

RELATIONSHIP AMONG EXPECTATION, MOTIVATION, AND INTENTION OF CHINESE CRUISE TRAVELERS

INTRODUCTION

The cruise industry is the fastest growing category in the entire leisure market with an average annual passenger growth rate of approximately 7.4% per annum (Florida Caribbean Cruise Association, 2010). China's cruise line market is small but hopeful (Wei, 2004). In 2009, one million cruise travelers were from Asia, of which 200,000 were from China. It is predicted that cruise travelers from Asia will reach two million by 2015 (Cruise Lines International Association, 2010). Many researchers believe that the number of Asian cruise travelers will increase because over 85 million Chinese have the ability to take international vacations (Josiam, Huang, Spears, Kennon, & Bahulkar, 2009). Thus, this study was to explore the expectation, motivation and intention of Mainland China residents on cruise travel and examine the correlation among expectation, motivation, and intention by building the Expectation, Motivation and Intention (EMI) Model.

METHODOLOGY

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used to obtain information. For the qualitative research, a focus group interview was conducted to obtain and evaluate attributes of expectation, motivation, and intention. For the quantitative research, a questionnaire was designed to collect primary data.

In this study, the target population was potential outbound cruise travelers in China. The distribution of questionnaires was conducted in universities, parks, coffee shops, restaurant waiting areas, and company offices in both Beijing and Shanghai between 23rd November and 17th December 2010. After being explained the purpose of the study, participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire on-site. In total, 250 questionnaires were distributed and 242 completed questionnaires were collected back. The response rate was 96.8%. All respondents had never taken an outbound cruise before (2 of them have taken domestic cruise before).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There were more female (54.7%) than male (45.3%) respondents. Over half of the respondents were at the age of 25 or below, 32.8% were 26-35 years old, followed by 36-45 (7.3%), and 46- 65 (4.7%). In terms of marital status, 72.8% of respondents were single, 18.5% were married with child(ren), and 8.6% were married without child(ren). For the family size, most respondents had a 3-person family (43.5%). The majority of respondents had college diploma or university degree (64.1%), and postgraduate or above education (33.2%). The majority (76.9%) had an annual household income less than RMB 150,000, and near 10% of the respondents (9.6%) had an annual household income higher than RMB 300,000.

Descriptive statistics was used to obtain the mean value of each item under expectation, motivation and intention. The top expectations were “See some beautiful sceneries” (M= 6.54), “Spend time with friends and family” (M= 6.50), “Relax” (M= 6.41), “Have fun” (M= 6.17), “Experience different culture” (M= 6.06) and “Experience different cuisines” (M= 6.05). The result is consistent with earlier research done by Hsu, Li and Cai (2009). The lowest rating of expectation was “Not be bored” (M= 5.22), followed by “Not get seasick” (M= 5.26), and “Build networking and social activities” (M= 5.29).

The highest mean score of motivation was “Enjoy beautiful environment and sceneries” (M= 6.36), followed by “Experience attractive routes and destinations” (M= 5.99), “See and experience new culture” (M= 5.98), “Visit different places in one trip” (M= 5.86), and “Travel to place friends/ relatives have not visited” (M= 5.73). This result showed a great difference from that in mature cruise markets such as North America (Hung & Petrick, 2011). The lowest ranking of motivation was “Enjoy casino experience” (M= 2.81), followed by “Enjoy health and exercise” (M= 4.28) and “Visit friends or relatives who live in the destination” (M= 4.54). For intention to cruise, “I am interested in cruise travel” received the highest rating (M= 5.47), and “I intend to cruise in the next three years” had the lowest (M= 4.53) means.

A factor analysis was conducted to reduce items measuring the expectation. Eleven items were retained in forming two factors, with all factor loadings greater than 0.5. These two factors were labeled as Active Pursuit and Serenity, which explained 58.06% of the total variance. Active Pursuit included “Not get seasick”, “Not be bored”, “Have fun”, “Have good facilities”, “Experience different ways of traveling”, “Get value for money”, “Experience different cuisines”, and “Enjoy attractive routes and destinations”. These variables represented the expectation to actively approach different activities on board to have fun. Serenity included “See some beautiful sceneries”, “Spend time with friends and family”, and “Relax”. This factor showed that respondents expected to have a peaceful and relaxing journey on cruise.

For factor analysis of the motivation items, 22 items were selected and grouped into five factors and explained 61.60% of the variance. They were labeled as Relaxation & Family, Discovery, Enjoyment, Wellness & Network, and Social/Esteem Need. The highest variance factor is Relaxation & Family (15.20% of variance), consisting of “Reduce stress”, “Get spiritual purification and moral enlightenment”, “Escape from routine of work and daily life”, “Have family gathering”, and “Accompany the family members who want to cruise”.

Referring to the definition of push and pull motivations (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981), five motivation factors obtained can be concluded into three pull factors (Discovery, Enjoyment and Wellness & Network) and two push factors (Relaxation & Family and Social/ Esteem Need).

By conducting T-Tests and ANOVAs, Active Pursuit (expectation factor) was rated differently by different genders. Enjoyment (motivation factor) was rated differently by different age groups and travel group sizes. Wellness & Network (motivation factor) was different among different age groups. Intention was different among different traveling group sizes. All the other factors were shown no significant differences among groups. For expectation, Active Pursuit was significantly different between male and female groups (T-value= -2.000, P<0.05). Significant differences among different age groups for motivation

factors Enjoyment and Wellness & Network were found.

In terms of the EMI model (Figure 1), motivation and intention are partial related. Between expectation and motivation, Active Pursuit has positive relations with all five motivation factors. Serenity positively affects Relaxation & Family and Discovery. Between motivation and intention, Relaxation & Family and Enjoyment have positive relations with intention. Between expectation and intention, Active Pursuit is positively related to intention.

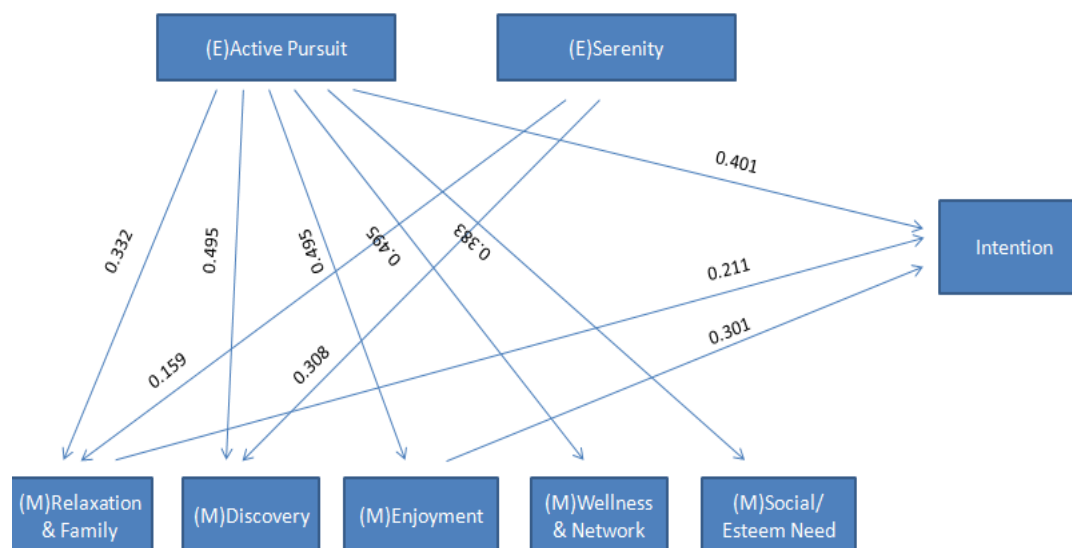


Figure 1 Expectation, Motivation and Intention (EMI) Model

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATIONS

This research is one of the first attempts to develop and empirically tests a model on cruise travel expectation, motivation and intention using data collected from potential cruisers in Mainland China. This study also shows possible ways for cruise liners to increase cruise travel intention. Specifically, Active Pursuit is the most important factor to impact intention, since it can affect intention directly and indirectly via affecting Relaxation & Family and Enjoyment. To strengthen the cruise intention, cruise operators can both increase consumers' Active Pursuit expectation before cruise and promote motivation factors Relaxation & Family and Enjoyment to them.

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