

Market Segmentation in the Decision Making Process in Tourism

Alexandra VINEREAN*

Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

In this paper, I examine the responses of 154 tourists in relation to their predisposition to purchase and the patterns and habits that are usually decisive in the decision making process regarding tourism services or products. For this research, I conducted a selective direct research, whose purpose was to obtain a segmentation of consumers who purchase tourism services based on specific dimensions of behavior. This research also implied studying the behavior of current and potential customers who purchase travel services depending on several variables for establishing different consumption habits. Thus, to establish a more detailed image of the tourists who participated in this direct and selective research, the analysis involved a factor analysis and a cluster analysis.

Keywords: consumer behavior, tourism, market segmentation, tourist dimensions, decision making process

JEL Classification M31, M21

1. Introduction

Consumer behavior could be studied in terms of its many patterns and habits of consumption during the acquisition process, because it depends on different factors that can interfere during a purchase (for example: the type of holiday to be taken, their motives and the determinants of that particular purchase, their lifestyle, the economic situation). Another important disadvantage regarding the tourism products and services is the intangibility of these offers, which often leads to hesitations and distrust during a purchase. This is why individuals may take advices from friends, relatives, travel agents and television which may influence different researches made by companies which studies tourist behavior patterns or habits. Withal, the purchase of the holiday is an important event in a person's life because the trip could represent the chance to escape from the monotony of his life, his work and will become the opportunity to relax, have fun, and enjoy with friends or family, away from home.

Thus, when planning a vacation, a travel agent, needs to take into consideration two types of factors, internal and external to the tourist. The internal factors can be divided into: personal motivators, personality, disposable income, health, family responsibilities, work commitments, past experiences, hobbies and interests, existing knowledge of potential holidays, lifestyle, attitudes, opinions, and perceptions. The external factors are classified into: availability of suitable products; advice of travel agents; information obtained from destinations; tourism organization and the travel media; word-of-mouth recommendations from friends and family, political restrictions on travel, health problems and vaccination requirements in destinations; special promotions and offers from tourism organizations; the climate/destinations of regions

* Corresponding Author:
Alexandra Vinerean, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu

Article History:
Received 03 July 2014 | Accepted 20 July 2014 | Available Online 05 August 2014

Cite Reference:
Vinerean, A., 2014. Market Segmentation in the Decision Making Process in Tourism *Expert Journal of Business and Management*, 2(1), pp. 14-29

(Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). These complex variables are very important into the final purchase decision of an offer with such an emotional value for consumers.

The success of any marketing activity is strictly related to understanding consumers' decision making process to purchase tourism products or services. Being aware of their behavior patterns, habits and the factors that influence their acquisition, tourism companies should comprehend when they could interfere in the process in order to obtain the results they desire. Thus, in this way, enterprises will know how to influence their customers to purchase different products or services that meet their needs and surpass their expectations.

Moreover, due to the extension of the studied field (the area of services), it is crucial for a company that activates in this area to take into consideration market segmentation, in order to be aware of the type the consumers it has to satisfy through their various products or services needed or desired by their potential and loyal customers; and in this way the company will achieve the profitability and success wanted. Thus, in this article, we discuss market segmentation in tourism and exhibit this segmentation through a research and empirical analysis conducted on 154 respondents from Romania.

2. Market Segmentation in Tourism

Market segmentation is defined as the process of dividing a market into more homogeneous groups of people who have needs, desires and similar applications. The purpose of segmentation is to provide the foundation for creating a marketing mix that will perfectly correspond the clients from the targeted segment. This explains the fact that the market segmentation is a form of consumer classification used to provide marketing support functions in an organization of tourism (Dibb et al., 2001).

Segmentation aims to improve the combination of the 4Ps: product, price, placement and promotion; however, organizations have to keep in mind that marketing success is not only due to using a single segmentation methods, it is important to use and combine all four types of segmentation (respectively six types in tourism), thereby establishing a hybrid segmentation to achieve profits or expected results of a company. Therefore, existing or potential customers can be divided by five criteria, the groups that have similar characteristics as the buyers, including: geographic segmentation, demographic, behavioral, and psychographic.

2.1. Geographical Segmentation

Geographical segmentation is based on collecting and analyzing information according to the physical location of the customer (Swarbrooke et al., 2003). Also, this type of segmentation divides markets into different geographical areas by region, country, city, population, climate, and so on.

2.2. Socioeconomic Segmentation

This method inquires companies to subdivide markets by different socioeconomic variables. Socioeconomic variables are represented by: income, occupation, education, lifestyle, price sensitivity, and brand preference (Swarbrooke, 1999).

2.3. Demographic Segmentation

This form of segmentation is based on different characteristics and is really important for tour operators and travel agents to better understand their customers who are planning a trip, such as: sex, age, religion, family status (Swarbrooke, 1995).

2.4. Psychographic Segmentation

This form of segmentation is considered to be a modern technique that already has begun to influence different areas, including clothing, food, perfume, cars, jewelry, drink and tourism (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). This technique is based on the idea that factors like attitudes, lifestyles, opinions and personalities of people determine their behavior as consumers.

2.5. Behavioral Segmentation

This technique involves the relationship between the consumers themselves and the product. According to Swarbrooke and Horner (2007), this method incorporates different variables like: user status (never used, ex-user, first-time user, regular user); readiness stage (unaware, aware and interested, desirous of purchasing, intent on purchasing, planning to purchase immediately); attitude towards product (enthusiastic, indifferent, hostile); benefits sought (status, economy, new experiences, good service,

excitement, making friends); loyalty to the product (total, partial, none); purchase occasions (regular purchaser, once-in-a lifetime purchaser).

Even though these types of segmentation are known to be successful in any area, some academics have searched for some techniques relevant only in tourism, Middleton and Clarke (2001) suggested there are six ways of segmenting markets in travel and tourism:

- Purpose of travel;
- Buyer needs, motivations and benefits sought;
- Buyer and user characteristics;
- Demographic, economic and geographic characteristics;
- Psychographic characteristics;
- Price.

Therefore, the segmentation of the tourism market is vital for a company because it provides competitive advantages and a clearer image of the targeted audience, thus allowing companies to direct their marketing efforts to a target group. Thus, once the market is reduced to the smallest homogeneous components (be it by a few individuals, or a group), a company is forced to ask marketers to find common dimensions which will allow the firm to transform these individuals or groups in profitable segments. Also, a short tourist market segmentation is promoted by Kolb, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Tourism market segmentation

Ways of segmentation	The target group
Demographic segmentation	Visitors segmented by age, income, sex, family status, ethnicity ..
Geographical Segmentation	Visitors who travel practical local, regional, national, international
Psychographic Segmentation	Visitors seeking relaxation, adventure, unpredictable events, concerts ...
Segmentation depending on use	Traditional tourists, visitors on business trips, visitors religious tourism.

Source: Kolb B., *Tourism Marketing for cities and towns: Using branding and events to attract tourists*. 2008

Behavioral influences are not included in the classification given by Kolb, but they could be interpreted in the tourism area from the perspective of the relationship between the tourist with the tourism service or product, more precisely the benefits sought by him from buying some regular products (Swarbrook and Horner, 2007).

3. Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses for this research are proposed according to literature review, however they are newly formed and have not been examined in previous academic work.

Objective 1: The segmentation of respondents, according to certain latent traits.

Hypothesis 1: There are at least two distinct segments of respondents.

Objective 2: The creation of factors based on the respondents' common characteristics.

Hypothesis 2: After the analysis, there will be at least 10 new factors with common characteristics.

Objective 3: Determining the main influence on the attitudes of respondents when choosing a travel package.

Hypothesis 3: Subjective influences are the ones that have a greater impact in the formation of attitudes, when choosing a holiday.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Context

The research setting for this paper refers to the study of consumer behavior in tourism and the determinants, factors, preferences, and habits that influence the decision making process of an acquisition with hedonic and utilitarian dimensions. This research aims to explore these aspects using exploratory factor analysis and clustering of respondents.

One of the most important contributions of a marketing research is to define the marketing research problem that requires the provision of marketing solutions (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.15). The problem

definition for this conducted research is in regard to the better understanding of the dimensions that affect tourist behavior.

4.2. Research Instrument and Data Collection

The research instrument consisted of a survey of eight questions that will be analyzed (in addition to three socio-demographic questions). Constructs used in the model are presented in Table 2 in terms of their conceptual and operational definition. All the scales are newly formed and have not been used in other research. The measurement of each variable was realized using a particular scale chosen depending on the nature of the study (Table 2), and objectives of the research.

Table 2. Conceptual and operational definition of variables used in research

Question no. and dimension explored	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Q1. Habit of traveling	Ways of travelling that have acquired a consistency on tourism services acquisition.	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1a. Luxury hotel (4-5 star) • Q1b. Mid-level hotel (2-3 star) • Q1c. Pension / Guesthouse • Q1d. Motel • Q1e. Rented apartments and houses • Q1f. Camping • Q1g. Hostel
Q2. Habit of traveling	Ways of travelling in terms of transport favored by consumers of tourism services.	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q2a. Airplane • Q2b. Car • Q2c. Bus • Q2d. Train • Q2e. Ship / boat
Q3. Habit of traveling	The time period in which consumers generally organize their travels.	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q3a. 2-4 days • Q3b. 4-7 days • Q3c. More than 7 days
Q4. Attitude	Learned predisposition of searching for information	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q4a. Magazines, newspapers, radio, TV • Q4b. Previous experience • Q4c. Recommendations from friends and relatives (WOM) • Q4d. Internet websites • Q4e. Social media • Q4f. Online forums • Q4g. Travel agents • Q4h. Tourism fairs
Q5. Attitude	Learned predisposition related to the quality of tourism services and return to the same tourist destinations.	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q5a. Quality of accommodation (hotel, restaurant, bar) • Q5b. Sightseeing (nature, weather, etc.) • Q5c. Price • Q5d. Customer Care (adequate facilities for children, great relationships with customers, allowing pets, etc.) • Q5e. Cultural and historical attractions
6. Attitude	Determinants that have a consistency in the choice of tourist destinations	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q6a. Accommodation facilities • Q6b. Scenery and sightseeing • Q6c. Weather conditions • Q6d. Historical tourist attractions • Q6e. Customer care • Q6f. Places to Eat

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q6g. Night life entertainment • Q6h. Relaxation opportunities • Q6i. Religious trips • Q6j. Cultural events
7. Attitude	Factors that have a consistency in the influence of the respondents' decision to purchase a travel package	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q7a. Auxiliary activities • Q7b. Facilities for families • Q7c. Price
8. Traveling habit	The ways tourists tend to travel.	1 2 3 4 5: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q8a. With the family • Q8b. In a couple • Q8c. With friends

The primary scope of this study is to understand the behavior of Romanian consumers in tourism. From January 4 to March 14, 2014, an online survey was posted on various social media outlets and different groups devoted to tourism, and members we invited to support this survey. The study used primary data, namely data originated specifically to address the research problem. The online survey generated 154 usable questionnaires. Table 3 presents the profile of the respondents.

Table 3. Respondents' profile

Sex	Age	Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Male	< 20 years	Pupils	2	100.0	100.0
	Between 20-25 years	Students	10	37.0	37.0
		Employee full-time	11	40.7	77.8
		Employee part-time	1	3.7	81.5
		Free independent	4	14.8	96.3
		Unemployed	1	3.7	100.0
		Total	27	100.0	
	Between 25-30 years	Employee full-time	9	100.0	100.0
	Between 30-35 years	Employee part-time	4	66.7	66.7
		Free independent	2	33.3	100.0
		Total	6	100.0	
	Over 40 years	Employee full-time	1	100.0	100.0
	Total male respondents			45	29.2
Female	< 20 years	Pupils	4	100.0	100.0
	Between 20-25 years	Students	63	69.2	69.2
		Employee full-time	23	25.3	94.5
		Employee part-time	2	2.2	96.7
		Free independent	3	3.3	100.0
		Total	91	100.0	
	Between 25-30 years	Students	1	12.5	12.5
		Employee full-time	6	75.0	87.5
		Free independent	1	12.5	100.0
		Total	8	100.0	
	Between 30-35 years	Employee full-time	3	60.0	60.0
		Free independent	1	20.0	80.0
		Unemployed	1	20.0	100.0
		Total	5	100.0	
	Over 40 years	Full-time employee	1	100.0	100.0
Total female respondents			109	70.8	

5. Empirical Analysis and Results

5.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis

5.1.1. Habits of Accommodation, Transportation, and Travel Period

In this paper, we want to propose a segmentation of the tourist consumer behavior and in order to achieve this objective we conducted an exploratory factor analysis as a preliminary stage designed to lead to a better clustering by reducing the number of scales.

Thus, factor analysis was used to reduce the number of variants of questions. Factor analysis is a technique of general linear model (GLM), which means that we used data that reflected interval or proportional scales in SPSS v 2.0.

Factor analysis has two distinct phases. The first phase involves the extraction of a small number of factors out of all the data. These factors can be interpreted as the basis of attitudes reflected in the respondents' answers to those specific questions. There are several methods of extraction, but the method used in this analysis was Principal Components. In the second phase, the factors are rotated to facilitate interpretation. Varimax rotation is the method most frequently used in the data analysis of questionnaires and it was also used in this paper. Varimax is an orthogonal rotation method that aims to minimize the number of variables that have a high 'weight' on each factor, thus helping to a better interpretation and more relevant factors (Fields, 2005, pp.160-165).

Next, we will present the resulted factors based on several research questions used in trying to explain consumer behavior in tourism. These questions were grouped to obtain factors that better explain the basis of tourists' attitudes.

First, we conducted a factor analysis on three questions: question 1 which reflected the accommodation preferred by tourists, question 2 which reflected the means of transport that the respondents prefer, and question 3 which reflected the preferred trip period for arranging their holidays. These three questions consisted of 15 attributes measured with Likert scales, for a better understanding of the types of consumers in tourism.

Initially, we conducted a test to demonstrate and check the adequacy of factor analysis. The 'Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy' (KMO) test is usually used as an index that compares the magnitude of the observed correlation coefficients with the magnitude of the partial correlation coefficients. Small values of the KMO indicator show that these correlations between pairs of variables cannot be explained and a factor analysis would not be appropriate. In general, it is desirable to obtain a value higher than 0.5. For questions 1, 2 and 3 the KMO value obtained was 0.695. Thus, we can proceed with the factor analysis and the interpretation of the resulted factors.

In table 4, the Eigenvalues refer to the variation explained or justified in the analysis. Eigenvalues associated with each factor represent the variance explained by a particular linear component. SPSS also displays Eigenvalues from the perspective of the percentage of accounted variance.

Table 4. Total variance explained for the habits of accommodation, transportation, and travel period

Item	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.782	18.549	18.549	2.782	18.549	18.549	1.793	11.953	11.953
2	1.706	11.371	29.92	1.706	11.371	29.92	1.784	11.893	23.846
3	1.503	10.018	39.939	1.503	10.018	39.939	1.661	11.071	34.918
4	1.383	9.217	49.156	1.383	9.217	49.156	1.511	10.075	44.993
5	1.197	7.982	57.138	1.197	7.982	57.138	1.491	9.939	54.932
6	1.074	7.163	64.301	1.074	7.163	64.301	1.405	9.37	64.301
7	0.942	6.282	70.583						
8	0.813	5.423	76.006						
9	0.693	4.619	80.625						
10	0.664	4.425	85.049						
11	0.561	3.742	88.791						
12	0.53	3.533	92.324						
13	0.404	2.695	95.018						
14	0.397	2.646	97.664						
15	0.35	2.336	100						

Table 4 shows the total variance and the number of factors selected (in this case, six factors of a total of 15 components) and the variance of each one, before and after rotation. The procedure automatically identifies factors that explain a variance greater than individual responses. Before rotation, the first factor explained 18.54% of the total variance. But after rotation, (the final part of the table labeled ‘Rotation Sums of Squared loadings’), first factor explains 11.95% of the total variance. Similarly, all six factors extracted explained 64.30% of the total variance, which is a somewhat satisfactory level for data interpretation. Rotation has the effect of optimizing the structure of the factor and the immediate consequence of this is the equivalence of the relative importance of the created factors.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix for the habits of accommodation, transportation, and travel period

	Component					
	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Q3a. 2-4 days	0.076	0.136	-0.432	0.308	0.187	-0.451
Q3b. 4-7 days	-0.129	-0.072	-0.205	0.056	0.169	0.808
Q3c. More than 7 days	-0.053	0.024	0.784	-0.247	-0.04	-0.025
Q1a. Luxury hotel (4-5 star)	-0.618	-0.13	0.315	0.182	-0.012	0.029
Q1b. Mid-level hotel (2-3 star)	-0.009	-0.12	0.028	-0.088	0.847	0.077
Q1c. Pension / Guesthouse	0.278	0.222	-0.051	0.19	0.63	0.08
Q1d. Motel	0.192	0.607	0.245	0.15	0.099	0.335
Q1e. Rented apartments and houses	0.165	0.223	0.108	0.616	-0.338	0.339
Q1f. Camping	-0.049	0.729	-0.398	0.088	0.033	-0.27
Q1g. Hostel	0.123	0.84	0.11	-0.013	-0.047	-0.077
Q2a. Airplane	-0.459	0.066	0.08	-0.489	0.026	0.385
Q2b. Car	-0.14	0.038	-0.166	0.775	0.166	-0.065
Q2c. Bus	0.567	0.062	0.046	0.058	0.385	-0.238
Q2d. Train	0.778	0.088	-0.086	0.071	0.046	0.018
Q2e. Ship / boat	-0.266	0.087	0.655	0.136	0.08	-0.137

In table 5, we can see which variables are most relevant for each of the resulted factors, and knowing these aspects we can proceed to name each new variable.

The first factor will be called ‘*Tourists focused on savings (F1)*’ because they avoid luxury accommodation (-0.618) and they prefer means of transport to the detriment of the more expensive type (such as aircraft (-0.459)) due to high scores recorded for train (0.778) and bus (0.567).

The second factor will be referred to as ‘*Tourists who opt for cheaper accommodation (F2)*’, such as camping (0.729), hostel (0.84) and motels (0.607).

The third factor will be called ‘*Tourists who prefer longer and luxurious trips (F3)*’ because of high scores achieved in ship/boat (0.655), 4-5 Star Luxury Hotel (0.315), and travel longer than 7 days (0.784).

The fourth factor will be called ‘*Independent travelers who organize their trips on their own (F4)*’ because they tend to ride by their personal car (0.775) and opt for rented apartments or houses (0.616). Also, these tourists opt to travel for longer periods of time.

The fifth factor will be denoted as ‘*Tourists who choose affordable accommodation (F5)*’ in accordance with their income due to the 0.847 score for average 2-3 star hotel and the 0.63 score for guesthouses.

The sixth and final factor extracted will be referred to as ‘*Comfortable tourists (F6)*’ because they use aircraft transportation (0.385) and opt for 4-7 day trips (0.808).

5.1.2. Preferred Sources of Information

The same procedure was used for question 4 which reflected the information sources the respondents use when deciding to make holiday or trip arrangements. This question was measured in the survey with a 5-point Likert scale and the results are shown in the following table (Table 6). The result of the KMO test was 0.611, therefore, a factor analysis is relevant in this case. Three factors were extracted and they explain 64.86% of the total variance.

Table 6. Total variance explained for the preferred sources of information

Item	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.395	29.936	29.936	2.395	29.936	29.936	1.862	23.269	23.269
2	1.575	19.684	49.62	1.575	19.684	49.62	1.757	21.969	45.238
3	1.219	15.242	64.862	1.219	15.242	64.862	1.57	19.624	64.862
4	0.939	11.736	76.599						
5	0.59	7.37	83.968						
6	0.522	6.523	90.491						
7	0.432	5.404	95.895						
8	0.328	4.105	100						

As in the previous case, we used Rotated Component Matrix (Table 7) to name the created factors based on Likert scales. In what follows, we associate the extracted factors from question 4 with different types of sources of information (subjective and objective) that tourists consult to search information related to their decision to purchase a tourism package.

The first factor was called ‘*Traditional marketing sources – objective (F7)*’. This new factor reflects tourists who get information from (a) magazines, newspapers, radio, TV (0.407); (b) travel agencies (0.857); (c) tourism fairs (0.868) (Table 7).

For the formation of the second factor we can observe important scores for the Internet (0.809), social media networks (0.772), and online forums (0.659). Therefore, we named this factor ‘*Online marketing sources - objective and subjective (F8)*’ (Table 7). This name reflects both objective sources such as websites (0.809) of agencies or hotels, but also subjective sources in terms of the exposure to tourism experiences of close friends on social media networks (0.772) or of tourists who post on online forums (0.659), such as TripAdvisor.

The third factor extracted incorporated scores from personal sources of the respondents, in terms of previous experience (0.871) and recommendations of their relatives or close friends (0.814). Thus, this factor was called ‘*Personal sources – subjective (F9)*’ (Table 7).

Table 7. Rotated Component Matrix for the preferred sources of information

	Component		
	F7	F8	F9
Q4a. Magazines, newspapers, radio, TV	0.407	0.206	0.344
Q4b. Previous experience	0.057	-0.054	0.871
Q4c. Recommendations from friends and relatives (WOM)	-0.11	0.031	0.814
Q4d. Internet websites	-0.094	0.809	0.026
Q4e. Social media	0.204	0.772	0.072
Q4f. Online forums	0.377	0.659	-0.089
Q4g. Travel agents	0.857	0.045	-0.124
Q4h. Tourism fairs	0.868	0.155	0.031

5.1.3. Reasons for Returning to a Travel Destination

We also conducted a factor analysis on question 5 which reflected the factors that would cause the respondents to return to a previous destination they already traveled to. For this question, we also conducted a ‘Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy’ test and obtained a score of 0.655 showing the relevancy of the analysis. Thus, we proceeded to extract factors and the results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Total variance explained for the reasons for returning to a travel destination

Item	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.723	34.451	34.451	1.723	34.451	34.451	1.451	29.02	29.02
2	1.081	21.616	56.067	1.081	21.616	56.067	1.352	27.047	56.067
3	0.932	18.645	74.713						

4	0.75	14.991	89.704
5	0.515	10.296	100

Table 9. Rotated Component Matrix for the reasons for returning to a travel destination

	Component	
	F10	F11
Q5a. Quality of accommodation	0.861	-0.13
Q5b. Sightseeing	0.315	0.517
Q5c. Price	0.484	0.146
Q5d. Customer Care	0.599	0.52
Q5e. Cultural and historical attractions	-0.132	0.881

Thus, two factors were extracted and will be named according to their scores presented in Rotated Component Matrix (Table 9).

The first factor is represented by the hedonic elements associated with the services provided by the facility that provides the accommodation: quality (0.861) and attention provided by the staff of the tourism institution for tourists (0.599). This factor will be entitled ‘*Tourists who want indulgence*’ (F10).

The second factor includes in addition to the services and attention provided by the staff and the elements related to the external environment and the diverse range that the destination can offer tourists: sightseeing and tourist attractions. Thus, we can observed that a relatively large percentage of tourists disregard utilitarian aspects such as the price, but focuses on the factors that give them pleasure, namely, the hedonic aspects. Therefore, this factor is named ‘*Tourists who appreciate sightseeing*’ (F11).

5.1.4. Factors and Determinants that Affect the Purchase Decision of a Travel Package

Further, we applied factor analysis for another three questions: question 8 which reflected how tourists tend to travel, question 7 which reflected the most important factors that influence the respondents’ decision to purchase a travel package, and question 6 which reflected determinants and their importance in the choice of tourist destinations. These three questions present a number of 16 scales that are measured with a 5-point Likert scale. Again, the KMO test was conducted and we obtained a result of 0.702, indicating the relevancy of factor analysis. Of the 16 scales of these three questions, five factors were extracted, and these factors explain 57.91% of the variance in the responses (Table 3.11).

Table 10. Total variance explained for factors and determinants that affect the purchase decision of a travel package

Item	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.512	21.952	21.952	3.512	21.952	21.952	2.493	15.579	15.579
2	1.817	11.354	33.307	1.817	11.354	33.307	2.222	13.886	29.465
3	1.431	8.947	42.253	1.431	8.947	42.253	1.644	10.276	39.741
4	1.298	8.113	50.366	1.298	8.113	50.366	1.623	10.146	49.888
5	1.208	7.55	57.916	1.208	7.55	57.916	1.285	8.028	57.916
6	0.947	5.918	63.834						
7	0.892	5.573	69.408						
8	0.792	4.947	74.355						
9	0.73	4.565	78.92						
10	0.667	4.168	83.089						
11	0.603	3.769	86.858						
12	0.534	3.34	90.198						
13	0.475	2.97	93.169						
14	0.427	2.672	95.841						
15	0.365	2.283	98.124						
16	0.3	1.876	100						

Table 11. Rotated Component Matrix for the factors and determinants that affect the purchase decision of a travel package

	Component				
	F12	F13	F14	F15	F16
Q7a. Auxiliary activities	0.081	0.742	-0.019	0.35	0.23
Q7b. Facilities for families	0.097	0.764	-0.024	-0.019	0.038
Q7c. Price	0.089	0.204	0.045	0.596	0.163
Q6a. Accommodation facilities	0.77	0.086	-0.007	0.205	0.168
Q6b. Scenery and sightseeing	0.368	0.184	0.433	0.151	0.483
Q6c. Weather conditions	0.066	-0.003	0.699	0.088	0.008
Q6d. Historical tourist attractions	0.113	0.157	0.691	-0.005	-0.012
Q6e. Customer care	0.77	0.002	0.306	0.02	-0.056
Q6f. Places to Eat	0.818	0.168	-0.016	-0.128	-0.058
Q6g. Night life entertainment	0.399	0.263	-0.119	0.223	-0.603
Q6h. Relaxation opportunities	0.403	0.369	0.244	0.108	0.037
Q6i. Religious trips	0.016	0.565	0.343	-0.304	-0.328
Q6j. Cultural events	0.201	0.594	0.236	-0.246	-0.193
Q8a. With the family	-0.031	0.257	0.044	-0.6	0.403
Q8b. In a couple	0.315	0.06	-0.369	-0.004	0.507
Q8c. With friends	0.012	-0.069	0.097	0.694	-0.078

Similar to the previous cases, we used the Rotated Component Matrix (Table 11) to name the factors created using Likert statements. The first factor is represented by tourists that travel in a couple (0.315) and focus on the whole tourism package characterized primarily by hedonic variables, such as: quality of service (0.77), courtesy of staff (0.77), locals (0.818) that they can visit on their trip, opportunities for relaxation (0.403), and entertainment (0.399). This factor is called *'Relaxing tourism for couples (F12)'*.

The second factor is named *'Religious tourism with the family (F13)'* because it presents tourists who travel with their family (0.257), who opt for cultural events (0.594), as well as religious trips (0.565), and need appropriate hedonic aspects corresponding to their current status (tourists children) that they can accomplish during their tourism experience (0.764). Also, throughout their vacation they want to experience auxiliary activities, such as various special programs organized at the hotel or excursions that would please their children (0.742).

The third factor consists of tourists who tend to travel alone and prefer to visit various tourist attractions (0.691), focusing on the landscape offered by these destinations (0.433), while taking into account the weather (0.699) before organizing their trip. This factor will be called *'Solitary tourists (F14)'*.

The penultimate factor is called *'Tourists who travel with friends and focus on price (F15)'* will include tourists who travel in groups of friends (0.694) and opt to travel at an attractive price (0.596). This utilitarian determinant is crucial for their tourist destination choice for their monthly income. Nonetheless, these tourists wish to engage in various activities during their vacations (0.35).

The last factor is represented by consumers who opt for family travel (0.403) or with a group of friends (0.507). They are also attracted to the surrounding areas (0.483) they are visiting, but are not fond of the night life entertainment (-0.603). Thus, this factor is entitled *'Tourists with family or in a couple who prefer a low key trip (F16)'*.

5.2. Cluster Analysis

After detecting certain differences between the questionnaire's respondents, as these differences were highlighted using factor analysis, we also performed a cluster analysis. Clustering was used to group respondents with similar behaviors, based on preferences and attitudes of tourists. Through segmentation, we can have a better understanding of the similarities and differences between respondents. Clustering is based on the concept of creating groups based on proximity or distance. Therefore, respondents are relatively homogeneous a cluster.

In data analysis, we used the Two-Step Cluster analysis, and to obtain relevant results, we used only the scale newly formed variables by factor analysis. Figure 1 displays the three clusters that were obtained in accordance with 16 variables.

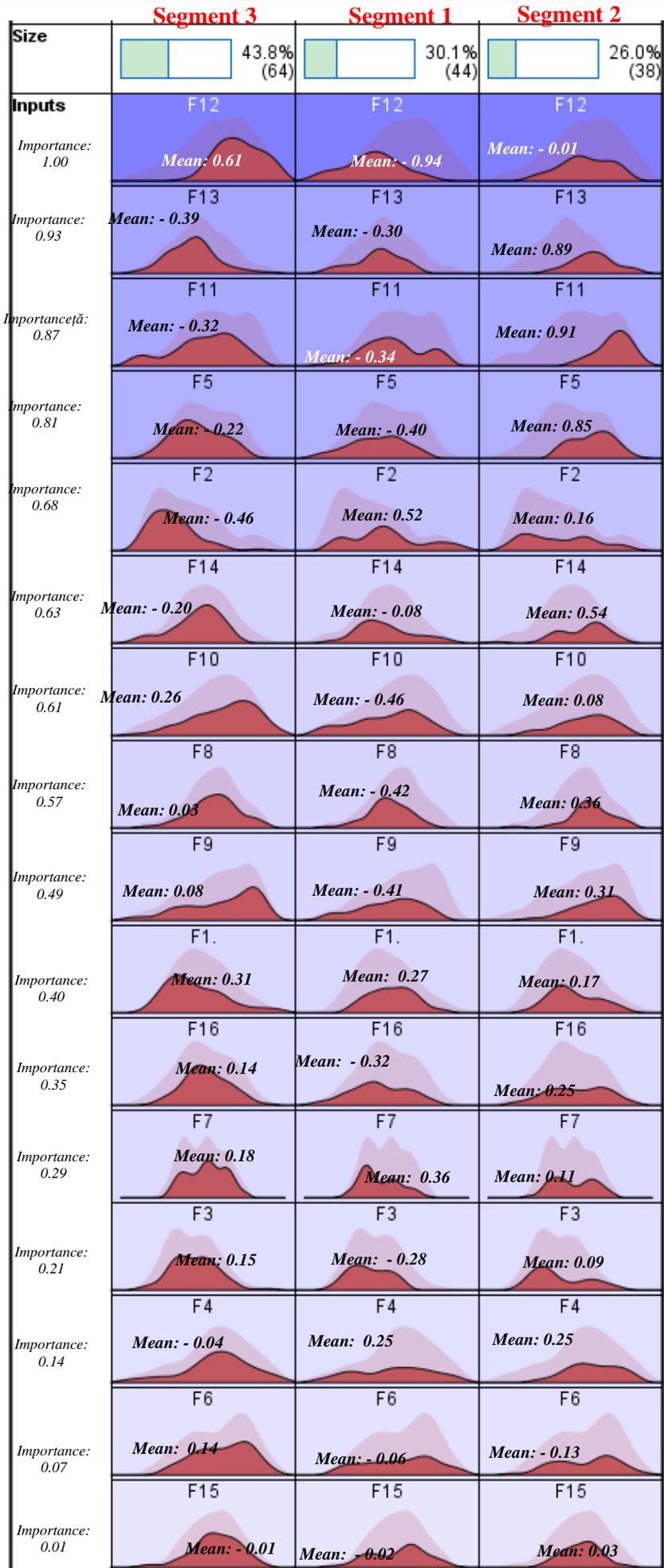


Figure 1: The mean and the distribution of the observed values for each segment

F1: Tourists focused on savings	F9: Personal sources – subjective
F2: Tourists who opt for cheaper accommodation	F10: Tourists who want indulgence
F3: Tourists who prefer longer and luxurious trips	F11: Tourists who appreciate sightseeing
F4: Independent travelers who organize their trips on their own	F12: Relaxing tourism for couples
F5: Tourists who choose affordable accommodation	F13: Religious tourism with the family
F6: Comfortable tourists	F14: Solitary tourists
F7: Traditional marketing sources – objective	F15: Tourists who travel with friends and focus on price
F8: Online marketing sources - objective and subjective	F16: Tourists with family or in a couple who prefer a low key trip

Further, we will interpret and discuss each resulted cluster.

5.2.1. Segment 1

Cluster 1 equivalent to segment 1 contains 29.3% of all of the database’s observations, i.e. 44 respondents who focus on savings and not very demanding. They tend to opt for rented houses in their travels and use their own transportation to save money, but in some cases prefer to fly if the destination is too far away.

Tourists from cluster 1, do not focus on hedonic aspects, such as luxury (-0.46) or the surroundings of their destination (-0.34).

The respondents of segment 1 have in common with the tourists of cluster 2 the fact most of the time that they opt for a type of tourism that is the most accessible and appropriate for the types of trips they pursue.

However, contrary to the tourists in segment 2 who consider the online information sources that are both subjective and objective (0.36), the representatives of cluster 1 are somewhat reluctant to these sources of information and prefer, in some cases, to take into account the traditional and objectives sources because they give them more confidence in the information provided.

This segment includes a greater number of women than men, aged 20-25 years, who generally spend on their journeys between 500-2000 Euros and are not oriented towards activities aimed at indulgence or spoiling. One of the reasons for rejecting this hedonic factor could be the fact that, usually, these tourists travel in groups or alone, and they prefer other types of activities during their vacations.

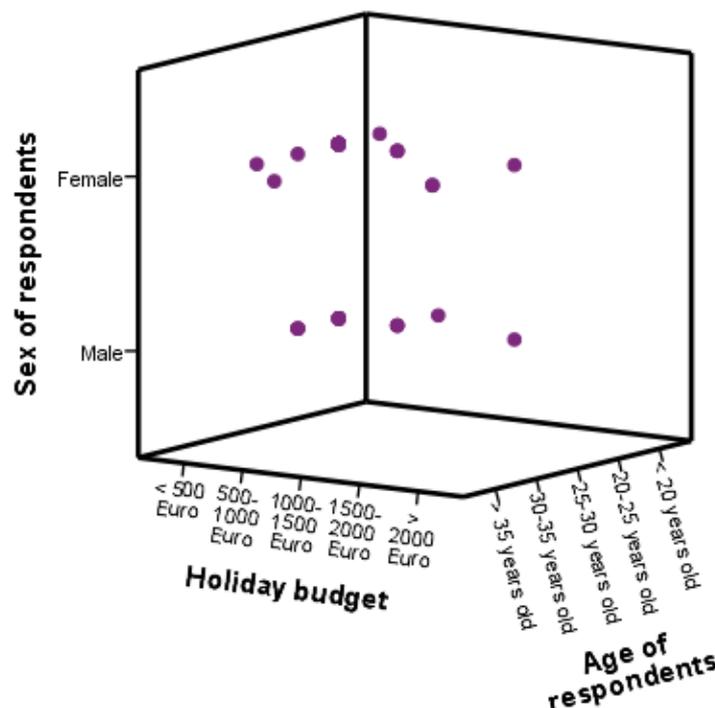


Figure 2. Distribution of segment 1 based on sex, age, and holiday expenses

5.2.2. Segment 2

Regarding segment 2 (38 respondents, 26%), the behavior and decision making process of the tourists from this cluster is influenced in the highest proportion by the information sources available online, that can be both objective and subjective (0.36). These sources occur in the online environment and are promoted by companies or by other tourists who had previous similar experiences. However, the personal and subjective sources, namely the previous experiences of the respondents or relatives' recommendations are exercised at a level where we can say that they help in forming of attitudes regarding a tourism package.

This group includes tourists who buy packages that focus on religious sights and attractions (0.89) and hedonic aspects, such as the surroundings of the tourism destination (0.91). Contrary to the tourists in segment 3, the tourists of cluster 2 sometimes opt for apartments or rented houses and prefer to secure their own transportation (0.25).

Although the respondents of cluster 2 sometimes prefer to go in luxury cruises and get spoiled on their holidays, they do not record scores as high as those in segment 3, where luxury (0.15) and indulgence (0.26) are essential to organized holidays. However, tourists of cluster 2 (0.25) and 3 (0.14) usually prefer to travel with their family or in a couple, registering positive scores for these variables that were formed in factor analysis.

The 38 respondents of this homogeneous group appear to for the most part tourists with families, (0.89) (a small portion mentioned they are single and travelling alone) as the predominant age range of this group is over 40.

Tourists in this segment generally spend on holidays sums that do not exceed the threshold of 500 euros. Also, in this group the sex demographic is quite even.

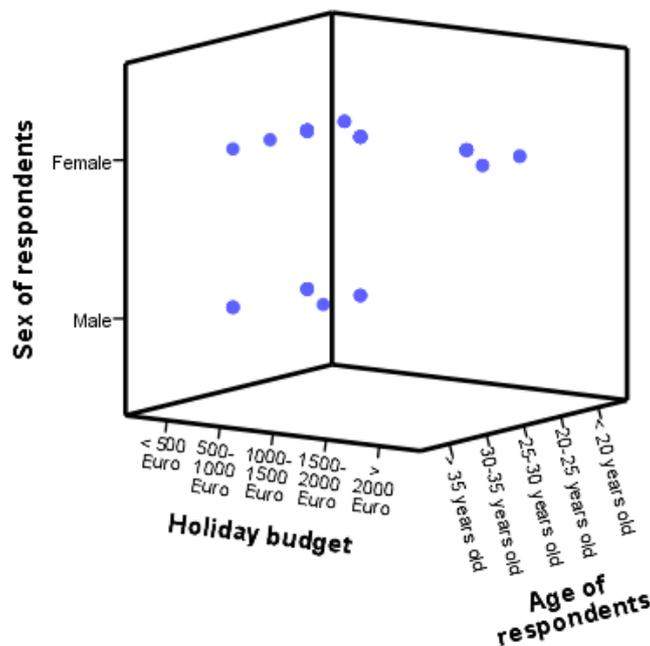


Figure 3. Distribution of segment 2 based on sex, age, and holiday expenses

5.2.3. Segment 3

The 64 representatives (43.8%) of segment 3 are aged between 25-30 years old and they usually spend between 500 and 1000 euro on their tourism package. For the most part, the respondents in this cluster are pursuing affordable tourism (0.31).

The third segment presents responses from more women than men. They prefer relaxation in a couple (0.61) and indulgence or spoiling (0.26). They do not want to make savings in terms of their accommodation (0.46) or transportation compared those in segment 1 who choose not to spend huge amounts on accommodation and pampering (-0.46) during their vacations.

Also, consumers in cluster 3 are not very interested in hedonic aspects, such as the visiting the surroundings (-0.32) compared to those in segment 2 who consider sightseeing as very important (0.91). Regarding the personal and subjective sources of information they do not have a large influence on the tourists of segment 3 (0.08) compared with those in group 2 who reported a score of 0.31. Mostly, the respondents of cluster 3 usually choose to take into account the traditional and objective information sources, recording a score of 0.18.

Regarding the arrangements for accommodation, we observe negative scores for 2-3 star hotels and guesthouses for both cluster 1 and 3, however, the tourists in group 1 usually pick cheap accommodation types such as hostel and motel; while those in segment 3 prefer luxurious accommodation in the form of 4-5 star hotels.

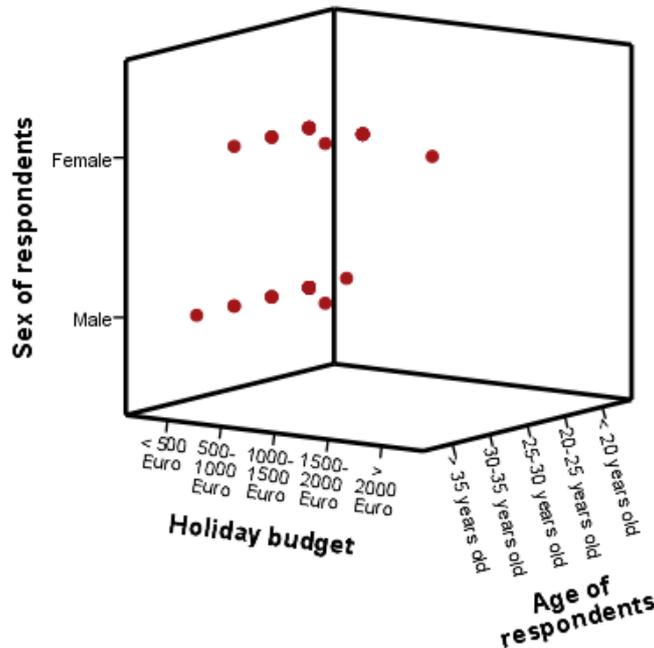


Figure 4. Distribution of segment 3 based on sex, age, and holiday expenses

6. Conclusions

6.1. Theoretical Contributions

In the current context characterized by the fact that tourism is one of the most important industries in the world, the research that is the subject of this article sought to explore some dimensions of tourism behavior of 154 persons from Romania.

Consumer purchase behavior should be studied in terms of several models that arise during the buying process because it depends on various factors that may occur during an acquisition (e.g. type of holiday, the reasons and factors that determine a particular procurement, lifestyle, social position). Another impediment in terms of tourist products and services is intangibility of these offers, which often leads to doubts and uncertain decisions during the execution of a purchase. This is why consumers can sometimes listen to advice from friends, relatives, travel agencies or TV; these influences may cause some problems for companies when studying tourism consumption patterns.

In conclusion, the subject of consumer behavior is the main key to the foundation of all marketing activities which is implemented to establish, promote, and sell different products and services. In order to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of marketing activities, companies have to understand how consumers make their decisions to buy different products. If they are conscious of the behavior patterns of consumers, what motivates them or what determinates them to purchase, then they will know when to intervene in the process to obtain the results that they want and also who to target at a particular time with a specific product or service.

Moreover, the decision-making process in tourism is really complex and it is influenced by various factors and many decisions, which additional are directly controlled by motivators, determinants and segmentation criteria. Segmentation divides the population into subgroups of people who have the same purchase characteristics. It seems that the decision of every person from the subgroup is driven by a range of influences, that are subdivided into four criteria: demographic (age, sex, religion, family status), geographical (region, countries, population), psychographic (lifestyle, personality), behavioristic (relationship between the tourist and the product- benefits, advantages that a customer expects to receive from a product).

Romania has a well-developed tourism potential, but currently, the means of country promotion (particularly in health tourism and winter) are not very well capitalized and used. This paper aimed at providing new insights into the behavior of tourists and the factors that influence the decision making

process for Romanian tourists. Therefore, I considered that any development that leads to better understanding and better promotion of tourism is welcomed. Also, future studies will attempt to emphasize new consumer trends of travel, and more exactly the dimensions of consumer behavior that exert a higher impact on changing their buying behavior.

6.2. Implications for Managers

In conclusion, it is critical for a tourism entrepreneur to be aware of the three main stages in the decision-making process in order to have a profitable business. These levels are: pre-decision stage and decision process, post-purchase evaluation, future decision-making. Thereby, the purchase process is the result of three factors: motivators, acknowledgment, perceptions and determinants (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007). These aspects will be further developed in future studies.

It is essential for a company to satisfy the needs of their targeted consumers. In his distinguished work, Philip Kotler says that 'usually, the sales of a company comes from two groups: new customers and repeat customers (customers who are loyal to a company)'. An estimation shows that attracting new customers can cost five times more than satisfying a customer who is loyal to the particular company. Also, it may cost sixteen times more to bring a new customer at the same level of profitability than the one already lost.

Customer retention is therefore much more important than customer attraction. For this reason, it is necessary that tourism managers to fully comprehend all the dimensions that lead to the manifestation of a particular tourist behavior.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

The limits of this study include those commonly associated with online surveys, including unsystematic sampling procedures, low response rates, weak links between units of analysis and respondents. While the representativeness of the sample can always be improved, for this research particular efforts were made in order to obtain a high response rate and to have a sample which reflects the target population.

Besides the outlined goals, the present research has proposed a validation of the statistical methods used, but for the future it is recommended the improvement of the statistical methods used by performing some additional statistical tests to validate the statistical significance of the results and determine a representative sample (which in this research was not a principal purpose).

Especially in terms of consumer behavior in tourism, it can be argued in favor for a longitudinal study to track and confirm the model based on the behavior of a group of tourists. A cross-sectional study differs from the longitudinal research in the homogeneity of groups and the users' experience of purchasing tourism products.

Also, the research can be extended internationally to observe a comparison analysis between similar data from Eurostat and the opinion of tourists who live in different geographical areas and come from different cultures.

In this sense, to cover any potential gaps, it is important to realize some researches which will focus on applying the questionnaire on different types of tourists, with the mediator effect of culture and frequency of trips and vacations.

Moreover, in terms of limitations and future lines of research, the present study examines the general purchasing behavior of some tourism services, without specifying different destination countries.

This research leaves additional new research directions that need answers. Future research will focus on the tourist market segmentation by holiday type. Thus, I will try to determine the profitability of business tourism compared to mass tourism, or leisure tourism, and the dimensions of consumer behavior that are triggered more strongly for efficient advertising campaigns targeted by these two types of tourism. Also, the research can be extended in terms of studying tourist behavior for a particular hotel chain (luxury hotels or accessible in terms of the budget of tourists).

7. References

- Dibb, S., Simkin, L., Pride, W.M. and Ferrell, O.C., 2001. *Marketing Concepts and Strategies*. 4th European edition. NY: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Fields, A., 2005. *Discovering Statistics Using SPSS*, Second Edition. NJ: Sage Publications
- Kolb B., 2008. *Tourism Marketing for cities and towns: Using branding and events to attract tourists*. Oxford: Elsevier Inc.

- Kotler, P., Bowen, J.T., Makens, J.C., 2013. *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism: International Edition - 6th Edition*, Harlow, England: Pearson Prentice Hall Publishing
- Mahika E., 2011. Current trends in tourist motivation., *Cactus Tourism Journal*, Vol. 2, Issue 2., pp. 15-24
- Malhotra, N. K.; Birks, D. F., 2007. *Marketing Research- An Applied Approach*, Harlow, England: Pretince Hall.
- Middleton, V.T.C., Clarke, J., 2001. *Marketing for Travel and Tourism - 3rd Edition*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Morrison, A.M., 2013. *Marketing and Managing Tourism Destinations*, NJ: Routledge.
- Page S., Connel J., 2006. *Tourism: A Modern Synthesis – 2nd Edition*, London: Thomson Learning
- Pike S., 2013. *Destination Marketing*, NJ: Routledge,
- Schiffman L., Lazar Kanuk L., 2009, *Consumer Behavior – 9th Edition*, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall Publishing
- Swarbrooke, J., Beard, C., Leckie, S., Pomfret, G., 2003. *Adeventure Tourism- The New Frontier*. Oxford: Butterwork-Heinemann.
- Swarbrooke, J., Horner, S., 2007. *Consumer Behaviour in Tourism – 2nd Edition*, Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.
- Swarbrooke, J.S. 1995. Sustainable tourism and the development and regeneration of rural regions in Europe: A marketing approach. In *Proceedings of the 'Expert Meeting on Sustainability in Tourism and Leissure'* (G. Richards,ed.), Tilburg University Pressterworth-Heinemann
- Swarbrooke, J.S., 1999. *The development and Management of Visitor Attractions*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann



Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.
CC BY