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Evaluating and extending the Travel Career Patterns model

Abstract

This paper examines a newly created approach to exploring travel motivations, the Travel Career Patterns (TCP) model. Through an analysis of the TCP model, the authors advance travel motivation theory by making three contributions: a refinement of the definition of travel experience; the use and evaluation of essays as a qualitative tool for interpreting travel motives; and an extension of the TCP model to a new setting. The first contribution is made by defining travel experience as a function of general experience with a de-emphasis on the use of age as a predictor of tourist experience. As part of the second contribution, essays are used to provide an insightful and emic understanding of travel motives through descriptions of a perfect day at a destination. It is demonstrated that such descriptions can effectively replicate results from quantitative approaches. The third contribution is made by extending the TCP model to the study of the motivations of study-abroad university students. These contributions improve the TCP model in light of the following elements of a sound theory of tourist motivation: ease of communication, ability to measure travel motivation, and employment of a dynamic approach. Contextual recommendations for future research include further TCP studies with small tourist groups, studies of eccentric tourist groups, and studies of complex, higher order motives such as self-actualisation and the 'flow' state. Methodological recommendations arising from this paper encompass the application of projective techniques to study motives using TCP and the use of software for qualitative analyses.

Keywords:

travel; experience; career; patterns; motivations; model

Introduction

Motivation is an area of tourism research that has frequently been open to various interpretations and as a result has been a subject of numerous debates (Harrill & Potts, 2002; Ryan, 2002; Pearce, 2005). Many approaches to researching travel motivation can be traced to a wide array of sometimes conflicting theoretical perspectives from psychology (Pearce, 2002). Some of these include: psychoanalytic approaches (Freud, 1940), modified psychoanalytic approaches (Adler, 1927), learning theory (Hull, 1943), trait theory (Allport, 1961) and personal construct theory (Kelly, 1955), as well as humanistic (Maslow, 1970; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and cognitive approaches (Berline, 1960).

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The complex amalgam of perspectives has led to the emergence of a number of widely accepted conceptual schemes or models of tourist motivation. For example, Plog (1974, 1987, 1991) proposed the allocentric-psychocentric model, Crompton (1979) classified motives across a cultural and socio-psychological continuum, Dann (1977) discussed the concepts of ego-enhancement and anomie as pertinent to tourist motivations, and Iso-Ahola (1982) proposed an optimal arousal model of travel motivations. Additionally, leisure motivation approaches were developed (Beard & Ragheb, 1983). Such attempts to understand travel motives are highly important. Travel motivation theory provides the foundation for understanding travel choice and travel behaviour, and permits the understanding of the role of the experience and the meaning of travel to tourists (Mansfeld, 1992; Ryan, 2002).

The challenge is that many of the above models fail to capture key elements of a sound theory of tourist motivation. These key elements are: a specification of the role of the theory; an elaboration of the ownership and appeal of the theory; ease of communication; ability to measure travel motivation; an implementation of a multi-motive approach; employment of a dynamic approach; and an ability to consider both extrinsic and intrinsic motives (Pearce, 2005). The TCP model satisfies these key elements to a much greater extent and provides a more theoretically robust model of tourist motivation than other approaches while also allowing for improvements (Pearce, 2005). This paper will focus on improving three of these elements in regards to the TCP model: ease of communication, which involves ensuring the theory is relatively easy to explain to potential users and be universal in its application; the ability to measure travel motivation, which ensures the theory is amenable to empirical study with ideas able to be translated into questions and responses for assessment purposes; and employment of a dynamic approach, which accommodates that both individuals and societies are continuously changing in tourism settings.

These improvements will be achieved by examining three main issues in regard to the TCP model: (1) the present definition of travel experience within the TCP model; (2) the appropriateness of predominantly quantitative approaches to examining travel motivations using the TCP model; and (3) the subsequent extension of the TCP model to a new setting.

To address these issues, the TCP model is first reviewed. This review is followed by a discussion of the definition of travel experience used in the original TCP studies (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003; Pearce, 2005). An alternative definition of travel experience is proposed. Methodological approaches to TCP will be considered and two TCP studies using different methods, one qualitative and one quantitative, will then be undertaken. It will be shown that essays can act as a powerful tool for understanding travel motivations. The qualitative essay analysis will also address the third issue – the extension of TCP to a new setting. These three contributions are aimed at improving the theoretical robustness of the TCP model by strengthening the key elements of sound motivation theory.

THE TCP MODEL

The TCP model is an adaptation of the Travel Career Ladder (TCL) approach to understanding tourist motivation (Pearce, 2005). TCL was initially developed by Pearce and Caltabiano (1983), and later refined by Moscardo and Pearce (1986) and Pearce (1988, 1993). TCL broadly proposed that, as tourists accumulate travel experiences, they somewhat progress upwards through Maslow's (1970) levels of motivation. Adapting these levels of motivation, the TCL presented five tourist motivation levels: relaxa-

tion needs, safety/security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem/development needs, and self-actualisation or fulfilment needs.

The difficulty with the use of the TCL approach was the common misinterpretation of the Maslow's needs hierarchy that one level of motives must be fulfilled before moving up the hierarchy or 'ladder'. On the contrary, Pearce recently explained that in TCL, "travellers were considered to have more than one level of travel motivation, though it was suggested that one set of needs in the ladder levels might be dominant" (2005, p. 53). It has been further commented that "one of the worst things that has happened to the Maslow's theory is that it has often been printed in the form of a triangle or pyramid" (Rowan, 1998, p. 81). Despite these misinterpretations, the hierarchy has never been empirically contradicted and is still commonly incorporated into university courses and research (Hagerty, 1999; Maddi, 1976). Today, it continues to be widely used and successfully applied (Bryan, 2005; Oleson, 2004). Hence, it appears appropriate to further build its usefulness in understanding tourist motivation.

In its present form, TCP de-emphasises the ladder hierarchy with a view to overcoming the misinterpretations of Maslow's work, and places travel motivations in a more dynamic, multi-level structure than TCL by emphasising the changes in motivation patterns (Lee & Pearce, 2002; Pearce, 2005). The essential premise of the TCL model that, with changes in travel experience, tourists will exhibit different motivations is retained in the TCP model (Pearce, 2005).

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE IN THE TCP MODEL

The emphasis on the role of travel experience as a driver for changing travel motivations is pivotal for the TCP model. Despite this importance, initial TCP studies have used a somewhat ambiguous definition and empirical operationalisation of travel experience (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003). Such definitions have resulted in a variety of measures of experience including respondents' age and self reported experience measures (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003; Pearce, 2005). The use of the respondents' age, while a possible indicator of the opportunity for a person to accrue experience, fails to accommodate that the individual may not take advantage of this opportunity in their life. Quantitative self report measures of experience, typically a Likert scale offering a range of 'experience' levels for respondents to select from, also have problems in the ends of the scales where they would be less sensitive to the extremes of high and low levels of experience.

Experience may be best described as the cumulative changes in an individual's perspective of himself or herself, and his or her environment as a result of events and activities in his or her life (Dewey, 1963). As travel experience is a component of general experience, the separation of travel experience from other experiences is an artificial distinction. Travel experience can therefore be defined as the cumulative changes in an individual's perspective of himself or herself, and his or her environment as a result of events and activities that arise from travelling.

One of the challenges with observing travel experience is that it is altered by the prior experiences of the individual, which are highly subjective (Dewey, 1963). The experience of an event or activity can have no absolute measure, except through its impact upon the individual's perspective, which unto itself is challenging to observe. Although trends of higher and lower levels of experience can generally be noted, such observations are difficult to operationalise.

Drawing on previous TCP studies three indicators of experience levels are proposed (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003): (1) The number of times a person has travelled (overseas and/or domestically); (2) The number of different destinations a person has travelled to (overseas and/or domestically); and (3) The amount of time a person has spent travelling (overseas and/or domestically). These three indicators show the extent to which a person has utilised their opportunities to accrue experience through time, and through a diversity of events and activities. For domestic trips, estimates are limited to the last 5 years to avoid recollection errors. The indicators incorporate the observation that experience comes with time, as each of these indicators are restricted in magnitude to that which a person can reasonably undertake given their age. Thus, there is no need for age as a separate indicator. Additionally, the three measures provide a much more sensitive measure at the extremes of experience levels.

These indicators therefore provide a more accurate means to differentiate between individuals with varying levels of travel experience. While the effect of the experience remains unobserved, the subjective nature of travel experience makes it inappropriate to attempt to empirically observe it. Instead, alternative qualitative methodologies may be better suited to analyses of such dynamic and subjective phenomenon.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO TCP

The present TCP literature typically views qualitative approaches as an exploratory technique. Qualitative approaches are often followed up with a quantitative study to refine the exploratory research. It will be argued that a qualitative approach to TCP can be viewed as a primary research technique in some circumstances and can offer considerable insight into travel motivations. This section will discuss how an essay based qualitative approach can offer useful insights into tourist motives.

The original study using the TCP model by Lee and Pearce (2002) employed a two-phase process. Twelve diverse exploratory interviews were first conducted to uncover key motive categories. Afterwards, those motive categories were placed into a broader frame of reference through a major survey with 1012 male and female respondents from various Western countries (Lee & Pearce, 2002). Krueger's (1994) concept of theoretical saturation was used to guide the exploratory phase where further sampling did not elicit new or further information. In the questionnaire phase, detailed statistical analyses revealed three core motivational dimensions for all travellers (irrespective of their travel experience levels): novelty, escape/relax and relationships. These results were supported by the interview findings, which additionally identified self-development as a major motivational force (Lee & Pearce, 2002). The study was later replicated and further conceptually adjusted in a non-Western context with Korean travellers (Lee & Pearce, 2003). Overall, the findings in this second study matched the results from Lee & Pearce (2002). Hence, self-actualisation, kinship, novelty and escape/relax were again identified as the core motives for all travellers. In this replicated study, respondents with higher travel experience levels were found to display externally oriented motivations, namely self-development through seeking nature and host-site involvement. On the contrary, subjects with lower travel experience placed more emphasis on internally oriented motivations, such as romance, kinship and autonomy.

Despite such findings, the TCP approach has not been sufficiently explored in smaller samples of travellers. In those cases, it may be more appropriate to reverse the quantitative - qualitative balance. When travel motivations are considered in smaller groups and/or in the context of tourist experiences at a destination, predominantly qualitative

approaches may be more useful (Kidd, 2002). Such approaches may consider motivations in a pre-departure phase and in relation to imminent travel experiences.

There are strong arguments for occasionally employing qualitative methods to study tourist motivation. A few seminal works employed in-depth interviews to study tourist motives (Crompton, 1979; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983). Analysis of photographs taken by tourists (Markwell, 1997; O'Barr, 1994), reactions to promotional material, and word-of-mouth conversations have also been previously used to study travel motives (Dann & Phillips, 2001). Several explorations of the 'flow' state, closely linked to the need for self-actualisation, were also conducted using the qualitative techniques of conversations and in-depth interviews (Csikszentmihlayi, 1975, 1990; Csikszentmihlayi & Robinson, 1991). Many of these qualitative methods were combined in ethnographic studies seeking to understand the world through the eyes of those being researched (Palmer, 2001; Baszanger & Dodier, 1997; Veal, 2005). Indeed, Dann & Phillips (2001) stress that qualitative methods allow researchers to go beyond the standardized checklist of motivation items and explore travel motives in more detail. There have been continuous calls in many subfields of psychology for additional investigation into the potential contribution of qualitative studies (Wagner, 2003; Kidd, 2002).

Although not commonly used to study travel motives (Dann & Phillips, 2001), in some cases an essay may be a more effective method than some of the other qualitative approaches. As opposed to the commonly used in-depth interviews, essays do not need to be transcribed, hence improving the efficiency of data collection. The problem of interviewer bias is reduced or eliminated, as a researcher does not need to construct interview questions and probe his or her respondents (Veal, 2005). Personal narrative essays also allow for greater spontaneity of expression than structured interviews (Stamou & Paraskevopoulos, 2003). It is therefore suggested that this kind of qualitative approach has the potential to offer considerable insight into travel motivation.

It has been argued that some relevant information may be missed in a respondent's essay as a result of reduced probing (McCormack, 2004). Such limitations can be overcome by a carefully worded essay question that encourages a respondent to creatively express their views. An example of this question would be to ask respondents to describe their perfect day at their destination. As tourists are not always able to directly articulate their motives this simple question allows for a detailed, emic look at the motives through descriptions of anticipated events (Pearce, 2002). In particular, essays allow respondents to discuss their diverse needs in the context of tourist experiences and satisfaction at a destination. In this way, the use of essays is in line with the dynamic, multi-level motivational TCP structure and thus offers an effective way to implement the model in research (Lee & Pearce, 2002).

Essays offer a fresh methodological approach to studying motivations through TCP and possibly through other models. The approach appears particularly useful for eliciting more in-depth results compared to quantitative methods and for situations where smaller sample sizes are to be used.

Comparing research methodologies

To illustrate the differences between the qualitative and the quantitative TCP methods two studies were undertaken. One has used a qualitative approach to examine the travel motivations of a small group of Australian university students, the other a quantitative TCP approach with a larger sample of backpackers visiting Australia. The results of the qualitative study will be used to extend the TCP model to the new setting of study-

abroad Australian university students. The results of the two studies will then be compared and it will be shown that a qualitative essay approach can be used to gain unique insights into travel motivations for the TCP model.

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY – ESSAYS

To extend the TCP concept, motivations of a study-abroad group of Australian university students were explored in detail through essays. In tourism, previous student travel studies primarily focused on travel behaviour of university students from the United States (Babin & KueLim, 2001; Butts, Salazar, Sapio & Thomas, 1996; Field, 1999; Gmelch, 1997; Hobson & Josiam, 1992; Hudman, 1990; Josiam, Clements & Hobson, 1994), university students from New Zealand (Chadee & Cutler, 1996; Carr, 2003a), students from Britain and Europe (Carr, 2003b; Carr, 2003c; Bonvecchio, 1991), university students from Asia (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2001; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002) and international students in Australia from Asian countries (Carr & Axelsen, 2005; Son, 2003). However, there is a dearth of studies on travel motives and experiences of Australian university students. One of the few studies that includes in its sample Australian university students is an investigation of international student travel preferences by Frost and Shanka (1999). A group of Australian and Asian students were asked to indicate their reasons for choosing destinations in the previous two years and to provide information on other travel preference factors. In that study the travel motives of the students in their pre-departure phase were not examined.

Thus, the objective of this study was to establish the travel motives of Australian university students prior to a Spanish study-abroad experience. Ten male and ten female students from the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) participated. The students were in the 18-35 age group and were undertaking a Bachelor of Arts in International Studies course (with a major in Spain), which they were required to combine with their primary degree in Business, Tourism, Nursing, Communications, Engineering, or other disciplines at the time of research. This convenience sample was chosen due to the first author's familiarity with the Spanish study program. The study was conducted in November 2005 during a pre-departure workshop for the students. All twenty subjects agreed to participate in the study. The respondents are not identified with fictional names used in the analysis to differentiate males from females and to ease the interpretation process.

Due to the small sample of university students and the respondents' imminent departure to Spain, essays were used to evaluate the group's motives. In the university context, essays neatly matched three dimensions of Tunnel's (1977) methodological naturalness. In this seminal work, Tunnel argued that good research methods in psychology would need to fulfil three key criteria: natural behaviour, natural setting, and natural treatment. A fulfilment of the three criteria could allow new empirical laws to be discovered and internal and external validity to be improved. The UTS student group was familiar with essay writing for academic assessment purposes, hence fulfilling the natural behaviour criteria. The group also completed the essays in a natural setting. Tunnel states that "almost any setting outside the lab, in which people regularly find themselves, qualifies as a natural setting (1977, p. 427)." In this case, the study was conducted in a UTS lecture room. The natural treatment, or natural event, criterion was also fulfilled. Tunnel points out that the event is natural if the subjects would have taken part in it regardless of the study. In this case, the pre-departure workshop would have been conducted irrespective of the research study, so the treatment was natural.

The respondents were asked to describe a perfect day at their Spanish study-abroad town. Conceptual content analysis was used to review the essays. This common analysis technique is very useful for identifying the intentions of an individual and for determining psychological or emotional states of persons, all of which are concepts relevant to motivations (Berelson, 1952). The responses were then manually coded and motivation themes were identified. Two additional tourism researchers then separately coded the essays without referring to the initial themes devised. A new set of motivations was then created based on the three sets. This procedure ensured congruence in the findings. As with the first phase of Lee and Pearce's (2002) study, the concept of theoretical saturation guided the study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Krueger, 1994). The dominant themes consistently re-occurred after the analysis of the first ten essays.

The results support the findings from the earlier TCP studies and previous studies of youth and student travel. Motivation themes of relationship/belonging, curiosity/mental stimulation, self-development and safety/comfort were identified. They respectively resemble the TCP motives of kinship, novelty, self-actualisation and escape/relax (Lee & Pearce, 2003). In many cases, the hedonic needs for Spanish food and drinking alcohol were intertwined with the above themes.

The relationships/belonging dimension was mainly expressed through a desire to be with friends, romantic partners and locals, and through immersion in the Spanish culture. This is how Melissa expressed her motivation for building relationships: "*The perfect day...would simply be filled with all the new people I have met and come to know well – Catalan, Spanish and people from all over the world.*" On the contrary, the males placed more importance on having romantic relationships with the locals than the females. Ben noted: "*My perfect day would include waking up next to a sweet Spanish bird. . .*" and, picturing a hypothetical scenario in his perfect day, Jason wrote: "*That señorita was pretty hot, think I might give her a call today but only if I can summon the courage to pull off the Spanish*". The relationship/belonging theme for the group through immersion in the Spanish culture was illustrated by Brenda's comment: "*My perfect day would be to enjoy a typical Spanish day, living as a local would in Santander. I would like to spend the day with Spaniards and feel comfortable and confident speaking Spanish with them. We would live by their typical timetable and enjoy a beautiful local meal.*" Filep & McDonnell (2005), in a study of young Spanish tourists coming to Australia, found that the need for immersion in Australia's culture was pertinent to those travellers. Specifically, it was revealed that like other youth travellers, young Spaniards have a strong need for social interaction and cultural novelty. These needs correspond with the motivation of the Australian group in this study for engagement with the Spanish culture and relationship building.

The curiosity/mental stimulation theme was another dimension identified in the essays. The theme was mainly expressed in terms of improving the command of the Spanish language, learning more about the Spanish culture, and having new experiences. Sarah mentioned a desire "*to speak relatively fluently*" and Mary stated: "*I would work in a little Spanish café where I'd get to practice my Spanish*". Mark expressed his desires to learn about the Spanish culture and have new experiences through relaxation, entertainment, food and drinking: "*An afternoon siesta would follow, then out again in the early afternoon to take in some local culture, perhaps a movie, play or theatre. After that, head out for a large Spanish dinner with friends over a few sangrias and tapas.*" Indeed, the curiosity/mental stimulation theme resembles the top three motivations of young travellers identified by Richards and Wilson (2003) in a major youth travel study: a motivation to explore other cultures, to experience excitement, and to increase knowledge. The links between these three motives and the idea of learning the Spanish language and understanding the Spanish culture are axiomatic.

The third motivation dimension of self-development featured in most essays. Both genders expressed this need in a similar way. Amanda's comments were typical of the sample: *"I love the idea of being independent in my daily activities such as shopping, cooking, etc. I have lived with my family all of my life...Although I am aware of possible culture shock, I hope to find ways of overcoming this..."* The theme of self-development also features prominently in Lee & Pearce's (2002, 2003) TCP studies, as well as in the youth and student travel literature. It appears that self-development is both a motivation and an outcome for youth travellers. Youth Tourism Consortium of Canada (2004) found that experience through self-discovery is a key motivation of young leisure visitors to Canada. On the other hand, in a study of American college students' behaviour during their trip in Europe it was found that study-abroad experiences often lead to personal development (Gmelch, 1997). This finding furthers the idea that youth motivations and experiences are often tightly linked, as is the case with the self-development theme identified in this study.

The last major dimension in the essays was that of safety/comfort. The theme was exemplified through discussions of the need to reduce anxiety about being in a new place, a desire for relaxation, and of nice weather. Discussing her desire for a safe and comfortable new place, Lisa noted: *"I would hopefully wake up in a clean, well furnished apartment"*. Mary also commented on reducing her anxiety about being in a new place: *"I'd have a room in a three bedroom share house and the area I live in would be the equivalent of Newtown/Erskineville in Sydney."* On the other hand, the males appeared to have a stronger need for resting and relaxing, and enjoying the climate than the females. Mike referred to a *"hopefully not too hot or too cold – pleasant outdoor weather"*, Ian mentioned *"sleeping in for a while after his lunch"* and James noted that his perfect day would include *"an outdoor siesta"*. Again the findings correspond to the literature. In an analysis of the travel motivations of university students from New Zealand, it was found that main motives were a combination of passive, social and hedonistic desires (Carr, 2003a). The passive desires clearly correspond with the strong relaxation theme from the essays. These youth travel desires may also help explain why the group in this study demonstrates needs for Spanish food and drinking.

Therefore, the core motives of the group of students in this study resemble common motivational patterns. These results are clearly in line with the youth and student travel literature and the original TCP studies, and have extended the application of the model to the new setting of Australian study-abroad students.

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY – VERIFYING THE QUALITATIVE METHOD

A quantitative study was undertaken for comparison to the student group in the previous qualitative study. The objective was to ascertain any differences in the motivations of the student group in comparison to other youth travellers. This process was seen as an important step in extending and strengthening the TCP model by verifying the adequacy of the qualitative approach with a more commonly used technique. The youth travellers used in this study were backpackers. Similar to the UTS group, they were planning an imminent trip or were presently participating in a trip in a foreign country. There is evidence in the youth tourism literature that these two groups are comparable due to similarities in demographic characteristics and typical experience (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Filep & McDonnell, 2005).

The survey consisted of 57 travel motivation items, and 11 additional demographic and travel experience questions. The TCP scales were appropriate for the study, as they had

been used previously to analyse the motives of youth travellers (Lee & Pearce, 2003). The newly formed travel experience indicators were those included in the study. Data collection was conducted at four backpacker hostels of varying quality and price in Sydney from 1 December 2005 to 20 February 2006. Sydney was chosen as a research location due to its proximity to UTS and its capacity to attract large numbers of backpackers.

A sample of 200 male and female backpackers was surveyed. The use of this larger sample supported the choice of a quantitative approach to examine travel motivations. Respondents who did not complete the three travel experience indicators and/or any of the travel motivation items were excluded from analysis resulting in 172 valid responses. The sample included 18-35 year old travellers. The ratio of male to female backpackers was approximately 52 to 48 per cent respectively. The respondents had to have a sufficiently good command of the English language to understand the self-administered scales, and answer the demographic and travel experience questions.

Drawing on the analysis plan outlined by Pearce (2005) principal component analysis was initially used. It identified the main motivational themes present in the multi item measures. The reliability of the measures of these themes was also examined. Cluster analysis was used to identify high and low travel experience groups within the sample. One sample t-tests were then used to identify the most important motivations for the low travel experience group¹.

Before principal component analysis was undertaken, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was generated and Bartlett's chi-square test of sphericity was undertaken. The overall MSA provides a measure ranging from 0 to 1, with values approaching 1 indicating the sample is adequate for further analysis. The overall MSA was 0.788, which indicates the sample was sufficient for factor analysis to proceed. The individual MSA were all in excess of the commonly accepted standard of 0.5 again suggesting the sample is adequate for all measures (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). Bartlett's chi-square test of sphericity tests the null hypothesis that the correlation matrix is an identity matrix (Coakes & Steed, 2003). In this case the chi-square statistic (5605.31, 1596 df) was significant with $p = .000$. These results indicated that principal components analysis could proceed.

Principal component analysis was used on the 57 travel motivation items. This analysis was undertaken using varimax rotation with the criterion for the choice of the number of factors being those with eigenvalues in excess of 1, which indicates that they account for the variance of at least a single variable (Hair et al., 1998). Fifteen factors were identified with eigenvalues in excess of 1 accounting for 70.646% of all variance. These factors with individual item loadings can be seen in Table 1 in order of construct reliability.

Cluster analysis was undertaken to identify higher and lower travel experience groups within the sample based on the three travel experience indicators. Hierarchical cluster analysis was used and two clusters were found in the sample. The higher travel experience cluster consisted of 11 respondents with 161 in the lower experience cluster. This large proportion of the sample being lower experience is consistent with the sampling method employed. Further to the cluster analysis, independent samples t-tests were undertaken for each of the three travel experience indicators and the respondents' age. Table 2 contains the results of these tests.

Table 1

FACTOR ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATION

Factor	Loading	Motive item	Mean	Std. Dev
Relaxation (6.423) ^a (6.354%) ^b ($\alpha=0.854$) ^c	0.445	Avoiding interpersonal stress and pressure	6.006	2.137
	0.797	Getting away from everyday physical stress/pressure	6.076	2.263
	0.458	Not worrying about time	6.215	2.079
	0.805	Giving my mind a rest	6.221	2.281
	0.727	Getting away from everyday psychological stress/pressure	6.331	2.367
	0.510	Resting and relaxing	6.541	1.887
	0.780	Getting away from the usual demands of life	6.709	1.863
	0.653	Being away from daily routine	7.285	1.918
Kinship/self-development (6.127) (21.467%) ($\alpha=0.851$)	0.483	Contacting with family/friends who live elsewhere	5.087	2.967
	0.501	Feeling that I belong	5.169	2.504
	0.631	Sharing skills and knowledge with others	5.634	1.876
	0.649	Being creative	5.936	2.161
	0.704	Using my skills and talents	5.965	2.088
	0.608	Working on the following values: kindness, fairness, authenticity, gratitude and open-mindedness	6.477	1.875
	0.511	Being with respectful people	6.727	1.851
	0.725	Developing my skills and abilities	7.017	1.798
Nostalgia/comfort (5.864) (3.567%) ($\alpha=0.842$)	0.609	Developing my personal interests	7.128	1.509
	0.891	Reflecting on past memories	5.430	2.416
	0.855	Thinking about the good times I've had in the past	5.680	2.442
Social interaction (6.647) (5.292%) ($\alpha=0.829$)	0.578	Feeling personally safe and secure	6.483	2.175
	0.703	Doing things with my companion(s)	6.378	2.196
	0.810	Being with others who enjoy the same things as I do	6.581	2.066
Self actualisation (7.066) (6.132%) ($\alpha=0.819$)	0.769	Enjoying the company of others	6.983	1.694
	0.549	Feeling inner harmony/peace	6.169	2.214
	0.647	Bringing out the best in me	7.029	1.801
	0.745	Gaining a new perspective on life	7.116	1.696
	0.731	Understanding more about myself	7.140	1.670
	0.490	Gaining a sense of self-confidence	7.169	1.938
Romance/friendship (4.712) (2.308%) ($\alpha=0.803$)	0.580	Gaining a sense of self-accomplishment	7.291	1.486
	0.496	Learning new things	7.552	1.258
Stimulation (7.576) (4.042%) ($\alpha=0.777$)	0.809	Having romantic relationships	4.285	2.560
	0.607	Being with people of the opposite sex	5.140	2.397
	0.868	Experiencing thrills	6.971	1.742
	0.812	Feeling excitement	7.395	1.477
	0.513	Having unpredictable experiences	7.477	1.395
Autonomy (7.078) (4.597%) ($\alpha=0.758$)	0.444	Experiencing things I have always wanted to do	7.744	1.444
	0.493	Having fun	8.291	0.929
	0.856	Being obligated to no-one	6.506	2.164
	0.754	Doing things my own way	6.983	1.821
	0.639	Being independent	7.267	1.882
	0.484	Exploring the unknown	7.558	1.156

Table 1

CONTINUED

Escape/social status (4.133) (2.794%) ($\alpha=0.700$)	0.586	Getting away from my family	3.413	2.408
	0.516	Enjoying isolation*	3.703	2.352
	0.739	Having others know that I have been there	4.017	2.692
	0.480	Showing others I can cope alone	4.727	2.638
Novelty (7.831) (2.712%) ($\alpha=0.650$)	0.735	Feeling the special atmosphere of the travel destination	7.651	1.221
	0.740	Experiencing something different	8.012	1.160
Host-site involvement (7.006) (3.073%) ($\alpha=0.631$)	0.788	Observing other people in the area	6.721	1.718
	0.778	Meeting the locals	7.291	1.375
Belonging/immersion (7.165) (2.496%) ($\alpha=0.565$)	0.618	Being near considerate people	5.837	1.979
	0.483	Meeting new and varied people	7.756	1.169
	0.517	Experiencing different cultures	7.901	1.117
Safety (6.616) (1.952%) ($\alpha=0.497$)	0.705	Meeting people with similar values/interests	6.099	1.885
	0.493	Developing my knowledge of the area	7.134	1.435
Security (6.087) (2.102%) ($\alpha=-$)	0.781	Experiencing the peace and calm	6.087	1.946
Isolation (4.709) (1.760%) ($\alpha=-$)	0.506	Being away from the crowds of people	4.709	2.296

a. Factor mean. b. Variance explained. c. Cronbach's alpha

* this item also loaded onto the 'isolation' factor with a loading of 0.504

Table 2

TRAVEL EXPERIENCE COMPARISON

Item	Low experience mean (n=161)	High experience mean (n=11)	Levene's statistic	t-statistic
Number of international trips taken	12.721	51.364	106.896	-2.134
Number of international destinations	8.478	24.273	77.705	-1.429
Total days of international travel	270.770	1,733.182	60.555	-6.798
Age	25.380	27.455	0.304	-1.678

From the results of the independent samples t-tests, it can be seen that there are significant differences in both the number of international trips taken and the total days of international travel at the 95% level. Interestingly, age is not significantly different between the groups. This finding somewhat confirms that age, as an indicator of travel experience may be inadequate. However, these results should be interpreted with caution due to the relatively low sample size in the high travel experience group.

Due to the relatively low sample size in the high travel experience group, and the emphasis on producing comparable results to the qualitative results, it was decided not to compare the responses of the high and low travel experience groups using independent samples t-tests. Instead, the travel motivation items were centred using each individual's mean item response to minimise scale effects, and then the items for each factor were averaged to form single measures. Each factor ranges from -4, indicating unimportance, to 4, indicating importance. One sample t-tests were then used to determine the factors that are more important to the low travel experience group as seen in Table 3.

Table 3

LOW TRAVEL EXPERIENCE (n=161)

Factor	Mean	t-statistic ^a	Relative importance ^b
Novelty	1.421	16.514	Important
Stimulation	1.165	16.225	Important
Belonging/immersion	0.760	10.262	Important
Self-actualisation	0.684	10.056	Important
Autonomy	0.671	7.274	Important
Host-site involvement	0.592	5.353	Important
Social interaction	0.233	2.094	Important
Safety	0.194	2.017	Important
Relaxation	0.018	0.200	-
Security	-0.300	-1.975	Unimportant
Kinship/self-development	-0.265	-3.843	Unimportant
Nostalgia/comfort	-0.538	-4.154	Unimportant
Isolation	-1.716	-10.396	Unimportant
Romance/friendship	-1.703	-10.895	Unimportant
Escape/social status	-2.283	-21.602	Unimportant

a. Null hypotheses: Factor mean = 0. b. at 95% level

The results show that the four most important factors are novelty ($t = 16.514$), stimulation (16.225), belonging/immersion (10.262), and self-actualisation (10.056) with a number of less important factors. Likewise the least important factors include escape/social status (-21.602), romance/friendship (-10.895), isolation (-10.396), and nostalgia/comfort (-4.154) with a number of less unimportant factors. However, these measures of importance are relative. That is, an unimportant factor may still be considered by a respondent, it is just that it plays less of a role than an important factor on average.

These results are largely in agreement with the qualitative approach used in the previous study looking at similarly experienced youth travellers. In particular the themes of belonging, stimulation and novelty feature prominently in both sets of results. An interesting contrast that should be noted is that the associations between factors differ across the studies. For example, in the qualitative study belonging was associated with relationships while in this study it is predominantly associated with immersion. This may be attributed to the two samples being at slightly different phases of their travel careers resulting in marginally different levels of travel experience. As travellers alternate between different levels of travel experience such transitions from one type of travel motivation to another would be expected.

The relative similarity between the results of the two studies supports the use of qualitative TCP research methodologies in place of quantitative approaches in some circumstances. It has been shown that it is possible to produce markedly similar results in situations where quantitative approaches prove difficult such as with small sample sizes or where more in-depth explorations of the travel motivations are sought.

Conclusions

This paper has made three contributions that improve the Travel Career Patterns (TCP) model in the light of the following elements of a sound theory of tourist motivation (Pearce, 2005): ease of communication, ability to measure travel motivation, and employment of a dynamic approach.

The ease of communication element is strengthened with a clearer definition of travel experience for the TCP model. It was argued that age is an unnecessary and possibly a

misleading indicator of travel experience and that travel experience should always be treated as a component of general experience. Three key indicators of travel experience were retained: (1) The number of times a person has travelled (overseas and/or domestically); (2) The number of different destinations a person has travelled to (overseas and/or domestically); and (3) The amount of time a person has spent travelling (overseas and/or domestically).

The ability to measure travel motivations of small groups through TCP has been improved by employing the qualitative, essay method. It was shown that essays are amenable to empirical studies of motivations. Through this qualitative method, motivations can be assessed by asking the question of: 'Describe your perfect day in ...' It was further shown that emergent essay themes can match themes from quantitative analyses, supporting its use in situations where quantitative analysis is impossible or inadvisable.

Lastly, the theoretical element of using a dynamic versus a snapshot approach was strengthened through this study. The structure of questionnaires often cannot capture the dynamic nature of motivations, which are inextricable from changing holiday experiences. Getting respondents to complete essays describing the various events during their perfect day in Spain has allowed the TCP model to better account for a constantly changing tourist environment. The use of essays has also permitted an extension of the TCP model to a new setting - the motivations of a small sample of study-abroad Australian university students. The motivation themes of relationship/belonging, curiosity/mental stimulation, self-development and safety/comfort were clearly identified, which resemble the motives of kinship, novelty, self-actualisation and escape/relax suggested by the TCP model.

Recommendations for future studies

Opportunities for motivation researchers wishing to use the model in future studies have emerged. Contextual as well methodological research agendas can be devised for researchers.

Contextually, researchers using the predominantly qualitative TCP method may wish to conduct: (1) Further studies of motivations of small groups of travellers in conventional contexts such as small groups of students or backpackers; (2) Idiographic studies of motivations with eccentric tourist groups. Some of these groups, such as drug tourists or sex tourists, may appreciate the less intrusive essay style of gathering information over a face-to-face interview; and (3) Research of higher order motives such as the need for self-actualisation or the underexplored tourist "flow" state (Filep, 2007).

TCP researchers may also wish to conduct future research into methodology, including: (1) Studies in which the model's methods would incorporate projective techniques such as photographs and pictures from brochures as suggested by Mehmetoglu & Dann (2003); and (2) Recent techniques of qualitative tourism analysis, such as the content/semiotic analysis via ATLAS/ti or Nudist programs. Such techniques may allow for a further in-depth understanding of travel motivations through the model.

The new attempts at theoretical advancement in the tourist motivation field are important yet challenging. As a Greek moralist, Plutarch, once wrote: "*To find a fault is easy; to do better may be difficult* (The Quotations Page, 2006)." It is the "more difficult" advancements that may need to be pursued by future tourism researchers as travel motivation theories approach new levels of complexity and meaning in our social science specialism.

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¹ All statistical analysis was undertaken using SPSS 12.0.1

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