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A SURVEY ON FACTORS INFLUENCING TOURISTS' DECISION TO VISIT SPA DESTINATION

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Abstract

The individualization of tourist demand has caused the multidimensionality of travel motives. The fact that they expect an integrated tourist product indicates that tourists travel to a destination because of a large number of motives. In this paper, we have analysed the push-pull concept, which represents a widely accepted theory of motivation in tourism. It is concluded that for 26% of respondents treatment and rehabilitation, 32% water consumption of medicines, 47% socializing with friends and 43% of leisure time in intact nature constitute are the main push factors of choosing a destination by statistical analysis of the data collected by research conducted in the period from 5 December to 25 December 2015. On the other hand, 52% of respondents said that, for them, the most important factor is quality medical staff, 44% diverse medical treatment, while 46% of respondents said that a wide variety of local attractions are factors that attracts them to a specific destination. Using and Spearman correlation coefficient the relationship between the push factors and future behaviour of tourists in terms of repeat visits and recommendations to friends is determined.

Keywords: motivation, push factors, pull factors, spas, destination.

Introduction

In pursuit of health and pleasure, relaxation, spiritual peace, and spiritual upgrade, tourists have undertaken the journeys since ancient times. Starting from the Indian ayuverda (more than 5000 years), through traditional Chinese medicine (2697. before our ere) and the ancient

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Greeks and Romans, tourists use the healing properties of mineral water, mud, gas and air in order to maintain and improve health, prevention from physical and mental illnesses and to establish a balance of spirit, body and mind (Jovanović, 2015).

The use of medicinal mineral water in order to achieve health, wellness and well-being in many parts of Europe dates back to the 17th and 19th centuries (Laing & Weiler, 2008). Health through water eventually becomes the most important postulate of wellness tourism that contributes to the growing popularity of this form of tourism. Accordingly, the quality of the spa environment and a well-designed integrated health tourism product, are the most significant motive for tourist visits of most spa resorts (Milićević & Podovac, 2013, p. 208).

Specifics of modern touristic demand point to the existence of diverse and multiple travel motives, as well as different ways to meet them. In the following parts of the paper we will analyze the basic factors that influence the decision of the tourists visiting the destination, as well as determine the significance of these motives for future travel behaviour of the participants of spa tourism.

Literature review

Motivation has attracted considerable attention of tourist academia in the 1960s, in order to better understand and predict factors that influence the decision to travel (Wong et al., 2013). Analysis of theoretical knowledge of the motivations and behavior of tourists primarily involves defining the concepts of motivation and motive. Motivation is associated with psychological and biological needs and wishes, and includes generated integral powers, direct and integrate the behavior and activity of a particular person (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 46).

The motivation for taking trips refers to a set of activities that influence a person to become a participant in basic tourism activities. In this sense, the motivational factors could be defined as psychological needs, which have an important role in causing psychological imbalance in a person, and that can be corrected only through the tourist experience (Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 100). The motive implies an internal factor that encourages, directs and integrates the behaviour of certain people (Murray, 1964, p. 7).

Motivation of tourists is the topic of study of numerous authors (Cohen, 1972; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Gnoth, 1997; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Motivating people to travel and live outside their place of permanent residence involves meeting various needs. On the other hand, very often people travel to meet not one but more needs, which indicate the interconnectedness of tourist needs. The motivation of tourists implies a set of needs and attitudes, which predetermine potential travel behaviour to a specific, clearly defined goals. Motivation has several dimensions. Tourists want to experience more than one attribute of destinations. Therefore, exploring the relationship between the two sets of variables, and destination attributes and motives is much more functional than the one-dimensional survey of dependent variables (Pyo et al, 1989).

Examining the motives that influence the decision-making on visiting a particular destination, the researchers note push-pull motivational theory (Dann, 1977; Azman & Chan, 2010, Chun-Man Cheung, 2012.). Push motivations are more related to internal or emotional aspects. Push motivations can be seen as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure and social interaction, family togetherness, and excitement. Pull motivations, on the other hand, are connected to external, situational, or cognitive aspects. motivations are those that are inspired by a destination's attractiveness, such as beaches, recreation facilities, cultural attractions, entertainment, natural scenery, shopping and parks (Yoon & Uysal, 2005, p. 46-47).

Uysal and Jurowski (1994) state that the essence of push-pull theory is that a man driven by the adoption of a decision on taking trips with internal forces and drawn by external forces, or by attributes of destinations (p. 844). The authors point out the existence of a reciprocal relationship between the pull and push factors to satisfaction when traveling. Many authors, seeking to explain the factors that direct visitors to the destination, consider different psychological and demographic characteristics of spa tourists. For example, Mak et al. (2009), according to the following factors: striving for physical relaxation, reward after a demanding job, seeking mental peace, escape from the business and social pressure, improving overall health, experience of spa tourism, striving for spiritual refreshment, an escape from daily routine, enjoyment in the luxury, improving physical properties, spending time with friends and family, strengthen family relationships, losing weight, as well as the desire to be trendy.

The authors of two like Azman and Chan (2010), grouped push factors as follows:

- Factors that lead to achieving self-satisfaction (escape from everyday stress and daily routine and hard work, relaxation and stress relief).
- Factors that lead to regeneration and fulfillment (recovery from tensions of business life and participating in various physical activities).

Crompton (1979) tried to identify those motives of satisfaction that influence the choice of destination. He also tried to develop a conceptual framework that will be able to show the listed motives. In addition to the theoretical model, Crompton has empirically identified nine motives of tourists. Seven of them are classified as a socio-psychological: an escape from the everyday environment, its own research and evaluation, relaxation, prestige, regression, improvement of kinship relations and the promotion of social interaction. As for the other two motives, stated the novelty and education (p. 408).

Analyzing the pull factors that attract tourists to a destination, Azman & Chan (2010) state spa attributes watching them as visible and invisible resources of destinations. Visible ones include the natural environment and anthropogenic resources, while under invisible marketing destination image is analyzed. Goeldner & Ritchie (2006) are consistent with the view of many researchers, according to which a tourist attraction is very important component of the tourism system and the main factor that attracts tourists and affect the development of the destination.

Considering the available literature on the push motivational factors that influence the decision on the visit to the area, and for purposes of the carried out research, internal factors will be grouped into two categories: health factors and social factors. In doing so, we will include in the health factors the following:

- Treatment and recovery of the disease.
- To escape from everyday stressful lifestyle.
- To improve and promote the health of the whole body.
- To establish a balance of spirit, body and mind.

Under the social factors, the following be considered:

- Tendency to acquire authentic tourist experience.
- A desire to spend free time with friends and relatives.

- A desire to spend free time in an unpolluted natural environment.
- Purchase and enjoy in organic food.
- Education about the tradition, culture, faith and ethical authenticity of the local population.

Methodology, research questions and hypotheses

In order to research the factors that influence the decision-making on visiting a particular destination spa, a survey was conducted in the period from 5 to 25 December 2015. Research, research questions and hypotheses are set based on a review of the literature on motivational factors of tourists to visit spas and based on previous researches (Rančić et al., 2014; Hashemi et al., 2015). Initially, a pilot survey was organized in the form of analyzing the responses of eight members of the focus groups to test the validity of the questions. The questionnaire includes 10 questions divided into three segments. In the first part, there are questions related to the demographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, education level, the amount of monthly income) as well as issues related to the spa where they lived and whether they were the first time in the spa or not. The second part of the questionnaire contains questions related to the push and pull motives of respondents. The respondents determined the degree of importance of a push and pull motives on a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (most important). The third part of the questionnaire contains questions about the future intentions of the respondents, who are on a scale from 1 (impossible) to 5 (definitely) assessing whether they will visit again destination and recommend it to friends/relatives.

In order to analyze the factors that influence the decision of tourists visiting a particular destination spa, as well as their future behaviour, we have set up the basic hypothesis, which states:

Different push and pull factors influence the tourist's decision on a visit to spa destination.

In order to make operational the basic hypothesis we set specific hypotheses, which are:

- *Various push factors affect the decision to visit a spa destination.*
- *Various pull factors affect the decision to visit a spa destination.*

In order to analyze the future behavior of the respondents and connectivity with the undertaking motives of respondents to travel, there have been set the following individual hypotheses:

- There is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of different sexes in terms of re-visit destination.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of the respondents of different monthly income and recommendations destination to friends/relatives.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the number of visits to destination of respondents of different ages.
- There is a correlation between the push motives and re-visit destination.
- There is a correlation between the push motives and recommendations of friends to visit a spa destination.

The research results with discussion

The study included a sample of 100 respondents with valid answers. Looking at the gender structure, the largest number of respondents were male, respectively 58 respondents. The largest number of respondents or 36% belong to the age group between 26-35 years. The study included a sample of 100 respondents with valid answers.

According to the level of monthly income, most of the respondents, or 48%, pleaded monthly earning from 150 to 300 euro.

By level of education, 32% of respondents said that they had completed college, then 27% of respondents have completed secondary education, whereas 24% of respondents hold a master's degree.

76% of respondents said they did not visit the spa for the first time (See: Table 1.).

When asked, in which spa they have stayed or are currently staying, the majority of respondents answered they stayed in the following spas: Vrnjačka Banja (37 % of respondents), Sokobanja (10 % of respondents), Morahalom (7 % of respondents), Karlove Vari (6 % of respondents), Banja Ždrela (5 % of respondents). Figure 1 shows the share of individual spa in a sample taht respondents have visited and used its services.

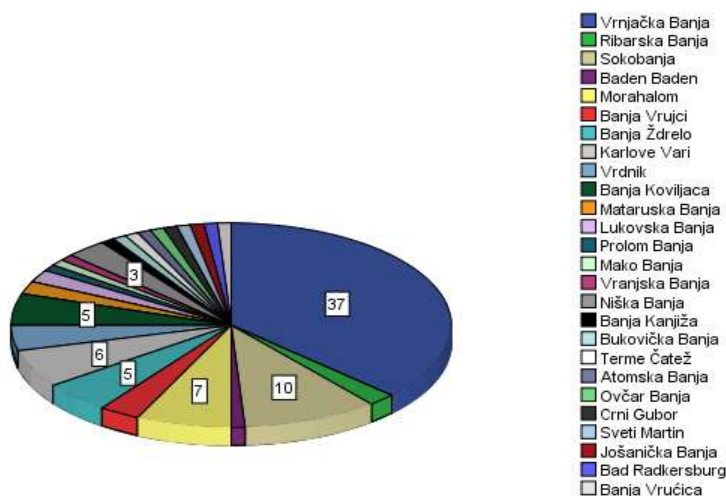
Table 1: *Demographic profile of tourist respondents*

Variables		F	%	M	SD	S	K
Sex	Male	42	42,0	1,58	0,496	-0,329	-1,931
	Female	58	58,0				
Age	Up to 25 years	14	14,0	2,78	1,236	0,332	-0,951
	26-35	36	36,0				
	36-45	19	19,0				
	46-55	20	20,0				
	56 years and over	11	11,0				
Monthly income	150-300€	48	48,0	1,93	1,112	0,904	-0,590
	310-500€	28	28,0				
	510-700€	7	7,0				
	710€ and over	17	17,0				
Education level	High School	27	27,0	2,83	1,422	0,285	0,241
	College	9	9,0				
	Faculty	32	32,0				
	Master	24	24,0				
	Magister	2	2,0				
	PHD	6	6,0				
First time in spa	Yes	24	24,0	1,76	0,429	-1,236	-0,482
	No	76	76,0				

f- frequency; %-percentage; M-Mean; SD-standard deviation; S-skeweness, K-kurtosis

Source: *Survey results*

Figure 1: *The structure of the sample according to destination, where the participants stayed*



Source: *Survey results*

Table 2. shows the frequency responses of respondents about the degree of importance of motives of arrival to a spa and spend their holidays in it. The respondents jumped from 1 to 5 (1-unimportant, 5 most important) expressing the degree of significance of individual motives of arrival to the spa. The largest number of respondents (26 respondents) pleaded their *treatment and rehabilitation* is not an important motive coming to the spa. However, 23 of respondents do not have a clearly defined position, while 22 respondents believe that this motivation is very important. 32 respondents believe that the *consumption of mineral water* is a very important reason for coming to the spa. *Spending time with friends* is very important motive for the 47 respondents, while 30 respondents believe that this is the most important motive. *Enjoying the local cuisine* represents a very important motive for the 33 of respondents, while an equal number of respondents do not have a clearly defined attitude regarding the significance of this motive, and that motive is the most important (by 26 patients). 33 respondents do not have a clearly defined position regarding the significance of *visit sites of cultural and historical heritage* as well as the motives of arrival to the spa. *Leisure time in the natural environment* is a very important motive for 43 respondents, while 30 respondents believe that this motive is most important motive for the spa. 38 respondents believe that the *preventive health care* is a very important motive for the spa.

Table 2: Push factors (f)

Variables	Unimportant	Irrelevant	Neither important nor unimportant	Very important	Most important
Treatment and rehabilitation	26	14	23	22	15
Drinking mineral water	21	15	19	32	13
Spending time with friends	5	5	13	47	30
Enjoying local cuisine	6	9	26	33	26
Visiting sites of cultural and historical heritage	7	11	33	27	22
Leisure time in a natural setting	4	7	16	43	30
Preventive health care	3	6	21	38	32

Source: Survey results

Table 3. presents the frequency of answers of respondents on the significance of certain elements of the range on offer, where they were staying. For 29 respondents, the *richness of mineral water* is a very important element of the range on offer. On the other hand, an equal number of respondents do not have a clearly defined position, and considers that the most important element of the offer (by 27 respondents). 51 respondents believe that a *good and quality service* offers the most important element. 42 respondents think that *unpolluted nature* is a very important element of an offer. For 52 of respondents, the *trained medical personnel* is the most important element of the offer, while 38 respondents believe that the *possession of medical equipment* is a very important element range on offer. 33 respondents believe that the entertainment on large water areas is very important element offer of the spa, where they stayed. *Adequate facilities for children's activities and accommodation and restaurant offer* are a very important element of offers of the spas for 30 or for 49 respondents. *The variety of medical and wellness treatments* is a very important element of the offer for 44 respondents, while 40 respondents believe that the *wide range of local attractions* is also a very important element of an offer of the spa, where they stayed. *Specially designed spa weekend products* are a very

important element of the offer for 40 respondents. 41 respondents believe that the *price competitiveness* of the most important element of an offer of the spa, where they stayed.

Table 3: Pull factors (f)

Variables	Unimportant	Irrelevant	Neither important nor unimportant	Very important	Most important
The richness of mineral water	5	12	27	29	27
Good quality service	1	2	4	42	51
Unpolluted nature	1	4	14	42	39
Trained medical staff	3	2	15	38	42
Available quality medical equipment	2	5	20	38	35
Fun on large water surfaces	8	10	28	33	21
Adequate facilities for children's activities	23	15	21	30	11
Accommodation and restaurant offer	0	2	9	49	40
The variety of medical and wellness treatments	1	6	15	44	34
A wide variety of local attractions	6	5	29	40	20
Specially designed spa weekend products	5	10	18	40	27
Price competitiveness	1	4	18	36	41

Source: Survey results

When asked whether they would again visit the spa where they were staying, 51 respondents answered that they would visit the same spa again,

while 34 respondents were likely to visit it. 55 respondents will definitely recommend their relatives/friends to visit the spa, where they stayed (See: Table 4).

Table 4: *Future intentions of participants (f)*

Variables	Not likely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Very likely	Surely
Revisiting the spa	3	12	34	51
Recommendation relatives and friends	1	9	35	55

Source: *Survey results*

In order to test the hypothesis, they applied some statistical tests. The first step represents checking assumptions about the normality of distribution, for which is used Kolgoromov-Smirnov test for samples from more than 100 respondents. Based on the value of Sig., Which is 0, 000 we conclude that the assumption of normality of distribution is discarded and in this case non-parametric test is applied.

To check the set hypotheses *there is a statistically significant difference in the attitudes of respondents in different sexes in terms of re-visit destination*, we used t-test for independent samples, which is used for comparison of mean values of the measured characteristics of the two different groups of people and in different circumstances (Pallant, 2011, p. 235).

Table 5: *Descriptive analysis of variables*

	Sex	N	M	SD	SE
Revisiting the spa	Male	42	4,26	0,912	0,141
	Female	58	4,38	0,721	0,095

M- Mean; SD-Standard deviation, SE-Standard error

Source: *Survey results*

Table 5. shows the descriptive measures for the analyzed sample, and the arithmetic mean and standard deviation values for the characteristics of each group (sex: male/female). Analyzing the values shown in Table 6, we can determine the value of the Leven's test of equality of variances Sig. 0.062 and it is greater than 0.05. In order to determine the existence of statistically significant differences, we use the result in the first column equal variances assumed, in which the level of significance is 0.474, and it is greater than 0.05, which means that there is no statistically significant

difference between gender and re-visit destination. Hypothesis has not been confirmed.

Table 6: *The results of t-test for independent samples*

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.
Revisiting the spa	Equal variances assumed	3,405	0,068	-0,718	98	0,474	-0,117	0,163
	Equal variances not assumed			-0,692	75,409	0,491	-0,117	0,170

Source: *Survey results*

To check the set hypothesis, which states *There is a statistically significant difference between the attitudes of the respondents of different monthly income and recommendations destination to friends/relatives*, was used Kruskal-Wallis' test, which is used to determine the significance of differences between two or more measured properties in those cases when the data do not meet conditions for the application of analysis of variance (Turjačanin i Čekrlja, 2006, p. 107). Based on the values of Asymp.Sig, which amounts to 0,008, and it is less than 0.05, we conclude that the difference between the attitudes of the respondents between the different monthly income and recommendations destination to friends/relatives is statistically significant (See: Table 7). According to test results, the hypothesis is confirmed.

Table 7: *Results of the Kruskal-Wallis*

	Recommendation relatives and friends
Chi-Square	11,880
Df	3
Asymp. Sig.	0,008

Source: *Survey results*

To check the set hypothesis, which states *There is a statistically significant difference between the number of visits to the destination in*

respondents of different ages, we used Kruskal-Wallis' test. Based on the value of Sig. of 0.107, which is greater than 0.05, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the number of visits to the area in subjects of different ages (see Table 8). Accordingly, this hypothesis was not confirmed.

Table 8: *Results of the Kruskal-Wallis*

Test Statistics ^{a,b}	
	First time in spa
Chi-Square	7,605
Df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0,107

Source: *Survey results*

Representing the correlation between the variables, the correlation coefficient is a measure on the basis of which it is concluded about the extent of their connection. The correlation coefficient indicates the extent to which changes in value of the variable followed by change or other changes in the value or other variables (Turjačanin, Čekrlija, 2006, p. 120). In continuation of this paper, we used the Spearman rank correlation coefficient, which is a non-parametric test and does not require a normal distribution. The objective correlation analysis is to examine whether there is a statistically significant correlation between certain variables.

In the first part of the Table 9., is shown the results of correlation analysis between the push factors and re-visit to the spa, with which is also confirmed hypothesis *Various push factors affect the decision to visit a spa destination*. It has been found that there is a positive correlation between the push factors and re-visit the spa, where they were staying. Looking at the connection strength, it was found that there is little correlation between the treatment and rehabilitation and re-visit (0,162); then the mean correlation between enjoying the local cuisine and re-visit (0,406); visits of cultural and historical and religious monuments and repeat visits (0,219) and the strong correlation between the consumption of mineral water and repeat visits (0,757).

The second part of the Table 9, shows the results of correlation analysis between the push motives and recommendations to friends/relatives. It was found that there is a positive connection between the push motives and recommendations spas, where they were staying, with which was also confirmed and hypothesis *Different pull factors affect the visit to a spa*

destination. Analyzing the connection strength, it was found that there is a medium correlation between visits to cultural, historical and religious monuments and recommendations of friends / relatives (0.378) and between leisure time in a natural setting and recommendations of friends/relatives (0.420) and strong correlation between the consumption of mineral water recommendations of friends/relatives (0.802) and between enjoying the local cuisine and recommendations of friends/relatives (0.532).

Table 9: *Correlation among visit motives and future intentions*

Visit motives	Revisiting the spa	Recommendation relatives and friends
Treatment and rehabilitation	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .162	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .090
Drinking mineral water	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .757	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .802
Leisure time in a natural setting	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .096	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .420
Hanging out with friends	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .028	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .034
Enjoying local cuisine	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .406	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .532
Visits of cultural and historical and religious monuments	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .219	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .378
Preventive health care	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .081	Spearman correlation Sig. (two-tailed) .031

Source: *Survey results*

Conclusion

Based on the research results, we can conclude that various *push* and *pull* factors affect tourists to decide on the visit. Realizing factors on the demand side pushing towards tourist destination, it should predict the future behavior of spa tourists to adequately respond to the changed demand by formulating complex products. Specifically, as the survey results show, visitors of spa destinations are no longer older and sick people, but more and more the younger and business people who want relaxation and an active holiday and eager to relax and escape from

everyday life. Further research could be organized for the purpose of defining the products that could be part of integrated spa products. You should also explore the possibility of promotional mix in order to better presentation and marketing of achieving visibility spa centers in Serbia on the European tourist map. For the purpose of linking research results and practical implications of these, we suggest the importance of analyzing socio-demographic characteristics of spa tourists and motivational factors in formulating appropriate marketing strategies. Segmentation, positioning and differentiation of marketing mix can be implemented only on the basis of a good understanding of the behavior and characteristics of spa tourists.

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