WHAT MOTIVATES EVENT TOURISTS?

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ABSTRACT
This paper examines the factors which influence event tourists to attend a particular event. Whilst tourism is an established academic field of study any focus on events as a specific area of research has only recently emerged. As a consequence, little if any research evidence connecting the two exists. In particular, motivation of event tourists appears to be under researched. The review of existing research reported in this paper addresses this gap by firstly reviewing the literature on motivation and what motivates people to be tourists and event attendees. This will then enable a typology of event tourists to be developed for further research.

Key words: tourism, events, event tourists.

INTRODUCTION
A review of tourism literature reveals an abundance of studies on motivation and satisfaction (McGee, Loker-Murphy & Uysal 1996; Bramwell 1998; Ross & Iso-Ahola 1991), however there is an apparent lack of research into the motivational factors which influence event tourists. Event tourism is globally important in terms of its popular appeal and ability to generate travel and tourism related benefits to destinations. Although research has been undertaken into the internal and external forces of the destinations attributes (i.e. climate, culture) and how they motivate travellers (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994) and the fact that there has been an increased interest in discovering what motivates tourists behaviour (Gnoth, 1997; Wann & Branscombe, 1993) there has been an apparent lack of focus into defining what motivates event tourists. Hence the aim of this paper is to analyse the motivational factors which influence event tourists to attend an event.
WHAT ARE MOTIVATIONS?

To be motivated means to be moved to do something (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A person who has no stimulus to act, is considered to be unmotivated. On the other hand a person who is moved to act is seen as motivated. Motivation can vary from the levels of motivation (how much motivation) and also the orientation of the motivation (what type of motivation).

Underlying all behaviour are needs and motivations grounded in the basic physiological and socio-psychological wants of all humans. The standard theories of motivation applied to understanding leisure and tourism behaviour are (Murray’s (1938) Needs Theory of Personality, Maslow’s (1943) Hierarchical Theory of Needs and Berlyne’s (1960) concept of optimal level of stimulation.

Murray (1938 pp.123) explained that “A need is a stimulus – a force pushing an individual in a certain direction or to behave in a certain way’ and identified 12 physiological needs which are viewed as primary needs, and include air, water, food and security, and also identified 28 psychological needs which are considered secondary needs and are connected to mental or emotional satisfaction. Murray postulated that needs are changeable and that they gain or lose importance as they are satisfied and in fact, suggested that there is a ‘need cycle’ and that needs can be dormant during the non-stimulated period, and are susceptible to stimuli during the ready period and so determine an individuals behaviour during the active period and also suggested that these needs work in combination with each other.

A more structured approach was adopted in Maslows (1943) Hierarchical Theory of Needs which suggested that peoples behaviour is driven by both physiological and socio-psychological needs. However, Maslow had a more structured hierarchical order to the needs of activation and satisfaction. He believed that the lower-order needs (psychological needs followed by safety needs) had to be satisfied before an individual could work on the higher-order needs of love, belongingness and self-esteem. At the top of the hierarchy of needs is self-actualisation which is an opportunity for individuals to ‘become everything that one is capable of becoming (Maslow, 1943 pp. 382).
Dispite this apparent difference Maslow (1970) agreed with the research by Murray (1938) that behaviour may be motivated by one or more needs and suggested that the hierarchy of needs may not be as rigid as it first implies. Research using both theories into tourism and leisure have found that the relationship between needs and activity choice is quite complex (e.g. Driver & Knopf 1977; Tinsley, Barrett & Kass 1977; Allen 1982; Iso-Ahola & Allen 1982; Pearce 1982; Beard & Bagheb 1983; Pearce & Caltabiano 1983; Mills 1985). This research has lea to the belief that behaviour is multidimensional and that the same activity may be motivated by a variety of needs at different times for the one individual or that one activity may have different meanings to another person at the same time (Crandell, 1980). No matter how complex the relationships may be, the motivation theory still provides insights into why people choose to take part in certain events or activities i.e. being an event tourist.

Further research has indicated that motivation can be referred to as biological/psychological needs and wants, including forces that arouse, direct and integrate a person’s behaviour and activity (Dann, 1981; Pearce, 1982; Uysal & Hagan, 1993). Various disciplines have been used to explain the phenomena and characteristics related to motivation. However, they are very complex as they relate to human beings and human nature, which in itself is complex. Whilst in the disciplines of sociology and psychology, motivation is often directed towards cognitive and emotional motives (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) or internal and external motives (Gnoth, 1997). Such internal motives are associated with feelings, instincts and drives whereas external motives involve mental representations such as beliefs or knowledge. MacCannell (1977) notes that from an anthropological viewpoint, tourists are motivated to escape the routine of daily life and seek authentic experiences. Whereas from a socio-psychological point of view, motivation is classified as seeking and avoidance behaviour (Iso-Ahola, 1982).

Event tourists may relate to one or many of the areas mentioned above. They may be escaping their daily routine by seeking an authentic experience at a ‘Sing Sing’ (traditional song and dance) in the South Pacific. Or they may be attending a week long health clinic event to restore their inner strength.
WHAT ARE EVENTS?
Events range from small local events or festivals to what are known as mega events. As there are several types of events and there may be different motivations for attending each type of event. Motivations may include ‘keeping up with the Jones’ to being the ‘first on the block to attend an event’ or just to escape the daily routine. One type of event is a special event and McDonnell, Allen & O’Toole (2002) considers a special event to usually be one-off or infrequent by nature. The special event could then be considered as a mega or hallmark event. Getz (1997 pp 6) defines mega events as:

Their volume should exceed 1 million visits, their capital costs should be at least $500 million, and their reputation should be of a ‘must see’ event. Mega events, by way of their size or significance, are those that yield extraordinarily high levels of tourism, media coverage, prestige or economic impact for the host community or destination.

An example of a mega event would be the Olympic Games which fulfils all of the criteria to which Getz (1997) refers. The Olympics are significant as they yield extraordinary high levels of tourism and prestige and obtain a great deal of media coverage which in turn has further economic impacts on the host community and destination in general.

On the other hand, a hallmark event is considered to be smaller in scale than the mega event and generally has a special meaning or significance for a region or community. Allen, O’Toole, McDonnell & Harris (2002 pp 13) defines hallmark events as:

A major one-time or recurring event of limited duration and often developed to enhance awareness, appeal or profitability of a tourism destination over a short time.

However, Ritchie (1984 p2) enlarges this definition viz:

A major one-time or recurring event of limited duration, developed primarily to enhance awareness, appeal and profitability of a tourism destination in the short term and/or long term. Such events rely their success on uniqueness, status, and or timely significance to create interest and attract attention.
The major point which both these definitions have in common is that they include a reason to celebrate, to bring various groups or individuals together to experience what the event has to offer. The event may last over several weeks or just a day. It may be a one time or recurring event and it may be a public or private sector event. Whichever type of event it is, there is the need to motivate people to take action to attend. Getz (1997) takes the general approach that people attend events to satisfy various personal needs.

**Motivations to attend an event**

There are several groups of motives proposed by McDonnell et al. (1999). The four main groups proposed by McDonnell et al. (1999) are *social motives, organisational motives, physiological motives and personal motives*.

*Social motives* may include the opportunity to experience social interaction with others or of being part of the community spirit which takes place during an event. The event attendee may feel so moved by their social motives that they want to partake of good deeds and may become a volunteer at the event.

The second group are *organisational motives*. These generally include the need for status or recognition that they have been a participant at the event. For example, there is status and/or prestige connected with attending an event such as the Olympic Games. Organisational motives also include sponsorship or community support. For example, organisations want to appear to be supporting the community through their commitment to the event.

*Physiological motives* are the third group and these include the need for relaxation and or exercise depending on the type of event. An attendee at an event expects to eat, drink and to be entertained as part of the event process.

The final group are *personal motives*. These motives can be different for each attendee. Some of the personal motives could include the need to seek new experiences from the mundane. Or to fulfil an ambition i.e. to attend the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. On the other hand it may related to personal development.
Actual attendance itself may be attributed to multiple motives or just a single motive.

Figure 1.1 Motives for attending an event

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Motives</th>
<th>Organisational Motives</th>
<th>Physiological Motives</th>
<th>Personal Motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>Status or recognition</td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Seeking new experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community spirit</td>
<td>Sponsorship or community support</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Fulfilment of ambitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good deeds</td>
<td></td>
<td>Eat, drink and be entertained</td>
<td>Learning and education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from McDonnell et al. 1999.

Motivations of a Tourist
A review of the literature on tourism motivation shows that people travel because they are ‘pushed’ into making a travel decision by internal psychological forces, and ‘pulled’ by the external forces of the destination attributes (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994). Tourists obviously have their own internal and external reasons for travelling (McGee, Loker-Murphy & Uysal, 1996). However, these reasons could have positive or negative impacts on travel satisfaction which has as been used as a tool to assess the outcome of the travel experience (Bramwell 1998; Ross & Iso-Ahola 1991). This concept of motivation can be divided into two groups which indicate that people travel because they are either pushed or pulled to do so by forces or factors (Dann 1977; Dann 1981). These factors illustrate how tourists are pushed by motivation variables into making travel decisions and then how they are pulled or attracted by a destination attributes (Uysal & Hagan 1993). Whilst push motivations are related to the tourists’ desire, the pull factors or motivations are aligned with the attributes of the destination choice (Cha, McCleary & Uysal 1995;
Put simply the push motivations are related to internal or emotional factors whilst pull motivations are connected to the external, cognitive or situational factors.

Crompton (1979) found that push motivations could be grouped into the following areas; escapism, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure and social interaction, family togetherness and excitement. Tourists may travel to escape the monotony of their every day lives and for authentic experiences. The pull motivations are attributed to the overall attractiveness of the destination. Pull factors may include; beaches, cultural attractions, natural scenery, shopping and so forth. However, these push and pull factors may work in tandem and the destination attributes may stimulate and reinforce inherent push factors (McGee et al. 1996). Several research studies have been undertaken using these perspectives (Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pyo, Mihalik & Uysal, 1989; Yuan & McDonald; 1990).

Further research by Iso-Ahola (1982) suggested that individuals perceive a leisure activity as having the potential to produce satisfaction for two reasons. The first reason is that the leisure activity may provide intrinsic rewards (such as mastery and competence) and secondly to escape from routine. In 1987 Kippendorf conducted similar research and found that tourists are motivated by ‘going away from rather than going toward something’ and that tourist motivation is generally self oriented.

Research into the needs, motivations and expectations of tourists has been conducted for several years. Whilst Table 1.1 is not exhaustive it does several researchers who have delved into this field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Researcher</th>
<th>Theory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Murray</td>
<td>Needs theory of personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>Maslow</td>
<td>Hierarchical Theory of Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Hebb &amp; Thompson</td>
<td>Different levels of optimal stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>Berlyne</td>
<td>Optimal level of stimulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.1 Historical research on segments of the tourism industry: needs, motivations and expectations.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Concept/Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Dann</td>
<td>The need to escape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>Schreyer &amp; Roggenbuck</td>
<td>Experience and expectation concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Crompton</td>
<td>Different motivations for different markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>Lopez</td>
<td>Needs motivation and expectations of tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Zuckerman</td>
<td>Sensation seeking concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>Dann</td>
<td>Push Pull concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>Cheron &amp; Ritchie</td>
<td>The concept of risk as motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Lounsbury &amp; Hoopes</td>
<td>Needs motivation and expectations of tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>Maddox</td>
<td>Needs motivation and expectations in tourism behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Parasuraman, Zeithaml &amp; Berry</td>
<td>Expectations are desires and wants of consumers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Geva &amp; Goldman</td>
<td>Needs motivation and expectations of tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Hall &amp; McArthur</td>
<td>Motivation of adventure tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Morgan, Moore &amp; Monsell</td>
<td>Motivation in adventure tourists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Ross &amp; Iso-Ahola</td>
<td>Motivation and satisfaction concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Mansfield</td>
<td>Motivation and satisfaction concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Oliver</td>
<td>Disconfirmation of expectations theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Ivancevich &amp; Matteson</td>
<td>A particular act will result in a particular outcome concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Rossi and Cereatti</td>
<td>Objective risk and subjective risk concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Anderson, Fornell &amp; Lehmann</td>
<td>Changing and adapting expectation concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Gnoth</td>
<td>Push Pull concept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Fulker &amp; Turner</td>
<td>Needs motivation and expectations of novice adventure tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Stewart</td>
<td>Motivation and desired needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Leep &amp; Gibson</td>
<td>Risk avoidance motivation by tourists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is generally accepted that push and pull factors (as motivations) have generally been used in studying tourist behaviour. These studies have played a useful role in understanding the different needs and wants which motivate and influence the behaviour of tourists.

Although past explanations of tourist behaviour has been based on a unidementional approach, many tourism researchers are now moving to more than one motive or need which affects the tourists’ behaviour.

Earlier studies acknowledged the following key motivation elements in relation to tourism. They are; the need to escape (for example a dreary home life) and to seek (new and exciting experiences) (Iso-Ahola 1982; Dann 1977). There is still acceptance of the undimentional approach to motivation on the understanding that a variety of behaviours can be explained as a response of a small number of motivational ‘needs’ (Ryan 1997). This appears to be the main view despite suggestions that motivation may be out-dated since the decision process is a result of many experiences and knowledge of destinations (Parrinello 1993). Gnoth (1997) suggests that that motivation’s two dimensions are lasting dispositions and object-specific elements. The interaction between motivation and the symbolic consumption of tourism experiences for its social or hedonic value, rather than functional utility was identified by Brown (1992).

Tourism motivations versus event motivations
Dann (1977; 1981) and Crompton (1979) have written extensively on ‘push’ and ‘pull’ tourist motivations noting that ‘push’ motivations are internal or emotional factors i.e. the tourists’ desires. On the other hand they stressed that ‘pull’ motivations refer to the destination attributes i.e. external cognitive or situational factors. For example a tourist may want to visit great Grandmothers birth place in Ireland (push) and the airfares are two for the price of one (pull).

However, McDonnell et al. (1999) researched event motivations and divided them into four groups; social motivation (interaction), organisational motivation (status/recognition), physiological motives (relaxation/exercise), personal motives
When comparing the tourism motivations as postulated by Dann (1977; 1981) and Crompton (1979) and the event motivations put forward by McDonnell et al. (1999) it...
appears that no pull motivates have been applied to event motivations. In other words, the importance of beaches, cultural attractions, natural scenery and shopping (to name a few) have not been considered a motivational factor for event attendees. The question is then, will this be the case for event tourists or will pull factors play a part in their motivation to attend an event and if so how important will they be?

DEVELOPING A MOTIVATIONAL TYPOLOGY
There are several proposed motivational typologies in the tourism literature for vacationers, tourists and travellers and many of these typologies are based on segmentation criteria which have been used to sub-divide the travellers into homogeneous groups to assist in the development of targeting and positioning strategies. These criteria can be used separately or in combination (Lang & O’Leary, 1997). Often demographic criteria (such as age) is used (Anderson & Langmeyer, 1982), the benefits the traveller is seeking (Shoemaker 1994; Woodside & Jacobs 1985) and the family life cycle (Fodness, 1992).

Several researchers (Hsieh, O’Leary & Morrison, 1992; Moscardo, Morrison, Pearce, Lang & O’Leary, 1996) have studied behavioural variables such as holiday activities which tourists take part in when on holiday. Attention has also been given to researching the amount of expenditure (Spotts & Mahoney, 1991) distance travelled (Etzel & Woodside, 1982), chosen destination (Lang et al. 1997) and frequency of the journeys (Woodside, Cook & Mindak, 1987). Whereas Swarbrooke & Horner (1999) suggested the more traditional criteria based on geography and economy should be used.

Decrop & Snelders (2005) note that socio-psychological typologies offer a more integrated picture of the traveller because they connect descriptive aspects of the traveller with sociological or psychological variables. Table 2.3 refers to Decrop & Schnelders (2005) typology of socio-psychological variables with references to various researchers.

Table 2.3 Tourist typologies based on socio-psychological variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Major variable(s)</th>
<th>Tourist types</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cha et al. (1995)</td>
<td>Push factors (motives)</td>
<td>Sport seekers, novelty seekers and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen (1972)</td>
<td>Roles, motives and level of risk aversion/novelty seeking</td>
<td>Drifter, explorer, individual mass and organized mass tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen (1979)</td>
<td>Roles, motives and sought experiences</td>
<td>The recreational, the diversionary, the experiential, the experimental and the existential tourist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Davis et al. (1988)</td>
<td>Attitudes, interests and opinions</td>
<td>Five clusters of differing degrees of attitudes towards the state’s tourism efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madrigal &amp; Kahle (1994)</td>
<td>Values and lifestyles</td>
<td>External locus of control (sense of belonging and security), enjoyment/excitement, achievement, egocentrism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayo &amp; Jarvis (1981)</td>
<td>Psychographics</td>
<td>The ‘peace and quiet’ traveller, the overseas traveller, the historian traveller, the recreational vehicle traveller and the ‘travel now/pay later’ traveler.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mazanec (1994)</td>
<td>Socio-styles</td>
<td>Dandy, rocky, business, squadra, protest, scout, pioneer, olvidados, vigilante, romantic, defence, prudent, moralist, citizen, gentry strict.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plog (1974, 1994)</td>
<td>Personality traits</td>
<td>Psychocentrics, midcentrics, near-allocentrics (plus intermediate categories; near-psychocentrics, midcentrics, near-allocentrics)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith (1989)</td>
<td>Motives and lifestyles</td>
<td>Explorer, elite, offbeat, unusual, incipient mass, mass, charter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrane (1997)</td>
<td>Personal values</td>
<td>The modern materialist, the modern idealist, the traditional materialist and the traditional idealist.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Decrop & Snelders 2005 p. 122
Whilst the issue of motivation of tourists has come under some scrutiny the typologies of Dann (1977;1981) and Crompton (1979) which provide the framework for developing an event tourism typology as it includes pull factors together with push factors. The categories include escape, self-exploration, social interaction, prestige, regression, relaxation and improvement in relationships together with external cognitive and situational factors. Recent research by Fairley (2003) noted that nostalgia is also a motivating factor for being an event tourist and should also be considered when developing a typology to define an event tourist.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In summary this paper has drawn attention to a number of significant gaps which have been identified in the literature in relation to event tourists. These are:

- A general reluctance by researchers to adopt a standardised definition of event tourists,
- A general lack of research examining the motivation of event tourists,
- The general lack of current research in providing relevant and reliable constructs known to predict motivations in relation to event tourism,

The limited published evidence available suggests that this could become a valuable source of insight into further development of the understanding of event tourism. As stated previously, limited research has been conducted into the motivational factors influencing event tourists and as it is a global phenomenon it is considered to be of great importance. More research therefore needs to be conducted into this area which will allow a typology to be developed of event tourists.
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Rossi, B. & Cereatti, L. 1993. The sensation seeking in mountain athletes as


