The peripheral and core tourism experiences: A conceptual study in Australia.

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Abstract— This conceptual study examines peripheral and core tourism experiences in Australia using online data collection of reviews by tourists. To date most of the obvious and major tourism factors have been researched and recognized as a single driver to a tourist community including major events, major attractions and popular well known world locations (Crompton & McKay 1997)[1], while little is known of how these factors contribute to initial and subsequent visits to a destination. Limited research has been conducted in tourism to ascertain how the choice of destination contributes to the over success and visitation in a region (Schmallegger & Carson 2010)[2]. Other fields of product and service marketing recognize the premise of core and peripheral attributes as consumption motivators (Qu, Kim & Im 2011)[3]. Applied in tourism core and peripheral factors suggest the notion of a core or main experience to a destination such as a major attraction or major event with a peripheral experience suggested as an augmentation, such as local unique cultural phenomena, local produce, culture and arts and local attractions.

Future research into peripheral tourism experiences will allow a typology to be developed advancing a management framework for peripheral tourism operators and stakeholders to assist in improving the appeal and success of these destinations and peripheral experiences in Australia.

Keywords- core and peripheral tourism experiences, destination choice, attractions, events.

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1. Introduction

International tourism contributes USD1159 billion (approximately AUD 1647 billion) worldwide which is nine percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), direct, indirect and indirect impact (World Tourism Organization 2014)[4]. Locally in many destinations, tourism is the only economic tool that can bring vitality to the region (Scheyvens & Russell 2012)[5]. Research has shown that businesses at all levels and scales of operation can contribute to poverty alleviation through tourism development and delivers opportunity, empowerment and security to the indigenous of the destination. Positive contributions to revenue generation, community development, and job creation by both small and large scale tourism development will generate the opportunity for local involvement and for labor conditions to improve (Scheyvens & Russell 2012)[5].

Many factors motivate and influence destination choice (Gnoth 1997)[6]. These include host-site-involvement motivation (experienced traveler), stimulation, personal development, security, nostalgia, romance, self-actualization, recognition and escape are all motivations for choosing a destination (Pearce & Lee 2005)[7]. Every tourist destination is made up of some or all of the following: attractions, cultural displays, transportation, shopping, climate, attractions, tours, events and restaurants (Qu, Lu & Im 2011)[3]. Each of these factors are significant to the tourism sector as they construct the tourism service offering and attraction of the destination. Tourism research has examined some of these factors of motivators on tourism destination choice, however it has overlooked the contribution of these to initial and ongoing visits to any destination. Each factor contributes economically and socially to the local population, tourist operators and sustainability of the sector.

Other fields of product and service marketing recognize the premise of core and peripheral attributes as consumption motivators (Qu, Kim & Im 2011)[3]. Applied in tourism core and peripheral factors suggest the notion of a core or main experience to a destination such as a major attraction or major event with a peripheral experience suggested as an augmentation such as local unique cultural phenomena, local produce, culture and arts and local attractions. The contribution of these peripheral experiences that are isolated from the core have on the overall tourism choice, visitation patterns and economic wellbeing of tourism is unknown and seldom researched. Moreover, the promotional emphasis, marketing funding and success of any campaigns for these peripheral experiences by tourism marketing and operators is little known. These peripheral experiences may offer exciting and unique aspects desired by tourists while not being the primary motivator of destination choice initially may in fact motivate repeat visitation. So what role do peripheral experiences play in destination choice?

The Macquarie dictionary defines core as the central, innermost, or most essential part of anything. In this study, it will relate to the central economic hub of a destination. The dictionary defines peripheral as the external surface or outside of a body. In this study the peripheral will be that which is not core.

Future research will typologies peripheral tourism factors using lifecycle positioning, push and pull factor analysis and tourist preference evidence, this study aims to regroup and define a classification system for peripheral experiences. Once the destination experience typology is narrowed to clearly identify peripheral experiences, this research will identify what role they play in choice and develop a framework that best supports the development and marketing of these experiences for local and economic regional tourism sustainability.

Examining and classifying the role of peripheral tourism experiences and understanding how these destinations are chosen is essential to build the context for examination. In many instances destinations are chosen for what 'pulls' the tourist to the destination such as the external forces of the destination attributes (Chan & Baum 2007)[8] or what is 'pushing' them into making destination travel decisions which include internal, psychological forces (Yoon & Uysal

2005)[9]. These push and pull factors work together with the destination attributes stimulating and reinforcing these inherent experiences. The pull factors are the concrete factors of a destination with the push factors focusing on the marketing and promotion support for the destination pushing the client.

Weaver and Lawton's (2015)[10] research found that destination pull factors can be categorized into the following: geographical proximity to markets; accessibility to markets; availability of attractions; cultural links; availability of services; affordability; peace and stability; a positive market image and pro-tourism policies which go further to enhance attraction to the destination (Hede & Jago, 2005)[11].

Butler (1980)[12] developed what is known as the Butler Sequence or destination lifecycle which proposes that tourist destinations tend to experience five distinct stages of growth (i.e. exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation) under free market and sustained demand conditions and these can be applied to tourist engagement with the destination. It should be noted that this is one of the most cited and applied models within the field of tourism studies and will assist in positioning core and peripheral experiences.

2. Literature review

A number of studies have been undertaken into the development of core and peripheral destinations and tourism in Australia (Schmallegger & Carson 2010)[2] and in islands (Cassidy 2012)[13]. In many areas, tourism development in third world countries has come about on an ad hoc basis with little thought given to local society or the expectations of the traveler. Scheyvens and Russell (2012)[5] note that tourism is not a practice of the indigenous, but of large corporations making as much money as possible in ways which may not be compatible with balanced development. The large corporations are looking at maximizing profit and this may conflict with peripheral community living.

The complexity of destinations, their development, planning, marketing and management is an issue that has intrigued researchers for some time and significant literature has emerged that examines elements of the destination. For example, destination planning and development of facilities has been examined by Ness, Aarstad, Haugland and

Gronseth (2013)[14] who explored the content of network connections between destinations, referred to as bridge ties, and how such ties facilitate destination development. Other researchers have examined aspects of destination marketing including Murdy and Pike (2012)[15]. Some research has also been conducted into examining destinations as an experience provided for tourists (Cassidy & Brown 2010)[16].

While acknowledging that extensive research has been undertaken into many of the central issues that pertain to destination growth and evolution, the development needs of peripheral regions remains an issue that warrants additional investigation from several perspective's; the views of local stakeholders as to the form and rate of development, and the types of touristic experiences that potential visitors to these regions may wish to experience.

There was research undertaken in the 70s into the development of mass tourism and how destinations develop over time and go through a destination lifecycle. Cohen (1972)[17] researches the two images which have been predominant in the sociology of tourism. They being that the tourist is superficial or in later years a contemporary pilgrim. He considers that they are both at a disadvantage as they talk about the general or mass tourist only.

While Plog (1974; 2001)[18,19] developed a psychographic scale used to differentiate traveler types such as organized mass tourists, individual mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter. He particularly researched mass tourism in developing countries and developed the personality scale to help explain why destinations rise and fall in popularity. In particular he researched the tourists' personality characteristics to determine their travel patterns and preferences.

Dann (1977)[20] considered the motivations to travel together with the push and pull factors in destination choice and concluded the escape motivation was important and the travelling enhanced the ego of the traveler. Yoon and Uysal (2005)[9] researched tourist motivations and push and pull factors in relation to the satisfaction experienced and associated it with destination loyalty. They found that there was a correlation between destination loyalty and it is positively affected by tourist satisfaction with their experiences. While Chan & Baum (2007)[8] also researched motivations they

were the motivations of ecotourists staying in an ecolodge and they found there was a correlation between motivation factors and push and pull factors. They also developed a typology for ecotourists. McKercher and de Cros (2002)[21] explored cultural tourism and developed a typology for the cultural tourist.

This conceptual study examines peripheral tourism experiences in Australia using online data collection of reviews by tourists. What is it that 'pulls' a tourist to a destination or experience? This research will contribute to the understanding of destination marketing and the destination attributes that require emphasis.

Butler (1980)[12] explored the concept of a tourist area cycle of evolution and suggested that destinations go through several stages of development and that this would have managerial implications. The stages are exploration, involvement, development, consolidation, stagnation or rejuvenation. This theory is known as the Butler Lifecycle.

The early research also explored the motivations to travel and the resident's attitude to tourists visiting their destination (Doxey 1975)[22]. More recent research explores the impact of destination development on many levels and asks the question, "Does tourism consume places?" (Hall, Harrison, Weaver & Wall 2013)[23]. Their research suggests that tourism development is a means to provide value to lands that are otherwise perceived as waste, unproductive or peripheral. The economic growth of peripheral economies was researched by Chaperon and Bramwell (2013)[24] and Seetanah (2011)[25] and found the tourism significantly contributes to the economic growth of the peripheral economies. While Cassidy and Brown (2010)[16] researched the most important influences on the decision to visit peripheral islands and found that climate and reputation of the holiday destination were important.

A destinations image is very important and can be a contentious issue. Nadeau, Heslop O'Rielly and Luk (2008)[26] found that despite the positive image of the Nepalese indigenous the respondents to their research had a less positive image of the country itself. In comparison Hede & Jago (2005)[11] found that most attendees at a special event had a more favorable opinion of the destination after the event than prior. To enhance the image of a destination customer relationship marketing (CRM) creativities are progressively being used

by business in an attempt to encourage brand loyalty to encourage repeat purchases. Murdy and Pike (2012)[15] and Qu, Lo and Im (2011)[3] suggest that the key goals of CRM are to create and enhance brand loyalty, increase customer retention and stimulate repeat purchases. By growing customer loyalty, value is added to the life of the customer and reduces the overall cost of marketing.

3. Core aspects

Papatheodorou (2004)[27] introduced the notion of core offering and infrastructure. Fashionable wanderlust and sunlust core resorts and attractions emphasised the establishment of infrastructure (roads, airports and accommodation) and facilities (banks, hospitals, restaurants) within a densely built environment and destinations. These resorts focused on being easily accessible and offering experiences advancing major market potential. They also ensured timetabled or regular services offered by well-known airlines and their subsidiaries to also support market development (Papatheodorou 2004)[27]. The resort was seen as the core and the other factors the peripherals.

4. Peripheral apsects

Peripheral locations can be identified within a global scale, continents, and countries and within regions. These peripheral locations may be disadvantaged as they are isolated from economic centers and from the main population base and are often costly to visit needing a sea journey or additional air services (Chaperon & Bramwell 2013)[24]. Hence, the peripheral areas maybe disadvantaged economically due to their distance from the core destinations that are the centers of wealth, local markets and economic leakages (Seetanah 2011[25]; Stoffelen & Vanneste 2015)[28].

5. Methodology

The purpose of this conceptual study is to identify what are peripheral experiences and events of tourism and to identify the role of core and peripheral tourism experiences on destination choice. Online data collection of reviews by tourist was obtained by referring to 'Tripadvisor'.

One of the most iconic things about Australia are the many 'Big Things' you will suddenly come upon while driving, with most of them

being in Queensland. A few of these 'Big Things' were reviewed in Tripadvisor such as; The Big Banana (NSW), The Big Pineapple (QLD), The Big Trout (NSW), The Big Merino (NSW), The Big Cane Toad (QLD) and The Big Orange (QLD), to name a few. Many of these big structures are now used as Tourist Information Centers. There were many hundreds of comments to be read with many travelers making comments such as; "…we were passing through so thought we'd stop", "it was on the way", "we were driving right past", "good place to stop and let the kids let off some energy".

These comments tend to suggest that the traveler did not have these experiences as a core tourism experience but rather as a peripheral experience, one that just happened on the way to their core destination or core experience.

However, when reviewing comments on such experiences as the Cellar Door Wine Festival (SA), the Perth Food and Wine Expo (WA), the Brisbane International (QLD) and the Darwin Food and Wine Festival (NT) the majority of reviews indicated that these were the core experiences they sought. A minor number of reviewers indicated that they only found out about the events when they arrived at the destination. The majority used these events as the main reason for choosing the destination. From these comments it appears the event was the core experience for the travelers and the destination was secondary.

However, any written piece is open to interpretation and it is suggested that further research is undertaken by interviewing travelers on these key points in relation to peripheral experiences. Then a typology of peripheral tourists can be developed advancing a management framework for peripheral tourism operators and stakeholders to assist in improving the appeal and success of these destinations and peripheral experiences.

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