



## Validating a customer well-being index related to natural wildlife tourism



Dong-Jin Lee<sup>a,1</sup>, Stefan Kruger<sup>b,\*</sup>, Mee-Jin Whang<sup>a,1</sup>, Muzaffer Uysal<sup>c,1</sup>,  
M. Joseph Sirgy<sup>d,1</sup>

<sup>a</sup> School of Business, Yonsei University, South Korea

<sup>b</sup> School of Business Management, Faculty: Economic and Management Sciences, North-West University, South Africa

<sup>c</sup> Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA

<sup>d</sup> Department of Marketing, Pamplin College of Business, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, USA

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Customer well-being is predictive of customer loyalty.
- Customer well-being is predictive of perceived value.
- Customer well-being is predictive of behavior-type outcomes.
- Customer loyalty has an influence on behavioral outcomes.
- Customer loyalty is influenced by high-order and low-order need satisfaction.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 6 November 2013

Accepted 1 April 2014

Available online 7 May 2014

#### Keywords:

Customer well-being  
Natural wildlife tourism  
Customer loyalty  
customer perceived value  
Length of stay  
Number of visits  
Park visitor expenditures

### ABSTRACT

This study reports an attempt to validate a customer well-being (CWB) index related to natural wildlife tourism. It was hypothesized that the CWB index related to wildlife tourism has a positive influence on travel outcomes (length of stay, number of visits, and total expenses), mediated by perceived value and customer loyalty. These hypotheses were tested using four waves of surveys of customers (overnight visitors) intercepted at the park in a two-year period. The survey data provided support for the hypotheses, which, in turn, lend validation support to the CWB index. Managerial implications of the customer well-being index are also discussed.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### 1. Introduction

National parks and natural areas as destinations are important tourism and recreational resources and serve as part of the cluster of attractions that people enjoy visiting and spending their leisure time. These places also have economic significance and appreciative consumption importance. Throughout the world, designated places such as national parks, parkways, natural wildlife

sanctuaries, and wilderness areas are frequented by people to engage in appreciative and esthetic recreational consumption. Such consumption may enhance the quality of vacation experience, induce happiness, and contribute to consumer well-being. National parks and natural areas offer visitors with scenic, historical, cultural, and archaeological and scientific value (e.g., Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003; Okech, 2011; Okello, Kenana, & Kieti, 2012; Okello, Wishitemi, & Lagat, 2005; Rogerson, 2011) and satisfy a wide range of human developmental needs grounded in various sources of motivation.

There has been a plethora of empirical studies on natural tourism. Some studies focusing on traveler motivation include benefits-sought by park visitors (e.g., Beh & Bruyere, 2007; Jurowski, Uysal, & Noe, 1993; Kim et al., 2003; Loker-Murphy, 1996), information used by park visitors (e.g., Uysal, McDonald, &

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [djlee81@yonsei.ac.kr](mailto:djlee81@yonsei.ac.kr) (D.-J. Lee), [stefan.kruger@nwu.ac.za](mailto:stefan.kruger@nwu.ac.za) (S. Kruger), [mysterons@yonsei.ac.kr](mailto:mysterons@yonsei.ac.kr) (M.-J. Whang), [samil@vt.edu](mailto:samil@vt.edu) (M. Uysal), [sirgy@vt.edu](mailto:sirgy@vt.edu) (M.J. Sirgy).

<sup>1</sup> The authors share research interest in Quality of Life, positive psychology, tourism, marketing and consumer behavior.

Reid, 1994), and various travel motivations and their importance (e.g., Bresler, 2011; Cini, Kruger, & Ellis, 2013; Galloway & Lopez, 1999; Graefe, 1977, 170 pp.; Iso-Ahola, 1989; Kim et al., 2003; Snepenger, King, Marshall, & Uysal, 2006; Uysal, McDonald, & Martin, 1994). Other studies have focused on outcomes of travel experiences such as park visitor satisfaction (e.g., Akama & Kieti, 2003; Uysal & Noe, 2002), spending behaviors (e.g., Akama & Kieti, 2003; Lee & Han, 2002; Manning, 2011; Saayman & Saayman, 2009), impact on adjacent communities (e.g., Buckley & Pannell, 1990; Fortin & Gagnon, 1999), and among others.

Much of the research literature on customer satisfaction in travel and tourism in general focuses exclusively on some aspects of travel needs (Iso-Ahola, 1980; Noe, 1987; Uysal, 2006; Uysal & Noe, 2002; Uysal & Williams, 2004). With a few exceptions (e.g., Kruger, Rootenber, & Ellis, 2013; Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Yu, 2011), very little research focuses on the totality of the tourist experience. This totality can be captured through tourist's experiences with the park in ways that meet the full spectrum of human developmental needs—basic and growth needs. In that vein, tourist's satisfaction with a variety of basic and growth needs experienced with every facet of tourist's interaction with the park adds to the overall affective repertoire that reflects the park's satisfaction of high-order and low-order needs.

This study focuses on the effects of customer well-being (CWB) related to wildlife tourism. In this study, CWB is conceptualized as a combination of high-order and low-order need satisfaction. Validating CWB measure in wildlife tourism in the context of customer behavioral outcomes should help policy makers design travel programs in ways that effectively enhance CWB as well as other positive behavioral outcomes.

The paper proceeds as follows. First, we will review the literature on traveler motivation. We then conceptualize CWB as a combination of high-order and low-order need satisfaction based on the theoretical notion of need hierarchy (Maslow, 1970) and two factor theory of motivation (Herzberg, 1966). Second, we then develop a predictive model of CWB in relation to behavioral outcomes. Third, we then present the results of four survey studies and implications of the findings.

## 2. Conceptual development

### 2.1. Traveler motivation

There have been extensive studies on travel motivation. In the early 1970s, Driver and colleagues developed a theoretical model based on expectancy theory related to the motivation for outdoor recreation (Driver, 1975; Driver, 1976; Driver, 1985; Driver & Brown, 1975; Haas, & Brown, 1980; Manning, 2012; Schreyer & Driver, 1989). They found that people engage in activities in specific settings to realize psychological outcomes that are expected and valued (cf. Atkinson & Birch, 1972; Manning, 2012).

Graefe (1977, 170 pp.) found eight different motivational states: *learning about nature*, *stress release/solitude*, *challenge/adventure/achievement*, *self-awareness*, *status*, *intra-group affiliation*, *enjoyment*, and *autonomy*. Iso-Ahola (1989) suggested that there are two basic needs related to leisure behavior: *escaping* (i.e., escaping from routine everyday life) and *seeking* (i.e., seeking adventure or friendship building). Satisfaction of *escaping* and *seeking* needs contribute significantly to the well-being of the park visitor. The same motivational factors explain why tourists take trips, what type of experience they seek, what type of destination they target, and the type of activity they become engaged with (e.g., Snepenger et al., 2006).

Uysal, McDonald, & Martin (1994) revealed that *novelty* was the most important motivational factor, followed by *prestige*,

*enhancement of kinship relationship*, and *relaxation*. Galloway and Lopez (1999) found significant relationships between *sensation seeking* and visitors' attitudes toward visiting remote parks, presence of dangerous animals, seeking wildlife, and stimulating/challenging activities. Loker-Murphy (1996) identified *excitement/adventure and meeting local people* as two primary motives for foreign backpackers in national parks in Australia. Research related to Korean national parks found the following motivational factors to be highly prominent in explaining visitors' behavior: *health enhancement*, *climbing*, *family togetherness*, *friendship building*, *escaping from everyday life*, *nature appreciation or study*, *learning about one's religious heritage*, and *adventure* (e.g., Ahn & Kim, 1996; Kim, 1993; Kim, Kim, & Kong, 1989; Kim et al., 2003; Lee, Kim, & Kwon, 1987).

Bresler (2011) also examined motives of visitors to game parks in northern Botswana (Africa) and found that the most important motives were *nature*, *adventure*, *escape*, and *mega-fauna*. And most recently, Cini et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between *intrinsic and extrinsic motives* and life satisfaction of visitors to a national wildlife park in South Africa and found that overnight visitors who are more intrinsically motivated have higher life satisfaction levels, greater positive feelings, and less negative feelings than those who are extrinsically motivated.

### 2.2. Customer well-being (CWB) related to wildlife

The CWB index employed in this study related to natural wildlife tourism is based on needs hierarchy theory (Maslow, 1954, 1970), Herzberg (1966) two-factor theory, and travel/tourism research conducted using visitors of a popular national wildlife park in South Africa—the Kruger National Park (KNP) (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977, 1981; Van Der Merwe & Saayman, 2008). The central theoretical tenet underlying our CWB index is that human developmental needs encompass a wide range of needs grouped in terms of two major categories, namely high-order and low-order needs. High-order needs include the need for self-actualization, esteem, knowledge, and beauty or aesthetics. Low-order needs include physiological, economic, and social. Consumer goods and services that serve to meet the full spectrum of human developmental needs should then be rated highly in terms of CWB than goods and services that satisfy only a small subset of needs (Sirgy, Widgery, Lee, & Yu, 2010). Thus, our CWB index is conceptualized as a combination of high- and low-order needs. That is, CWB is enhanced when the consumption experiences meet the full spectrum of human developmental needs (i.e., safety, economic, family, social, esteem, actualization, knowledge, and aesthetics needs) (Sirgy, Lee, & Kressman, 2006).

The reader should note we are not using Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory to explain how tourists move towards self-actualization. We use Maslow's need hierarchy theory as well as Herzberg's two-factor theory to identify two sets of needs, basic and growth needs, that can be applied to tourists' motives related to natural wildlife parks. In other words, the application of these two theories to the development of a construct and measure of consumer well-being related to natural wildlife parks is limited to the taxonomical nature of human motives, not the human development aspects of how people develop cognitive, affectively, and socially through satisfaction of basic and growth needs. To reinforce this point Pearce and Packer (2013) in a recent review suggested that

... the value of Maslow's work lies not in the hierarchical system associated with his studies but resides more simply in the diversity of motive forces he outlined. All five levels of Maslow's hierarchy can be seen as co-acting in determining a complete motivational profile .... In particular new status- and relationship-informed patterns of motivational aspirations

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1012068>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1012068>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)