

Università della Basilicata

L.M. Natural & Cultural Resources Economics

Traveller Decision Making: The Experientialist Stance

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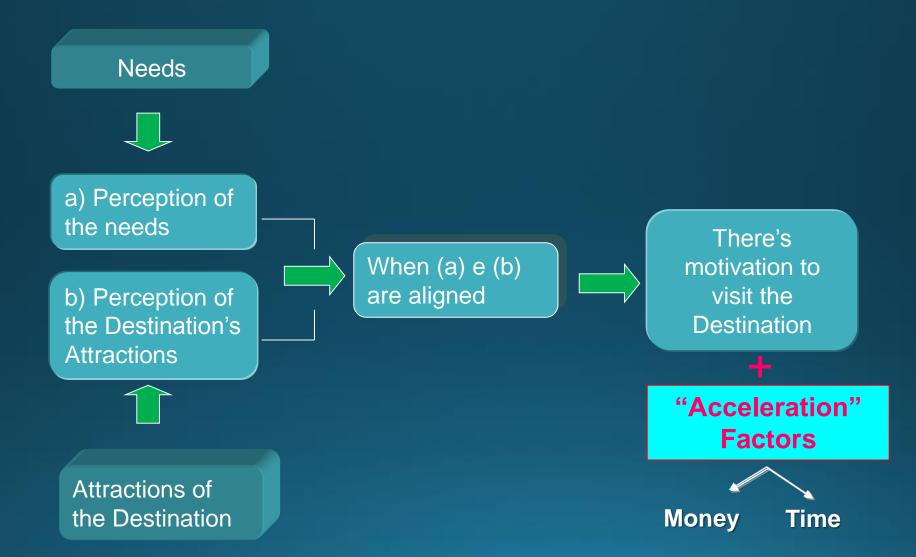


Tourism Destination Marketing & Management

Proff. C. Rossi e R. Micera



Traveller Decision Making: Motivation



Tourism Destination Marketing & Management - Prof. Roberto Micera



Traveller Decision Making: AIDAS Model

Awareness Interest Desire Action Satisfaction



Traveller Decision Making: the forces

External forces' perception



- a) significative: those deriving from personal experiences
- b) symbolic: derived by the image spread by media and by official promotion of the site
- c) social: derived by opinions of those which have already spent time in the location

Internal forces' perception



It derives from **personal** attributes, as attitude, motivations, values, the leaning toward some kind of experience



Traveller Decision Making: The Never Ending Journey

Limitations of **objectivism**

Experientialist approach to theory and research

Limitations of **subjectivism**

A **Grounded Theory** approach allows researchers to build and to revise propositional statements of relationships and observe people in specific usecontexts

Questioning and observing tourists in situ



Traveller Decision Making: The Never Ending Journey

Traveller's trip decision planning process

A mappable using the resulting experientialist template

In situ

chains of context



unconscious-thinking

behaviour



streams of conscious-thinking



Gilbert's (1991) finds six commonalities...

- 1. Consumer behaviour is a constant decision-making process
- 2. The individual consumer is emphasized
- 3. Behaviour is rational or utilitarian and can be explained
- 4. A buyer actively searches for evaluates and stores information
- **5.** Collected information is narrowed down to choose alternatives
- 6. Future purchases are affected by the final purchases



Constructive Choice Theory



Subconscious information

Choice-making strategies

Cognitive processing of information

The desire to confront

To avoid **negative feelings**

cognitive effort



choice accuracy



The awareness of one's environment is the foundation of ecological systems theory





Constructive choice theory

Ecological systems theory





informants' lived experiences as 'causal historical waves'



- Modelling tourist decision making appears to be complex because both antecedents to the trip and atsite 'in-contexts' affect the process.
- Rational constraints and hedonic desires, as well as internal and external elements, affect decision makers.
- ➤ Decisions may be **cognitive** and require considerable planning and weighing of alternatives, or **instinctive** because they feel right.
- Leisure travel also involves continuous **high involvement** purchase decisions, which makes the process dynamic.
- More internal and external variables affect the decision process once the traveller arrives



System 1



System 2

- **thinking**
- prior-trip actions

thinking

at-site configurations of action



opportunities

Tourist Decision Dynamics: Theoretical Map

- 6. Key activity drivers 8. Situation 3. Pre-framing and preplanning · What activities trip issues on-site influenced the Pre-framing events influences selection of External stimuli not found? Local destination? information sources used Special events 7. Activities at 5. Choice of unknown destination prior to visit destination 2. Framing leisure Activities planned · Why was Demographics and done choices destination Who is this · Activities planned Leisure travel selected? visitor? and not done alternatives Why were What type of Activities not competitive lifestyle does planned and done destinations he/she have? Activities not rejected? planned and not done 4. External influences 9. Consequences · Friends, relatives, or co-workers · Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with specific Retrieval of thoughts and attitudes experiences and global visit · Situational constraints and Intention to return
- demographic and lifestyle differences
- unexpected or unplanned events
- external and internal personal
- features and possible benefits that
- help to frame leisure choices
- Information collected while framing and planning a trip
- social forces influence the selection or rejection
- key activity drivers solidify the destination choice
- key activity drivers affect planned and accomplished activities at the destination
- visitors interpret **events and change plans** while visiting
- visitor experiences resulting in specific outcomes are the antecedents to a good or

Willingness to recommend destination



The Dynamic Modelling Theory of Travel Decision Making

➤ To prevent being overwhelmed with decisions and alternatives, travellers typically split decisions into smaller and more familiar decisions.

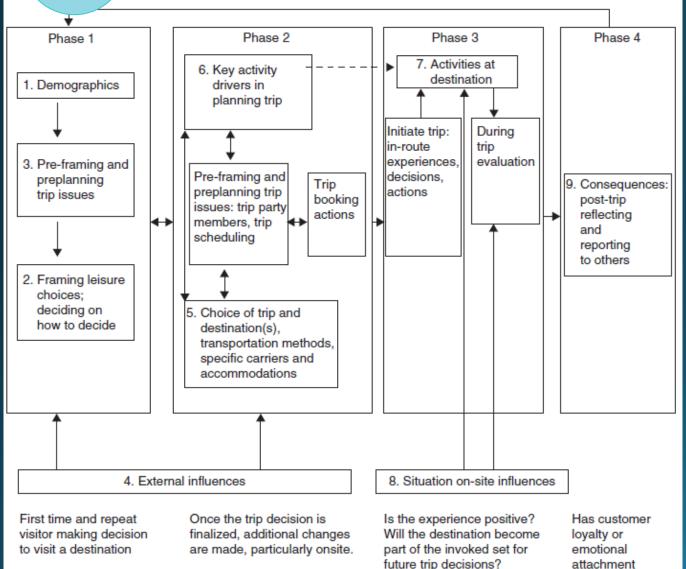
The unstructured decision-making model of Mintzberg *et al.* (1976) maps a process that organizations may employ when encountering unfamiliar decisions.

This model reduces decisions into three main phases: identification, development and selection.



Unstructured-structured process model for travel decision making

developed?



Phase 1: the foundation for destination selection

Phase 2: key activity drivers (e.g. budget or time constraints) help to evaluate alternative destination choices

Phase 3: additional stimuli create some opportunities and eliminate others

Phase 4: a self-reflection process. The evaluation of the trip affects the first phase of the next travel planning process



Drilling Down with Grounded Theory

EP method

☐ Grounded theory is a common approach for interpreting traveller experiences.

☐ Grounded theory development usually includes *in* situ observations and face-to face informant questioning by the researcher.

Emic interpretation captures the essence of a larger social issue.

Etic viewpoint studies behavior from outside a particular system' and is vital to understand an alien system.



Data Collection Methodology

- For tourism research, the inquiries need to uncover the rationale behind the visitor's decision- making process, outcomes and feelings throughout the trip.
- Interviews should take place at locations and situations considered to provide the 'greatest opportunity to gather the most relevant data about the phenomena under investigation'

Prospective informants should be prescreened with general questions about their visits and asked whether they would participate in an interview.



Data Collection Methodology

For the Helmut and Helga interview, questions addressed:

- (i) demographic information
- (ii) pre-trip planning and sources of information
- (iii) activities and destinations both planned and unplanned
- (iv) issues surrounding flights, accommodation and ground transportation
- (v) overall impressions of the travel experience

6. Key activity drivers 7. Key activities on 1. Demographics for Hawaii visit Hawaii's Big Island Husband and wife See lava and volcanoes Talked to children at Teenage children home daily at home Saw lava tubes Snorkelling Pre-framing and pre- Visited church planning trip issuses · Hilo day trip Trip needs to be 3 3. Pre-framing and weeks to get over jet preplanning 9. Consequences lag; cannot miss more trip issues Worthwhile work Are children old trip, but did Wife insists on visiting enough to be left not get to see the US mainland to see alone? lava flows something else Saved Delta Initiate trip During trip Wife happy Target two- and threemileage awards San Diego evaluation now (having star hotels to save over 20 years stopover; Hotel—'We visited money 2 hour 'I could not afford got what Hawaii)' the trip when I was visit to younger, if not Tijuana, expected Trip booking actions now, when?' Mexico for 80 Online booking euros' hotel and rental car Decided to Redeem Delta miles relax and limit daily activities 2. Framing leisure rather than 5. Choice of destinations choices Husband thinks Trip included 3 night everything stopover in San Diego (un)consciously Rental car Hawaii: three nights on about visit to has broken Kauai, four nights on 'South Seas signal light Maui, four nights on the paradise' Big Island and five No specific media nights on Oahu influence; generally 'End in Honolulu so we aware of Hawaii can get home fast if No sightseeing information search necessary' before visit Volcano alone is the reason to come to the Internet search for Big Island' hotel and rental Alternative: Thailand. car options but cannot travel alone 4. External influences 8. Situation on-site influences General press news stories about Rough coasts; not many breakers volcanoes in Hawaii · Considered helicopter ride to see volcano but Bought travel guidebook after arriving too expensive Studied websites for hotel and car rental

Helmut and Helga were interviewed poolside at their Big Island hotel located in downtown Kailua-Kona

Helmut and Helga Uncovered



Explaining Tourism Behaviour

Phase 1: memories, demographics, ecological factors and unconscious memories influenced Helmut and Helga's decisionmaking criteria. They could not take the trip until their children were old enough to manage for themselves.

Phase 2: **the decision to making actual plans**. Key activity drivers would make or break the trip.

Phase 3: travel behaviour departs from the traditional consumer decision making funnel. At the trip destination, each travel party was exposed to unexpected occurrences and activities

Phase 4: questions whether or not the visitor developed an attachment to the destination



Conclusions

- A thinking-action-thinking streaming approach for understanding the complex and extended decision making that takes place in leisure travel pre-trip, at-site and post-trip interpretations by travellers.
- Trip planning involves many steps and includes many variables: the unstructured decision model allows the decision maker to break down the decisions into manageable feedback loops.
- Long interviews consider the importance of conscious and unconscious thinking in travel decisions
- One surprise is how little pre-trip planning is done possibly by most visitors.
- On-site adjustments are likely to involve a quick evaluation of the trade-offs with little or no cognitive thought. Unconscious thought is important for making these quick decisions because they feel right. In situ interviews allow researchers to observe external influences on tourists' decisions.
- Case study research methods are sometimes criticized because the findings are difficult to generalize to a broad population. However, achieving replication using theoretical sampling of a few cases (fi ve to ten) of narrowly defi ned population segments helps to overcome such criticism and provides the opportunity to construct Boolean-algebra based predictive models