1-1-2019

Conceptualizing vacation dedication

Amata L. Ring

University of Queensland, amata@uow.edu.au

Venkata K. Yanamandram

University of Wollongong, venkaty@uow.edu.au

Ulrike Gretzel

University of Southern California, ugretzel@uow.edu.au

Sara Dolnicar

University of Queensland, s.dolnicar@uq.edu.au

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/gsbpapers>

Part of the [Business Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ring, Amata L.; Yanamandram, Venkata K.; Gretzel, Ulrike; and Dolnicar, Sara: Conceptualizing vacation dedication 2019, 1-5.

<https://ro.uow.edu.au/gsbpapers/580>

Conceptualizing vacation dedication

Abstract

To better understand and predict tourism demand, we introduce the concept of *vacation dedication* to the tourism literature. Vacation dedication is a form of enthusiasm for and devotion to going on vacation. It is an enduring urge to go on a vacation that is so strong that it persists in spite of external constraints. We empirically test its links to the well-established constructs of travel involvement, commitment, and tourist identity. Affective commitment emerges as most strongly associated with vacation dedication, pointing to an important emotional component.

Disciplines

Business

Publication Details

Ring, A., Yanamandram, V., Gretzel, U. & Dolnicar, S. (2019). Conceptualizing vacation dedication. *Current Issues In Tourism*, Online First 1-5.

Conceptualising vacation dedication

Amata Ring
GfK Austria
Erdberger Lände 26a
1030 Wien, Austria
amata.ring@gfk.com

Venkata Yanamandram
Sydney Business School
Faculty of Business
University of Wollongong
Northfields Avenue
Wollongong, NSW 2522, Australia
venkaty@uow.edu.au

Ulrike Gretzel
Center for Public Relations
Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism
University of Southern California
3502 Watt Way
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0281, USA
gretzel@usc.edu

Sara Dolnicar (corresponding author)
Tourism | UQ Business School
The University of Queensland
Room 439, GP North Building (39A), St Lucia Campus
Brisbane Qld 4072 Australia
T +61 7 3365 6702 M +61 437 216 185
E s.dolnicar@uq.edu.au

ABSTRACT

To better understand and predict tourism demand, we introduce the concept of *vacation dedication* to the tourism literature. Vacation dedication is a form of enthusiasm for and devotion to going on vacation. It is an enduring urge to go on vacation that is so strong that it persists in spite of external constraints. We empirically test its links to the well-established constructs of travel involvement, commitment, and tourist identity. Affective commitment emerges as most strongly associated with vacation dedication, pointing to an important emotional component.

KEYWORDS

dedication;
enthusiasm;
involvement;
commitment;
identity

Introduction

Tourism research generally assumes that individuals will engage in tourism activities unless they encounter constraints. This paper argues that some people will travel for leisure purposes even when faced with constraints because they feel dedicated to going on vacations away from home. We conceptualize this new concept of vacation dedication as a form of enthusiasm for and devotion to going on vacation. Merriam-Webster (2014) defines devotion as dedicating time, money, energy, etc. to a particular activity or purpose. We specifically choose the term "dedication" in describing the personal drive to go on vacation regardless of external constraints to be able to compare it to the widely understood and used concept of "job dedication" (Van Scotter & Motowidlo, 1996), which is associated with illustrated effort and persistence in overcoming obstacles related to the job. Vacation dedication in the context of our research means a strong preference for and active choice of vacations over other possible activities. McKercher and Chen's (2014) research clearly illustrates that not everyone who could travel actually feels the need to go on vacation. Consequently, vacation dedication could be an important measure to gauge demand potential. In this paper, we not only operationalize vacation dedication but seek to better understand its psychological foundations by exploring potential links to the well-established constructs of involvement, commitment and identity.

Involvement is theorized as a motivational state that encompasses both cognitive processes and emotions (Zaichowsky, 1994). It motivates information processing as well as decision-making in favour of the object or activity. Being involved in something always implies that the object or activity has personal relevance, meaning it is self-related or somehow instrumental to achieving personal goals (Kyle, Absher, Norman, Hammit, & Jodice, 2007). Involvement has been studied extensively in leisure and tourism and is seen as motivating a range of leisure and tourism-related behaviors (Havitz & Dimanche, 1990). It has been measured at activity, product and destination levels (Gursoy & Gavcar, 2003) but has not been previously conceptualized at the overall vacation behaviour/travel level. We hypothesize:

H1: High involvement in leisure travel leads to higher vacation dedication.

Commitment has been variously defined, e.g. as a willingness to make short-term sacrifices to maintain a stable relationship and confidence that the relationship is stable (Anderson & Weitz, 1992). In the organizational behaviour literature, a three-component commitment model distinguishing between affective, continuance and normative commitment has been established based on Allen and Meyer (1990). This multi-dimensional view of commitment has also been applied to marketing (e.g. Bansal, Irving & Taylor, 2004). In tourism, Dimitriadis (2006) finds commitment to mediate between satisfaction and behavioral and attitudinal loyalty and Suárez Álvarez, Vázquez Casiellas and Díaz Martín (2007) conclude that affective commitment drives attitudinal loyalty, while objective commitment drives behavioural loyalty to travel agencies. It can be assumed that high commitment to

travel leads to a low willingness to substitute tourism activities (Buchanan, 1985) even when facing adverse events or conditions. We thus propose:

H2: High affective, continuance and normative commitment are positively correlated with vacation dedication.

Identity for the purpose of this paper refers to self-identity and specifically to the extent to which a person views themselves as someone who loves and needs vacations away from home. Identity and identity salience are seen as stable over time and contexts (Stryker & Burke, 2000), but can be modified if there is a misalignment. Aligning self-relevant meanings in specific situations with a person's identity standard is referred to as self-verification (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Behaviour results from the need for self-verification. In the leisure literature, Shamir (1992) defines leisure identity salience as "the relative importance of a leisure identity for defining one's self, relative to other identities the individual holds" (p. 301) and shows that leisure identity salience is associated with investment of time in a leisure activity as well as social, continuance and financial commitment to the activity. A few studies have used the concept of identity to study tourism phenomena (e.g. Damari & Mansfeld, 2016; Marschall, 2015), but, like most of the leisure identity literature (see Jun & Kyle, 2012 for a review), only look at identity in relation to specific types of tourism or travel behaviours. We conceptualize tourist identity at a higher level in accordance with Desforges (2000), who defines it as a general mobilization of tourism consumption for self-identity purposes. Corresponding to the notion that the self is a primary motivator of behaviour, we hypothesize:

H3: High levels of tourist identity lead to high levels of vacation dedication.

Methodology

To maximize generalisability without potentially compromising data quality with translations and back-translations, we chose English-speaking countries. We focused on countries that have reliable online research panels, and where a sizeable proportion of residents have the means to be able to afford vacations. Data representative of the adult population in Australia (n=917), Canada (n=922), UK (n=950) and the US (n=941) was collected using a professional online survey panel company, leading to a total usable sample of 3730 survey respondents. The profile of survey participants mirrors the census data relatively well.

Commitment was measured based on Allen and Meyer (1990) and identity using a modified scale of athletic identity (Brewer, van Raalte & Lindner, 1993). Commitment and identity items were measured on a binary scale to minimize fatigue effects (Dolnicar, Grün & Leisch, 2011) and are available in the Supplementary Materials. Involvement was measured using the shortened Personal Involvement Inventory (Zaichkowsky, 1994) comprising ten seven-point semantic differential items. The following question was used as an indicator of vacation dedication: "If I had fewer days of vacation per year, I would continue to undertake trips away from home / not

undertake any trips away from home at all”.

To compare associations, we calculated independent logistic regressions for all constructs. Commitment and identity entered the analysis as summated scores across the binary variables; involvement as a summated score of binarized responses. Ten-fold cross validation was used to calculate accuracy and area under curve (AUC) values of the receiver operator characteristic (ROC) curve for each model. Accuracy is the percentage of accurately predicted cases; AUC represents the percentage of correctly predicted outcomes for randomly drawn pairs of observations with observed values 1 and 0. Note that this predictive performance cannot be interpreted as a causal relationship given that the analysis has been conducted using a one-off cross-sectional data set, but it does point to strong and systematic associations, which should be followed up with an experimental study to establish cause-and-effect relationships reliably. All analyses were carried out in R version 3.0.2 (R Development Core Team, 2013) using packages DAAG (Maindonald & Brown, 2013), caret (Kuhn & Johnson, 2013) and ROCR (Sing, Sander, Beerenwinkel & Lengauer, 2005).

Results

Commitment emerges as being most strongly associated with vacation dedication, having both the highest accuracy and AUC values (Table 1). Among the commitment components, affective commitment performs best as a statistical predictor with 88% accuracy.

---- PLEASE INCLUDE TABLE 1 HERE ----

Conclusions and limitations

The paper introduced vacation dedication as an important construct to understand and predict tourism demand. None of the hypotheses can be rejected; thus, vacation dedication was established as a construct that is distinct but significantly related to other psychological constructs that motivate tourism consumption. Commitment, specifically affective commitment, has emerged from this study as having the strongest association with vacation dedication, suggesting that there is a strong emotional component driving vacation dedication. The research is of immediate practical value by providing a simple measure to assess individuals' vacation dedication. Such an assessment is critical in times where unexpected external events can lead to mass cancellations (Hall, 2010). Further, understanding vacation dedication has important implications for human resources management and the provision of vacation-related job benefits. It can also inform policies to reduce travel-related

carbon footprints, indicating that some individuals would not be easily persuaded by such measures.

Limitations of this research include the consideration of the link between psychological constructs and vacation dedication in isolation. Other factors, such as general personality traits, cultural values or socio-demographics, are likely to play a role in explaining vacation dedication as well and should be considered in further research. Furthermore, the current research focused on vacation dedication when confronted with decreased vacation days. Further research should investigate whether the link of affective commitment to vacation dedication in the context of other unexpected external events, such as natural disasters or political instability, remains important.

References

- Allen, N.J., & Meyer, J.P. (1990). The measurement and antecedents of affective, continuance and normative commitment to the organization. *Journal of Occupational Psychology*, 63, 1-18.
- Anderson, E., & Weitz, B.A. (1992). The use of pledges to build and sustain commitment in distribution channels. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 29, 18-34.
- Bansal, H.S., Irving, G., & Taylor, S.F. (2004). A three-component model of customer commitment to service providers. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 32, 234-50.
- Brewer, B.W., van Raalte, J.L., & Lindner, D.E. (1993). Athletic identity: Hercules' muscles or Achilles heel? *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 24, 237-254.
- Buchanan, T. (1985). Commitment and leisure behavior: A theoretical perspective. *Leisure Sciences*, 7, 401-420.
- Damari, C., & Mansfeld, Y. (2016). Reflections on pilgrims' identity, role and interplay with the pilgrimage environment. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 19(3), 199-222.
- Desforges, L. (2000). Traveling the world: Identity and travel biography. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 27(4), 926-945.
- Dimitriadis, Z.S. (2006). Customer satisfaction, loyalty and commitment in service organizations. *Management Research News*, 29, 782-800.
- Dolnicar, S., Grün, B., & Leisch, F. (2011). Quick, simple and reliable: forced binary survey questions. *International Journal of Market Research*, 53, 231-252.
- Dolnicar, S., Lazarevski, K., & Yanamandram, V. (2013). Quality of life and tourism: A conceptual framework and novel segmentation base. *Journal of Business Research*, 66, 724-729.
- Gursoy, D., & Gavcar, E. (2003). International leisure tourists' involvement profile. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30, 906-926.
- Hall, C. M. (2010). Crisis events in tourism: subjects of crisis in tourism. *Current issues in Tourism*, 13(5), 401-417.
- Havitz, M. E., & Dimanche, F. (1990). Propositions for testing the involvement construct in recreational and tourism contexts. *Leisure Sciences*, 12, 179-195.
- Jun, J., & Kyle, G. T. (2012). Gender identity, leisure identity, and leisure participation. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 44(3), 353-378.
- Kuhn, M., & Johnson, K. (2013). *Applied Predictive Modeling*. New York: Springer.
- Kyle, G., Absher, J., Norman, W., Hammitt, W., & Jodice, L. (2007). A modified involvement scale. *Leisure Studies*, 26, 399-427.
- Marschall, S. (2015). 'Homesick tourism': memory, identity and (be) longing. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 18(9), 876-892.
- Maindonald, J. H., & Braun, W. J. (2013). DAAG: Data Analysis And Graphics data and functions. R package version 1.18., <http://CRAN.R-project.org/package=DAAG>.

- Merriam-Webster (2014). Devotion. Online dictionary entry. Accessed online October 23, 2014 at <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/devotion>.
- McKercher, B., & Chen, F. (2014). Travel as a life priority? *Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research*, DOI: 10.1080/10941665.2014.931289.
- R Core Team (2013). R: A language and environment for statistical computing. R Foundation for Statistical Computing, Vienna, Austria, <http://www.R-project.org/>.
- Shamir, B. (1992). Some correlates of leisure identity salience: Three exploratory studies. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 24, 301-323.
- Sing, T., Sander, O., Beerenwinkel, N., & Lengauer, T. (2005). ROCr: visualizing classifier performance in R. *Bioinformatics*, 21, 3940-3941.
- Stryker, S., & Burke, P. (2000). The past, present and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63, 284-297.
- Suárez Álvarez, L., Vázquez Casiellas, R., & Díaz Martín, A.M. (2007). Análisis de la confianza y el compromiso percibido por el consumidor como variables clave en las relaciones entre los clientes y las agencias de viaje minoristas. *Revista de Análisis Turístico*. 4, 68-87.
- Van Scotter, J. R., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1996). Interpersonal facilitation and job dedication as separate facets of contextual performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(5), 525.
- Zaichkowsky, J. L. (1994). The personal involvement inventory: Reduction, revision, and application to advertising. *Journal of Advertising*, 23(4), 59-70.

Table 1: Model details

Independent variable	AIC	Coefficient	Standardized coefficient	Accuracy	AUC value
Commitment	2550	0.51***	1.23***	88%	80%
Identity	2690	0.45***	1.17***	86%	78%
Involvement	2568	0.64***	1.17***	87%	79%
Affective commitment	2508	1.18***	1.17***	88%	80%
Continuance commitment	2990	0.75***	0.81***	84%	69%
Normative commitment	2751	1.09***	0.94***	87%	73%

AIC ... Akaike Information Criteria, *** p -value <0.001