

Experience-Appetites as a Segmentation Schema for Tourism Marketing

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Abstract

Tourist destinations often segment based on demographics or past behavior, overlooking the motivational drivers that shape travel decisions. This study applies a segmentation framework based on experience-appetites to understand traveler preferences. A survey of college-aged consumers assessed the importance of 26 destination attributes and the likelihood of engaging in six activities during a hypothetical trip to a mountain town. Exploratory factor analysis identified five appetites: adventure, luxury/amenities, sustainability, peace/relaxation, and cost sensitivity. K-means clustering revealed distinct visitor segments with significantly different appetites and activity intentions. Appetite profiles predicted intended behaviors more effectively than demographics. Findings show that destinations can improve positioning and messaging by targeting what travelers seek to experience, rather than who they are, or even what they've done in the past.

Track: Tourism Marketing