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Motivations and Preferred Activities of Tourists to Rural Destinations: A Comparative Analysis of Rural and Urban Residents

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ABSTRACT

The primary purposes of this study were to identify the perceived importance of motivations and activities for travel to a rural destination, and to determine whether these variables were influenced by the tourist's place of residence. The study is based on an on-line survey completed by 1,048 individuals. A series of independent t-tests were used to determine whether there were differences in the motivations and preferred activities of rural residents versus urban residents, while canonical correlation analysis revealed relationships between the two sets of variables (motivations and activities). Findings suggest that rural destinations appeal to both rural and urban residents. In some instances, differences with regards to the motivations and activity preferences of these two groups were identified. Correlations between the motivations and activity preferences of respondents also suggest that rural tourists are interested in activities that are aligned with their initial motivations for deciding to travel to a rural area.

INTRODUCTION

In tandem with a rise in urban living, rural tourism has seen significant growth during recent years (Albaladejo & Diaz, 2005; Gartner, 2004; Molera & Albaladejo, 2007; Zamora, Valenzuela & Vasquez-Parraga, 2004). A bulletin issued by Statistics Canada, based on the Canada Travel Survey (CTS) and International Travel Survey (ITS), indicated that half of all domestic tourists visited a predominantly rural region of Canada during 2002 (Beshiri, 2005). As rural regions continue to attract increasing numbers of travelers, it is important for tourism planners to develop offerings that are competitive and attractive.

An understanding of the unique motivations and preferences of rural tourists is integral to successful development efforts. Thus, this study was designed to collect information regarding the pull and push attributes that drive tourists to rural destinations, specifically their motivations and activity preferences. Furthermore, segmentation of the rural tourist by place of residence can provide valuable insights into whether rural and urban dwellers are attracted to rural destinations by different or similar factors. The specific objectives of this study were to identify: (1) the motivations that 'push' travelers to rural destinations; (2) the activities that 'pull' rural tourists to specific destinations; (3) whether the perceived importance of motivations and activities differed between rural and urban dwellers; and, (4) the relationships between motivations and activity preferences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rural Tourism

Rural tourism has been the subject of academic study for many years, however, ambiguity and disagreement regarding the definition and conceptualization remains (Frochot, 2005; Gartner, 2004). As Gartner (2004) observes, 'Canada... has defined, redefined, and

defined again, through the years, what constitutes rural' (p. 154). Generally, however, there is agreement that rural tourism is a very broad term; it is often considered to include subsets such as agri-tourism, nature-based tourism, and eco-tourism. The growth of this form of tourism in recent decades has been attributed to increased automobile and weekend travel, economic hardship, a mature travel market, and changing tastes and preferences (Hill, 1993, as cited in Zamora, Valenzuela & Vasquez-Parraga, 2004), the last of which may be related to a growing interest in understanding and experiencing nature and the 'rural life' (Gartner, 2004; Tyrnainen, Silvenninen, Nousianinen & Tahvanainen, 2001; Zamora et al., 2004).

Many rural regions have begun to focus on tourism as an important tool for economic development, and scholars have examined opportunities for the creation of tourism products, services, and marketing plans, as well as other strategies for tourism promotion and development (see, for example, Cai, 2002; Koster & Randall, 2005; Williams & Ferguson, 2005). Underpinning any effort to create an effective development or marketing strategy is a need to understand the motivations and activity preferences of rural tourists, as these are significant factors in the decision-making and destination selection process.

Motivations for Pleasure Travel

Motivations for pleasure travel have been studied extensively over the past few decades. Crompton (1979) identified nine motives that influence the selection of a destination by pleasure vacationers, including seven he classified as socio-psychological (e.g. escape of an environment perceived as mundane; relaxation; personal exploration and evaluation; and social interaction), as well as opportunities for education and novelty. Dann (1981), reviewing early literature on the subject, described seven different approaches taken by researchers to describe and identify travel motivations, while Uysal and Jurovski (1994) proposed that an exploration of motivations by "push" and "pull" factors has been accepted by most scholars. "Push" factors are internal forces that incite a person to travel (e.g. desire for escape, rest, and relaxation; health and fitness; adventure; social interaction) while "pull" factors are external forces related to a destination's attributes (e.g. natural features; recreation facilities; cultural attractions; and travelers' perceptions and expectations). As Pyo, Mihalik and Uysal (1989) suggest, tourism marketers must consider both tourism motivation trends and destination attributes when developing promotional strategies.

While the literature concerning motivations for travel to rural areas is limited, some scholars have provided valuable first insights in this regard. Molera and Albaladejo (2007), reviewed existing literature on the subject, and noted that the motivations of rural visitors may include contact with nature; experiencing space and freedom; enjoying peace and tranquility; searching for authenticity and tradition; the desire for contact with local residents; and the importance given to the cost of going on holiday. Based on their study of rural tourists in Finland, Tyrnainen et al. (2001) posited that the main reason tourists go to the country is for the sake of change, to relax and try something new. Engaging in social contact, spending time with their family, resting and having fun were also identified as reasonably important motives, while the opportunity for self-development and/or to find peace were not considered important.

Zamora et al. (2004) noted that some researchers have considered the influence of individual or household origin in the destination decision-making process; however, no plausible explanation or clear pattern of behaviour had been identified. Focusing their attention on rural destinations, these scholars examined whether vacationers from rural origins favored rural destinations (regardless of their current place of residence), whether city-dwellers preferred urban destinations, and whether social class influenced destination choice. Their findings suggest that the contribution of rural origin in the choice of a rural destination over an urban destination is very significant, while the effect of social class is insignificant. Further exploration of the

relationships between the motivations of rural tourists and their place of residence would serve to augment this research and enhance an understanding of the decision-making process.

Activity Preferences of Pleasure Tourists

In addition to a destination's inherent attributes (e.g. natural landscape), the availability and diversity of activities at different destinations can also serve as an important "pull" factor in the traveler's decision-making process. Using multi-dimensional segmentation, Taylor (1986) examined a large sample of Canadian pleasure travelers to identify the activities, interests, and facilities required to meet the benefits sought from a pleasure trip. He identified six major segments based on desired activities/interests: (1) *outdoors*, the largest group; with interests in wilderness, mountains, parks, and rural areas; (2) *resort*, the second largest group, with preference for beaches, warm climate, and high quality amenities; (3) *bed and breakfast*, a travel segment drawn to small towns, villages, and rural areas with inexpensive accommodations; (4) *city culture*; (5) *heritage*; and (6) *city spree*. Together, these final three segments represent 19% of Canadian pleasure travelers, with those seeking city culture and heritage sharing many similar interests such as museums and art galleries, cultural activities, historic sites, and local crafts. Using canonical analysis, Pyo, Milhalik, and Uysal (1989) identified the most important activity preferences of the US tourism trip market, which included cultural and natural attributes, budget accommodation, shopping, and food-related activities. The literature reveals that a wide variety of activities are sought by tourists and highlights strong preferences for both urban-based and rural-based activities.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

This study is based on an online survey that was developed, implemented, and managed by the Tourism Research Centre (TRC) at the University of Prince Edward Island. Tourism Prince Edward Island (TPEI), the provincial government department that manages tourism marketing for the province of PEI, Canada, provided the TRC with a list of all individuals who contacted the Department during 2010 to request tourist information. Only those individuals who provided Tourism PEI with an e-mail address and indicated that they were willing to be contacted were included in total population for the survey. In total, 158,964 e-mail addresses were collected from January 2010 to November 2010, of which 10,000 were used for this study. These email addresses were randomly selected using a stratified sampling method based on the inquirer's origin (place of residence). The on-line survey was launched December 16, 2010 and closed December 30, 2010. During this period, two reminders were sent to those who had not completed the survey, thus a total of three contacts were made with the sampling frame. During the survey period, 2,218 people (22.2%) started the survey, and a total of 1,596 (16.0%) surveys were completed. Of these, only the survey responses from 1,048 Canadian residents were used.

Sample Characteristics

Of the 1,048 respondents, 644 (61.5%) were urban residents and 404 (38.5%) were rural residents. Overall, the majority of respondents were Ontarians (41.6% of rural; 53.1% of urban) with 21.4 percent from Atlantic Canada (excluding PEI), 12.8 percent from the Prairies, 11.7 percent from Quebec, and 5.4 percent from British Columbia and Alberta. Overall, more respondents were female (56.9%) than male (43.1%), with females representing a much larger proportion of rural resident respondents (59.2% female and 40.8% male). Over half (58.2%) of respondents were between the ages of 45 and 64. The vast majority of respondents were married or living in common-law (80.9%). The percentage of married or living in common-law amongst rural resident respondents (85.1%) was much higher than amongst urban respondents (78.3%). Overall, respondents were most likely to have graduated community/technical college (24.5%) or

some university/college (19.9%). Over half of respondents (50.2%) were working full time and 29.2 percent were retired. Overall, 53.3 percent of respondents had an annual household income of less than \$70,000. Notably, the single most common household income range for rural residents was between \$30,000 and \$50,000 (26.0%), while urban residents most commonly reported an income range between \$70,000 and \$100,000 (24.1%).

Measurement

Three main constructs were used to analyze the data: preferred type of destination; perceived importance of motivations for travelling to a rural destination; and perceived importance of activities at rural destinations. Differences regarding the motivations and preferences of rural and urban residents were identified. Two items were used to measure preferred type of destination and obtain general preference information about urban/city-based and rural/countryside destinations. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

Eight 'push' items relevant to pleasure travel to a rural destination were selected from motivation factors previously identified in the travel and tourism literature (Chen & Hsu, 2000; Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977, 1981; Echtner & Ritichie, 1993; Kozak, 2002; Pyo, Mihalik, & Uysal, 1989; Uysal & Hagan, 1993; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Yuan & McDonald, 1990). These were used to measure the perceived importance of motivation items to tourists visiting rural destinations. Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type importance scale, where 1=not at all important and 5=very important.

Seventeen activity items were used to measure the perceived importance of activities at a rural destination for a pleasure trip; these were selected based on the travel and tourism literature (Choi, & Tsang, 1999; Hyde, 2004; Kim, & Jogaratnam, 2003; Littrell, Paige, & Song, 2004; Morrison, & O'Leary, 1994; Moscardo, Pearce, & Morrison, 2001; Pyo, Mihalik, & Uysal, 1989; Rao, Thomas, & Javalgi, 1992; Taylor, 1986). Responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type importance scale, where 1=not at all important and 5=very important.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were performed for all items of importance related to motivations and activities at rural destinations to provide characteristics of the sample and offer general information regarding the variables. Simple correlation analysis with reliability tests was carried out to identify the relationships between individual variables while Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the construct. A series of independent *t*-tests were analyzed on study variables (preference of destination type, motivations, and preferred activities) to determine whether variables in the two groups (rural vs. urban residents) differed. Canonical correlation analysis was utilized to explain the nature of interrelationships among sets of multiple dependent variables and multiple independent variables by measuring the relative contribution of each variable to the canonical relationships obtained (Alpert & Peterson, 1972; SAS Institute, 2004). In this study, activity preferences were considered predictors whereas intrinsic motivations were input as criterion sets (independent variables).

RESULTS

Differences in Preferred Type of Destination and Motivations between Rural and Urban Residents

To determine whether there were any statistically significant differences between rural and urban residents with respect to preferred type of destination (i.e. rural or urban destination), as well as the importance of motivations when planning a pleasure trip to a rural destination, a series of *t*-tests were run. The results are reported in Table 1. Statistically significant differences

were found in all items related to respondents' preferred type of destination and four motivation variables. Overall, both rural and urban residents were more likely to prefer to travel to rural/countryside destinations than urban/city-based destinations. However, more interestingly, while rural residents tended to prefer to travel to rural/countryside destinations, urban residents were more likely to prefer to travel to urban/city-based destinations.

When respondents were planning a pleasure trip to a rural destination, they were least likely to be motivated by visiting family and/or friends and reconnecting with the past, and most likely to be motivated by opportunities to observe natural beauty, pastoral settings, and scenic vistas and to relax. When compared to their urban counterparts, rural residents were more likely to be motivated to travel to a rural destination in order to observe natural beauty, pastoral settings, and scenic vistas ($p < .007$, $M = 4.54$ vs. 4.42), experience something new and different ($p < .005$, $M = 4.32$ vs. 4.18), enjoy a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside ($p < .021$, $M = 4.20$ vs. 4.07), and reconnect with the past ($p < .045$, $M = 3.61$ vs. 3.48).

Table 1
T-test Results for Preferred Type of Destination and Perceived Importance of Motivations to Travel to a Rural Destination

Variable	Rural Residents (<i>n</i> =404)	Urban Residents (<i>n</i> =644)	Total (<i>n</i> =1,048)	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
Preferred Type of Destination ^{a)}					
I generally prefer to travel to urban/city-based destinations	2.70	2.91	2.83	-3.366	0.001
I generally prefer to travel to rural/countryside destinations	3.78	3.46	3.58	5.261	0.000
Motivations ^{b)}					
Enjoying a change of pace from everyday life	4.21	4.27	4.25	-1.132	0.258
Visiting family and/or friends	3.39	3.38	3.38	0.126	0.900
Relaxing	4.46	4.40	4.42	1.330	0.184
Observing natural beauty, pastoral settings, and scenic vistas	4.54	4.42	4.47	2.686	0.007
Experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life	4.05	4.04	4.04	0.269	0.788
Enjoying a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside	4.20	4.07	4.12	2.314	0.021
Reconnecting with the past (own or general)	3.61	3.48	3.53	2.004	0.045
Experiencing something new and different	4.32	4.18	4.23	2.806	0.005

Note: ^{a)} Mean values are based on a 5-point Likert type scale (1 =strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree); ^{b)} based on a 5-point Likert type importance measure scale (1 = not at all important; 5 = very important).

Differences in Activity Preference between Rural and Urban Residents

As shown in Table 2, statistically significant differences were found in only four of the seventeen activity items when comparing rural and urban resident groups. While rural residents tended to be more interested in visiting farmers' markets and taking in agricultural experiences (e.g. visiting farms/ orchards/u-picks, watching a harvest, visiting a roadside stand), urban residents were more likely to be interested in hiking or trekking in a natural area and experiencing adventure activities (e.g. mountaineering, trekking, rafting, bungee jumping, mountain biking, rock climbing). Overall, respondents were the least likely to be interested in playing golf when planning to a pleasure trip to a rural destination, and most likely to be interested in viewing beautiful scenery. Other popular activities included sampling local foods, cuisine and/or drink; visiting national/provincial/state parks; visiting historical and cultural attractions (e.g., historic sites, museums, galleries); and, attending local festivals or events (including concerts, fairs, exhibits).

Table 2
T-test Results for Perceived Importance of Activities at a Rural Destination

Variable	Rural Residents (n=416)	Urban Residents (n=653)	Total (n=1,069)	t-value	p-value
Attending local festivals or events (including concerts, fairs, exhibits)	3.72	3.68	3.69	0.554	0.580
Sampling local foods, cuisine and/or drink	3.95	4.01	3.99	-0.935	0.350
Agricultural experiences (e.g. visiting farms/ orchards/ u-picks, watching a harvest, visiting a roadside stand)	3.24	3.12	3.17	1.861	0.050
Experiencing local culture and lifestyles (e.g., mingling with locals)	3.67	3.60	3.63	1.166	0.244
Visiting farmers markets	3.51	3.39	3.44	1.984	0.048
Playing golf	1.92	1.91	1.91	0.154	0.878
Participating in water sports (kayaking, canoeing, sailing, cruising, etc.)	2.68	2.81	2.76	-1.526	0.127
Hiking or trekking in a nature area	3.21	3.36	3.30	-1.931	0.050
Horseback riding	2.19	2.22	2.20	-0.400	0.689
Viewing beautiful scenery	4.39	4.39	4.39	-0.024	0.981
Visiting national/provincial/state parks	3.92	3.94	3.93	-0.373	0.709
Observing wildlife (including bird watching)	3.53	3.47	3.49	0.867	0.386
Shopping for local crafts or souvenirs	3.49	3.38	3.42	1.642	0.101
Visiting historical and cultural attractions (e.g., historic sites, museums, galleries)	3.80	3.80	3.80	0.023	0.982
Experiencing adventure activities (mountaineering, trekking, rafting, bungee jumping, mountain biking, rock climbing)	2.50	2.69	2.62	-2.395	0.017
Camping	2.86	2.74	2.78	1.340	0.180
Staying at a Country Inn or Bed & Breakfast or Farm/Ranch	3.52	3.51	3.52	0.097	0.923

Note: Mean values are based on a 5-point Likert type importance measure scale (1 = not at all important; 5 = very important).

Relationship between Motivations and Activities to Travel to a Rural Destination

Rural residents. Table 3 presents the results of canonical correlation analysis for rural resident respondents. Of a possible eight canonical functions, four statistically significant canonical functions were calculated. Each function's squared canonical correlation (power of explanation) was 42.88%, 26.02%, 12.49%, and 8.06% respectively.

The results of canonical function 1 indicate that rural residents who were highly motivated by experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life, and reconnecting with the past were also more likely to be interested in visiting historical and cultural attractions and experiencing local culture and lifestyles at a rural destination.

According to the results of canonical function 2, rural residents who were highly motivated to visit rural destinations in order to observe natural beauty, pastoral settings and scenic vistas and enjoy a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside, but were not motivated by opportunities to reconnect with the past were more likely to be interested the following activities: viewing beautiful scenery; participating in water sports; and observing wildlife.

Table 3
Canonical Correlation Analysis between Motivations and Activities: Rural Residents

Variable	Standardized Canonical Coefficients			
	Canonical Function 1	Canonical Function 2	Canonical Function 3	Canonical Function 4
Predictor set (Activities)				
Attending local festivals or events	0.1169	-0.2563	-0.2146	-0.3008
Sampling local foods, cuisine and/or drink	-0.2769	0.2835	-0.1360	-0.2452
Agricultural experiences	0.2520	-0.1280	0.1845	-0.0167
Experiencing local culture and lifestyles	0.3859	-0.1768	-0.3637	0.0137
Visiting farmers markets	-0.0404	0.2445	0.5257	0.0198
Playing golf	-0.0073	-0.0208	0.1284	-0.2873
Participating in water sports	-0.0615	0.3247	0.3543	0.1047
Hiking or trekking in a nature area	0.0491	-0.1171	-0.3245	-0.0710
Horseback riding	0.1084	-0.0318	0.1420	0.3577
Viewing beautiful scenery	-0.0444	0.7579	-0.0370	0.4906
Visiting national/provincial/state parks	0.1109	0.0272	-0.0001	0.1378
Observing wildlife (including bird watching)	-0.0101	0.3202	-0.2278	-0.5581
Shopping for local crafts or souvenirs	0.0412	-0.2542	0.1923	0.4488
Visiting historical and cultural attractions	0.5458	-0.1322	-0.1204	-0.1074
Experiencing adventure activities	-0.0310	-0.1303	-0.4556	0.5607
Camping	0.0860	-0.0568	0.5565	-0.0904
Staying at a Country Inn or Bed & Breakfast or Farm/Ranch	0.1239	0.0174	0.4924	-0.3437
Criterion set (Motivations)				
Enjoying a change of pace from everyday life	0.1053	0.0051	-0.1883	-0.3256
Visiting family and/or friends	0.0903	-0.0154	0.5744	-0.7072
Relaxing	-0.0997	-0.0069	0.1761	0.5021
Observing natural beauty, pastoral settings, and scenic vistas	-0.0779	0.8760	-0.0030	-0.3706
Experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life	0.6317	-0.2763	-0.6505	-0.4820
Enjoying a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside	0.0023	0.3054	0.4889	0.0461
Reconnecting with the past (own or general)	0.5168	-0.3642	0.3859	0.6887
Experiencing something new and different	-0.0069	0.2618	-0.2610	0.4720
Canonical Statistics				
Canonical Correlation (Cc)	0.6548	0.5101	0.3534	0.3077
Adjusted Canonical Correlation (Adj. Cc)	0.6272	0.4703	0.2756	0.2535
Squared Canonical Correlation (Cc ²)	0.4288	0.2602	0.1249	0.0947
Eigenvalue	0.7508	0.3517	0.1427	0.1046
Proportion	0.5039	0.2360	0.0958	0.0702
<i>p</i> -value	0.0001	0.0001	0.0002	0.0378
Multivariate Statistics				
	<u>Value</u>	<u>F-value</u>	<u>p-value</u>	
Wilks' Lambda	0.2918	3.76	< .0001	
Pillai's Trace	1.0434	3.41	< .0001	
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	1.4900	4.13	< .0001	
Roy's Greatest Root	0.7508	17.05	< .0001	

Results of canonical function 3 indicated that rural residents interested in activities such as camping; staying at a country inn, bed & breakfast, or farm/ranch; visiting farmers' markets; and participating in water sports were more likely to be highly motivated by visiting family and/or friends; enjoying a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside; and reconnecting with the past. They were, however, not likely to be motivated by opportunities to experience and gain knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life.

Canonical function 4 results indicate that rural residents consider the following activities important at rural destinations: experiencing adventure activities; viewing beautiful scenery; shopping for local crafts or souvenirs; and horseback riding. These activities were more likely to be positively related to the following motivations: reconnecting with the past; relaxing; and, experiencing something new and different. They were, however, negatively related the following motivations: enjoying a change of pace from everyday life; visiting family and/or friends; observing natural beauty, pastoral settings, and scenic vistas; and experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life.

Urban residents. Table 4 shows the results of canonical correlation analysis for urban resident respondents. Of a possible eight canonical functions, four statistically significant canonical functions were calculated. Each function's squared canonical correlation was 40.61%, 23.39%, 11.66%, and 7.42% respectively. Based on the result of canonical function 1, urban residents who were highly motivated by observing natural beauty, pastoral settings and scenic vistas when they were planning to a pleasure trip to a rural destination, were more likely to be interested in viewing beautiful scenery at a rural destination.

According to the result of canonical function 2, urban residents who were highly motivated by experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life, and reconnecting with the past, but not strongly motivated by opportunities to observe natural beauty, pastoral settings and scenic vistas were more likely to be interested in visiting historical and cultural attractions and experiencing local culture and lifestyles. They were, however, less likely to be interested in viewing beautiful scenery.

Results of the canonical function 3 indicated that strong interests in activities such as sampling local foods, cuisine and/or drink, visiting national/provincial/state parks, and experiencing adventure activities were more likely to be positively related to the following motivations: experiencing something new and different; experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life; and visiting family and/or friends. Interest in these activities was, however, negatively related to reconnecting with the past. In other words, urban residents who were interested in the above mentioned activities were unlikely to be motivated to travel to rural destinations by the desire to reconnect with the past.

The results of canonical function 4 reveal that urban residents who considered important activities at rural destinations to include visiting farmers' markets, horseback riding, experiencing adventure activities, and camping were more likely to be motivated by opportunities to experience something new and different, enjoy a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside, relax, and visit family and/or friends. They were less likely to be motivated by opportunities to experience and gain knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life and enjoy a change of pace from everyday life.

Table 4
Canonical Correlation Analysis between Motivations and Activities: Urban Residents

Variable	Standardized Canonical Coefficients			
	Canonical Function 1	Canonical Function 2	Canonical Function 3	Canonical Function 4
Predictor set (Activities)				
Attending local festivals or events	0.0325	0.0256	0.2647	-0.2630
Sampling local foods, cuisine and/or drink	-0.0665	-0.0681	0.6381	0.2241
Agricultural experiences	0.1756	-0.0473	-0.1366	-0.0221
Experiencing local culture and lifestyles	0.0438	0.4650	-0.0234	-0.0824
Visiting farmers markets	0.0479	-0.0103	-0.1161	0.4806
Playing golf	-0.1158	0.1499	0.0308	0.1476
Participating in water sports	-0.0200	-0.1157	-0.1712	-0.1902
Hiking or trekking in a nature area	-0.0005	-0.1410	0.2871	-0.3750
Horseback riding	0.0632	0.0618	-0.1041	0.4436
Viewing beautiful scenery	0.6052	-0.5342	-0.0320	-0.1310
Visiting national/provincial/state parks	0.0778	-0.0070	0.6150	0.1372
Observing wildlife (including bird watching)	0.2486	-0.0328	-0.4929	0.0879
Shopping for local crafts or souvenirs	-0.0160	0.1328	0.0386	0.1922
Visiting historical and cultural attractions	0.1416	0.6604	-0.2440	-0.4463
Experiencing adventure activities	-0.1191	0.1245	0.4793	0.3604
Camping	0.0942	-0.0801	-0.4062	0.3081
Staying at a Country Inn or Bed & Breakfast or Farm/Ranch	0.0664	0.0422	-0.2696	-0.0709
Criterion set (Motivations)				
Enjoying a change of pace from everyday life	0.1219	0.0815	0.1345	-0.4531
Visiting family and/or friends	-0.1676	0.2281	0.3291	0.3914
Relaxing	-0.1513	0.0514	0.0696	0.4525
Observing natural beauty, pastoral settings, and scenic vistas	0.7439	-0.5754	-0.0718	-0.2385
Experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life	0.1177	0.8000	0.3403	-0.5343
Enjoying a feeling of freedom from being in the countryside	0.1083	-0.2483	0.0334	0.4818
Reconnecting with the past (own or general)	0.2949	0.4031	-0.9743	0.1406
Experiencing something new and different	0.0194	-0.0363	0.6521	0.5205
Canonical Statistics				
Canonical Correlation (Cc)	0.6372	0.4837	0.3415	0.2724
Adjusted Canonical Correlation (Adj. Cc)	0.6189	0.4565	0.2976	0.2281
Squared Canonical Correlation (Cc ²)	0.4061	0.2339	0.1166	0.0742
Eigenvalue	0.6837	0.3054	0.1320	0.0801
Proportion	0.5273	0.2356	0.1018	0.0618
<i>p</i> -value	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0025
Multivariate Statistics				
	<u>Value</u>	<u>F-value</u>	<u>p-value</u>	
Wilks' Lambda	0.3387	5.33	< .0001	
Pillai's Trace	0.9236	4.81	< .0001	
Hotelling-Lawley Trace	1.2966	5.89	< .0001	
Roy's Greatest Root	0.6837	25.18	< .0001	

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study examined the motivations and activities that respectively ‘push’ and ‘pull’ travelers to rural destinations. A comparative analysis was carried out to identify differences between rural resident and urban resident groups with respect to these factors. The findings of this study offer insight regarding the rural tourist and notable differences between segments of this travel group based on their place of residence.

With respect to preferred type of destination, respondents were more likely to prefer to travel to a rural destination versus an urban one. Notably, however, when compared to their urban counterparts, rural residents showed a higher preference for rural destinations, while urban residents showed a higher preference for urban destinations than the rural resident group. This suggests that, while rural destinations are generally favored over urban destinations, tourists may, to a certain extent, be more attracted to destinations that have features that are familiar and/or similar to their place of residence. These results are in line with those of Zamora, Valenzuela and Vasquez-Parraga (2004), who found that 64% of travelers of rural origin preferred rural holiday destinations. A significant, albeit smaller, percentage of travelers (40%) of urban origin also preferred rural destinations.

Overall, respondents were most likely to be motivated or ‘pushed’ to visit rural destinations in order to observe natural beauty, pastoral settings and scenic vistas, and to relax. Given these findings with respect to motivations, it is unsurprising that respondents were most likely to be interested or ‘pulled’ by opportunities to view beautiful scenery. Respondents were least likely to be motivated by opportunities to visit family and/friends and to reconnect with the past. With respect to activities, respondents were least likely to be interested in playing golf while visiting a rural destination. Notably, rural residents expressed more interest in agricultural activities, while urban residents expressed more interest in being actively engaged with nature (e.g. hiking or trekking, experiencing adventure activities). Findings on the motivations of rural tourists and their activity preferences offer valuable insights that can aid rural tourism stakeholders as they pursue development and marketing strategies. Developing strategies and policies to maintain and promote an area’s natural beauty is arguably integral to ensuring the rural destination remains competitive.

Relationships between the motivations and preferred activities of respondents traveling to rural destinations revealed correlations between the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors considered most important. For example, rural residents interested in activities such as camping, staying at a country inn or bed & breakfast, visiting farmers’ markets and participating in water sports, were unlikely to be motivated to visit rural destinations in order to gain knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life. Urban and rural residents motivated by experiencing and gaining knowledge of different cultures, history and ways of life were more likely to be interested in activities such as visiting historical and cultural activities and experiencing local culture and lifestyles. These correlations between motivations and activity preferences serve to confirm what would otherwise be an obvious but unsubstantiated assumption – that rural tourists place high importance on activities at a rural destination that are aligned with the motivations that initially influence their decision to travel to a rural area.

These results suggest that rural destinations appeal to both rural and urban residents. In some instances, differences with regards to the motivations and activity preferences of these two groups were identified, although there were several variables where no significant difference between the groups was observed. Correlations between the motivations and activity preferences of respondents indicate that rural tourists seek out activities at rural destinations that reflect their intrinsic motivations. Overall, this study aids in an understanding of the rural tourist and, specifically, the differences (and lack thereof) with respect to the motivations and activity preferences of rural and urban residents.

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