

# Tourists' Behavioral Intentions and Travel Motives: The Case of South Cotabato Province, Philippines

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## Abstract

This study analyzed the influence of travel motives on behavioral intentions of tourists. Survey method was used in this study and employed a purposive sampling. The findings revealed that restoration as travel motive rated extremely high, while learning and discovery, passive enjoyment, self-fulfillment, social interaction, and destination image were all very high. The level of tourists' intention to revisit, and intention to recommend were all very high. Restoration, learning and discovery, and self-fulfillment appeared to be the significant predictors to intention to revisit. Restoration, social interaction, and passive enjoyment significantly influence intentions of tourists to recommend a travel destination. This study is a significant contribution to the limited local researches in the area which may assist in generating tourism-related strategies and policies.

**Keywords:** Travel motives; behavioral intentions; tourists, destination; travel.

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## 1. Introduction

The tourism industry is known to be the world's fastest growing industry. It is a fragmented industry that needs the cooperation and support of every social and institutional organization in the community. When a tourism facility is established, a different organization will be responsible for attracting tourists and providing services; the government will provide for roads, public safety and facilities; healthcare system in the community should also be prepared for any medical needs of tourists, and the list goes on (Libosada, 2019). Undeniably, local communities benefit from the tourism activities. It uplifts lives of the local people in various way to include creating job opportunities, business developments using local resources, and improved infrastructures (Kumar, 2019).

In 2019, twenty-two percent (22.5%) of the Philippines' Gross Domestic Product had been accounted for from the travel and tourism sector, and it has generated 22% of the total employment in the country (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2021). A decline to 14.6% in the GDP and 19.2% in total employment was reported in 2020 as an effect of the global pandemic. People's mobility was restricted and forced some businesses to limit and or shut down operations.

Despite these declines, domestic tourism began to grow because of the ongoing restrictions, especially to international visitors. Even in 2019, there were 1.2 million local travelers and only 5,000 foreigners. Aside from that, out of 1.2 million travelers, 800,000 are same-day tourists, which means that tourists do not usually stay overnight when visiting destinations in the province (Cabrido, 2020). It drives the researchers further to understand influences on tourists' travel motives and intentions.

Even amidst pandemic, tourist destinations should strive for not only sustainable tourism but also sustainable business operations as the sector faces increased competition (Rop, Akunja, & Thiong'o, 2021) especially in the local setting. It is therefore very relevant to understand thoughts of the visitors towards a destination in order to successfully capture them. Su et al. (2014) recommended that a study on tourist behavioral intentions such as revisit intentions and intention to recommend a destination may be conducted to widen its generalizability among various tourist destinations. In a study by Hutchinson et al. (2009), further research on this area of analyzing the tourist behavioral intentions was encouraged to be conducted on different recreational activities and settings. The present study aims to provide additional information and empirical analysis about tourists' behavioral intention, especially in the local context, and an additional source of the local literature in this field of study.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of travel motives on tourists' behavioral intentions. In the context of this study, tourists' behavioral intentions refer to the reason behind the travel or the goal for traveling, while travel motives refer to the psychological factors as to why tourists choose to travel to a particular destination. Dimensions of travel motives measured in this study include learning and discovery, passive enjoyment, restoration, social Interaction, self-fulfillment, and destination image. Dimensions of tourists' behavioral intentions measured are intention to revisit and intention to recommend. Primarily, it analyzes which of the dimensions of travel motives significantly influence tourists' intention to revisit and intention to recommend.

## **2. Literature Review**

### ***2.1 Tourists' behavioural intentions***

Tourists' behavioral intention is said to be a topic that always comes up in tourism research because the behavioral intentions of tourists help significantly in determining the growth of a destination; and more often than not, behavioral intentions show to be a major factor in the growth and fame of a destination (Jeong, Kim and Yu, 2020). Intention to revisit is a post-consumption behavior wherein a tourist repeats the activity of visiting a destination and engaging in the activities offered in that destination (Viet, Dang & Nguyen, 2020). Intention to recommend may not always be directly a recommendation but can also be in the form of word-of-mouth, such as honest opinions, or the tourist sharing their experiences in the destination with other people (Jeong, Kim and Yu, 2020).

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### ***2.2 Travel motives***

Motivation is the need that leads a person to act in a certain way to satisfy a desire. Many different reasons and incentives motivate people to travel. Although the decision to satisfy needs is based on various psychological variables, overall human behavior can be an incentive (Correia et al., 2013).

Push and pull factors concepts are commonly used in understanding travel motives. Push factors are internal motives that cause tourists to seek activities to reduce their needs, while pull factors are destination generated forces and the knowledge that tourists hold about a destination (Gnoth, 1997). Most push factors are intrinsic motivators such as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, prestige, adventure and social interaction, health and fitness. Pull factors emerge due to attractiveness of a destination including beaches, recreation, and cultural attractions (Uysal & Jurowski, 1994).

External motives in tourism can influence tourists and pull them towards a certain motivation and subsequent decision. Tourism destinations often try to attract potential tourists, and this pull factor can initiate a person to create motive for traveling and develop the corresponding motivation to visit this particular destination. This pull factor is also related to the search for travel motives tourists develop when selecting their holiday. At first, pull factors evoke some desire that can provoke a feeling of personal deficiency when this desire is not satisfied (Gisolf (2014).

Aside from the pull factors, there are also urges stemming from the inner person that push an individual toward a particular direction: the push factors. The element of escape is one example. Push factors are typically related to a lack (and not so much a deficiency), and if this lack is not satisfied, it may cause harmful effects. A lack of rest (over-fatigue) may lead to a need and subsequent travel motive. According to Beard and Ragheb's theory in 1983, five factors or subscales summarize the travel motives of a tourist. These are the following factors: (1) learning and discovery (the desire to learn new things, broaden one's knowledge, become more educated, and experience something new or unusual); (2) passive enjoyment (the desire to have fun, to be pleasantly entertained, and to be relaxed and satisfied); (3) restoration (the desire to unwind mentally and emotionally, to change routine, and to recover from stress and tension); (4) social interaction (consists of making new friends, assembly new humans, to advantage extra understanding approximately the country and journeying for social interaction. Tourists experience the need to meet new people and to gain a different understanding of their country. Activities the resort or destination provide should indirectly make sure that travelers can interact with every different and provide them studying experiences.); and (5) Self-fulfilment (the drive to make life more interesting, to test skills and abilities, to experience a sense of accomplishment, and to grow self-awareness and self-worth).

Destination image is also crucial for both people who have visited and those who have not yet visited a particular destination. Destination image is a set of beliefs, impressions, and ideas that people attach to a given place. In a study of Rahman, et al. (2021), it showed that the destination image can positively impact on the intention to visit a destination. Generally, image is a fundamental element in promoting tourism destinations since differentiating one destination from another is key to its success (Carballo et al., 2015).

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Sample and Procedure***

This study is descriptive-correlational research. A descriptive method was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the tourists, the travel motives, and tourists' behavioral intentions. Regression analysis was used to examine the influence of tourists' travel motives on behavioral intentions. Purposive sampling was used in this

study. Tourists who participated in the research were not below 15 years old and not above 60 years old due to local travel restrictions brought by the pandemic. All respondents were able to travel at least twice to any travel destinations in South Cotabato Province in the Philippines. A total of 211 tourists responded to the survey. Minimum health and safety standards were observed throughout the conduct of the survey concerning COVID-19 pandemic.

The anonymity of the respondents was ensured throughout the study. Primary data gathered, such as respondents' responses, was held entirely confidential, and that all interests of the concerned were safeguarded and respected. The participation of the respondents was completely voluntary. This means that respondents took part in the research freely and came to the survey activity of their own volition without coercion or penalty for not taking part. The respondents were informed that it is their privilege to back out from the interview any time they wished to. Only the researchers have complete access to the data. It was clear to the respondents that the activity was completely anonymous and not for any commercial activity.

### ***3.2 Instrument***

The researchers divided the questionnaire into three parts. The first part aims to gather the demographic information of the respondents, the second part includes assessment of travel motives, and the third part measures the behavioral intentions of tourists towards the destination.

Items for tourists' travel motives and behavioral intentions were adapted from various literatures that were critically examined by the researchers to capture measurements of the variables. For tourists' travel motives scale, dimensions such as passive enjoyment, learning and discovery, personal self- fulfillment, restoration, and social contact were adapted from Packer (2004) which was based on Ford and Nichols' (1987) taxonomy of goals, and the destination image dimension was adapted from Su, Hsu, and Swanson (2014). All dimensions were measured with a 7-point, Likert-type, anchored with not at all important (1) to extremely important (7) responses. Items for tourists' behavioral intentions were also adapted. The items for intention to revisit, and word-of-mouth referrals or intention to recommend were adapted from Cronin, et al. (2000), Eggert and Ulaga (2002), Kashyap and Bojanic (2000), Patterson and Spreng (1997), and Hutchinson, Lai, & Wang (2009). All of the aforementioned measures used 7-point Likert-type scales with response anchors ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). Instruments were subjected to validation and reliability testing.

## **4. Results and Discussions**

### ***4.1 Demographic profile of the respondents***

Majority of the respondents were female at 74.88% during the data gathering. In terms of age, majority of the respondents were around 15-26 years old at 81.04%. Majority of the respondents were students with a percentage of 63.51%.

### ***4.2 Tourists' travel motives***

Table 1 shows the weighted mean of each travel motivation. It can be observed that the level of restoration as a motivation to travel is extremely high, with a mean of 6.19. This explains that tourists have extremely high motivation to travel because they want to recover from the stress and tension of everyday life, relax mentally,

relax physically, find peace and tranquility, and have a change from their daily routines. The learning and discovery as a motivation to travel is very high, with a mean of 5.87. This shows that tourists have high motivation to travel because they want to experience something new or unusual, do something exciting, be better informed, expand their knowledge, and satisfy their curiosity. The level of passive enjoyment as a motivation to travel has a weighted mean of 6.08 and explains that tourists have a very high motivation to travel because they want to enjoy themselves, feel happy and satisfied, be pleasantly occupied, and be entertained. The level of social interaction as a motivation to travel is very high and has a mean of 5.53. This shows that tourists have a very high motivation to travel because they spend quality time with family/friends, develop close friendships, meet new people, bring their families together more, and build friendships with new people. The level of self-fulfillment as a motivation to travel has a mean of 5.78, which interprets to the motive being very high. This means that tourists have very high motivation to travel because they want to think about their values, make things more meaningful for themselves, discover themselves, develop their spirituality, and challenge their abilities. The destination image as a motivation to travel is very high also with a mean of 5.30. This means that the tourists have very high motivation to travel because they want to discover new places, discover new services, have mental images about vacation experiences, and experience the image of the place.

**Table 1.** Tourist's travel motives

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Learning and Discovery	5.87	The Motive is Very High
Passive Enjoyment	6.08	The Motive is Very High
Restoration	6.19	The Motive is Extremely High
Social Interaction	5.53	The Motive is Very High
Self-fulfilment	5.78	The Motive is Very High
Destination Image	5.30	The Motive is Very High

#### ***4.3 Tourists' behavioral intentions***

In table 2, the intention to revisit a destination is very high, with a mean of 5.81. This explains that tourists have a very high intention to revisit the destination. The level of intention to recommend the destination is also very high, with a mean of 5.95. It means that the tourists have very high intentions to recommend the tourist destination to other people positively and recommend the destination to those planning to visit and experience the same tourist sites they have visited.

**Table 2:** Tourists' behavioral intentions

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Descriptive Interpretation</b>
Intention to Revisit	5.81	The Intention is Very High
Intention to Recommend	5.95	The Intention is Very High

#### ***4.4. Influence of travel motives on tourists' behavioural intentions***

Prior to operation of the regression analysis, tests on collinearity, normality, homoscedasticity, and evaluation of sufficient number of observations were performed to ensure the fitness of data for the regression analysis. The results of the test have indicated that all assumptions were met.

#### 4.5 Travel motives and intention to revisit

The model in the table 3 shows that it has three significant predictors to the intention to revisit namely restoration, learning and discovery, and self-fulfillment and that the model is significant and meaningful. This model explains that 40% of the variation in the dependent variable may be explained by the variation in in the independent variables.

**Table 3:** Influence of travel motives on intention to revisit

Dependent Variable	Sample (211)
Intention to Revisit	
Beta Coefficient	3.387
t-value	16.336
R <sup>2</sup>	.408
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.400
Std. Error of the Estimate	.4983
F Statistic	47.619
Significance Value	.000
Independent Variables	
Restoration	
Beta Coefficient	.198
t-value	4.001
Learning and Discovery	
Beta Coefficient	.114
t-value	2.473
Self-fulfilment	
Beta Coefficient	.092
t-value	2.386

This indicates that every unit increase in the restoration motive of tourists to visit a travel destination will lead to an increase in their intention to revisit the destination by 0.198 units. In the same manner, every unit increase in the learning and discovery motive will lead to an increase in their intention to revisit the destination by 0.114 units; and every unit increase in the self-fulfillment motive will lead to an increase in their intention to revisit the destination by 0.92 unit.

#### 4.6 Travel motives and intention to recommend

Table 4 shows that the restoration, social interaction, and passive enjoyment motives to travel are the significant influences to tourists' intention to recommend a destination. This model explains that 45% of the variation in the dependent variable may be explained by the variation in in the independent variables. Looking at these values, it indicates that every unit increase in the restoration motive of tourists to visit a travel destination will lead to an increase in their intention to recommend the destination by 0.332 units. Also, every unit increase in the social interaction motive will lead to an increase in their intention to recommend the destination by 0.199 units; and every unit increase in the passive enjoyment motive will lead to an increase in their intention to revisit the destination by 0.268 units.

**Table 4:** Influence of travel motives on intention to recommend

Dependent Variable	Main Sample (211)
Intention to Recommend	
Beta Coefficient	1.167
t-value	3.169
R <sup>2</sup>	.458
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	.450
Std. Error of the Estimate	.8869
F Statistic	58.368
Significance Value	.000
Independent Variables	
Restoration	
Beta Coefficient	.332
t-value	3.542
Social Interaction	
Beta Coefficient	.199
t-value	3.387
Passive Enjoyment	
Beta Coefficient	.268
t-value	3.114

## 5. Conclusion

This study concludes that restoration, learning and discovery, and self-fulfillment travel motives are significant predictors of tourists' intention to revisit a travel destination. This implies that when tourists experience mental and physical relaxation, and feel that they have recovered from stress and tension in a destination they have visited, they are more likely to visit again the destination. This is true also to learning and discovery, and self-fulfillment motives. When they feel they learn something new, exciting, and sense of achievement from their visit, their intention to revisit the destination gets stronger.

Restoration, social interaction, and passive enjoyment significantly influence the intentions of tourists to recommend a travel destination. This implies that when tourists feel restored, had better interactions with other people, happy, and satisfied in a destination, they tend to recommend the place to other people. Generally, restoration motive consistently influences both tourists' intention to revisit and intention to recommend.

### 5.1 Practical Implications

Tourist establishments may focus their strategies on the restoration activities such as investing in stress-relieving environment and facilities where travelers can relax mentally, physically, and have peace and tranquil since restoration is being identified as extremely important motive why travelers visit and destination site. Policies related to travelers' safety and security must be put in place to protect guests who are using relaxation amenities and facilities of the destinations. Thus, only approved and registered relaxation amenities and facilities shall be allowed to be offered.

## 5.2 Limitations and Future Research

Due to the pandemic, the researchers were restricted to expand its scope and samples. Similar studies may be conducted in other regions using larger samples. Other tourists' behavioral dimensions may also be explored and analyzed.

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