



What attracts tourists to a destination? Is it attractions?

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Abstract

The role of attractions in tourism cannot be overemphasized since it is common knowledge that it is the attractions that draw travellers to an area without which, arguably, they would be no tourism. In fact, it is a general belief that attractions complete the tourism experience as they are part of the four A's in tourism - accommodation, accessibility, attractions and amenities. Every destination develops and sells their attractions to tourists as one way of emphasizing the destinations appeal. But do tourists visit a destination because of attractions? This content analysis study analysed government documents, tourist organisations documents and websites as well as publications on five destinations (Hong Kong, India, Netherlands, Singapore and South Africa) to understand how they attract Chinese and American markets and to see if these tourists visit because of attractions or for other reasons. The study has found that attractions are just some of the reasons why tourists visit these destinations, and in most destinations, there are unmentioned aspects of the trips. Destinations need to incorporate right messages in their marketing campaigns that go beyond attractions as visitors mainly come for business followed by leisure other than mere attractions.

Keywords: attractions, tourists, destinations, visitors, appeal

Introduction

Debates on whether attractions attract tourists or not, are relatively new on the academia platform despite these empirical studies being proposed by Leiper in 1990. In a quest to address this call, some authors have written on tourism motivation *vis à vis* the choice for a destination and tourism attractions in their entirety (Richards, 2002; Karl, Reintinger & Schmude, 2015). Some authors have defined and have understood attractions from their functionality point of view (Pearce, 1999) while others have focused on their geographical locations and well and management implications (Pearce, 1998; Hu & Wall, 2005; Leask, 2010; Leask, 2016). On the other hand, it has been an unwritten belief by almost all destinations that as long as attractions have been built, people will come (McKercher, 2016a; McKercher, 2016b) which has also been the foci of academic research



of some authors (Lew, 1987; Leiper, 1990). From these papers, we see the importance of tourist attractions in the tourism system or process but the drawback is that they have focused on the traditional operationalization of the attractions. So what are tourist 'attractions?' Do they attract tourists? McKercher in 2016 fathered this debate in a quest to understand if an individual attraction can indeed attract tourists into a destination.

This paper will attempt to define what tourist attractions are, and how they are classified, and try to link them to tourist motivation to visit attractions. At the centre of this work, we will analyse five tourism destinations and two source markets to understand how these destinations perceive what their core attractions (tourism demand generators) are and relate them to the source markets to see if tourists are attracted by the same attractions.

Literature review

Tourist attractions

Early works on attractions by Gunn (1972) affirmed that without attractions, there are no tourists or tourism. The converse is also true as 'tourism attractions' exist because of tourists and they are 'produced' and marketed as such due to the availability of tourists (Lew, 1987). As Hu and Wall (2005) put it, "tourist attractions are an essential ingredient for successful tourism destination development" (p.617). Similarly, Benur and Bramwell (2015) assert that tourism destinations rely on their primary tourism products as mechanisms to pull and motivate tourists to visit them. Lew (1987) gives us a picture of what attractions are. He writes that attractions include all elements that draw tourists away from their homes and these include sightseeing, activities and experiences. To set delimitations to this broad definition, Mac Cannell (1976) proposed that for any phenomenon to qualify to be an attraction, it needs to have three attributes which are; a tourist, a site and an image or marker that popularizes the site. This distinction from MacCannell does not change anything in Gunn's (1982) observations that tourists visit a destination because there is a tourist attraction which definitely has an image. However, from an ontological point of view, Gunn's sweeping statement does not take into consideration excursionists or domestic visitors who can visit the attractions without necessarily sleeping over in that area. He assumes that only tourists (overnight spenders) consume attractions.

Harris and Howard (1996) proposed a different definition of attractions proposing that it (an attraction) could be a physical or cultural element of particular place with the capabilities of satisfying tourists' specific leisure related needs. They encapsulate that these elements could be ambiance in nature like climate, culture or specific to a location in cases of such things as museums or performances. This definition, just like Pearce (1991), has some flaws in its conceptualization of what attractions are. For example, both do not consider other 'elements' such as experiences that visitors seek in a destination, shopping, cuisine, sense of achievement, among others, as attractions. Besides, the definition assumes that tourists only travel for leisure purposes eliminating other purposes of tourism trips such as business, visiting friends and relatives, health among others. However, a more concise definition is provided by Hu and Wall (2005) who say that an attraction is a permanent resource that can either be natural or man-made and whose main purpose of development and management is to attract tourists.

From the definitions above, we can synthesize some meaning of attractions but for the purposes of this study, we will define an attraction from a tourist's point of view as some phenomena, experiences, activities, sense of belonging or feeling offered at specific locations, at a cost or for free that pulls or motivates tourists with a need to travel out of their usual environments to be satisfied and without which no trip would be made.



Classification of tourist attractions

Lew (1987) gives us one way of looking at tourist attractions. He says that attractions can be classified from three distinct perspectives: Ideographic, Cognitive and Organizational. Lew (1987) purports that from an ideographic perspective, attractions are named and appreciated because of their own uniqueness which earns them a name. With this typology of naming or branding of attractions, DMOs can decide how much entry fees to levy upon the attractions depending on how it has been classified. Cognitive Perspective refers to the way people perceive an attraction to be either risky or not. In other words, the cognitive perspective of an attraction looks into how risky tourism attractions can be and how prepared the tourists are to experience the attractions with this perceived risk. This is linked to Plog (1990) psychographic study on tourist behaviour in choosing destinations as well as modes of travel. His study concluded that some tourists display allocentric behaviour because they choose new destinations on a continuous basis and are curious about and they want to explore whereas on the other hand, psychocentrics are cautious and less adventurous. Lastly, organizational perspectives focus on characteristics of attractions such as capacity, location, scale and whether they are permanent or not. Events such as Lake of Stars Festival in Malawi fit into this category as it is not permanent rather is hosted once every year.

A more practical way of looking at attractions is provided by Lawton and Weaver (2010) who capitalizing on Leask's (2008) work, contend that attractions should not be classified based on ownership, capacity, market, permanency and type only but for them to be comprehensive enough and well encompassing, attractions should be classified according to such attributes as ownership, orientation, spatial configuration, authenticity, scarcity, status, carrying capacity, accessibility, market and context (Lawton and Weaver, 2010).

Kotler and Keller (2012) and McKercher (2016a) present us a six tier product hierarchy which can also be applied in the tourism system. According to these authors, every need could ably be satisfied by any product in the product family and its subsets depending on the simplicity or complexity of the need itself. In other words, specific needs can best be satisfied by specific tourism products. Similarly, attractions can also be classified as primary, secondary and tertiary. From this latter hierarchy, lesser attractions do not attract tourists other than competing their experience in the destination unlike primary attractions which are at the core of demand generation and have the 'breadth' and 'depth' of appeal (Mill & Morrison, 1985).

Tourist attraction systems

Gunn writing in 1988 said that a tourism system is a fusion of a tourist himself, attractions (nuclei) and markers which informs him about the destination or the attraction propelling him to visit. She proposes that the nuclei which could be a built attraction, a place or a cultural element, can be looked at from the perspective of motivation saying these nuclei motivate or stimulate people to leave their usual environments. Gunn (1998) adds that with the help of markers which are simply pieces of information found in the generating region, in transit and in the destination region (contiguous), a complete tourism system is created whence a tourist has a complete tourism cycle from point A to point B, a proposition also supported by (Leiper, 1990).

According to Mill and Morrison (1985), McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie (1990) writings on tourism attraction system theory, they posit that the more powerful an attraction is, the more its ability to attract tourists to that destination. Kotler and Keller (2002) and McKercher (2016a) present us a six tier product hierarchy which can also be applied in the tourism system. They say that every need could ably be satisfied by any product in the product family and its subsets, depending on the simplicity or complexity of the need itself. In other words, specific needs can best be satisfied by specific tourism products or attractions.



This is probably the founding stone of McKercher's (2016b) attractions/needs relationship framework which looks at the role of individual attractions in drawing tourists to a destination. According to McKercher (2016b), generic or multiple order tourists' needs can be satisfied by substitutable activities which he also terms high order taxon consequently meaning that individual attractions has an insignificant or low role to play in attracting tourists to that destination. On the other hand, individual attractions have a high role to play in attracting tourists with singular/specific or low order taxon which has few substitutable. From this model, a DMOs can mark some attractions as lower order attractions and price them accordingly to target a specific tourist group with low order taxon of needs. As tricky as it is, McKercher warns DMOs against "wrongly associating most popular places visited as reflecting the key motives why tourists visit" p.670. In other words, the most visited attraction does not inherently transcend to the nuclei attraction or the key reason why people visit that destination (McKercher, 2016b).

Motivation

The whole essence of travelling is as a result of motivation- the trigger within and without an individual to action. Crompton (1979) defined motivation as a driver or driving force that propels humans to behave in a certain way. Supporting this line of thought, Oliver (2010) says that this driving force within human beings emanates because of two fundamental reasons; to get rid of a need or to acquire or add some value to their lives. This mirrors Dann (1977) motivation theory of anomie and ego enhancement (The Push and Pull factors). He proposed that tourists visit various tourism destinations or attractions as a way of running away from their daily stress (anomie) or with an aim of experiencing something new and achieve a sense of pride (ego- enhancement). Interestingly, authors content that in as much as tourists have needs that need to be satisfied, the drive to buy a tourism product, in this case, an attraction, never arises unless the tourist in question is knowledgeable of such products that would get rid or satisfy of his need (Fodness, 1994; Goossens, 2000). According to Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) in their hedonic consumption study, tourists make fantasy imageries and emotions on the anticipated attraction or product which motivates them even more to buy it.

Notwithstanding the fact that tourist motivation is a complex issue and there is no simple way of understanding it, of importance to us in this essay is to understand if attractions do attract tourists. Dann (1981) posited that understanding the Pull factors in tourism helps destinations or attractions managers to discern why tourists come to their attractions for their ongoing or future marketing communication purposes. Fodness (1994) agrees with Dann (1981) saying that no destination could run an effective marketing campaign if it fails to understand tourists' motivations. These motivations could range from isolation to being with friends and family. In this view therefore, tourists have needs that need to be met while the destination has the means of attributes that would satisfy those needs.

All in all, authors agree that novelty seeking, social contact, escape, adventure, relaxation, nature and attraction are some of the motives for people to travel to destinations (Crompton,1979;Iso-Ahola & Allen, 1982; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2003; Pearce & Lee, 2005;Park & Yoon, 2009; Hsu, Cai & Li, 2010). Worth noting is the role that a destination image plays in motivating tourists to visit. Destination image wraps up all forecasts, experiences and memories a tourist is to beget from a destination (Crompton, 1979; Hirschman & Holbrook,1982; Pike & Ryan, 2004) and has a bearing on a tourists' behavioural intentions in choosing a destination (Pike & Ryan, 2004; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a). In a nutshell, we can agree that tourists travel to different destinations owing to their lifestyle bubbles in the generating region which either need to be reinforced or to be weakened.



Methodology

The authors reviewed secondary data from various academic journal articles, national destination websites as well as books on attractions, motivations and tourism in general. International tourists' arrival information from five destinations tourism boards namely: Hong Kong, India, Netherlands, Singapore and South Africa as well as two source markets (USA and China) were reviewed. Domestic tourists were sieved out as their attraction needs are different from those of international tourists owing to the '*usual environment*' and another reason was that incorporating domestic tourists would have brought in some bias to the data.

The data was looked at from McKercher's (2016b) product taxonomy where singular or specific needs are well met by low order taxon attractions that are rarely substitutable and their role in attracting tourists is very high while on the other hand, generic or multiple order tourist needs are easily met by high order taxon attractions whose role in attracting tourists is very low. (See figure 3.1 attached). Themes and patterns of tourists flows were identified from the data to inform us on why tourists come to the five destinations. Since we only used secondary data, it is possible that some core information was missed out which could shape the study into another direction and possible future research.

Research findings

We considered and analysed five tourist destinations which are: Hong Kong, India, Netherlands, Singapore and South Africa. These countries were opted for because it was easier for us to access their tourism statistics online and their tourism statistics were 'exhaustive' enough as compared to the other destinations. For comparisons sake, statistics from 2013-2017 were used as they were the most recent in some of the chosen destinations. Considering that these countries are in different regions of the world, it was more applicable to only analyse two common markets which are the United States of America and China unlike other markets which showed a lot of disparities.

According to ITB (2017), the American outbound travel market is the second biggest market by trips at 60% after Germany and ranked first on expenditure in 2015. The main purpose of travel for this American segment according to The USA Department of Commerce (2015) is holiday (51%) seconded by VFR travel at 27%. Moreover, 8% of these outbound international traveller swerve on their first trip abroad The Chinese market, on the other hand, is ranked fourth outbound market by trips and second on expenditure (ITB, 2017).

Hong Kong Destination

According to the Hong Kong Tourist Board (HKTB,2017), the markets display different tastes for attraction consumption in the destination as well as their duration and expenditure characteristics.

The Chinese Market

China remains the most significant tourist market to Hong Kong as seen in its ever increasing tourist arrival numbers as well as tourist expenditure in the destination. According to the Hong Kong Tourist Board (2015), about 46 million Chinese tourists visited Hong Kong in 2015 with 60% of them being same day visitors. Of the 19,007 overnight visitors, 59% registered vacation as the main purpose of the visit followed by VFR at 22%. These were mainly people of the age ranges of 16-46 years who are termed as young (16-30 years) representing 28%, mid-career (31-45 years) representing 24% and the Achievers (46 years+) representing 43% of the arrivals, respectively and who are a mirror of the market vacation segment target by the HKTB. Chinese tourist spent 14.1% less in 2015 at HK\$142.3 billion but maintained position one with 73.9% of total tourist expenditure by the overnight category and had an average stay of 3.3 days.



USA market

With tourist arrival numbers at 1,181,024 in 2015, USA was Hong Kong's 4th market with a market share of 2% after China, Taiwan and South Korea but with an overnight visitor expenditure of HK\$ 5.79 billion, USA is second to China on the expenditure scale. With more men than females visit Hong Kong and with a mean age of 43.8 years, the main purpose of visiting was vacation at 46% followed by business at 27%. The average length of stay was 3.9 days and repeat visitors were at 67%.

The most visited attractions in Hong Kong

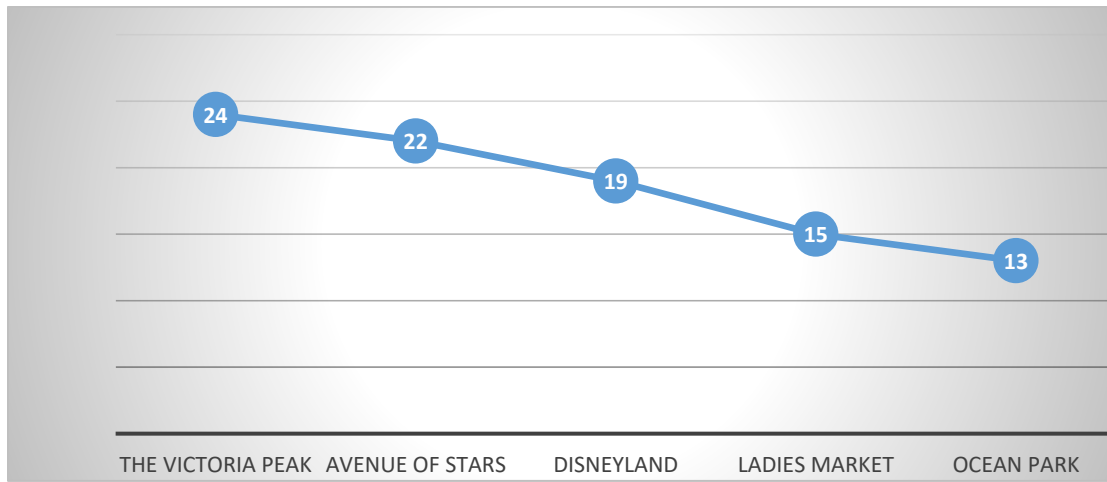


Fig 4.1 Hong Kong's most visited tourist attractions in 2015

Source: Hong Kong Tourist Board (2015)

According to the Hong Kong Tourism Board statistics, 80% of the Chinese tourists had one single destination, Hong Kong, while 20% visited other destinations on their trip. For the long haul market (USA Inclusive), 17% came specifically for Hong Kong while 83% had multiple destinations such as China (35%), Macau (24%) and Thailand 12% among other destinations (Hong Kong Visitor Profile, 2016). Interesting to note is the fact that most visitors to Hong Kong from China, were repeat visitors with figures pegged at 80% with an average stay of 3.2 nights.

Table. 4.1 Tourists activities in Hong Kong

Country/Region	Shopping	Dining & Sightseeing	Theme Park
China	88%	39%	27%
Short Haul	78%	68%	30%
Long Haul	57%	69%	11%

Destination India

Tourism in India is reportedly growing at the rate of 13% per annum compared to 7% growth rate in the world (Chavan & Bhola, 2014) and international tourism has also followed this trend with tourists coming from the US, UK, Middle East, South Africa, Spain, France and others. Despite tourism being largely unplanned in most states, Kerala, Goa, Jammu, Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh had tourism incorporated into their state plans (Chavan & Bhola, 2014).



USA Market

According to the Government of India (2016), American tourists to India ranked on position one on the international tourists' arrivals with 1,213,624 tourists representing 15.12% of the international arrivals in India and they mainly visited in December. India received more male tourists from USA than females at 59.3%. Of these tourists, 20.4 % were between the age range of 45-54 years followed by an age range of 0-14 years at 20%, who probably accompanied their parents or guardians.

Chinese Market

China is India's 11th international source market with 206,322 tourists recorded in 2015. Of these tourists to India, 63.8 % were males and the most prevalent age range was 25-24 years at 40% followed by the age range of 35-34 at 25.8%. Of these visits to India, 11.2% were recorded in November as compared to 6.3% in May.

India's Top five visited Attractions (2015)

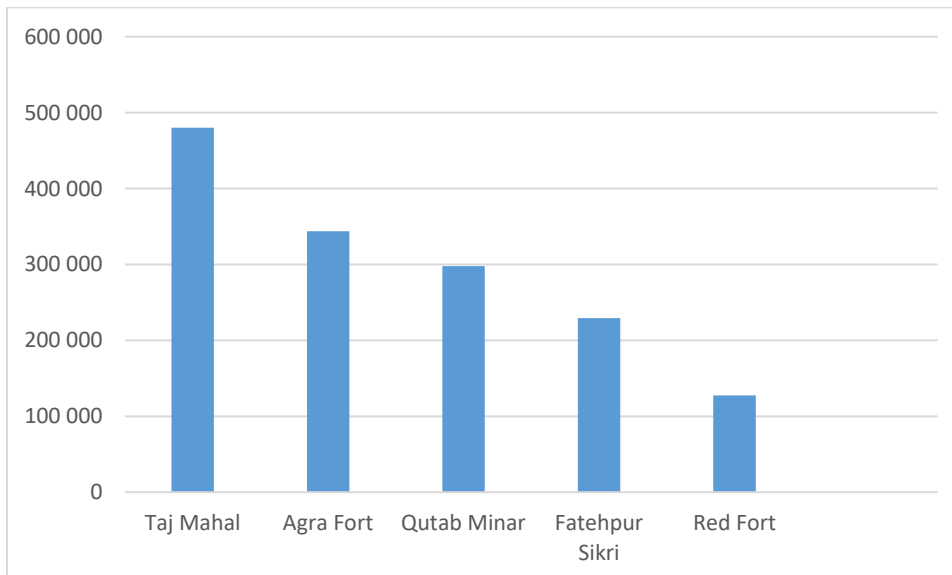


Figure 4.2 The five most visited attractions

Source: India Tourism Statistics data (2016)



The Figure below illustrates the most visited five states according to the Government of India (2016).

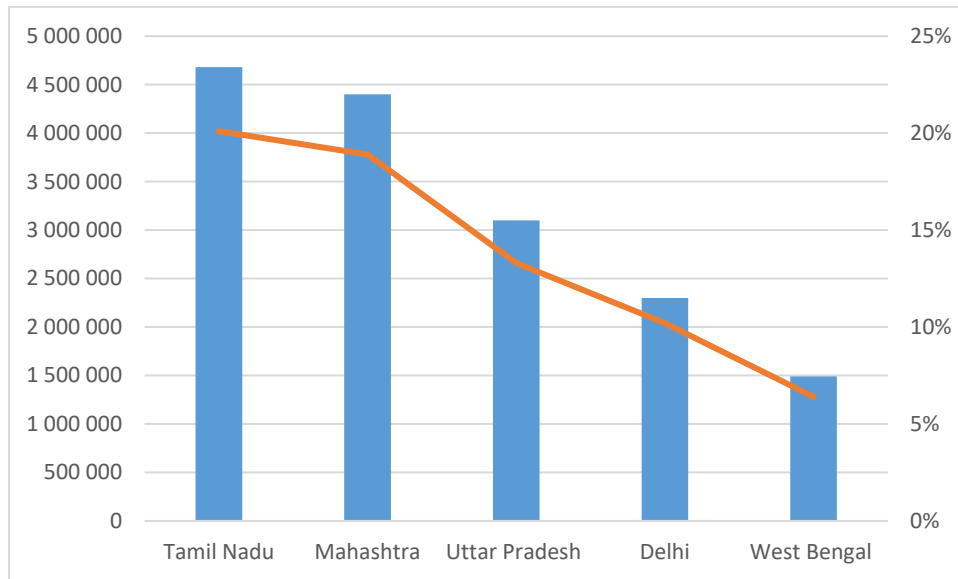


Figure 4.3: Tourist visit to some Indian States

Destination Netherlands

Destination Netherlands enjoys vibrant domestic tourism as well as international tourism as evidenced by the number of international tourists who visited in 2016. There were a total of 15.5 million international tourists who were mostly from neighbouring countries (Netherlands Board of Tourism and Conventions [NBTC], 2016a). According to NBTC Statistics Incoming Tourism (2014), most international tourists (69%) visit Holland for short holidays and they are categorized as leisure tourists.

The majority of these tourists, plan their trips in advance and mostly use the internet before booking. Leisure travellers top this list at 87% and they mainly booked their travel less than a month before setting off. At least 52% of all international visitors to Holland were repeat visitors in 2014, (NBTC, 2014) and most first time visitors were observed from long- haul markets such as Russia, Brazil, Spain and China at 74%, 69% and 54% respectively.

Chinese Market

The Chinese market in Holland prefers guided tours owing to the immature nature of the big part of it but more and more young travellers go solo and engage in shopping on the trip (NBTC, 2016b). The Chinese market perceive Netherlands as a land of tulips, windmills and clogs such that most of the visitors come to Holland for these attractions. Of the 330,000 Chinese visitors to Netherlands in 2015, 55% had a business motive in Amsterdam and the average length of stay was 5.1 nights on which they spent about €1,256.

Most Chinese tourists in Holland engage in Walk through the city (14%), walking (12%), fun shopping (11%) and visiting a café or bar (8%). According to the HBTC (2015), most Chinese visitors to Holland come on multi- destination tours which take them to two or three destinations. The main purpose of visiting Holland according to NBTC (2014) is rest, relaxation and fun akin Scandinavians, Germans and Belgians.



The USA market

The US market is ranked 4th international source market in Holland with slightly over 1 million visits and 59% of them having a holiday motivation in Amsterdam. With an average stay of 4 nights, most Americans visit Holland in spring and summer which spans from April to September. According to NBTC Statistics Incoming Tourism (2014), Americans engaged in activities like walking through the city (22%), visiting notable/historical places or building (12%) and visiting a museum (11%) and walking (9%). America is considered as the main source continent of long-haul market with these statistics and it ranked 4th again on international leisure visitors to Holland (NBTC, 2014).

Destination Singapore

This city country has more attributes similar to its sister city Hong Kong and having roots with the Chinese descent, Singapore Tourism Board (STB, 2016) observes that it makes it difficult for Singapore to competitively attract tourists who seek deep and authentic Asian experience.

USA Market

USA was Singapore's 11th international market as most Americans prefer China and India as their Asian destinations owing to 'their authentic and distinctive cultures and architecture' (STB, 2016) statistics. USA's outbound tourists to Asia predominantly travel for VFR (45%) followed by holidaying (27%) and a majority of them travel in December. However, in 2014 American tourists visited Singapore for various reasons such as; holidays at 47% followed by business/MICE at 27% (75% being repeat visitors) and lastly 10% stopovers. STB (2016) notes that American traveller's despite being cultural explorers, consider authentic cultures, good hygiene factors highly when choosing a destination.

According to STB (2016) statistics, the USA market perceives Singapore as more westernized than other Asian destinations although very expensive and hence 86% leisure seeking Americans were in Singapore as part of their multi-destination trip and consider Singapore as a stopover or secondary destination (Mill & Morrison, 1985). Despite the general feeling among Americans that Singapore lacks differentiation and vibrancy and cultural distinction from other South East Asian destinations, Americans showed their quest for 'authentic cultural experiences' by visiting; Chinatown, Gardens by the Bay, Little India, Marina Bay Sands and Sands SkyPark (STB, 2016).

Chinese Market

The Chinese market with 2.864 million tourists was the second largest inbound market into Singapore after Indonesia but the Chinese market beats Indonesia and any other market on expenditure with most Chinese engaging in shopping of fashion accessories, genuine jewellery, clocks and watches (STB, 2014). But according to the recent STB report on Tourism Performance Report in first quarter of 2017, China was ranked first displacing Indonesia and maintained its leadership on tourism expenditure.

Given the Chinese gifting culture, as well as status need to own foreign brands, it is unsurprising that they spend more on shopping than any other item. Contrariwise, the Chinese market spends less on accommodation than the average visitor to Singapore as they prefer budget hotels. STB (2014) observes high tourist numbers from China during summer school holidays (June- August) and little in flows during the Spring and National Day holidays. This reflects why most Chinese tourists to Singapore are family travellers and early career types.

According to the STB (2014), beginner travellers prefer multi-destination packaged tours with pre-determined itineraries while the mature and experience travellers prefer independent travel which



gives them flexibility and freedom to venture in their favourite activities while on the trip. While novice travellers prefer visiting iconic well known attractions such as SkyPark, Singapore Flyer, Marina Bay Sands and Universal Studios whereas the mature tourists demand “deeper experiences and engagement with cultures and heritage of the local people” STB (2014). Perceived as a safe, modern and clean destination, most Chinese tourists to Singapore admire it as a Garden City suitable for family vacations, with similar cultures and food being an added advantage. Overall, Chinese travellers seek discovery, enlightenment and a sense of accomplishment followed by keeping up with friends when they travel and they plan and book their travel 8-30 days in advance (STB, 2014).

Destination South Africa

Just as in the case of the foregoing destinations, South Africa emphasizes attractions on the adverts sent out to the public. South Africa is marketed as a ‘diverse and enchanting country’ in the world and attractions such as Kruger National Park, heritage sites such as Robben Island, Cape Town the home of beach life and Table Mountains are given prominence in the marketing messages.

The country received 10 million international tourists in 2016 which signified an 12.8% increase (Department of Tourism, 2017). According to the report, South Africa hosts about one million business delegates every year who mix their business itineraries with leisure attractions. Most international visitors are males than females and mostly the visitors are within the age range of between 15 – 64 years.

South Africa is marketed as a leisure, business and events destination to both domestic and international visitors (Department of Tourism, 2016). The Department of Tourism participates in travel shows and engages media and guests to promote destination South Africa, according to the website, with aims that focus on increasing the number of tourists who visit the country, improve seasonal arrival patterns and to increase the geographical spread, length of stay and expenditure of the guests.

South Africa has several types of tourism such as adventure, conference, cultural, eco, paleo, sports and medical tourism. The most visited province in 2016 was Gauteng followed by Limpopo (South Africa Department of Tourism, 2016). Gauteng’s top five attractions were:

- i. Sandton City/ Mandela Square (53.1%)
- ii. Eastgate Mall (16.2%)
- iii. Apartheid Museum (16.1%)
- iv. Mandela House in Soweto (13.1%)
- v. Tour of Soweto (11.7%)

Whereas for Limpopo, the top five attractions were:

- i. Kruger National Park (83.4%)
- ii. Blyde River Canyon God’s Window (44%)
- iii. Panaroma (30%)
- iv. Hazyview Mall (27.8%)
- v. Hazyview (Cable slide etc.) (22.3%)

USA market

South Africa reports that US in one of its top ten international tourism markets sitting on position 3 after Germany and United Kingdom with 349, 521 tourists reported in 2016. This represents



14% of the international visitors to South Africa (Tourism and Migration Report, 2016). USA is acknowledged for hosting many MICE in South Africa than any other country.

A majority of Americans (95%) just like other Western countries visited South Africa for holidays followed by business motives but the activities they engaged in most was shopping (65.7%) and natural attractions (55.8%).

The 2016 Tourism reports states that a majority of American tourists to South Africa were between 25-44 years old and at 65%, mainly visited for leisure. The report further states that repeat visitors were pegged at 64.8 % and the average stay of American visitors was 13.2 days and they mainly stayed in hotels.

Chinese Market

Growth of the Asian Market is captured at 30.3% and China ranks 6th on the top ten tourist markets to South Africa with 116,946 visitors contributing 4.9% of the international visitors to South Africa.

The majority of the Chinese visitors indicated that they had come to South Africa for leisure at 76% and they were mainly repeat visitors between the age ranges of 35 - 44 years (South Africa Department of Tourism, 2016). The report further stipulates the Chinese visitors to South Africa were repeat visitors (61%) and stayed in hotels with an average stay of 7.5 days.

The Chinese market mainly visits South Africa for Social reasons followed by shopping at 41% and 36.9% respectively (South Africa Department of Tourism, 2016).



How do these destinations market themselves to these markets?

	General marketing strategy	China	USA
Hong Kong	Experience Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Fun familiarization tours • My time for Hong Kong • China International Tourism Industry Expo (CITIE) • Meetings & exhibitions • PR activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media familiarization • Consumer marketing • Meetings & exhibitions
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incredible India • PM Modi as Incredible India brand ambassador 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest should be treated like a God 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guest should be treated like a God
Netherlands	Holland brand (A metropolis city with districts, follow your passion and enrich your experience and lastly must see events.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a Multi-channel network (MCN) where Holland is advertised to the Chinese market via WeChat and other social media platforms in Chinese language. • Just Be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holland 2.0 • Just Be
Singapore	Passion made possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital marketing (We chat, Tencent, tuniu.com, Ctrip) • No one-size fits all strategy - Customized tour development • Emphasize “the biggest, newest) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Showcase Singapore’s authenticity through differentiated local experiences such as food and beverage. • Position Singapore as a complement to neighbouring destinations and as a break from the rustic Asian experience. • Build advocacy among millennial travellers who are active users of social networks.
South Africa	SA- Inspiring new ways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a tourism office in Beijing • Runs a Chinese website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a tourism office in New York • Emphasizes the diversity of attractions in the destination



Discussion

Tourism attractions and tourism motivation cannot be discussed in isolation. In fact, one leads to another and they talk to each other but they are not the same as most DMOs perceive them to be. Tourist attractions cannot exist without tourists (else they will just be features or products) and tourist motives cannot exist without tourism products or attractions. As we have seen above, personal motives which are inherently referred to push factors eye upon tourism attractions (pull factors) to be addressed. In the data presented above, there is a discrepancy between the most visited attraction in Hong Kong and the most done activity- The Peak and Shopping. According to Lew (1987), shopping like sightseeing and other activities are part of the broad definition of the term attractions but this has been overlooked by the Hong Kong Tourism Board. So how do we say that most tourists came to Hong Kong to visit the Peak and not to do shopping? Is this as a result of lack of an agreed method of measuring shoppers?

Referring to tourist's motivation, Pearce (2011) posits that earning a social status or experiencing fashionable places is an outer layer motive which is done by well-travelled people but we would be naïve to apply this motive to the Chinese market which is newly experiencing the world hence this shopping falls under self-actualization in the middle layer motives of Pearce (2011) Travel Career Pattern. And for this market, it is a high order taxon which could be met in any shopping destination. For the Chinese tourists to Hong Kong, Disneyland is a preferred destination than other attractions perhaps due to the nature of the attraction which is relatively new to the Chinese market and Hong Kong Disneyland confirms their self-actualization desire which is an intrinsic middle layer motive according to Pearce (2011). On the other hand, American tourists in Hong Kong predominantly visit for holidays which falls under Pearce's core motive of relaxation. However, according to Mc Kercher's (2016a) product taxonomy, relaxation is a generic/ multiple order taxon which can be satisfied in any destination hence no specific low order taxon in Hong Kong is required satisfy it (Mc Kercher, 2016a).

Indian tourism statistics pose questions whereas the most visited state does not match the most visited attractions. In this case, the most visited state is Tamil Nadu whilst the most visited attraction is Taj Mahal which is in Uttar Pradesh state. From this example, there is a clear distinction between visiting a place and visiting an attraction. Speaking in tourism terms, the most popular tourism destination in India is Tamil Nadu but the most touristic attraction is Taj Mahal in Uttar Pradesh state. We would be wrong if we concluded that Tamil Nadu offers tourists with general motivations attractions whilst those with specific low order needs visit Uttar Pradesh state. In other words, Taj Mahal does not attract tourists, comparatively, rather a group of attractions in India do. This confirms Mc Kercher and Koh's (2017) sentiments that "the importance of iconic attractions as demand drivers may be overstated." Furthermore, motivations for travel are not highlighted apart from demographic characteristics of the tourists, foreign exchange earnings as well as service performances (airlines and hotel occupancy rates). In a bid to find out tourist's perception of India as well as to find out their motivations and preferred destination in India, studies commissioned by the Ministry of Tourism India were conducted in five source markets of Germany, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Turkey and South Korea.

Results, according to Indian Tourism Statistics (2015), indicated that most people were willing to visit India because of its Culture (16%), Heritage (14.9%) and Tourist Scenic Spots and Beaches both at (11%). These motivations, according to McKercher (2016a), are high order taxon which can be substitutes by other products on the market. The respondents also indicated that they would love to visit Delhi, Mumbai, Goa and Agra and no specific attraction was mentioned. It is also worthy to note that none of the sampled source markets is among the top 7 international markets so questions linger on as to why these markets were settled for and what significance they have to the destination.



An insight into the Netherlands market does not reveal to us any specific attraction that 'attracts' people to Holland apart from the broad high order motivations which are satisfied in Amsterdam. NBTC (2015) also admits the discrepancy that exists between the main activity (planned beforehand) and the activity taken (P.54). American tourists had the coast and culture as their main activity but they engaged mostly in like city walks while the Chinese visit for rest, relaxation and fun. Should we take Amsterdam as a single attraction that is attracting these people? No! According to Pearce (1991) and of course (McKercher, 2016a), an attraction has to be named and has to satisfy the order of taxonomy as a low order or high order taxon respectively. NBTC emphasizes walking through the city, biking/cycling tours as core activities to be done in Netherlands. These tourism experiences belong to the generic multiple high order taxon of needs (McKercher, 2016a) where anything can satisfy the tourists needs (Tangeland,2011) and according to Pearce (2011), nature and self-development (meeting locals) are middle layer motives mostly done by experienced travellers and the American market belong in this category whereas the Chinese market which mostly constitute first time travellers to Holland travel for rest, relaxation and fun which are core motives on Pearce's (2011) Travel career Pattern and belong to the generic multiple high order taxon of needs (McKercher, 2016a).

On the part of Singapore, the Chinese tourists fall on two extremes as novice travellers prefer to visit iconic places while seasoned travellers deeply engage and consume culture when they visit (STB, 2016). The Singaporean Tourism Board further states that the Chinese market is interested in food, sightseeing and shopping. Indeed, Chinese tourists spend more money on shopping than any other item and perhaps this could constitute the 'attraction' motive for visiting Singapore but the Chinese market generally travel for 'self-actualization' which is a middle layer motive (Pearce, 2011) and at the same time, their desire to visit the 'biggest' and 'newest' unique experiences which cannot be found back home (STB, 2016; Mc Kercher and Koh (2017) justifies that attractions do attract Chinese travellers to Singapore and these 'newest', 'tallest' and 'biggest' "attractions" are low order specific taxon which satisfy low order motivations/needs of the Chinese travellers. Contrary to the Chinese market, the Americans were not necessarily attracted to Singapore by any attraction as they generally visit it as part of their Asian travel to justify their expenditure and kill time.

For South Africa, the various reports that can be found report that both the Chinese and the Americans came to South Africa for leisure motives. Shopping was the most preferred activity in the destination by Americans whereas Chinese engaged mostly in social activities. We also learn that the most visited province is Gauteng followed by Limpopo. Unlike India, these statistics tally as the most visited malls for shopping were the ones in Gauteng province whereas Kruger National Park, the most visited natural attraction is in Limpopo province.

On the TCP, both the Chinese and the American tourists based on the leisure motive fall under core motives where there is novelty, escape/relax and relationships. Based in their activities, the Americans are on the outer layer where they satisfy social status through shopping while those that engage in natural attractions activities satisfy the mid layer extrinsic motives (Pearce, 2011). Unlike all other markets, South Africa has the largest repeat visitors from both China and USA. Their concentration in Gauteng Province could be interpreted as their need to deeply engage with the destination as they are not novice or first time travellers who tend to travel and see many attractions during a trip (Oppermann, 1999;2007). No statistics are available on the attractions that pull people to South Africa without which they would not come as per the product taxonomy (McKercher, 2016a) other than the motives of travel.

Common throughout these five destinations is that the statistics given do not give us a reason why tourists bought the 'destination'. In other words, they do not give the number one rule of tourism- destinations must have a central focus that generates demand. As Bull (1991) pointed



out, DMOs, need to understand the three roles of attractions in tourism which are; an intrinsic part of the trip, a major motivator as well as a discretionary activity engaged in at the destination. This being the case, DMOs should possibly desist from using motivation and purpose of the trip interchangeably, a situation which makes them miss out on what really attracts people to their destinations. The tendency of DMOs to measure tourists' demographics as well as capacity usage of their assets need not to be emphasized.

Notwithstanding the findings above, it is clearly prevalent that most destinations do not know what attractions or tourism products satisfy the needs of visitors who come to their destination. These destinations do not know their central focus or low order taxon attractions that generate demand and meet consumers' needs. Another pattern worthwhile noting in this review is the fact that proximity is a key attribute that attracts tourists into a country as evidenced by huge tourist volumes from short haul markets which constitutes regional tourism. This could be as a result of ease of accessibility as well as product awareness filtering agents as alluded to by (McKercher, 2008). Riding on these short haul markets, which McKercher and Koh (2017) found to be mostly product aware, DMOs could get an insight into their product offerings by asking the tourists what attractions attracted them to the destination in the first instance?

Conclusion

In as much as everyone has needs that require satisfying on a tourism trip, the attractions in that destination or the destination as a whole, have a big role to play in attracting tourists (Leiper, 1990; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Benur & Bramwell, 2015). Concurring with McKercher (2016a;2016b;2017) in his papers 'Do attractions attract tourists?', this paper concludes that, in as much as this debate on attractions is inconclusive and highly subjective in that, 'attractions do attract tourists because they do satisfy tourist needs and tourism attractions are products and tourists travel for various needs and wants' as contended by Benur and Bramwell (2015), attractions do not attract tourists. Attractions, whether physical, socio-cultural or environmental (Jafari, 1982), are double-edged swords: means to an end and an end in themselves! (Goosens,2000). But drawing from the reviewed destinations above, single attractions do not attract tourists as we have found no evidence to support this claim. Furthermore, this analysis has failed to link tourist visitation to one single attraction in the destinations per McKercher's (2016a) product taxonomy except for the Chinese tourists in Singapore.

Time is nigh for destination management organizations to get out of their comfort zones and find out if the tourists they record in their country come for a specific tourist attraction (low order taxon), or if they come for some multi-level attractions to satisfy their generic multiple needs. DMO's need to adopt Leask's (2010) resolution that visitor attraction research should "develop mechanisms for evaluating the contribution of visitor attractions within a destination area" (p.163). Defining motivations as purpose of the trip or as attractions as per Pearce's (1982) or Lew's (1987) definitions, would misplace DMOs efforts and resources of nurturing the real attractions that draw tourists to the destination.

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Appendix 1

Product/ need Taxonomy model

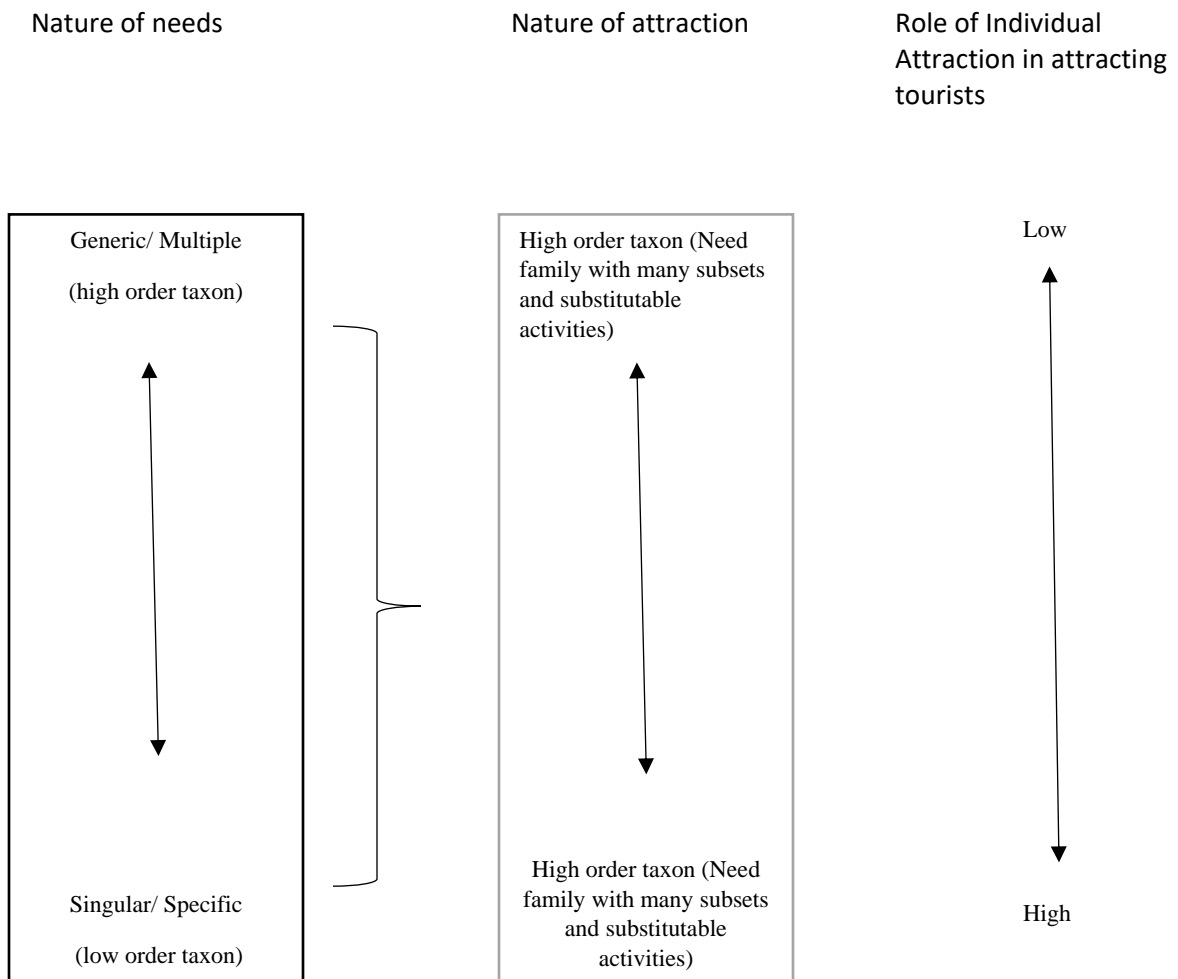


Figure 3.1. Role of Individual attractions in drawing tourists to a destination

Source: McKercher (2016a)