Motivating Tourism: 
A Case of Club Mahindra Holidays

Neeta Baporikar, Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune, India

ABSTRACT

Attempts have been made for long to classify tourists by activities, interests and opinions (AIOs), by values and even, typology of the tourist based on personality characteristics. Pearce (1993) observes, tourist motivation is in fact “discretionary, episodic, future oriented, dynamic, socially influenced, and evolving” with “attitudes, behavioural intentions, values, preferences, beliefs, needs, and goals thereby presenting spaghetti of overlapping and interlocking concepts”. This research paper is a case study of how ‘Club Mahindra Holidays’ flagship brand of Mahindra Holidays & Resorts India Ltd., (MHRIL) started in 1996, has been successful in motivating tourism in general and in India in particular. It also attempts to understand how tourism is based on motivating theories and draw lessons for evolving successful tourism strategies based on the core values such as Reliability, Trust and Customer Satisfaction. The case study will enable tourism organizations to adopt best practices, strategize well for success and contribute to economic development in this era of globalization.

Keywords: Curiosity, Development, Economic, Holidays, Intrinsic, Motivation, Pleasure, Satisfaction, Strategies, Tourism, Tourist, Travelers, Unity

1. INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is considered one of the largest and fastest growing industries in the world (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2005; Cooper & Hall, 2008). As a worldwide occurrence it forms a very important part of the service sector strongly influencing the economy (Ninemeier & Perdue, 2008; Kay, 2003; Koc, 2004). For the tourism industry to maintain or improve its current status it is dependent on tourists’ travel decisions which are reflected in travel behaviour. Papatheodorou (2006) stated that destination choice has always been an important aspect in tourism literature. These factors constitute of culture, travel motivations, finances and previous experiences, to name a few (Ankomah, Crompton & Baker, 1996). Cooper and Hall (2008) state that tourism is subject to a collection of influences and factors that determine its relative distribution. Travel motivations forms an integral part of travel behaviour and has been widely researched and applied in tourism marketing strategies. The need to see the unseen and know the unknown drives people to travel to new places and motivates them to visit new destinations (Venkatesh, 2006).

It is therefore important for tourism products such as resorts to understand the travel behaviour and more specific the travel motivations of tourists, as it may assist in product development, improved marketing strategies, enhanced service delivery approaches and the creation of a competitive advantage. Therefore, travel behaviour plays an important role in tourism as concept, industry and economy.

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and demands investigation. Tourists are subject to certain behaviour before, during and after travelling. This is conceptualized as travel behaviour. This behaviour is the direct result of interaction between certain personal and environmental variables on a continuous basis. Notice is given to the influence of people and situations on both sides and the reaction according to this influence. Travel behaviour can therefore be defined as the way tourists behave according to their attitudes towards a certain product and their response by making use of the product (March & Woodside, 2005; George, 2004).

March and Woodside (2005:116) state that specific decisions embraces one or more of the behavioural intensions based on the need to behave in a certain way according to highly defined situations. In order to predict travel behaviour it is important to understand how individual characteristics of a person interact with the characteristics of the situation, therefore understanding the positive and negative evaluative factors influencing destination choices of the tourists (March & Woodside, 2005; Laws, 1995; Holloway, 2004).

Various researchers have identified factors influencing travel behaviour of tourists such as variables motivating the tourist to travel, attitude of the tourist, various situational factors and environmental factors which influence the personal significance of the tourist (Venkatesh, 2006; Laws, 1995). According to Gartner (as cited by Pike, 2008) motivation initiate the decision-making process. This occurs when a certain need or want cannot be met at home. Motivations surface when a tourist wants to satisfy a need or want and this can be seen as a very important variable in relation to their travel decisions and the outcome of satisfaction (Chang, 2007; Correia, Oom do Valle & Moco, 2006). According to George (2004) as well as March and Woodside (2005) travel motivations can be considered as one of the most important psychological influences of tourist behaviour. Motivations are the inner state of a person, or certain needs and wants of a person, which forces them to act or behave in a specific way and thus sustaining human behaviour and energy levels of the human body (Decrop, 2006; George, 2004). Maslow’s theory is one of the most frequent used to explain the premise of motivation. Maslow uses five sets of goals which are also referred to as basic needs: physiological needs, safety needs, social needs, self-esteem and self-actualization (Tikkanen, 2007). Tourists may need to escape, relax, to gain relief of physical- and mental tension and for typical sun lust reasons. Crompton (as cited by Saayman, 2006) identified seven socio-psychological factors which motivate a tourist to travel: escape from an everyday environment, discovery and evaluation of oneself, relaxing or participation in recreational activities, gaining a certain level of prestige, for the purpose of regression, strengthening family ties and facilitating their level of social interaction.

It is important to understand and have adequate knowledge about the motivations influencing the travel behaviour of tourists; for they have a direct impact on the decisions tourists make (George, 2004). Various researchers have analyzed travel motivations in order to conclude a better understanding of travel behaviour (Crompton, 1977; Huang & Xiao, 2000; Lee, Lee & Wicks, 2004; Law, Cheung & Lo, 2004; Correia, Oom do Valle & Moco, 2007; Saayman, Slabbert & van der Merwe, 2009). Travel behaviour and travel motivation are therefore considered as important fields in tourism research literature (Huang & Xiao, 2000; Lam & Hsu, 2006). The prediction of travel behaviour and knowledge of travel motivation play an important role in tourism marketing, in order to create demand and assist tourists in decision-making (March & Woodside, 2005; Decrop, 2006; Mazanec et al., 2001; Holloway, 2004). Thus by having adequate knowledge and understanding of tourist behaviour, strategies and policies can be developed and implemented to increase the demand for tourism (March & Woodside, 2005; Law et al., 2004:361; Papatheodorou, 2006). Attempts have also been made for long to classify tourists by activities, interests and opinions (AIOs), by values and even, typology of the