that hugely impact on the destination marketing environment (Dwyer and others, 2009, pp 65-66). In the experience economy paradigm, as travel becomes less and less about 'places and things' and more about experiences (King J, 2002, pp 105-108), destinations can no longer extract benefits from mass promotion messages that feature them as places having these and those one might say, objective - attractions, and providing such and such services to visitors. The marketing environment has been sending signs to destinations that they cannot keep depending on management and marketing strategies unsuited to current conditions .

Destination marketing is recognized as pivotal in the management of the destination lifecycle and contributing to the formulation of a strategy that is so needed to differentiation (Torres R, 2002, p 90). However it has also been acknowledged that there are specific problems which are difficult to overcome, mainly due to the complex, fragmented, and multidimensional nature of the destination. The need to properly deal with them, finding effective and efficient courses of action that may contribute to their solution, is becoming more and more pressing, because from both the demand side and the supply side significant transformations are already taking place at a global scale. The most important ones concern the consumer itself. Societal trends have gradually shaped a more experienced consumer (Richards G, 1996, pp 30-31). In general terms, they are now understood and recognized as highly skilled in their purchase behavior

because highly informed, independent, quality and environmentally conscious (Ryan C, 2002, p 20).

To be successful in the tourism markets, marketers must be able to interpret the needs of their visitors, identify appropriate ways of segmenting the markets in which they compete, develop and launch the appropriate products and effectively communicate with potential visitors. These issues are closely interrelated, as they form the basis of the marketing interface between the marketer and market environment (Fyall and Leask, 2007, pp 59-61). Tourism takes place in a complex, dynamic and constantly changing environment that must be monitored and adapted to by all tourism enterprises. The industry today faces a set of new and increasing challenges arising from changing tourist behavior and environment conditions. These challenges include: (Machlouzarides H, 2010, pp 85-90)

- ✓ the reconciliation of the need to consolidate the industry's service offerings to the consumer and maintain a market position with the need to remain flexible enough to respond to changes in its operational environment ;
- ✓ To design and properly deliver products and experiences corresponding to the needs of the various markets.

II. Tourism marketing and Tourism decision making:

Visitor's consumption process can be divided into three parts; the pre, during and post visitation. These parts are very essential for any visitor's decision making process .

The pre-visitation: involves the image viewed by the visitors about the destination. A positive image accordingly would likely be promoting visitation, and a negative image would normally do otherwise .

During the visitation: there is of course service delivery which is an intangible process, it is therefore important to display some tangible assets to portray quality in the services. This is because pictures are essential in conveying the image of destination, thus would influence visitor's criteria, values attributes and perception about a place .(Middleton and others, 2009, pp 208-210)

Post-visitation: is linked with visitor's satisfaction. Visitors analyze their experiences after their visits to a destination; the aftermath is what is important. It is this effect that makes an impact on choosing a destination for a second time or recommending this destination as a positive word of mouth to either a friend or a family member (Lin C and others, 2007, 183).

III. Reasons that are crucial and highly considered when building marketing strategy:

1. Destination decision making and destination image :

Visitor's decision about a destination to visit is associated with beliefs and cognition. These views about a destination, which plays an important part in the decision making process is a collection of ideas, beliefs and perceptions people have about the daily happenings in a destination and the attributes they attach with the destination (Jang, Han and others, 2007, pp 1306-1309) .

This ends up in creating an image in an individual's mind about that destination. However studies conducted showed that stereotypes of images about a destination are reflected in the travel decisions. Repurchase impressions, and post purchase views formulate consumer's attributes towards a product. This can be called a stereotype of the destination's image (Lin C and others, op cit, pp 182).

In earlier empirical research, it was discovered that there exist a relation between what someone has in mind and their preferences in decision making. In the nut shell a destination's image does have an impact on visitor's preferences and final decision. However not all destination images are built up from cognitive and affective conceptions do have an influence on visitors destination choices. But a lack of knowledge surely about a place would normally only give room for a more holistic perception It exposes three main levels of a destination's image. Firstly a destination image should be seen as having two main parts; an attribute - base and a holistic view. Secondly as they claim these parts have a tangible and an intangible component. And lastly a destination's image is made up of some general functional and psychological characteristics, or even peculiar events, ideas or feelings. This really demonstrated that an image creation in a visitor's mind is widely dispersed and cannot be pinned down to any particular attribute especially looking at these three levels of destination images .

2. Destination decision making and gender :

Gender plays a role in the travel decisions. Males have been noted for travelling often as a result of work associated issues or businesses, while females on the other hand are noted for travelling more for recreational reasons. This means decision on destinations to visit could be reflected in gender. Gender is related to personality, visitor's way of acting and their intentions to go towards attractions(Meng F and Uysa M, 2008, pp 304-306).

Opposite views in socio- psychological intentions which represent push and pull factors that determine destination choices. These pull and push factors were

analyzed on Australian leisure travelers from a gender point of view. Results from these indicated that there were differences in the gender decisions as concerns push and pull factors. Females were seen to make decision associated with culture, family bonding opportunities and ego while male's decisions were related to sports, and new experiences when planning on destinations to visit.

The results also pointed out that females are more risk averse in their choices of destinations to visit and consider educational opportunities while males are adventurous or risk taking in their decisions. It also pointed out that males and females of the same age group could have different views as regards leisure destination choices. In business travels especially considering hotel choices and service delivery, women prioritized security, self service and lower prices as opposed to men who valued business services and things associated with more when making decision.

3. Destination decision making and service intangibility :

There is an imbalance in communicating the services associated with visiting a destination since services are intangible. This therefore urges the producers to have some aspect of physical asset that can portray quality. Travelling leaves memories for a life time and it's thus complicated to be promoted because of its intangibility. Decision making related to services are challenging to marketing as a whole. Pre purchase choices about services (travelling in this case) are more risky since it is not possible to touch or feel. Therefore tourist destination brand image is a major influencing factor in a traveler's destination choice (Bolan, P and Williams L, 2008, pp 382-385).

4. Destination decision making and individuals :

General studies about destination choices by visitors have been explored through various decision making channel processes. **Coathup** suggests that as people's knowledge widen about new things and areas, their desire for adventure, new opportunities and experiences also changes. These could be reflected in the choices they make about destinations to visit. **Leisen** claim that visitor's choices about destinations are related to their financial and time allocation. We can say that is quite logical but **Jang** also identified that visitors decision about a destination to visit and collection of information depends on the stage of the family life cycle of the individuals concerned.

There is also the aspect of decision making associated with cognition. visitor's decisions stem from a hierarchy of effect which involves a cognitive level, affective level and behavioral level. An evoke set as **Howard** explains, is a collection of preferred alternatives of brands which consumers who in this cases are visitors group together as being necessary when purchasing any product. A choice set on wider bases refers to the way visitors first of all view a brand or product and its alternatives and then analyze them together to come out with a decision (Decrop A, 2009, pp 96-100) In addition to these, other studies too direct their focus on structure and size of the sets. We could see in this case that a list would be formulated with all the attributes considered as desirable by the visitor in his/her decision making process. This is just one view concerning evoke set because there exist another views as suggested by **Decrop** which are related clearly to theoretical and conceptual framework and do not have any empirical base. Thus the decision making here gently eliminates the number of alternatives, which is in the same light as a rational decision making .

Visitors in this scenario would do this elimination of alternatives as a result of low cognitive storage capacity, and ease information accumulation about different areas. To actually form an evoke set; retrieval (memory) is necessary. It constitutes of ideas to be considered, or places already known (Hamilton, Maddison and Tol, 2005, pp 257-259). From this comes an action set which is a function of heuristics. Brand awareness set ahead of the action or consideration set had been introduced. It stood for a perpetual stage where all known destinations by visitors come to mind (the awareness set.) But this however works in a hierarchy fashion. _It is now a truism of marketing that brand awareness is a necessary precondition for choice (Decrop A, op cit, P 102).

5. Destination decision making and time :

According to **Korça** residents behavior have an impact on the hospitality of a destination which intend influences visitors decision on a destinations as regards visits. All tourism activities are influenced to some extent by time. **Truong & Henscher** stress that time is an issue visitors must consider since it cannot be stored for future usage .

Papinski who brought in a model of time –space prism in the world of English speakers, in 1969 pointed out that this time – space prism is made up of three constrains; Coupling; referring to people's ability to be at a particular place at a given time .Authority; it indicates giving only certain people the right to visit certain places. All these therefore play a role in the destination decision making process of most visitors.

Findings also by **Papinski** suggested that work related issues are always planned before any other daily routines. This thus would obviously affect the destination choice ((Decrop A, op cit, 102)

6. Destination decision making and culture :

Divergence in culture as well can influence visitor's decision. **Lew** indicated that differences in attractions can cause visitors to travel to other areas. Culture unfortunately as **Jackson** indicated was largely excluded as a crucial factor of a destination choice whereas long time ago **Hofstede** had declared culture does affects visitor's decision on destination choices. National cultures also have been utilized to demonstrate an impact on the destination choices of visitors as well as their journey patterns, without keeping out their favorite activities. (Hamilton, Maddison, op cit, p 261).

People are flexible to go to destinations where their languages are spoken. It was realized that religion too played a part in travelling since Muslim countries were desirable visited mostly by Saudi visitors. **Henderson** pointed out after a study that Muslims considered Muslim destinations safe for visit and westerners on the other hand considered western countries best for them to visit. It therefore brings out the fact that the closer the culture of a place to a visitor, the more likely would that destination be chosen, and the wider the cultural difference the less likely would the destination be chosen or the decision choice be that destination. Thus visitors are drawn towards people who behave like them or share the same attitude (Dwyer and others, op cit, p 69).

7. Decision making and information :

Destination choice decision is a function of information available from different sources. According to **Murphy** in recent studies, travelers that love risk and want adventure did not seek a lot of information. But those who feared risk not only gathered information but also considered particular vacations and lodging facilities. Information search depends on destination desires and the different stages involved in the travelling itself. This would probably lead to variations at each stage of the journey that is the to and fro planning of the journey (Middleton and others, op cit, p 230)

Word of mouth (WOM) has also been a very important source of information which has a special influence on older people. This idea was deduced by **Fall and Knutson** who conducted studies on adults who were 55years and above travelling for leisure in the state of Michigan, USA indicated that 2/3 of the sample used Word of mouth as their source of information. Word of mouth (WOM) was mostly gotten from family and friends and older people preferred to visual expressions of images, thus TV advertisement played more impact on their

travel decision than radio adverts. The internet was rated second to word of mouth as a source of information. They still suggested that those who use the internet to gather information about destination visitation and the buying of its associated services were normally acquainted to the internet, educated and earned a higher level of income (Hu, Y and Ritchie, J, 1993, pp 29-30) .

Previous studies undoubtedly showed that various information collection about destination visitations are related to visitor's actions and choices, but word of mouth seemed to be the basic source of information for many visitors gotten especially from friends and family (Jackson M , 2001, p 169)

8. Other factors :

There are factors too that linked climate as attracting visitors to a destination which **Hamilton** tries to analyze. Exploring studies conducted by **Pike** in 2002 on 142 questionnaires on perceptions of destinations images, they found out that there was a narrow link between destination decision making process and the weather condition of the place although he found an association with landscape. **Hu and Ritchie** also carried out similar studies and declared that natural features and the climate were of unique importance in displaying a destination and could pull people. Therefore sun bathe and a nice weather were fitted in as attributes considered by visitors in choosing a destination to visit. There is increasing evidence which supports climates as having a neurological and psychological influence on vacation. All ideas do not only point to reasons why visitor would choose a destination but also why they could avoid a destination. **Bansal and Eiselt** suggest that choice decisions can be affected by health, security, time as already mentioned then also by expenses and distance. The risk involved in the journey itself resulting from limited ideas, distorts visitor's decisions and makes them doubt the quality of service that would be available (Jackson M, op cit, p 169).

1. Regarding the fact that some opportunities occur only at particular times, visitors can miss better travel opportunities if they do not buy in time but delay because of mixed feelings about these services due to its intangibility or because they require a service that will meet their needs (King J, op cit, p 110). When risk is concerned in decision making, decisions often turn to be slowly made or avoided .This retardation in decision making is referred to as hesitation, and that individual fear should be seen is a potential factor that can play on visitor's choice of destinations to visit. Thus when visitors perceive risk, they can delay in their decisions (Richards G, op cit, 134).

IV- Conclusion:

There are many beautiful places in the world, what then could account for the choosing of a particular destination? **Roe & Urquhart**, point out that the tourism industry is volatile in nature and can be destabilized by other variables such as natural disasters, exchange rates in money and political reasons. These unforeseen circumstances are the things that could distort people's views on deciding where they should go. **Ashley** also suggested that the image of a place as being safe to visit is very crucial and could be easily damaged, thus could reduce visitor's interest to travel and confidence in a particular destination. I would assume at this moment that a visitor takes these into consideration when choosing a place to visit. Notwithstanding these uncertainties people are still making journeys to different destinations.

Visitor's satisfaction on the other hand which is very important requires some knowledge of culture by the host. **Giuliani** emphasize that when people's ethnicity, race and culture are mingled with those of others, their loyalty to this location could either be intensified or threatened. This is another factor that can hamper traveling especially considering religions where prayers are due at particular times of the day and particular foods forbidden. Choosing a place for any reason to visit would contain a bunch of factors. This research would explore the reasons that are crucial, and are highly considered by visitor when choosing a particular destination despite the complexities of language, time, religion and satisfaction uncertainties that exists. **Lee** also talks about how celebrities to some extent have been involved in destination image displays. Some have even acquired contracts to show off a destination especially if they have a positive image and how fascinating a destination could be that they go there to relax or for business. This suggests why an image about a destination is very important because it affects choices in the decision making process.

As a result: we realize therefore that the decision to visit a particular destination by visitors is an aggregate of many factors. It touches several areas of any individual's life, his/her beliefs and to some extent his friends and family as we have seen in word of mouth source of information. There was also another interesting point referred to as "Word of Mouse". I found this quite interesting because it shows how globalization especially the use of the internet to portray the image of a place has had a strong effect on destination choices (Kristine de Valck. et al, 2009). The features chosen for display and adjective utilized to describe these destinations, or its related services really count. This has influence many people to go to destinations which they never intended to visit, although some have been disappointed after the visit to the destination saying it is not what they saw on the internet. Upon using the internet visitors see only what has been published and build up an idea or create an image only from these pictures and the adjectives used to describe them. The word of mouth too has also had people

Bibliography:

- .1 Dwyer and others, (2009): Destination and Enterprise Management for a Tourism Future, *Journal of Tourism Management*, vol 30, pp 63-74.
- .2 King J, (2002): Destination Marketing Organizations – Connecting the Experience rather than Promoting the Place, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, vol 8(2), pp 105-108
- .3 Torres R, (2002): Cancun's Tourism Development from a Fords' Spectrum of Analysis, *Journal of Tourist Studies*, vol 2, pp 87-116 .
- .4 Richards G, (1996): Skilled Consumption and UK Ski Holidays, *Journal of Tourism Management*, vol 17(1), pp 25-34.
- .5 Ryan C, (2002): Equity, management, power sharing and sustainability, *Journal of the new tourism*, *Tourism Management*, Vol 23 No. 1, pp. 17-26.
- .6 Fyall and Leak, (2007): Destination Marketing: Future Issues, Strategic Challenges, *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, vol 7(1), pp 50-63
- .7 Machlouzarides, H. (2010), "The future of destination marketing: the case of Cyprus", *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp 83-95.
- .8 Middleton and others, (2009): *Marketing in Travel and Tourism*, 4th ed., Elsevier, Oxford, uk.
- .9 Lin C and others, (2007): Examining the Role of Cognitive and Affective Image in Predicting Choice Across Natural, Developed, and Theme-Park Destinations. *Journal of Travel Research* vol 46, p 183.
- .1 Jang, Hand others, (2007): Expanding the individual choice-sets model to couples honeymoon destination selection process, *Tourism Management*, vol 28, pp pp 1299–1314.
- .10 Meng F and Uysa M, (2008): Effects of Gender Differences on Perceptions of Destination Attributes, Motivations, and Travel Values: An Examination of a Nature-Based Resort Destination, *Journal of sustainable tourism*, Vol 16, No. 4 , pp 304-306.
- .11 Bolan, P and Williams L, 2008: The role of image in service promotion: focusing on the influence of film on consumer choice within tourism, *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, vol 32, pp 382–390.

- .12 Decrop A,(2009): Destination choice set. An Inductive Longitudinal Approach, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 37, No. 1, pp 93–115.
- .13 Hamilton, M. J., Maddison, J. D., Tol, S. J., 2005. Climate change and international tourism: A simulation study. *Global Environmental Change*, N 15, pp 253–266.
- .14 Hu, Y and Ritchie, J, 1993: Measuring destination attractiveness: a contextual approach *Journal of Travel Research*, N 32 , vol (2), pp 25–34
15. Jackson M, (2001): Cultural influences on tourist destination choices of 21pacific rim nations, Paper presented at the CAUTHE national research conference, pp. 166–176.