

The Significance of Income Variable in the Field of Tourism Research



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Abstract

The purpose of this mini-review is to provide the researcher with a condensed theoretical framework regarding the importance of using the income variable in field research, in the wider field of tourism. Income is perhaps one of the most important factors shaping the profile and identity of the tourist and there is extensive reference to this variable in a number of research and studies regarding the tourism sector [1-20] Jodice et al. 2006. In general, most researchers link the variable of tourists' income with the choice of destination, with the proximity of the destination from the region of origin of the tourists, with the consumption ability of the tourists, and also with the duration of the trip or vacation.

Keywords: Income; Research variable; Tourism research

Introduction

Classical economic theory suggests that the main determinants of tourism are the incomes of tourists and the price of goods and services relative to that of substitutes [2]. Income - as a variable - is directly related to the increase in the number of tourists, but also to the formation of tourist expenditures in the destinations [1]. Both [2] study and other studies also found that the income variable is elastic, indicating that arrivals, or tourism spending, grow at a faster rate than income.

According to [4], income is part of the function that expresses the distribution of willingness to pay. At the same time, the income of tourists and potential tourists is a particularly important variable in any tourism research [4], as the fluctuation of incomes indirectly affects the formation of the prices of the provided tourist products and services. In their research on tourism identity in Aruba, the Caribbean, they note that tickets are the most frequently examined variable in international tourism demand studies. Besides, according to the aforementioned scholars, the desired demand for tourist services in the current period depends on the existing income status of tourists and the prices of tourist

services in this period. Practically speaking, the economic level of tourists is what determines the destination, although there are exceptions, such as the persistence of habit, lack of knowledge, the difficulty of changing travel plans, short-term physical, or institutional restrictions, etc. In conclusion, Vanegas and Croes come to the view that tourists' income is a dominant variable, able to influence tourism prices in the destination, to a particularly extensive extent.

Background

In another published study by [11] tourists' income is among the important variables that determine the duration of the trip and vacation. Increases in tourist income affect the length of tourist stay at the destination. [10] also agree with them, according to which income - as an important component of understanding the demographic profile of tourists visiting a destination - is perhaps the most important factor (if one excludes some psychographic characteristics of tourists) linked not only with the duration of the tourist stay but also with the choice of the part of the vacation. In addition, [14] count income among the variables that affect the

duration of the vacation and even record a ratio, as the higher the income, the longer the duration of the tourists' stay at the destination. At the same time, they link income to the distance of the chosen destination from the visitors' areas of origin. In addition, in their model, they link the income of tourists to their consumption potential, but also in relation to the prices of the provided tourist goods.

[7] also agree with this last finding, as they report that tourists - a survey of Japanese visiting the USA - with higher incomes are also major consumers, regardless of whether they visit a destination for the first time, or repeatedly. Repeat visitation plays an important role in the formation of spending, as according to available data tourists who visit a destination for the first time tend to spend more than those who visit it repeatedly (Opperman, 1997) [7,16] in addition, investigate the formation of a relationship between income on the one hand and consumer loyalty of tourists and profitability for tourism providers on the other.

The importance of tourists' income is also emphasized by [12] and in particular, they state that income is among the parameters traditionally considered in almost all tourism demand models, where restrictions on tourist prices combined with travel budget - from the point of view of tourists - determine the choice of destination. In fact, most scholars use the income variable to trace the path of formation of the decision to choose the tourist destination [11] although there are exceptions, such as [6] who take considering tourist prices and not tourists' income [13] also link tourists' income with destination choice.

5. Discussion

[15] in their published study on visitor satisfaction at the culturally unique festival event of the city of Calabar, Nigeria, highlight the parameter of income (along with other demographic characteristics of visitors such as age, gender, educational level, and nationality) as a differentiating variable in relation to visitor satisfaction. The results of their research showed that according to the distribution of income, the majority of respondents (24.9%) belonged to an economic level above the average (in relation to economic indicators of the time and region), declaring a monthly income greater than 100,000 naira - an amount which, although it corresponds to just over 100 euros, is considered significant by the circumstances in Nigeria. In the same research, the conclusion is drawn that the higher the income of the visitor, the more difficult it is for him to be satisfied with his participation in the festival.

Jodice et al. (2006) also agree that the income of visitors plays a role in the satisfaction of their participation in a specific event, in their research on nautical-fishing tourism activities in the Santee Cooper Lakes, in South Carolina, found that of all the demographic parameters, income was the only statistically significant variable. [18] examining empirical research findings on tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, in areas of Antalya, Turkey, draw the conclusion - and they, like others mentioned above - that visitor

satisfaction is inversely proportional to declared income. With all of the above [2] conclude through extensive research on consumer behavior, that people with -upward- differentiation in income (as well as in educational level) tend to display differentiated characteristics of behavior patterns. Also, [19,20] as well as [9] are positioned in relation to income as a variable that significantly affects consumer behavior [9].

Conclusion

Having therefore drawn data from the current literature regarding the variable of income, it is possible to argue that this parameter is an integral element of the demographic profile of a multitude of research activities in the tourism sector and that is closely related to factors such as visitor satisfaction, the amount of spending at the destination, the formation of the destination choice decision, the repeatability of the visit and loyalty to the destination, the length of stay, as well as the distance of the vacation destination from the tourists' place of origin.

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