

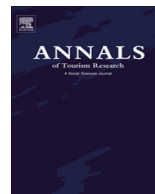


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Habitus and food lifestyle: In-destination activity participation of Slow Food members



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ABSTRACT

A common theme in the tourism literature is that tourists are motivated to travel to escape from ordinariness. This may lead to the assumption that the activities tourists choose to undertake in a region are motivated by the same desire for the extraordinary. Some studies have found travellers who are highly involved in a particular recreational activity are likely to participate in it both at home and while on holidays. This study examines the travel motivations and destination activities undertaken by Slow Food members and finds that they undertake similar cooking and food related activities while away as they do at home. A theoretical explanation for this behaviour is taken from the concept of lifestyle and Bourdieu's *habitus*.

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Introduction

One of the main themes in tourism research is investigating why people travel (Cohen, 1979). Early formative studies, conducted at a time when travel was a relatively new mass phenomenon, emphasise motivations such as to escape from an ordinary life (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Tourists are seen to search for sensation and adventure (Malkin & Rabinowitz, 1998; Swarbrooke, 2003), and stimulation and novelty (Lee & Crompton, 1992) while they are travelling. Tourism studies discuss women from developed countries who travel to the Caribbean to meet beach boys as part of an adventurous trip (Herold, Garcia, & DeMoya, 2001). Students are found to travel for fun and outdoor adventure (Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009). Thus, numerous tourism studies have explained motivation to travel to a

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particular destination in terms of a desire to participate in destination activities that are new or novel (Jang & Cai, 2002; Wamwara-Mbugua & Cornwell, 2009).

With the rapid development of transportation systems, people today travel between destinations much more conveniently, faster, and with lower cost than thirty years ago and so the number of destinations that people visit and revisit nowadays is much higher. As a result, today's travellers may make decisions on which destination activities to undertake upon arrival (McKercher & Chan, 2005). Further, the motivation to undertake these activities may be unrelated to those for visiting the destination and instead be related to the personal, inter-personal, and situational factors at the moment of decision-making; including lifestyle, personality, and past experiences (Chen, Huang, & Cheng, 2009; Decrop, 2006; Wahlers & Etzel, 1985).

It therefore appears that the relationship between tourists' activity preferences in a destination and their daily life activities requires further research. Brey and Lehto (2007) investigated vacation and daily activities of tourists and found that involvement in activities in a home environment can lead to similar actions in a destination. Further, Smith, Pitts, and Litvin (2012) noted that tourists often undertake the same recreational activities when on vacation as at home and suggested that tourists' primary travel decisions of where to go is mainly destination-driven, not activity-driven. LaMondia and Bhat (2012) found that individuals sometimes travelled long distances to participate in leisure activities that they could undertake closer to home due to their loyalty to this particular activity. This study further examines this issue suggesting other concepts such as lifestyle and *habitus* as well as involvement may help to explain the phenomenon.

Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) analysed travel decision-making models, and suggested that future studies should focus on underlying variables that affect choice behaviour such as lifestyle. The concept of lifestyle has been used in the study of decision making and characterises an individual's way of living. It has been used as a basis for psychographic market segmentation (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Scott & Parfitt, 2004). Bourdieu (1984, 1990) elaborated the notion of *habitus* as being related to lifestyle and taste. From Bourdieu's point of view, consumers operate according to a logic of distinction, with economics and cultural capital playing a fundamental role, and embody this distinction according to their own taste. The notion of *habitus* is written in the body through past experience and manifests through lifestyle (Sassatelli, 2007). The body carries and accumulates past memories and displays this lifestyle through choice; hence, model of car, brand of clothing, type of food are all examples of ways that lifestyle can be manifested. *Habitus* can explain the interactions and activities of the individual in a social environment (Reay, 2004). An individual's choices are influenced by *habitus*, that is, in the moment of decision making, the individual depends on prior social and historical forces that shape his/her experience (Allen, 2002).

The aim of this study is to examine the travel motivations and destination activities of members of the Slow Food movement to see if they undertake similar activities when travelling as they usually do at home. The Slow Food movement is a non-profit foundation with over twenty years of history, and with over 100,000 members in 150 countries around the world. The philosophy of Slow Food is based on acquiring *good, clean, and fair* food. Good food is defined as being tasty and diverse, and produced in such a way as to maximise its flavour and connections to a geographic and cultural region. Clean food is sustainable, and helps to preserve rather than destroy the environment. Fair food is produced in socially sustainable ways, with an emphasis on social justice and fair wages (Schneider, 2008). In the movement's view, individuals have a responsibility to know about and participate in their own regional food systems in order to confront their unique issues. The Slow Food movement has evolved from a marginal political system to one that is increasingly respected and which is influential in its recognition of food related norms, rituals and networking as important (Miroso, Wooliscroft, & Lawson, 2011). Slow Food members acknowledge that the pleasure one finds in good food is a source of connection to others and to the condition of the environment (Labelle, 2004; Pollan, 2003).

Literature

Lifestyle and habitus

The concept of lifestyle and its relationship with marketing was first introduced by Lazer (1963). Lazer defined lifestyle as, "...a systems concept. It refers to the distinctive mode of living, in its

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