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Research Paper

A motivation-based segmentation of holiday tourists participating in white-water rafting

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ABSTRACT

Much of the previous research on white-water rafting has investigated the motivations of adventure tourists. This study identifies German tourists' motivations to participate in white-water rafting during their vacation. In addition, the study aims to provide a wider perspective by segmenting holiday tourists depending on their rafting participation motivations. The study focuses on holiday tourists who took a daily white-water rafting tour in the Koprulu Canyon area in Antalya. Using the Leisure Motivation Scale, 375 questionnaires were collected from the survey participants. Firstly, by conducting a factor analysis, *Intellectual, Social, Competence/Mastery, and Stimulus/Avoidance* were identified as the main white-water rafting motivations. Later, a cluster analysis was performed in order to segment tourists according to their motivations. Four groups were obtained: Active Vacationers, Reluctant Vacationers, Moderate Vacationers, and Challenge Seeker Vacationers. Implications derived from the study are presented in the discussion section.

1. Introduction

Destination authorities strive to enhance the attractiveness of their destinations and to increase overall tourist satisfaction by including supporting products such as daily tours and authentic events into traditional tourist experiences (e.g. summer holidays, business travels). Study results also show that there is a high level of interest by tourists for joining daily tours and activities outside their hotels, especially at resort destinations (Horner & Swarbrooke, 2016; Rid, Ezeuduji, & Pröbstl-Haider, 2014). Among those, adventure activities have gained particular importance and popularity in most of the destinations.

Over the last five decades, tourists' travel motivations for participating in adventure tourism have been widely investigated by scholars (Buckley, 2012). These tourists, known as adventure tourists, are shown to have specific motivations, depending on the activity they prefer to engage in. Interestingly, the literature review shows that holiday tourists' motivations for participating in daily adventure tours has generally been an ignored research area. Specifically, there is no study that focuses on daily white-water rafting tours organized at resort destinations; neither is there one that identifies holiday tourists' participation motivations. In addition, motivations of white-water rafting tourists cannot be assumed to be homogenous. In this regard, motivation construct can be used for clarifying different market segments in the rafting context.

The above-mentioned facts in the literature inspired the authors to

ask two critical and fundamental questions: (1) why do tourists participate in white-water rafting during their holidays? and (2) can motivation be used to segment white-water rafting participants? To address these questions, we selected Antalya, Turkey, one of the popular resort destinations in the world with 12,062,597 international tourist arrivals in 2014 (AKTOB-Mediterranean Touristic Hoteliers & Managers Association, 2015), as the research area. The research data were collected from German tourists who constitute the second most important market, in terms of tourist arrivals to Antalya, after Russian tourists, in the last three years (TUOFED-Turkish Hoteliers Federation, 2017).

Although Antalya has been known as a mass tourism destination since the 1980s, it is only since the 2000s that the local authorities have become aware of its natural, cultural, and social potential in generating attractive activities for holiday tourists. Adventure tours (e.g. rafting, jeep safari, scuba diving) that are organized by local travel agencies in different areas of the city are now serving to promote tourist satisfaction. With an estimated 600,000 participants a year, white-water rafting is one of the most popular adventure activities among the tourists in this area. Interestingly, white-water rafting participants' motivations in Koprulu Canyon, Antalya have not been previously examined by researchers in spite of its increasing popularity in tourism. The overall findings of this study are presumed to support the utility of motivations in market segmentation in the white-water rafting context.

The paper continues with a literature review about tourist motivation and typologies. In the following, adventure tourists' motivations

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are summarized. A brief description of Koprulu Canyon is presented in the next section. The method section is followed by the results of the analyses. The paper concludes with a discussion of the findings, some limitations, and future recommendations.

2. Tourist motivation and typologies

In marketing, market segmentation is considered as an attempt to extract homogeneous markets with similar characteristics. In this way, authorities may generate new or tailor-made products and services targeting specific market segments (Jang, Morrison, & O'Leary, 2002). As noted by Dolnicar and Grün (2008), one of the most crucial decisions in segmentation studies is to select the most appropriate segmentation criteria. In tourism literature, various criteria are used by scholars for the purpose of identifying the market segments. The literature review by Bigné, Gnoth, and Andreu (2008) showed that demographics, geographical factors, socio-economic variables, psychographics, and behaviors, including motivations, activities chosen, benefits sought, direct expenditures, usage of information sources, and travel patterns, had been the main criteria used by researchers. In principle, the selected criteria should be measurable and enable the researchers to obtain market segments that comprise individuals with similar characteristics. The obtained market segments are often presented as a tourist typology (Garrod, 2008).

The idea of market segmentation and the need for identification of tourist typologies goes back to the 1970s (Uriely, 2009), with the early studies of Cohen (1972, 1979) and Plog (1977). In his study, Cohen (1972) presented four categories of tourists based on tourist roles, motives, and sought experiences, which are named as the drifter, explorer, individual mass, and organized mass tourists. Differing from Cohen (1972), Krippendorf (1984) proposed a typology with the 'much maligned tourists' (negative stereotypes of people behaving irresponsibly) to 'alternative tourists' (more positive stereotypes respecting local cultures and environment) (Inkson & Minnaert, 2012, p.88), where tourists may be positioned in various points of this two-polar continuum. Plog (1994) used psychographics and personality criteria for identifying tourist typologies. The psychographic-personality dimensions of tourists are named as the venturesomeness, pleasure-seeking, impulsivity, self-confidence, planfulness, masculinity, intellectualism, and people orientation.

These scholars, who followed a behavioral market segmentation framework, often used tourist motivation as a criterion, and identified the tourist typologies in different contexts, such as rural tourism (Rid et al., 2014), casino gambling (Lee, Lee, Bernhard, & Yoon, 2006), and overseas pleasure travel (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). For example, in the context of backpacker tourism, Chen, Bao, and Huang (2014) clustered Chinese backpackers based on their travel motivations and demographics. Three market segments were obtained (self-actualizers, destination experiences, and social seekers) through the use of four motivation dimensions (social interaction, self-actualization, destination experience, and escape and relaxation). Their results showed that the market segments obtained through tourist motivations had distinct characteristics.

In golf tourism, Kim and Ritchie (2012) created a travel motivation-based tourist typology research in a sample of Korean golfers. Through semi-structured interviews and quantitative research, the researchers identified three tourist clusters, namely; golf-intensive golfers, multi-motivated golfers, and companion golfers. The results indicated that golf tourists did not have homogeneous travel motivations. Park and Yoon (2009) investigated Korean tourists' rural tourism motivations for segmentation purposes. Factor analysis results showed the dimensions of motivation in the rural tourism as: relaxation, socialization, learning, family togetherness, novelty, and excitement. Through the use of these motivations, the researchers obtained four market segments, namely: family togetherness seeker, passive tourist, want-it-all seeker, and learning and excitement seeker. The study findings proved that rural

tourists could be clustered according to their motivations.

In sum, the usage of motivation as a market segmentation criterion may enable researchers to generate distinct tourist typologies. Thus, destination and company authorities may prepare marketing strategies that better fit target market expectations and needs through the use of information obtained from such studies.

3. Adventure tourist motivations

Previous research about adventure tourists' motivations can be classified into two categories. On the one hand, there are studies that focus on adventure tourism participation motivation in general. On the other hand, there are studies that examine specific adventure tourism types (e.g. rafting, rock climbing).

Many academics in the first group suggest that risk is one of the common motivations of adventure tourists (Ewert & Hollenhorst, 1989). However, some academics argue that adventure tourists might have diverse motives (Giddy & Webb, 2016; Kerr & Mackenzie, 2012; Walle, 1997). For example, Kerr and Mackenzie (2012), who investigated adventure tourism motivations in general, found that adventure tourists had a diverse range of motives. While risk taking, goal achievement, social motivation, escape from boredom, testing personal abilities, and overcoming fear, connecting with the natural environment, unselfconsciousness, and pleasurable kinesthetic bodily sensations were identified as motives for adventure tourism participation, the authors concluded that the importance of these motives might vary among participants. In addition, a comprehensive literature review by Buckley (2012) revealed that fourteen distinct motivations exist for participation in adventure tourism. The author also concluded that adventure tourists were motivated by thrill or rush instead of an actual risk. However, Buckley (2012) study was criticized by Pomfret and Bramwell (2016), because of its attempt to generalize the motivations for participating in adventure tourism.

A push-and-pull motivation framework has also been used in the identification of adventure tourist motivations by researchers. For example, Giddy and Webb (2016) evaluated adventure tourist motivations in a sample from South Africa. Their results revealed that novelty and appreciation of nature were the most important push motivations, followed by environmental education and escape. Features in the environment emerged as the only statistically significant pull motivation. To summarize, the first group of researchers aimed to explore the main motivations of adventure tourists. Their objective was to clarify why adventure tourists prefer to travel for adventure, and which motivations they share in common. A literature review about adventure tourism by Weber (2001) summarized that gaining insight, risk and uncertainty, gaining and assessing skills, feeling independent, and gaining knowledge about the external environment were the most common motivations of adventure tourists.

A second group of researchers focused on identifying the adventure tourist motivations at an activity level since participant motivations may significantly vary depending on the characteristics of the activities (Pomfret & Bramwell, 2016). The study of Ewert, Gilbertson, Luo, and Voight (2013), for example, which investigates participant motivations and motivational differences relating to four adventure activities over a six-year period, supports this argument. According to the results, sensation-seeking motivation was more important for rock climbers than for canoeists and sea kayakers. In the context of mountaineering, Ewert (1994) investigated high-altitude mountaineers in Alaska and found that exhilaration and excitement were the most important motives. Risk taking did not emerge as an important motive according to the results. The findings also revealed that the pattern of motivation was significantly influenced by experience level. Recently, Pomfret and Bramwell (2016) examined mountaineers' motivations using data obtained from Chamonix, France. Their results reflected the importance of developing mountaineering experience, having an adventure, and taking on new challenges as the push motives for mountaineering

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