

Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Destinations

6 The Role of Emotions in Consumer Decision Making for Budget City Breaks

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Design and setting by P.K. McBride

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Introduction

In the quest to better understand consumer decision making (CDM), a number of models featuring motivation, supply, demand, value, price, quality, cues, information and emotions have been developed (Andreason, 1965; Engel et al., 1986; Howard-Sheth, 1969; Solomon, 1996). Applications in a tourism context (Cooper et al., 1998; *inter alia* Gilbert, 1991; Middleton and Clark, 2001) have attempted to provide a general framework which has tended to assume a vacation scenario and its attendant criteria such as high levels of risk and insecurity, which may not be relevant in all tourism product markets such as short breaks. Moreover, many tourism models have arguably underplayed the complexity of tourist decisions with respect to consumer emotions and attitudes to products, having emphasized the cognitive dimension at the expense of affective aspects and their interrelationship in consumer decisions.

The short break market has been neglected from the perspective of CDM research despite its economic importance for many destinations. It is generally assumed that short break decision making is characterized by lower risk, lower involvement and a more limited information search than decisions relating to vacations, but there is no empirical evidence to support this view. Most studies of the short break phenomenon have focused on tourist motivations, behaviour patterns and destination characteristics (Bloy, 2000; Dune et al., 2006; Jang and Cai, 2002). This study responds to this challenge by examining CDM in the budget city break market and in acknowledgement of the complexity of the CDM process, the research takes an integrated approach to the problem by adapting and extending Hansen's (2005) conceptual CDM framework. This chapter, part of a larger study of CDM in a short break context, has three specific objectives.

1. To identify the significant dimensions of CDM in the budget city break context.
2. To analyse the role of emotions in budget city break decision making.
3. To determine the relative predictive ability of cognitive and affective dimensions in relation to consumer satisfaction with, and behavioural intention towards, budget city breaks.

Literature Review

A number of tourism CDM models, based on general frameworks presented in the consumer behaviour and marketing literature have been hitherto used to conceptualise tourist decision-making. Wahab et al.'s (1976) 'linear model of the tourism decision-making process' acknowledges the familiar sequence of cognitive stages in consumer decisions

Chapter extract

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