

Segmenting Ocean Cruise Ship Tourists

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Abstract:

Cruise tourism is a fast growing segment of the tourism industry. Cruise tourists have doubled from 3.8 million passengers in 1990, to 7.5 million in 2000. The number of cruise tourists reached 11.2 million in 2005, and is expected to reach 13.5 million by 2007 in the United States. Along with this trend, tourism researchers claim that cruise tourism has consistently gained popularity since the early 1990s. The purpose of this study is to profile cruise tourists using benefits sought and describes the characteristics of market segments among cruise tourists. Three lucrative segments were identified: Enthusiast (39.8%), Relaxation Seekers (35.3%) and Educational Tourists (25.0%). The study presents the distinctive characteristics of three segments.

Keywords: Market Segmentation; Cruise tourists; Destination Choice; Benefits sought; Activity Participation

Introduction

Cruise tourism is a fast growing segment of the tourism industry. This emerging niche used to be known as an once-in-a-lifetime tourism experience reserved for the older generation (Marsh & Staple, 1995). However, a Tourism Queensland study indicates that more than 85% of those involved were repeat passengers, while almost two-thirds of those passengers participated more than five times (Tourism Queensland, 2003). Cruise tourism passengers have increased rapidly at an average rate of 7.6% since 1980 as cruise operators began providing cruise packages to the mass market. Cruise tourists have doubled from 3.8 million passengers in 1990, to 7.5 million in 2000. The number of cruise tourists reached 11.2 million in 2005, and is expected to reach 13.5 million by 2007 in the United States. In 2005, 25 cruise lines operated

143 ships worldwide. This substantial growth requires new destination development offering a variety of activities (Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA), 2007).

Based upon the micro-economic price theory in which market segmentation helps an organization maximize its profit (Chamberlin, 1933 cited in Hunt & Arnett, 2004), market segmentation has been considered a key concept of marketing (Wyner, 2002). This essential marketing tool helps an organization identify specific subgroup segments, thus developing marketing mixes that address the needs and desires of targeted market segments (Lewis & Chamber, 2000). Researchers have used the demographic, geographic, psychographic and behavioural traits to segment consumer markets.

The market segmentation concept also has a long history in tourism (Anderson & Langmeyer, 1982; Shoemaker, 1994; Woodside & Jacobs, 1985; Hsieh, O'Leary, & Morrison, 1992; Jang, Morrison & O'Leary, 2002). This study selected benefits sought as a psychological trait in order to segment the cruise market in the United States. Among the variable bases applied in their tourism segmentation study, the issue of intended benefits represents a frequently used psychographic variable; indeed, Crompton and McKay (1997) noted that psychological and behavioural traits are key considerations for understanding tourists' decision making processes. Relatively little research has been conducted to understand activity participation and travel behaviour among cruise tourists. Thus, the purpose of this study is to illustrate the benefits sought by cruise tourists using a factor-cluster market segmentation approach.

Study Method

This study involved a secondary analysis of Travel Activity and Motivation Survey (TAMS) data collected in the United States between January and June 2006. This survey data was collected by mail with an established U.S. postal panel. Of the surveys sent, 60,649 were returned (71.3 percent overall response rate). For this study, a subset data with 6,136 cases was used.

Data Analysis Procedure and Results

The following procedure was used to segment the US cruise tourists. First, the data was subjected to principal component factor analysis with a varimax rotation to simplify the factor structure and increase the interpretability of the factors (see Table 1).

Table 1. Results of Factor Analysis for Benefits Sought

Factor	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained (%)	Grand Mean (Std. Dev.)
Knowledge/Learning ($\alpha = 0.745$)				
To gain knowledge of history, other cultures or other places	.796	2.54	23.11	2.19(0.45)
To enrich your respective on life	.768			
To stimulate your mind/be intellectually challenged	.752			
To see or do something new and different	.669			
Relaxation ($\alpha = 0.648$)				
To relax and relieve stress	.783	2.12	19.24	2.44(0.42)
To get a break from your day-to-day environment	.739			
To have a life with no fixed schedule	.646			
To be pampered	.572			
Family/Social ($\alpha = 0.585$)				
To keep family ties alive	.839	1.34	12.17	2.14(0.39)
To renew personal connections with friends	.708			
To enrich your relationship with family members	.599			

1) The items were measured using a 3-point Likert type scale (1 = of no importance, 2=somewhat important & 3 = highly important).

2) Principal component analysis was employed with varimax rotation using 15 benefit sought scale items.

3) Total variance explained: 54.53%

4) KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy: 0.732

5) Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: Chi-Square = 11382.76, $p < 0.0001$

Fifteen benefits sought items were factor analyzed. The outcome of the analysis suggests that eleven items are saliently loaded on to three factor domains explaining 54.5% of the variance. Second, in order to identify groups of respondents based on similar responses to attitudinal items, the factor mean scores from both factor analyses were used to group the respondents using the K-means cluster analysis algorithms. The number of clusters was determined by examining the dendrogram provided as a hierarchical cluster analysis output. An

experiment with two and three clusters was initially run, however, a three-cluster solution was found to be more meaningful with an adequate number of cases contained therein (See Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5).

Table 2. Characteristics of the Cluster and Results of ANOVAs

Cluster	Variable	Knowledge/ Learning	Relaxation	Family/ Social
Cluster 1: Enthusiasts ($n = 2272$)		2.368	2.643	2.572
Cluster 2: Relax Seekers ($n = 2017$)		1.963	2.609	1.768
Cluster 3: Educational Tourists ($n = 1426$)		2.216	1.875	1.988
Total ($n = 5715$)		2.187	2.439	2.142
ANOVA Statistics				
	<i>F</i> value	459.45	4256.33	2663.53
	$p > F$	<.0001	<.0001	<.0001

Table3. Summary of Discriminant Analysis

Discriminant Function ^a	Eigenvalue	% of Variance	Canonical Correlation	Wilks' λ	χ^2	df	<i>p</i> -value
1	1.765	59.2	0.799	.163	10356.25	6	.0001
2	1.218	40.8	0.741	.451	4548.92	2	.0001

Note: ^a First 2 canonical discriminant functions were used in the analysis.

Table 4. Discriminant Function Loadings: Functions at Group Centroids

Cluster	Function	
	1	2
Cluster 1: Enthusiasts	.646	1.248
Cluster 2: Relax Seekers	.896	-1.295
Cluster 3: Educational Tourists	-2.295	-.156

Note: Unstandardized canonical discriminant functions evaluated at group means

Table 5. Classification Results

Cluster	Predicted Group Membership			Total
	1	2	3	
Cluster 1: Enthusiasts	2249 (99.0%)	2 (0.1%)	221 (0.9%)	2272
Cluster 2: Relax Seekers	5 (0.4%)	1989 (98.6%)	19 (0.9%)	2017
Cluster 3: Educational Tourists	5 (0.4%)	6 (0.4%)	1415 (99.2%)	1426

Note: 98.9% of original grouped cases correctly classified.

Third, as shown in Tables 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, Chi-square and ANOVA tests were employed to determine the distinctive characteristics of three identified segments.

Table 6. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Variable		Enthusiasts	Relax Seekers	Educational Tourists	χ^2 Statistics
Education	High school or less	12.8%	14.3%	11.5%	$\chi^2 = 29.028$ $p < 0.001$
	Some college/college diploma	37.9%	37.6%	34.6%	
	Bachelor's degree	29.8%	30.9%	29.7%	
	Some graduate/grad. degrees	19.5%	17.2%	24.2%	
Income	Under \$40,000	3.8%	3.1%	5.1%	$\chi^2 = 18.235$ $p = 0.006$
	\$40,000 - \$79,999	25.8%	27.3%	30.6%	
	\$80,000 - \$149,999	56.9%	56.4%	51.7%	
	Over \$150,000 \$	13.5%	13.2%	12.6%	
Gender	Male	40.6%	46.6%	50.3%	$\chi^2 = 35.664$ $p < 0.001$
	Female	59.4%	53.4%	49.7%	
Age	Generation Y	2.9%	4.6%	3.8%	$\chi^2 = 440.668$ $p < 0.000$
	Generation X	29.3%	33.7%	15.5%	
	Baby Boomers	46.1%	44.1%	34.2%	
	Seniors	21.7%	17.7%	46.6%	
Occupation	Full time employee	56.5%	61.4%	37.3%	$\chi^2 = 380.128$ $p < 0.001$
	Part time	7.2%	7.5%	8.5%	
	Self employed	8.5%	9.1%	8.0%	
	Retired	16.7%	12.1%	37.4%	
	Others	11.1%	9.9%	8.8%	
Marital status	Married	73.0%	66.6%	68.5%	$\chi^2 = 44.041$ $p < 0.001$
	Never Married	13.3%	18.5%	13.1%	
	Divorced, widowed, separated	13.7%	14.9%	18.4%	
Ethnicity	Caucasians	87.4%	91.5%	92.0%	$\chi^2 = 36.029$ $p < 0.001$
	Afro-Americans	8.6%	5.1%	4.7%	
	Others	2.0%	1.6%	2.2%	
Household size	Mean(Std. Dev.)	2.65(1.26)	2.44(1.17)	2.27(1.15)	$F = 44.04^{***}$

Table 7 Activity Participation When Traveling (N=5654)

Variable	Enthusiasts	Relax Seekers	Educational Tourists	Overall	χ^2 Statistics
Fishing	19.8%	17.6%	17.1%	18.3%	5.457*
Kayaking and Canoeing	11.5%	10.6%	11.3%	11.1%	.939
Motor Boating	15.0%	11.1%	11.3%	12.7%	17.509***
Snorkelling in Sea/Ocean	34.3%	35.0%	25.9%	32.5%	36.800***
Sunbathing & Sitting on a Beach	53.4%	52.2%	41.1%	49.9%	59.156***
Swimming	55.2%	53.0%	41.5%	51.0%	70.403***
ATV	10.3%	7.3%	7.3%	8.5%	15.830***
Cycling	8.7%	6.4%	8.5%	7.9%	9.205**
Fitness Centre	22.0%	17.7%	16.8%	19.2%	19.784***
Jogging & Excising Outdoor	17.1%	12.1%	14.4%	14.7%	20.915***
Golf	17.3%	14.4%	14.7%	15.7%	7.839**
Walking, Hiking & hiking Trails	26.5%	18.9%	25.4%	23.5%	37.427***
Horseback Riding	11.5%	9.6%	8.1%	10.0%	11.301**
Mini-Golf	20.3%	17.0%	13.2%	17.4%	30.828***
Visit Parks	36.4%	28.7%	37.4%	33.9%	38.717***
Wildflower/Flora Viewing	13.9%	9.4%	16.0%	12.8%	35.945***
Whale Watching	21.1%	18.0%	24.4%	20.9%	20.717***
Bird Watching	11.3%	6.6%	13.5%	10.2%	47.912***
Land-based Animal Watching	20.3%	14.1%	25.0%	19.3%	65.243***
Aboriginal Cultural Experiences	12.5%	8.7%	17.0%	12.2%	51.604***
Free Outdoor Performances	20.9%	15.2%	19.0%	18.4%	23.365***
Live Theatre w/wt Dinner	32.3%	26.6%	35.0%	30.9%	30.521***
Popular Concerts	16.5%	16.1%	12.5%	15.4%	12.139**
Comedy Club	26.5%	24.1%	18.7%	23.7%	29.23***
Farmers Market	28.1%	19.7%	28.3%	25.2%	49.7876***
Aquariums	30.2%	22.9%	26.7%	26.7%	28.881***
Botanical Gardens	19.6%	15.0%	25.1%	19.3%	54.836***
Art Galleries	23.4%	17.7%	27.7%	22.5%	49.153***
Historical Replicas of Cities	14.2%	9.8%	15.7%	13.0%	29.395***
Carnivals	13.6%	9.3%	10.9%	11.4%	19.298***
Fireworks Display	24.5%	18.3%	21.7%	21.6%	24.095***
Museum	39.6%	29.6%	47.1%	37.9%	110.586***
Historical/ Archaeological sites	62.3%	53.9%	64.6%	59.8%	46.517***
Well-known Natural Wonders	36.1%	27.2%	39.7%	33.9%	66.273***
Cooking/Wine Tasting Courses	10.9%	7.5%	8.5%	9.1%	14.813**
Health/Wellness Spas	18.6%	17.1%	11.9%	16.4%	29.409***
Photography	21.3%	17.5%	22.6%	20.3%	15.768**
Casino	57.6%	59.8%	50.4%	56.6%	30.810***
Movie Theatres	39.4%	34.0%	33.3%	36.0%	19.062**
Fine Dining	46.5%	43.9%	42.0%	44.5%	7.411*
Local Dining	70.1%	64.5%	70.4%	68.2%	19.589***
Shopping - Antiques	31.1%	25.0%	29.3%	28.5%	20.296***
Shopping – Gourmet Foods	26.0%	19.4%	22.4%	22.8%	26.517***
Shopping – Local Arts/Crafts	49.3%	43.6%	49.9%	47.5%	18.272***
Shopping – Clothing, Shoes and Jewellery	64.1%	60.4%	53.1%	60.1%	44.277***
Local Outdoor Cafe	46.9%	39.3%	43.4%	43.3%	25.016***
Wineries	29.5%	24.8%	31.2%	28.2%	19.781***
Breweries	14.2%	11.1%	13.7%	13.0%	9.911**

Note: Activity items were measured using Yes and No

* significant at the 0.01 level; ** significant at the 0.05 level; *** significant at the 0.001 level

Table 8. Trip Experience

Variable		Enthusiasts	Relax Seekers	Educational Tourists	χ^2 Statistics
# of Trips Taken for Last 2 Yrs (N=5622)	1	4.2%	4.6%	4.0%	$\chi^2 = 19.93$ $p = 0.011$
	2	10.8%	12.7%	12.1%	
	3	11.0%	13.9%	12.8%	
	4	14.2%	14.8%	12.8%	
	More than 5	59.8%	54.0%	58.3%	
Trip to Mexico (N=5609)		38.5%	35.9%	33.3%	$\chi^2 = 10.225$ $p = 0.006$
Trip to South America (N=5609)		7.5%	7.1%	12.0%	$\chi^2 = 29.694$ $p < 0.001$
Trip to Caribbean (N=5609)		44.9%	40.2%	53.7%	$\chi^2 = 60.524$ $p < 0.001$
Trip to Europe incl. UK (N=5609)		13.2%	11.7%	22.5%	$\chi^2 = 83.124$ $p < 0.001$
Trip to Australia/New Zealand (N=5609)		1.4%	1.2%	4.2%	$\chi^2 = 42.461$ $p < 0.001$
Trip to Asia (N=5609)		2.8%	2.7%	6.1%	$\chi^2 = 34.002$ $p < 0.001$
Involvement in Trip Planning (N=5535)	All	66.3%	65.7%	63.9%	$\chi^2 = 8.747$ $p = 0.189$
	Most	19.3%	17.9%	18.3%	
	Some	9.1%	10.5%	11.1%	
	None	5.4%	5.9%	6.7%	

Table 9. Information Search Behaviour

Information Source	Enthusiasts (%)	Relax Seekers (%)	Educational Tourists (%)	Overall
An Internet Website	79.6	80.4	70.8	77.7***
Past experience/been there before	52.8	52.3	47.0	51.2**
A travel agent.	48.2	47.5	48.9	48.1
Advice of friends or relatives/word-of-mouth	48.0	41.3	41.8	44.1***
An auto club such as the AAA	30.3	25.9	32.7	29.4***
Maps	29.8	22.1	32.5	27.8***
Travel information received in the mail	23.5	20.6	26.7	23.3***
Articles in newspapers/magazines	25.2	19.0	25.9	23.2***
Official travel guides or brochures from state / provincial /national organizations	25.3	18.5	25.9	23.0***
Travel guide books such as Fodor's or Michelin	19.7	16.1	22.9	19.2***
Visitor information centers	20.8	14.2	20.2	18.3***
Advertisements in newspapers/magazines	15.7	12.5	14.2	14.2*
Programs on television	11.6	9.0	9.1	10.0**
An electronic newsletter or magazine received by e-mail.	11.3	8.9	8.7	9.8**
Advertisements on television	5.8	3.9	4.3	4.8*
Visits to trade, travel or sportsmen's shows	3.3	2.6	3.3	3.0
Website Use				
A cruise line website	52.2	55.9	45.0	51.7***
A travel planning/booking website (e.g., Expedia, Travelocity)	54.0	54.4	43.4	51.5***
An airline's website	49.4	49.0	43.3	47.8**
The website of a hotel or resort	45.4	44.9	37.0	43.1***
The website of a country/state/province/or city tourism authority	29.8	27.9	29.3	29.0
The website of an attraction (museum, theatre, amusement park, etc.	26.5	22.3	22.2	23.9**
A motor coach website	1.6	0.9	2.2	1.5*

* significant at the 0.01 level; ** significant at the 0.05 level; *** significant at the 0.001 level

Table 10. Information Use Experience

Variable	Enthusiasts	Relax Seekers	Educational Tourists	χ^2 Statistics
Booking Over the Internet	69.3%	66.4%	59.0%	$\chi^2 = 39.603$ $p < 0.001$
Travel Package Purchase	Most	10.5%	11.4%	$\chi^2 = 17.190$ $p = 0.002$
	Some	48.3%	45.6%	
	None	41.2%	43.0%	
Newspaper Readership	Frequently	34.8%	29.2%	$\chi^2 = 49.125$ $p < 0.001$
	Occasionally	30.9%	29.3%	
	Rarely	19.8%	22.8%	
	Never	14.5%	18.7%	
Newspaper Readership - Travel sections	Frequently	47.6%	41.6%	$\chi^2 = 42.789$ $p < 0.001$
	Occasionally	27.7%	28.3%	
	Rarely	16.3%	19.0%	
Never	8.4%	11.1%	6.4%	
Internet as Information Source	86.3%	88.9%	78.6%	$\chi^2 = 73.711$ $p < 0.001$

Table 11. Destination Selection Factors

Variable	Enthusiasts	Relax Seekers	Educational Tourists	F-test/ χ^2 Statistics	
First Considering when planning a Summer Trip	Destination	57.8%	60.5%	60.7%	$\chi^2 = 45.138$ $p < 0.001$
	Activity	8.3%	9.2%	8.5%	
	A certain type of vacation experience	2.1%	3.1%	2.1%	
	Look for package deal	22.5%	15.1%	16.8%	
	Something else	4.7%	6.3%	6.6%	
	Someone else planned the trip	4.5%	5.8%	5.5%	
Importance of Destination Choice – Overall ^A	1.87	2.11	2.09	$F = 9.257^{***}$	
No health concern at the destination ^B	2.46	2.31	2.18	$F = 77.134^{***}$	
Safety	2.75	2.60	2.75	$F = 116.276^{***}$	
Familiar with culture and language	1.85	1.94	1.86	$F = 42.819^{***}$	
Being at a place that is very different culturally	1.61	1.73	1.74	$F = 82.414^{***}$	
Destination having friends or relatives	1.50	1.20	1.42	$F = 138.713^{***}$	
Availability of low package deal	2.23	2.12	2.00	$F = 52.750^{***}$	
Disabled people friendly	1.39	1.24	1.28	$F = 38.032^{***}$	
Lots of things to see & do -children	1.64	1.34	1.30	$F = 143.532^{***}$	
Lots of things to see & do - Adults	2.61	2.45	2.34	$F = 10.2470^{***}$	
Availability of information on the Internet	2.24	2.14	1.85	$F = 139.423^{***}$	
Shopping opportunities	1.97	1.84	1.61	$F = 124.509^{***}$	
Availability of luxury accommodation	1.78	1.72	1.46	$F = 91.906^{***}$	
Availability of mid-range accommodation	2.43	2.37	2.18	$F = 81.127^{***}$	
Availability of Budget accommodation	2.01	1.89	1.88	$F = 20.334^{***}$	
Availability of Camping site	1.33	1.20	1.24	$F = 30.295^{***}$	
Convenient access by car	2.34	2.13	2.13	$F = 69.990^{***}$	
Direct access by air	2.34	2.27	2.18	$F = 28.892^{***}$	
Convenient access by bus/train	1.65	1.48	1.61	$F = 36.108^{***}$	

A -Overall destination choice anchored by 1 is Extremely important and 5 is not at all important completely agree.

B -Destination Choice items were anchored by 1 is Of no importance and 3 is Highly important.

* significant at the 0.05 level; ** significant at the 0.01 level; *** significant at the 0.001 level

Discussions

Three cruise tourist clusters were determined in the study. The following statements describe the characteristics of each cruise tourist cluster.

Cluster 1: Enthusiast (39.8%)

“Enthusiasts” are married, employed and highly educated. They consist of baby boomers and females, they earn higher income than those in Cluster 3, they maintain a larger household size, and they have the largest representation of African-Americans. They also participate in most travel activities (see Table 7). Enthusiasts traveled more often than Relaxation Seekers, they

have obtained Mexico travel experience, and they are actively involved in trip planning. They are likely to book a trip on the Internet, and frequently read newspaper travel sections. When planning a trip, they are likely to search for package deals. Destination choice is important, particularly regarding health issues, safety, a variety of entertainment, and accessibility.

Cluster 3: Relaxation Seekers (35.3%)

The “Relaxation Seekers” consist of employed Caucasians that are predominantly single and have a high-income. These are relatively less educated people, they represent the youngest group, and they have a medium household size. They are passive in terms of activity participation, except for a few activities such as snorkeling, sunbathing, popular concerts, comedy club, shopping, casino and fine dining. They traveled less often than other two clusters, likely traveled within the United States, and are actively involved in trip planning. Relaxation Seekers also book trips via the Internet as they rely heavily on the Internet as an information source. However, they are less likely to read newspapers than other clusters. When planning a trip, destination is the most important factor. Interestingly, Internet availability at the intended destination is a choice factor for this group.

Cluster 3: Educational Tourists (25.0%)

The “Educational Tourists” of Cluster 3 are composed of retired, Caucasian and highly educated people with lower incomes. They are also the oldest group. They are very unique relative to activity participation and are likely to participate in cultural and ecotourism-based activities. Similar to Enthusiasts, they also travel frequently to overseas destinations, even more often than Relaxation Seekers and Enthusiasts. When this group plans a trip, finding the right destination is the primary factor to be considered.

All three groups use the Internet as a major source of information, followed by previous experience, word of mouth, travel agents, and auto clubs. They mainly consult cruise line Websites, e-travel agencies (e.g. Expedia), and airline Websites.

Great potential opportunities exist for cruise destination and cruise line marketers that

want to extend their markets. To ensure long-term success, these organizations must develop market segmentation strategies in order to position themselves well in the newly growing cruise tourism market, a segment that connects to the cruise tourists' market. This study extends the existing work on this topic by using the benefit sought trait to segment cruise visitors and enable marketers to develop marketing strategies. This study identified some distinctive differences among the three groups. The study findings may provide the cruise industry and cruise destinations a useful platform to adjust or improve current marketing strategies.

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Cruise tourism encompasses all faces of the tourism industry; accommodation, transportation, hospitality and attractions. Cruising has become the fastest growing segment in the travel industry across the world and it's no surprise with the wide variety of cruises on offer nowadays. In this post I will reflect on cruise tourism, what cruise tourism is, how the form of tourism has developed in its time, and where the form of tourism is predominantly focused. Cruise ships vary from small yachts to mega ships and can take place on the ocean, river or fjords. Cruise tourism is popular in the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Arctic amongst other destinations. Cruise tourism definitions. Cruise ships are large passenger ships used mainly for vacationing. Unlike ocean liners, which are used for transport, they typically embark on round-trip voyages to various ports-of-call, where passengers may go on tours known as "shore excursions". On "cruises to nowhere" or "nowhere voyages", cruise ships make two- to three-night round trips without visiting any ports of call. Ship database updated 20:40 Tuesday, 17 Nov 2020 UTC (time now 21:02 UTC). Ship. last reported (UTC). position. Callsign. Carnival Splendor. 2020-Nov-17 2000. Ships in port or not reporting today: Carnival Conquest. 2020-Nov-15 1600. N 25°52', W 079°35'. 3FPQ9. Larkspur. 2020-Nov-15 1600.