

Postmodernity and Tourism: reflections on the tourist experience in the context of travel agencies

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Abstract

The tourism phenomenon constitutes a project of society that appropriates spaces and transforms them according to its own norms and values. Travel motivations and tourist destinations are part of a network of personal and social meanings, and their analysis helps to understand the new social coexistence and the new market possibilities. Studies on consumer behavior in tourism consider motivation as the basic determinant of consumption and the decision-making process as something individual. Therefore, this study intends to reflect on the postmodern tourist, his needs and continuous search for life experiences, establishing a relationship with the marketing strategies in the context of travel agencies. For this purpose, six travel agencies from Natal-RN were interviewed. Research results indicate that, according to travel agencies, the tourism consumer has sought experiences, although they point out that they have not yet developed strategic actions in this direction. To think contemporary tourism is not to discard the economic and market elements that constitute it, but to understand that its essence is in travel as a human practice and in the subjectivity this implies.

Keywords: post-tourist, experience, travel agencies

Resumo

Pós-modernidade e turismo: reflexões acerca da experiência turística no contexto das agências de viagens

O fenômeno turístico constitui um projeto de sociedade que se apropria de espaços e os transforma segundo normas e valores que lhe são próprios. As motivações de viagens e os destinos turísticos fazem parte de uma rede de significados pessoais e sociais e sua análise auxilia compreender a nova convivência social e as novas possibilidades mercadológicas. Estudos acerca do comportamento do consumidor no turismo trata a motivação como determinante básico do consumo e o processo de tomada de decisão como algo individual. Assim, pretende-se refletir o turista pós-moderno, suas necessidades e busca contínua por experiências de vida estabelecendo relação com as estratégias mercadológicas para a oferta das viagens no contexto das agências de viagens. Para tanto, foram entrevistadas seis agências de viagens do município de Natal- RN. Os resultados da pesquisa sinalizam que, segundo as agências de viagem, o consumidor do turismo tem buscado experiências, embora apontem que elas ainda não

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desenvolvem ações estratégicas neste sentido. Pensar o turismo contemporâneo não é descartar os elementos de natureza econômica e mercadológica que o constitui, mas compreender que sua essência está nas viagens como prática humana e a subjetividade que ela implica.

Palavras-chave: pós-turista, experiência, agências de viagem

Resumen

La postmodernidad y turismo: reflexiones sobre la experiencia turística en el contexto de las agencias de viajes

El fenómeno turístico es un proyecto social que se apropia de los espacios y los transforma de acuerdo con las normas y valores propios. Las motivaciones de viaje y los destinos son parte de una red de significados personales y sociales y su análisis ayuda a entender las nuevas relaciones sociales y nuevas posibilidades de comercialización. Los estudios sobre el comportamiento del consumidor en el turismo consideran la motivación como un determinante básico de consumo y el proceso de toma de decisiones como algo individual. De este modo, se pretende reflejar el turista postmoderno, sus necesidades y la búsqueda permanente de experiencias de vida que establecen relación con las estrategias de marketing para la prestación de los viajes en el contexto de las agencias de viajes. Para ello, se entrevistó a seis agencias de viajes en la ciudad de Natal-RN. Los resultados del estudio indican que, de acuerdo con las agencias de viajes, el consumidor de turismo ha buscado experiencias, aunque señalan que no han desarrollado acciones estratégicas en este sentido. Pensar el turismo contemporáneo no es descartar la naturaleza económica y los elementos de mercado que lo constituye, sino que su esencia está en el viaje como la práctica humana y la subjetividad que ella conlleva.

Palabras clave: post-turismo, la experiencia, agencias de viajes

INTRODUCTION

Mankind has moved around the planet since the beginning of time, when the primitives roamed long distances seeking for the food and shelter necessary for survival. Throughout history, travels began to be motivated by other human needs, such as commercial, educational, religious, economic, health, and leisure purposes.

From the second half of the 20th century, several factors contributed to the development and expansion of travels. Economic and political changes in the international scene; the evolution of social relations due to the work and its acquired rights, as paid and guaranteed vacations, for example; technological advances in communication and transportation, which enabled more comfortable and quick travels and the cheapening of promotion and tourism services cost; were responsible for expanding the opportunities for leisure and tourism.

Therefore, today, the tourism phenomenon is considered a project of society that takes the spaces and transforms them according to its own standards and values, which transcend spatial limits. To Maffesoli (2001, p.51), the postmodern nomadism, born from the polytheism of values, is “a kind of ‘migratory drive’, urging [the individual] to change place, habits, partners, all this to fulfill the many facets of its personality”. In short, it could be represented by the desire of a new place, a life of enchantment and re-enchantment with the world.

Thus, travel motivations and tourist areas, some seen as destinations, are part of a network of personal and social meanings, and their analysis help us understand not only a new social coexistence and its relationship with nature, but also new market possibilities that involve the whole process of development and consolidation of the tourist activity and its many social actors.

The individual, in its journey as tourist, uses goods and services that define the tourist demand which, in turn, is influenced by consumer (the tourist) behavior models (Cooper, 2007). In this sense, understanding the behaviors, motivations, and needs that lead to the decision to purchase a tourist product represent the basic determinant of consumption and the decision-making process as something individual.

With the advent of globalization, global strategies to identify, develop, and market diverse tourist products and services are strengthened, especially through the corporate networks of companies related to the tourism productive chain (Beni, 2003). Therefore, market innovations and the different forms of communication of the contemporary world can create for the consumers conditions and opportunities that seemed impossible, undesirable or were not part of their knowledge.

Given this context, this article aims to reflect on the postmodern tourist, its needs and continuous search for life experiences, establishing an association with the market strategies to offers travels and with how this has been worked or felt by the travel agencies in the city of Natal, in the State of Rio Grande do Norte.

To this end, this study is founded on a bibliographical and descriptive research on the historical and theoretical evolution of tourism, presenting the postmodern tourist based in the concept of Molina and in the concept of wandering and nomadism proposed by Maffesoli, which seek to indicate possibilities of a more holistic and phenomenological understand of the human life in its social context in the topicality.

Also, an exploratory research was conducted on the current corporate vision about the needs of this postmodern tourist and the new possibilities of travel agencies influenced by this context in consumer behavior and travel consumption. Bearing that in mind, six (06) travel and tourism agencies of Natal – RN were interviewed regarding the changes in the tourist profile, tourism destinations, time of travel, and practice of activities in the destinations.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF TOURISM: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Understanding tourism requires reflection on travels. The dawn of human existence is characterized by nomadic societies, which roamed mainly for survival reasons, linked to the search for food and shelter. As the societies acquire conditions for their own food production, they begin to settle and, thus, travel start to happen at the expense of other factors.

Figueiredo (2010) elucidates through travelogues this trajectory of motivations related to historical, political, economic, social, and cultural conjunctures of each epoch. However, the same author considers that:

The concept of travel goes beyond the simple spatial offset, to become an offset between the same and the different. Studying tourism would then be a peculiar form of traveling, of the trip for leisure, the return experience, and of the travel-package: the tourism commodity (Figueiredo, 2010, p. 285)

In this sense, many authors (Figueiredo, 2010; De La Torre, 1994; Molina 2003; Boyer, 2003) assign distinct phases that make up the historical evolution of travels and the consolidation of tourism, whereas the same only arises effectively from the mid-19th century.

Oscar de La Torre (1994) lists three phases of tourism development. The first, which occurs until the mid-19th century, is called “incipient elitist tourism”, reserved for a bourgeoisie minority. The second, which he called a “transition” phase, is characterized by the early popularization of the activity, which extends until the mid-20th century. And finally, the third, from the second world war, in which arises the mass tourism that persists until today.

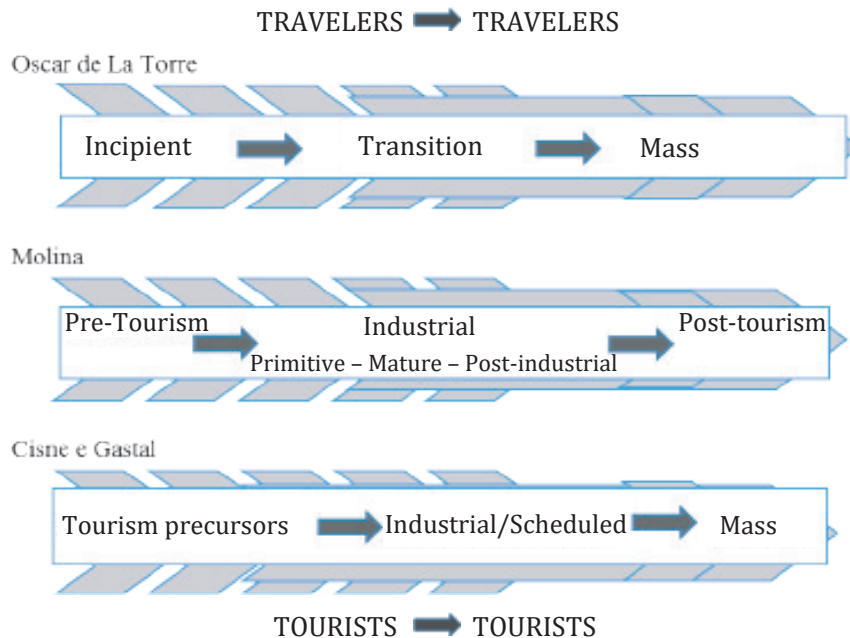
Molina (2003) also established three stages of development for this phenomenon. For the author, the first stage is the “Pre-Tourism”, which ends with the practice of the *Grand Tour* – as an educational rite of passage for young people of the British elite – and the recovery of seaside resorts as important destinations, with an intense social life. The second stage, the “Industrial Tourism”, is subdivided into three categories: primitive, originated in the 19th century and going until the beginning of World War II; mature, from there to the mid-1980s; and the third category, the Post-industrial, which introduces significant changes in the world tourist practice as from the technological, communicational, and marketing changes. And the third stage is represented by the “Post-Tourism” as a new theoretical-methodological paradigm, still under development, analysis, and conceptual enrichment, where the tourist becomes more autonomous to the detriment of high-efficiency technologies and the intensive use of information as a strategic resource by companies.

Cisne and Gastal (2010) also discuss the historical periodization of tourism in the view of some authors and, in short, they list the three main phases that are relevant in its historical evolution. The pre-tourism or predecessor phase comprises the trips guided by numerous political, religious, exploratory and, not necessarily, commercial reasons, until the Grand Tour of the Modern Age, a moment in which the individuals who thus move represent the travelers. The second phase is related to the beginning of scheduled trips, and to their precursor Thomas Cook, which were facilitated by the transportation development due to the Industrial Revolution and the invention of the steam engine, followed by a period of wars and economic instability that interrupts the growth of such activity. Finally, the third phase starts when the tourist practice is resumed after the World War II, ceasing to be an exclusively elitist activity and passing to occurs on a large scale, consolidating the mass tourism and, at the same time, the derogatory stereotypes of travelers, now tourists in fact. Thus, what Figueiredo (2014) will call the “travel-package: the tourism commodity” arises.

With the changes in conceptions of life, traveling becomes a facet of the social life, which simultaneously leads to the growth of “means of travel”, the offer of tourism-related services and products (Boyer, 2003).

Figure 01 shows the compilation of views on the periodization of tourism suggested by the authors abovementioned, highlighting the classification of traveling individuals according to the periods identified.

Figure 1 – Tourism periodization according to de La Torre (1994), Molina (2003), and Cisne and Gastal (2010).



Source – Prepared by the authors.

TRAVELERS OR TOURISTS: REFLECTIONS ON THE POSTMODERN TOURIST

Understanding the birth of tourism from the 19th century is considering the activity does not deal just about individuals moving to a destination for any personal or societal reasons, but that this is a human practice which involves displacement, intention to return, leisure practice and, finally, the use of equipment, services, and products to facilitate such displacement and the travel experience.

Tourism is a different kind of consumption, as it takes places in other locations and does not aim at meeting some fundamental need of the man [...] tourism is a product of a social-cultural evolution and can be defined as follows: Tourism = set of phenomena resulting from the travel and temporary stay of people outside their domiciles, to the extent that this displacement satisfies, at leisure, a cultural need of the industrial civilization (Boyer, 2003, p. 16)

Understanding the tourism as a phenomenon of modernity is assigning different meanings to travelers and tourists. In modernity, with the industrialization process, it is clear that the tourism praxis was related to an escape from everyday activities, urban stress, and personal problems concerning work conditions and,

somehow, traveling was a way to ensure free time. According to Krippendorf (2001), trips are presented as a subterfuge to escape the slavery of daily life and find the much longed-for 'freedom'. Thus, tourism becomes an industry of fun, pleasure, and social status (Meyer, 2007), where the travel destination is another anti-everyday pole. Individuals' interests were liable to market manipulation, because the essential was to escape the everyday space and its obligations, without giving up the facilities.

In this context, Figueiredo and Ruschmann (2004) state that "tourism is a form of traveling which is exclusive of modernity, and a pillar of postmodernity". For these authors, the travelers are those individuals that travel for noble and subjective grounds in search of identity and diversity, causing concerns wherever they go.

The search for identity comprises a movement of departure, travel (journey), and arrival – whether returning to the point of origin or arriving at a new place. Firstly, traveling means becoming detached, deprived of what is bad, unbearable in life, being in suspension. The journey – traveling state – symbolizes a rite of passage, in which the temporary is present, and the everyday world is suspended. Its range is space and time. The place does not exist as space (Figueiredo & Ruschmann, 2004, p. 173)

In such discussion, adventure is the basic element both got the traveler as the tourist, and curiosity is a variable element. However, the authors conclude that "the criticism to tourism and to the tourist are result of a biased reading of mass tourism trips, undertaken by workers of the global middle class" (Figueiredo; Ruschmann, 2004, p.183). Within the perspective of mass tourism, consumed in large scale, this interpretation of the tourist experience as ending on itself is possible.

Whereas the cultural and social complexity of postmodernity and the process of world globalization, new conceptions and values about travel experiences are possible. Maffesoli (2001) emphasizes that the resumption of wandering, regardless of the travel, represents the need for individual experience and social value. Wandering involves mobility, which, in turn, is related to the desire for adventure by cultural, scientific, sexual, and religious practices, experienced in real time and collectively through communication networks or trips and tourism.

For the 21st century tourist, the travel does not represent a mere social status, but a way to complement the daily life experience and to meet the adventurous and curious spirit of the human being. The spread of free-market capitalism, the opening of borders, privatization, deregulation of the economy, and the integrative technologies contributed to new relationships between time, space, and subject. Vacations are no longer happening in a pre-established moment of the year but are fragmented over the months. Consumption in postmodernity is not based only on mass production, with pre-determined products, but opens to the individual particularities, and the individualism starts to be a reality in the pillars of contemporary society. The tourists then start to require differentiated, customized, flexible and qualified products that meet their enchantment and re-enchantment of the world.

Even in the field of tourism studies it is possible to observe an evolution. Panosso Netto (2005) points out that tourist studies start from technical and positivist approaches of the activity, with theorists such as Luiz Fernández Fuster, Walter Hunziker, K. Krapf, S. Medlik, and A. J. Burkart; pass through the paradigmatic phase, with the presentation of the systemic model applied to tourism by its scholars Neil Leiper, Mário Carlos Beni, Alberto Sessa and Roberto Boullón; until the period of “new approaches”, in which theorists like Jafar Jafari and John Tribe try to replace the human being as the main element of the tourist phenomenon. Thus, a new understanding of a greater phenomenon complexity is evident. These new approaches start to investigate in a multi- or interdisciplinary way the trips and the tourism, within a perspective of the being, the tourist, and its social and psychological influences.

Uriely (2005) points out that the tourism, in the postmodernity, is increasingly present in people’s everyday lives and that studies should not disregard the subjects in their analyses, since the travel and the consumption related to it represent a personal and, therefore, subjective choice. Tourists traveling in a similar way do not necessarily share the same experience, so the tourism is a plural and diverse phenomenon. The authenticity of the tourist experience is related to a constructivist perspective, in which the tourist ascribes meaning to the objects disposed and, thence, the segmentation of tourism products or the typology of tourists should not exclude the subject from the analysis. To Sheller and Urry (2004, p.1), tourism also involves relationships between memories and performances of “bodies with gender and race, emotions and atmospheres”.

In the attempt to satisfy needs and wishes, the understanding of the dynamic process of relationships between groups that cause changes can be found. Social actors are human beings, subjected to diverse fields of action control but also driven by subjective factors, such as feelings and emotions. These psychological aspects, added to biological characteristics, provoke attitudes, initiatives, decisions and achievements (Tomazzoni, Dorion, & Zottis, 2008, p. 139).

Also, the reconfiguration of tourism is influenced by the new conception of sustainable development, which is supported by an interdisciplinary interpretation and by the notion of material and immaterial “space’, a concrete and abstract place that is scenario of interactions, conflicts and transformation, a symbolic point of contact between local and global, which influences all its social actors. (Irving *et.al.*, 2005). The post-tourist values the culture, is conscious that natural landscape should be preserved, and moves around searching for icons that represent the local identity and collective memory contained in the material and immaterial cultural heritages.

Given this context, it can be said that the contemporary tourist resumes, in part, the role of travelers, since living the tourist experience becomes part of its personal development and not only an anti-routine need or a reverse of the work-life. Travel motivations are multiple and circumstantial. Although such tourist keeps the role of consumer, the subjectivity of trip cannot be neglected since the human curiosity remains and the wandering spirit is part of everyday life.

Pezzi and Vianna (2015, p.170) present a reflection on the anthropological meaning of the experience and point out that it could be related to the tourist activity in two ways: the first, through the Experience Tourism, which is “the term commercially used to describe a mode of formatting tourism products, making the tourist the protagonists of his own travel” and the second is the tourist experience, which “in its anthropological conception, aims to look at the individual on the intermission of its routine and repetitive behavior”. For them, the experience of tourism should cause some strangeness that makes the individual to reconnect to the past and re-signify its memories, reintegrating travel experiences in its daily life.

As stated by Beni (2003), in contemporary times the dominant companies will be those that focus on experience planning and organization, those that manage to conquer the minds and emotions of customers. The competitive edge of such companies will be their ability to know the customers’ expectations and to add values to their products and services, something that goes beyond the mere vision and reaches the four senses and the heart. In other words, companies that can provide a memorable event (Pezzi and Vianna, 2015).

RECONFIGURATIONS OF THE CONSUMER MARKET OF TRAVEL AGENCIES

In the current scenario of changes due to information technologies, economic crises, and level of consumer knowledge, it becomes necessary to deepen the analysis on consumer behavior. Today, individuals are becoming increasingly selective in the choice of services and products, seeking those that provide experiences able to generate greater personal and professional satisfaction.

The evolution of society flows through the agricultural, industrial, and informational societies, as well as the dream society. In this latter, space is also opened for the emotional and intangible side of humanity. Given this context, it is believed that people will be seem less by the goods owned and increasingly by the confidence in their histories and feelings demonstrated (Panosso Netto and Gaeta, 2010)

In the field of tourism, new changes arose in consumer behavior with the emergence of internet, related to the awakening to perform a trip, passing through the way of acquiring information of tourist products, and ending in motivational issues. However, the analysis of motivations is complex and presents numerous variants. In a dynamic world, today’s motivation is not always the same as tomorrow’s, and a unique group of individuals may present various personal motivations.

Kaynok *et al.* (1996, cited by Swarbrooke and Horner, 2002), in a study on Irish travelers, found significant differences among tourists of different ages, gender, cultural levels, income, and marital status. Young people preferred vacations that favor the practice of activities, while older adults sought destinations to rest, with opportunities to visit interesting places. Interviewees of higher cultural level revealed a preference for destinations that provide opportunities for contact with nature or cultural activities. On the other hand, people with lower educational level stressed the importance of vacations in which they could try new and

unfamiliar activities, very different from their daily practices. People of lower income saw the vacation as an opportunity to escape the daily life monotony and to allow themselves activities that gave them confidence. People of higher income, in turn, wanted intellectually stimulating and exciting vacations, with the opportunity to increase their knowledge about the area visited.

The challenge is the fact that there is not an exact factor that defines this issue of motivations, and these are not the only determinant for the tourism product consumption, but rather the sum of consumers' resources, knowledge, attitudes, motivation and personality, as well as a set of factors that determine the individual behavior as consumers.

Consumer's decision power relates to internal (of the person) and external (environment) factors and, consequently, can facilitate or limit tourists eager to turn their motivations and desires into reality. The analysis of factors such as availability, income, health, political aspects (terrorism, nature of the political system, immigration restrictions, travel-targeted media, travel agencies' marketing, personality, life style etc.) is extremely important in the process of knowing the consumer behavior in tourism.

Considering the postmodern tourists, it is necessary to pay attention to technological change issues, which give the individuals more information, thus providing greater power of choice and security in organizing and carrying out their trips. In modernity, travel motivations were much more limited to financial and technological resources, as the access to information was more restricted to those with high purchasing power, or to the middleman, the travel agencies. Based on the studies of Molina (2003), Figueiredo and Ruschmann (2004), and Panosso Netto and Gaeta (2010), some factor regarding travel motivations in different epochs of the world tourism evolution are suggested, according to the Chart 1.

Chart 1 - Travel motivation factors

Modern Tourist	Postmodern Tourist
Little information	Much information
Group travel	Individual travel
Defined packages	Custom packages
Passive traveler	Active traveler
Escape, pursuit of knowledge	Living an experience

Source - Prepared by the authors.

When analyzing the tourist consumer throughout history, several changes are identified in the way to relate to the destination, in motivations, and in the behavior when consuming tourist products and services. Identifying these changes is paramount for tourism administrators and entrepreneurs, since from this it is possible to devise strategies of market operation and consolidation. Then, the survival of the tourist activity as a service provider depends on its adaptation to the changes of society in social, political, and economic aspects, in addition to the client expectations (Panosso Netto & Gaeta, 2010).

Among the many companies involved in the displacement and stay of tourists/ travelers – transport, hotels, restaurants –, we highlight the travel agencies as a distribution channel between suppliers and final consumers (tourist/traveler), considering their importance in facilitating the travel and the access to tourist products through the identification of consumers' needs and wishes.

Tourism agencies are commercial enterprises with the purpose of carrying out trips. Consequently, they are service providers that inform, organize, and take all necessary measures on behalf of one or more persons who wish to travel. They offer all the services related to transport, hotel, and tourist events of all kinds, and organize individual or collective trips at a fixed price, whether through programs established by themselves or chosen freely by the consumers. (Beni, 1998, p.182)

Although it was possible the existence of travelers' services provision spontaneously since ancient time, the Western literature records its appearance in the mid-19th century with the *Thomas Cook and son*, initially in Europe and later in North America (Tomelin, 2001). Until then, trips were performed randomly, in rudimentary transport, with indefinite duration and lack of infrastructure and security, i.e., without much planning opportunity.

According to Andrade (1992), agencies considered ancient were dedicated to individual tours for a bourgeois clientele, becoming specialized in group tours from the 1930s. In the 1950s, the market expands, and a clientele of average purchasing power starts to be served. Thus, travel agencies set up the sale of package groups tours in standard summer vacation destinations at affordable prices, to captivate people and to create a regular or constant demand, a fact which is related to the expansion of the hospitality industry and of the air transport sector.

At the end of the 20th century, Brazilian economic policies affected adversely the economy of organizations in these sectors, especially when the travel agencies started to suffer from the reduction in commissioning percentage for marketing national and international airfare, due to a decision of several airlines, following an international tendency that arose in the United States (Tomelin, 2001).

The impact of the internet emergence as a new operational and commercial tool, in addition to the eventual deregulation of air transport and other factors of the late 20th century, are challenges that the travel sector has been facing in the beginning of this new century and millennium. This affects the profile of the travel agent, which is marked by the disintermediation of services, re-intermediation of emerging new agency types and, objectively, by the repositioning of its profile. (Tomelin, 2001, p. 22)

Given this scenario where information and travel venture facilities are diverse and accessible, the strategic redirection of travel agencies becomes essential. Tourists search for an intermediary that knows them and understands their feelings and needs in an intimate way, a "synergy of archaic phenomena and technological development" (Maffesoli, 2001).

On the exposed, it is up to travel agencies the dedication, responsibility, dynamism, and especially the ability to adequate to new market tendencies, so

that they can develop a business management aimed at meeting their consumers' needs. Panosso Netto and Gaeta (2010) highlight that tourism administrators should not establish strategies to meet this new consumer just to consolidate the market, but because the tourist consumer and its context currently feature characteristics that favor experience, leading us to think about the authenticity of products and services.

THE CONTEMPORARY TOURIST AND THE EXPERIENCE: A VISION OF TRAVEL AND TOURISM AGENCIES OF NATAL - RN

Given the aforementioned positions regarding new trends of tourist behavior and the need for strategies that meet this new profile, we will briefly present a research conducted with travel agents in the city of Natal – RN. Several changes were identified in the point of view of costumers, from the choice for destinations, through the way of traveling, to the main motivation factor.

According to travel agents, about 10 years ago the international destinations sought after by passengers were United States (Miami, New York, Orlando), Argentina (Buenos Aires), and Europe, and the national ones were Rio de Janeiro and Gramado. These offsets were generally in groups, to acquire knowledge and make purchases. They were held once a year, and in destination like Europe the trips lasted up to 30 days.

Currently, customers seek less mass-market destinations such as Europe (Eastern Europe), Singapore, Argentina (wineries in Mendoza), nature-bound environments (Fernando de Noronha, Manaus, Foz do Iguaçu), cruises and resorts. Most of these offsets is individual, to experience cultural and gastronomic experiences. They also look for services that most represent the local reality of the destinations visited, as typical, traditional, and family restaurants. Requests of products and services made by clients to agencies, depending on the destination, boil down to hotel, airfare, transfers, and travel insurance services. Trips are shorter, lasting from 10 to 15 days depending on the destination chosen. Despite the decreased travel time, the frequency increase to 02 or 03 times a year.

For the agents interviewed, the customer is more demanding and comes to the agency already with the idea of the trip and, in this case, the agencies elaborate the *forfait* (custom package) to meet such needs. Travel groups still remain but suggest a greater tendency to custom packages.

It was also noted that customers who demonstrate the need for a personal tourist experience are those with higher purchasing power, since they represent a travel expert population. Consumers who never or little traveled seek the agency to obtain information and request tours to travel, indicating that for mass market destinations the travel programming can even occurs autonomously, but for little media-disclosed destinations they seek the scheduled packages of the travel agencies, conveying more safety to the travel organization process.

Although very timidly, the research results contribute to the proposition that tourist consumer has been seeking for experiences in his trips. This statement is based on the observation of a greater internalization in tourist destinations,

the demand for individual trips, and the reduced time spent in consolidated destinations, increasing when the tourist searches for experiences in contact with nature. Consumers do not reach the agency by saying they want to live an experience, however, the destination proposed and the way of organizing the trip are pieces of evidence of such a tendency.

It is noteworthy that, despite the knowledge on this new consumer profile and the recognition that nowadays traveling is not dissociated from the experience it provides, few strategic actions have been used by agencies.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tourism, as a human and social activity, undergoes changes that accompany the historical, political, social, and economic situations of each epoch. Technological advances, the new relationships between time and space, and the human conceptions about the social and environmental media contribute to significant evolutions in the field of travels and tourism.

Although travel modification differs over time, some scholars point out that the *wanderlust* seems to be inherent to human nature. Adventure, curiosity, and strangeness are persistent elements in the historical evolution of travelers and are reconsidered in travel motivations of tourists in the contemporary world.

The postmodern tourists gradually cease to be passive in arranging their travels and increasingly recognize their power of decision and choice, in accordance to their wishes and needs, and expect a memorable event travel, a life experience, something that connects to their past and re-signifies their memories.

In this sense, subjectivity and individual experience become key elements of travel motivations, of the “tourism commodity” chosen, and of the return, established by new relations between time, space, and subject. Therefore, in postmodernity the traveler and the tourist are intertwined, and the dynamics of the scheduled trip becomes more complex, since it involves numerous factors and not only the anti-routine, the social status, or the consumptions of tourist goods and services.

Facing this complex tourist subject and its motivations, initiatives, decisions, and achievements, the dynamism is primordial for tourist business, especially travel agencies. Knowing the customer, or rather, the person is critical to ensure an authentic tourist experience to who is traveling. Moreover, knowing the suppliers and partners is essential, so they can meet the needs of this subject and thus contribute in a seamlessly integrated way to the travel experience.

Thinking contemporary tourism is not disregarding the economic and market elements that make it up but understanding that its essence is in the traveling as a human practice and that tourism, as a social phenomenon, is human, with all the subjectivity this implies.

Tourism and travel agencies that can understand the tourist not only as a client but as a person who seeks life achievements in the trips, will be those that will continue to actually mediate the tourist services and will find possibilities to expand their offer.

This study does not end here; however, it intends to instigate further research, with great deepening in theme as in coverage, as well as the realization of this topic under new perspectives.

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Received: 02/04/2017

Approved: 08/28/2017

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