

Making memories: an empirical study of children's enduring loyalty to holiday places

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Abstract – Children are silent agents in tourism, although they are intelligent and skilled enough to be part of the research agenda. In the past, children were ignored as passive, unreliable and incompetent informants, but this view has now faded. There are three principal reasons for including children in tourism research. As active and talented individuals, they are a genuine part of the overall tourism market. Their needs and well-being matter to multiple stakeholders. In the context of influencing family travel, their position as active social figures can, directly and indirectly, affect their parents' purchasing behavior. Further, children's future holidays may be affected by their current experiences. At the theoretical level, this chapter adds a further small step to bridge the gap between child and adult studies in tourism. Children's perceptions and experiences are still not studied extensively in tourism research and the work on motivation and benefits is especially scarce. Importantly, the approach employed here uses the existing Travel Career Pattern approach as a broad motivational appraisal system that enables the work to be connected to adult motivation research. At the methodological level, this study shows that the active involvement of children in the research process has significant benefits. At the practical level, this study can help government policy and planning in the field of tourism. The silence about children is not limited to participation in research, it is also evident in the development of policies.

Keywords – Memories; holidays; customer loyalty; children; family; motivation

1. Introduction

This chapter considers children's understanding of their visited holiday places based on their best holiday memories. In particular, the chapter provides evidence that children's holiday benefits can be linked to their motivation for further travel. More broadly, there is evidence that children can retain a very clear and concrete memory of their past life experience (Bauer et al., 2002). Encoding and decoding can be tracked from children's second to fourth year (Bruce, Dolan, Phillips-Grant, 2000; Eacott & Crawley, 1998; Hudson, 1990). The early childhood memories are not always detailed and they do keep changing in their quantity and quality (Rubin, 2005). Nevertheless, they persist as important parts of autobiographic memory and help form the individual's life timeline (Tulving, 1985). Autobiographic memory differs from what is just remembered at any previous point of time, as it embraces memories that are related to other recollections and individual feelings. Further, autobiographic memories are multifunctional and contain directive, personal and social functions (Yin, Poon & Su, 2017). In tackling the topic of loyalty the researchers focus on this directive function as it can be seen as underpinning problem-solving and planning for the future. These definitions and considerations frame the present interest in children's memories of travel and holidays.

Based on Conway's (2000) autobiographic memory model, holidays are examples of general events in the memory knowledge base that can be stored, restored and controlled through the "working self" with the help of emotions. Memories are dependent on the content and the feeling intensity of the memory (Fitzgerald & Broadbridge, 2011), the gap between the event and remembering (Fitzgerald & Broadbridge, 2011; Rubin, Schrauf and Greenberg, 2003), and the visual cues (Berntsen & Rubin, 2006). It is desirable to study emotionally intensive childhood holiday memories close to the event. The restrictions of reminiscing, lack of detail and coherence are less problematic if this approach is adopted. As noted previously, and as Pillemer (2003) explained, autobiographical memories can be a good source of motivation. Kim (2010, 2014) believes memory is the most important source for deciding for a second visit.

Children, once largely ignored in tourism studies because they were seen as passive, unreliable informants are now receiving some research attention (Barker & Weller, 2003; Darbyshire, Schiller, & MacDougall, 2005; Mayall, 2000; Kellett & Ding, 2004). Certainly, the new view is that they can be intelligent and skilled enough to be part of the research agenda (Carr, Jones & Lee, 2005; Clark & Moss, 2001; Cobb, Danby & Farrell, 2005; Kinney, 2005). The value of studying children is threefold: first, due to their increasingly active role in society they can be seen as a new wave of consumers; second, in the context of family travel they can shape parents' purchasing behavior; and finally, the experiences they have now may build a base for their own future travel choices. Nevertheless, it is a challenge to understand what children know, and how they think about and remember places. These challenges prompt researchers to use innovative techniques and deep qualitative research methods to consider the nature of the childhood travel memories, holiday perceptions and loyalty to a place. The present study, which adopts an empirical approach to memory and its implications, offers a fresh conceptualization of studying children in tourism. It introduces several methods that may benefit others who study family tourism and the child's role in holiday activities and benefits.

2. Background

Iran as a diversified destination is chosen as the context for this study. While the key psychological processes of interest in this study - the role of autobiographical memory, motivation and loyalty - may be thought of as universal, it is an advantage for the global scholarly community to develop and test ideas from a wide range of international contexts. The inclusion of data about human processes from post-colonial, post-conflict and post-disaster destinations represents what Flyvbjerg (2006) has termed informative case selection of marker instances. Empirical analyses of these situations, along with work from well-studied contexts, may build valuable insights and support for the generalizability of concepts and explanatory schemes. Since the revolution of 1979, the main reason for Iranians to travel has been to undertake a pilgrimage. Within the country, there have been serious recent efforts by both public and private sectors to develop the tourism industry. Domestic tourism is currently more dominant than international tourism in Iran as the rules and regulations, economic sanctions, visa issues, and the currency exchange rates all limit international possibilities. Despite these limitations, Iranian tourists are especially appreciative of holidays in terms of being grateful, marvelling, luxuriating and having a strong sense of the status value of their time. Holidays provide powerful, evocative highlights for their lives (Pearce & Mohammadi, in press). The numbers of inbound tourists increased from 2013 but the sudden economic sanctions were a great barrier to the expansionist development plans (UNWTO Compendium, 2019). The direct share of tourism can be portrayed by the visitor exports in which Iran was in the 57th rank and jumped to 17th in 2018. Iran has generated IRR150,859bn in 2017 which is predicted to be increased by 3.4 in 2028 and the ranking of Iran's total contribution to GDP was 35th in 2017 which is changed to 19th in 2018 which shows Iran is growing as a potential destination in the world tourism industry (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2018).

Two key concepts form the main basis of this study: memory and loyalty. Memory is a collection of systems that work together permitting us to learn from the past and anticipate the future. Episodic memories, including long-term storage of real memories, relate to personal experiences (Schwartz, 2011). In fact, both adult and children's tourist experiences involve complex psychological processes with a particular focus on memory (Larsen, 2007). Although there are several definitions in the literature, tourism experiences can be considered as personal and mental assessments of incidents involving tourism activities that lead to results. Studies have shown that memorable travel experiences are related to the past personal events that are strong enough to enter the long-term memory (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Memories may be hidden or lost but there are some factors like time, personal essence and uniqueness of an event that can keep holiday memories as active items for recall. These remembered incidents may be predictors of the future behavior of the tourists (Larsen, 2007). Typically, tourists seek and pay for enjoyable experiences, many of which become excellent candidates for long term memory storage because they are vivid, emotionally relevant and social (Sørensen & Jensen, 2015).

Memories can be also interpreted as a social representation formed on the basis of resources such as culture, collective wisdom, common knowledge, and understanding; these connections between individuals and the processes used to understand the meaning of the world assist the formation of recalled holiday episodes (Moscovici, 1982). Children display clear and obvious memory (Bauer et al., 2000; Fagan, 1990; McDonough et al., 1995). For example, children aged two and three can provide basic information about past events, at least in response to adult queries (Hudson, 1990). Studies show that there is a very early childhood period for which some memories can be retrieved. Adults sometimes talk about their memories that occur at the age of three or four (Bruce et al., 2000), or even before that time (Eacott & Crawley, 1998). Different approaches to

memory show the limitations of childhood cognitive function, but lasting memories do emerge at the age of two or between two to four years old. The memories of children less than five years old are more discontinuous than for the older children and typically offer less detailed information. The memories of this youngest age group appear to fluctuate in quality and quantity (Fivush, Haden and Adam, 1995; Sluzenski, Newcombe, and Ottinger, 2004). Even though there are some limits to these memory recall abilities, findings from the literature provide compelling evidence that children can encrypt and retrieve information about events such as holidays and travels.

Psychology researchers have attended to the topic of children's memory more frequently than tourism scholars (Manczaka et al., 2016; Peterson, 2012; Price and Phenix, 2015; Sluzenski, 2003). Currently, only few studies have focused on the importance and nature of the memories of the tourists and this work is exclusively adult centered. Ballantyne, Packer and Sutherland (2011), study wildlife tourism memories, and Kim (2014) examine the tendency to return to same places based on memories. Other studies in hospitality and tourism research, such as those conducted by del Bosque and San Martin (2008), Lee et al. (2008) and Jang and Namking (2009), investigate the positive and negative emotions linked to memory as behavioral determinants. There is abundant scope for further research on the topic of memory, especially the memory of children.

Yoon and Uysal (2005) introduced the concept of consumer loyalty to the field of tourism products and services, destinations, and leisure activities. Again the emphasis has been on adults, thus paving the way for reconsidering this material with children in mind. The reason for the importance of consumer loyalty in the tourism industry can be related to the economic and fiscal effects of this industry. Loyalty relates to the ability of the destination providers to create an experience for tourists, which is matched with the image they have constructed (Aktaş, Aksu, & Çizel, 2007). Tourists who travel to places on multiple occasions are more likely to be relaxed and less likely to seek new and novel experiences. Other reasons for traveling to familiar destinations include the minimization of the risk of travel to challenging areas, the reduction of unhappy experiences, location dependency, and a deeper experience stimulated by past visits. It is all important, however, to note that tourism and tourism services are different from other tertiary industries. Repetition, or loyalty, is more complex and the desire for novelty is a challenge to the quest for safe familiarity (Pearce & Kang, 2009).

The behavior of the tourists can be divided into three stages before the visit (Choosing a destination for the first visit), during the visit (travel experience or perception of the quality of travel during the stay) and after the visit. The third stage is the future behavior-the loyalty-including the decision to repeat the visit and the desire to introduce the destination to others. There are two approaches to travel loyalty: one is behavioral and the other is attitudinal (Brunner, Stöcklin, & Opwis, 2008). The behavioral approach focuses on repeating the purchase of a brand. Oliver (1999) introduces four stages of loyalty. The first stage is the cognitive loyalty that the customer concludes based on his information that a brand is preferable to others. The affective loyalty means the customer gains a positive attitude and tendency toward a brand through previous satisfying experiences. Conative loyalty shows the willingness to take action. The last stage is behavioral loyalty in which the buying motive becomes an action for purchase.

The tourism industry is an experience-driven sector. Studying memorable experiences is valuable to predict the future behavior of tourists to suppliers in the competitive tourism sector. Positive feelings are a more powerful guide to prompt tourists to return to destinations and advise others about a place (Barnes, Mattsson, & Sørensen, 2016; del Bosque and San Martin; 2008; Ritchie and Crouch, 2003). Nevertheless, even when positive experiences have been remembered,

a tourist does not always undertake a return visit. The probable outcome does not necessarily mean dissatisfaction, but the need for novelty (Agapito, Pinto, & Mendes, 2017).

Again, the work reviewed here has been done on adults and the consequence of thinking about loyalty with a life-span or timeline approach has not been developed. Therefore, it is important to note the potential role of childhood travel memories as a booster for adult loyalty. Over the past decade, marketers and child product advocates have developed a wide range of strategies to reach the young consumers. They are interested in the children's market for two main reasons. First, is that children are the future market (Small, 2008; McNeal, 1992). It has been established that the sense of loyalty of children towards a brand forms at an early age and this good attitude toward an identifiable product persists into adulthood. In general, theoretical foundations indicate that tourism satisfaction, mental conflicts, perceived image of the destination and familiarity with the destination are some of the most important factors affecting the loyalty to the tourist destinations (Chen & Tsai, 2007). The researchers suggest these processes might be strong and powerful when the travellers are younger children. Second, children have a significant direct and indirect impact on parental decisions on travel and holidays, determining consumer behavior and travel planning (Carr, 2011; Cullingford, 1995; Gunter & Furnham, 1998; Jenkins, 1978; Kang & Hsu 2005; McNeal, 1992; Poria, Atzaba-Poria & Barrett, 2005; Wang et al., 2004;).

One of the evolving achievements of tourism research in the last 20 years has been to give voice to the less obvious markets and the marginalised groups in society (Ren, Pritchard & Morgan, 2010). This wide-ranging corrective to previous traditions has seen authors embrace studies of the disabled, ethnic minorities and those affected by the power of tourism big business (Richards, Pritchard & Morgan, 2010; Tribe & Liburd, 2016). In terms of addressing market segments within the global travel world, there has been an awareness of the spending power of those with non-traditional sexual preferences as well as concerns with the welfare of women travellers of all ages and those whose religion and dress codes identify them as a distinctive group (Oktadiana, Pearce & Chon, 2016; Wait & Markwell, 2014). The presence of children within and as a part of these groups tend to go relatively unnoticed (Lehto et al., 2009; Nanda, Hu, & Bai, 2007; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001; Poria & Timothy, 2014; Small, 2008; Schänzel, Smith, & Weaver, 2005). Although children have an important role in social sciences, as noted previously, in tourism they are understudied. Furthermore, those few studies published have been about children and not with them. The partial reluctance of tourism scholars to study children may be the result of three forces. Children in some cultures are required to be seen and not heard - such a positionality discourages exploration and concern about what they think and how their world view might matter. Secondly, from the perspective of tourism businesses, it is not always apparent that children are consumers or drive the consumption patterns of the adults who accompany them. They may shape the parental decisions but a pragmatic approach has been to ask the parents' views about the needs and views of their children rather than directly determine interests. A third explanation for the tourism scholars' reluctance to study children lies in the combination of ethical barriers and an associated awareness that speaking to and working with children carries special demands.

3. Challenges/issues

The challenges authors may face in working with children are related to communication (Barker and Weller, 2003; Hill, 2005; Punch, 2002), accessibility and satisfaction (Connors & Stalke, 2007; Farrell, 2005; Fargas-Malet et al., 2010; Flewitt, 2005; McSherry et al., 2008),

confidentiality and child care issues (Masson, 2004, Einarsdóttir , 2007; Fargas et al., 2010), the impact of child participation (Clark, 2005; Hill, 2006), the representation of children participating in the research (Hill, 2006), the position and place of children for research, not only as their physical location, but also their social status (Darbyshire, Schiller & MacDougall, 2005; Dockett, Einarsdottir & Perry, 2009; Fargas et al., 2010; Mannion, 2007; Moss & Petrie, 2002; Punch, 2002; Waller, 2006), as well as the challenges of data collection and interpretive frameworks used in data analysis (Clark, 2005; Farges et al., 2010; Grover, 2004).

Given these challenges, different approaches have been used for studying children. The applied method needs to answer the questions, be sensitive to childhood ethical principles and also account for the characteristics and needs of children as well as the cultural and physical situation of the research. Typically, children are not questioned directly and the most common techniques applied are visual and descriptive tools such as the use of photos as stimuli (Newman, Woodcock & Dunham, 2006; Samuels, 2004), drawings (Dockett & Perry, 2005; Driessnack, 2005; Leonard, 2006; Morgan et al., 2002; Sartain, Clarke & Heyman, 2000) and storytelling (Barker and Waller, 2003).

The main challenge of studying children is the way they are studied. Much tourism research about children is oriented to asking adults (Blichfeldt et al., 2010; Kang & Hsu, 2005; Ryan, 1992; Turley, 2001; Shanzel et al., 2005; Wang et al., 1994). In this study, however, children are taken as active agents. An attempt is made to adopt an innovative research design aimed at children. Triangulation of the methodology is used to gain richer data and reduce bias; a process which serves as a validity tool for qualitative research. Children often try to express their views and interpretations of their experiences through drawing (Clark, 2005). Images can facilitate the discovery of their existence, thoughts, and enable the research team to interact with children. Drawing is a relatively easy way to collect social information about children and with children (Barker and Waller 2003; Leonard, 2006; Morgan et al., 2002). The choice of drawing as a tool for evaluating is a powerful technique (Kuhn, 2003), because when children are reluctant to answer questions, they can more easily respond with a figure or drawing. Further, asking for a drawing can be a calming influence, it can help children relax and interact, serve as an indication and motivator for remembering and expressing fulfillment, and help children organize their own narration (Hill, 1997). It gives them enough time to think about their ideas and opinions (Milles, 2000) as well as time to react (Dockett & Perry, 2005; Parkinson, 2001; Punch, 2002). Drawings are visual data that can show how children see things.

The other retrospective technique is photo/image-elicitation. Usually, children are asked to take their own photos or some photos are used as recollection tools or driving factors to reach children's intentions (Newman, Woodcock & Dunham, 2006; Samuels, 2004). Indirect collection methods, such as storytelling, are especially useful for expressing children's experiences, as they are less threatening and give children the opportunity to express their understanding of experiences when they are not quite alert to or cannot express themselves verbally. Stories also provide a safe and effective opportunity to explore the situation. Bearing these issues in mind, the researchers explore children's understanding of their visited holiday places based on their best holiday memories. At its core, the chapter tests the proposition and provides evidence that children's holiday benefits can be linked to their motivation for further travel.

4. Methodology

4.1. Sampling

The research design involved selecting respondents, specifically children from age 9 to 12, from Tehran, Iran. The logic of choosing this age range is due to the quality and quantity in the improvement of the children's memories as they mature. In order to have the samples well distributed based on social, cultural and economic factors, cluster and simple random sampling methods were used. Based on the development indexes, 22 districts of Tehran were categorized into three levels of well-med-low developed and randomly two districts were chosen from well- and med-level developed areas were selected, while low-developed areas were not studied as it was assumed children from these social levels may not have experienced enough holidays for the study purposes. In each district, four schools were systematically chosen, a public male primary school, a private male primary school, a public female primary school, and a private female primary school. The results of cluster sampling ensured that we have an evenly distributed split between the sexes, social and economic factors. One hundred and seven children participated in this study.

Ethical considerations are a key issue in working with minorities and children. Adopting the post-positivist philosophy and using a qualitative approach to fulfill this study, the role of researchers and the way of communicating with children were important issues. The ethical issues are not just a matter of choosing the suitable techniques but should be considered throughout the whole study. Before starting the process of collecting data, the researchers entered the field by reviewing the literature about children and getting to know the sensitivities of this age group as well as the terms and conditions of scientific research. The researchers tried to apply the dimensions of the "ERIC" (Ethical Research Involving Children) guidelines (Graham et al., 2013) and conduct research based on the ethical criteria set.

The researchers appeared at the schools to work with the selected groups of children following permission to conduct the work from the Education Ministry. Collaborating with school authorities, they constructed a comfortable setting within the school spaces for data collection. The children took a group session as a warmup stage and then appeared individually for the next steps. Due to the time limit and the children's curriculum, the researchers visited the schools for each step of the study on separate days. In total, the researchers visited each school three times at intervals of almost two months. The nature of the research was explained to the children in simple language. They were advised about the activities in which they were going to be involved and they were asked if they wanted to continue or not. They were allowed to leave the study any time they wished. Some warm-up little tasks were used to get them involved and feel relaxed. They were told the process is not going to be evaluated for marking them and they just can have fun by participating. For rewarding their participation, the children were given a pack of drawing tools as a gift. During the data collection task, the researchers did not intervene in the process and commented only if there were any ambiguities or questions asked. The researchers were open to listening to the children as much as they liked to talk and share opinions on the issues. All children were encouraged to speak up and simply use their own words. For each and every part of the work, if there was any need to record their voices, permission from both the school authorities and parents and children was obtained. For privacy and the possibility of following up further data in the next steps of the research process, children were coded according to the district, state or non-governmental schools, girls' or boys' schools, and first letters of the first and last name. All information collected during this research is treated in strict confidence and is only used for academic purposes.

4.2. Data collection

The data collection was done in three different sessions with children. In each session, just one activity was done due to their classes and not keeping them away from the class for a long time. An advantage of this protracted data collection procedure was that it limited spillover effects from one task to the next. In the first session, after a warming up activity, the researcher explained the study and children were asked to draw the best ever holiday they have experienced. They were given a drawing tool kit as a gift to start. They had no time limitations to end the activity and were allowed to work on their papers as much as they liked and enjoyed. Each child was interviewed shortly after finishing the drawing on what she/he had drawn.

The second session was assigned to a storytelling technique and the children were asked to tell stories of their best travel experiences. The researchers did not interfere during the activity and just tried to show the children how their words were valuable and, through body language, convey a sense of acceptance and interest. All their words were recorded by a voice recorder with the school authorities and their own permission; just one girl was not happy with the recording, so the researchers took notes instead.

The third session was used for the Children Travel Motivation Pictorial Test, which was designed by the researchers. The design of the test followed the components of the Travel Career Pattern (Pearce & Lee, 2005). Collection of 240 images with cartoon characters was assembled. For face validity, several rounds of screening were implemented, and the number of images trimmed down to 120, almost 10 for each components of travel motivation. In order to measure the content validity of the images, an inverse test was designed and implemented in two stages with 18 undergraduate students of Tourism Management, 120 final images were shown to them and they were asked to write what they perceived of the shown images in words, phrases or sentences. By doing content analysis, images with higher frequencies were selected. In the second stage, the selected images were again shown to the same group, and they were asked to link each image to one of the 12 components of the travel motivation. Eventually, 132 images from a total of 240 original images were selected. Some further consideration was applied as using same-sex characters for girls and boys in order not to get a motivation rejected due to its opposite-sex character and also repeated images were avoided. As the test intended to use the motivations to find the priorities for children, a set of 66 pairs of twin combinations of 12 travel motivations components were formed. For ease of doing this test, two color booklets were printed. Children were informed that they would see two images, and they should choose one of the images that interested them more. Finally, a small set of questions directed at where children would like to go next on their holiday and what they would like to do was given. This step was designed to check for variations in loyalty: no loyalty, place loyalty and transferred loyalty.

5. Analysis

For analyzing the drawings, a Holiday Drawing Analytical Model was designed by the authors inspired by the Kuhn's (2003) descriptive-interpretive drawing evaluation method. The HDAM is composed of 4 phases, one descriptive and three interpretive. The first phase is a descriptive phase to recognize the elements of the paintings such as people, environment, objects, text, and symbol (Kuhn, 2003). The second phase is an interpretive phase based on tourism system approach consisting of space (Clark, 2005; Urry, 2002), product (Clark, 2005; Gunn, 1988; Leiper, 1989),

activity (Jenkins, 1980; Mill and Morrison, 1985) and social relations (Kuhn, 2003). The third thematic interpretive phase is based on the Orchestra model (Pearce, 2011) to assign subjects to sensory, affective, cognitive, behavioral, and relationship experiences. The final phase is to detect the motivations which participants are interested in, based on the tourism motivation Travel Career Pattern (Pearce, 2005). Analyzing the children's interviews and holiday stories was done through content thematic analysis (O'Leary, 2014). The data from the interviews were reduced and sorted into travel motivations. As in the case of the analyzing of drawings, a manual coding approach was again used. Transcripts were categorized based on the words or concepts reported by the children. In the pictorial test, frequencies of the answers showed the dominant travel motivations of the children.

5.1. Children's Perceived Travel Benefits and Motivations

As a planned multi-method approach, the combination of the visual and verbal techniques reduces the bias and weakness of each individual approach and adds credibility to the outcomes. The visual image of the drawing and the oral method of narration were closely connected for the perceived travel benefits of children, as there was a high degree of agreement between the results of these two methods. The images used provided the travel options to children, and proved to be a good test to examine the motivation of children for future trips (see Figure 1- generated in Excel 2016).

Combining the data from all three techniques in this study, the travel career pattern for childhood travel was mapped to illustrate the interests and motives of the children's travel. The nuclear motives that are most important for children are the priorities of novelty, nature, social relationships, personality excellence, and excitement. The second layer of less important motivations includes comfort and escape, independence, recognition, loneliness, and self-esteem, and in the third layer, only two motives were experienced in romance and nostalgia.

[INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE]

5.2. Children's Destination Loyalty

Content analysis of the interviews with children on loyalty and the desire to return to the experienced destination identified the main themes of cognitive loyalty to the new destination (the desire to visit a new destination), transferred loyalty (the desire to visit a destination similar to a previous destination) and place loyalty (wish to return to the previous destination). Results showed that children with higher social-economic status are less loyal to the destinations. Unlike the study of adult loyalty by Ruiz, González, & Zamora (2018), boys have shown more loyalty to their destination than girls. By way of contrast the earlier study revealed adult males were less loyal to places than women.

6. Discussion

The results indicate the impact of past positive experiences on reinforcement, stability, and repetition of experience. The greater the degree of perceived benefits among children, the greater the tie to enhancing and retaining the incentive to repeat a similar destination experience. In terms of motivation, the greatest impact was on novelty, social relationships, and nature and to a lesser degree related to self-development and relaxation. One of the most striking findings in the data

relates to the motivation of nature, which lost its second place in perceived benefits of childhood travels to the tenth rank in the children's travel motivations for future trips. One reason is that the children make novelty a priority which prompts them to choose new and exciting activities which they have not experienced earlier. In this logic, once certain nature based destinations are experienced, they lose their appeal compared to visiting new and unfamiliar places. For the same reason, stimulation and autonomy, were greatly enhanced as future travel motivations. This work represents a novel finding in the travel motivation literature (cf. Pearce, 2011). It is clear from the present motivation data that young children as travelers start to expand their travel motivation base. This would appear to be the genesis of the young adult patterns unearthed in other studies of Western and Asian markets where all motives matter and it is only with greater levels of travel experience that adults become rather specialized and focus on enhancing and thoroughly developing specialized key needs (Pearce & Lee, 2005). The work revealed in the present study is, in effect, a precursor to other motivation studies, not just in the age of the respondents but as a window to adult motivation.

The results of this study were also consistent with what has been seen in the literature on the relationship between adult travel experience and loyalty in adults (Chen & Petrick, 2014). That is, the perceived benefits of travel have had varied impacts on the desire to return to the same destination or similar purposes. Children's holidays do appear to lead to their emotional loyalty. The type of loyalty identified in the study is linked to the motivations underpinning their choices.. Recognition, autonomy, isolation, and nostalgia, which were identified less often by children, did not have the power to influence the desire to choose a previous destination or create a kind of loyalty. The perceived benefits of novelty, nature, and relationships that have been experienced in children's travels did affect the reported desire for future travel. All three kinds of loyalty were influenced by these factors: a desire to be specifically loyal, transferred loyalty and no link to the visited place. The untangling of these specific outcomes for a range of motivational patterns is a part of a larger publication project. For the present, the work is thus only partially in tune with the study by Pearce and Kang (2009) who reported strong transferred loyalty as the predominant outcome of nature based motivations and benefits. The present work offers a pathway for further study to explore patterns of motivation and returning to places or the desire to go elsewhere in other samples from a wider cultural and social-economic frame.

With regard to Rojek's action analysis (2005), the behaviors and choices we see are not merely an accumulation of voluntary actions. Cultural, social, economic driving forces locate and shape the individual actor. In this view, leisure and holiday paths are not merely the result of the motivation of individuals, but sometimes other broader forces control the experience. By examining the socio-economic status of children, the results showed that children in the middle range of the Iranian socio-economic system were more loyal to their destination, which could be due to the lower number and variety of trips and economic constraints of this stratum. It appears that the socioeconomic class can play a role in shaping motives, their stability and influence future behaviors.

7. Conclusion

In this study, travel benefits and motivations of children were studied through their best travel stories, drawings, and a pictorial test. The methods-based triangulation produced rich data on childhood travel benefits and motivations. Children showed great interest in novelty, nature, and relationship during their experienced holidays and motivation for novelty, stimulation, relationship and autonomy on future visits. Novelty has saved its ranking for the future visits and this factor is very prominent for children's destination choice. More than half of the children showed loyalty towards the visited destinations in the form of specific place or transferred loyalty. As novelty is an important consideration in the children's minds, they look for new motivations as stimulation or autonomy which had not been experienced in the past. Nevertheless, children's tendency to seek out new places does not necessarily downgrade their attachment to the previously visited setting.

The broader scope of this study contributes to and offers several noteworthy pathways for further work. At the theoretical level, the work adds a further small step to bridge the gap between child and adult studies in tourism. Children's perceptions and experiences are still not studied extensively in tourism research and the work on motivation and benefits are not yet common. Importantly, the approach employed here uses the existing Travel Career Pattern approach as a broad motivational appraisal system, thus enabling ties to adult motivation research. At the methodological level, this study shows that the active involvement of children in the research process has significant benefits. By reaching beyond the at times limited positivist traditions in tourism studies, this study focuses on the involvement of children as active, influential, conscious and independent individuals with clear and separate views from their parents and adults. Qualitative, visual and participatory approaches open up new ways to explore these views and the overall experiences of childhood travels. Here we studied Iranian children through innovative methods, painting, narrative memories and pictorial test. The approach has arguably also paved the way for in-depth qualitative studies to study the perceived benefits and motivations of more childhood travels.

At the practical level, this study can help government policy and planning in the field of tourism. The silence about children is not limited to participation in research, it is also evident in the development of policies. The evolution of policies in tourism development can include including an awareness of children's physical and psychological needs in holiday and tourism precincts. This study can stimulate work that develops further the notion that children can play an effective role in decisions related to the tourism industry policy and its business owners and marketing managers. The children who have been studied today will be adults in a relatively short time. More specifically, information can be used to promote the overall value of children's travel through the promotional elements observed in their perceived benefits; secondly, decision makers can predict future demand and provide the capital needed to realize the intended target market. As a result, with a better understanding of the customer, experience designers and holiday makers are more likely to be able to design better group tours, better information and necessary infrastructure, and understand the kinds of facility upgrades which may generate children's enthusiasm.

There are some limitations to the study that can also be used to frame the present work and guide fresh research. It would be beneficial to sample from different sites or countries with a multicultural background. In collecting qualitative data, some judgments about the codes and the membership of comments to those codes may be imperfect. Although in this study, ten percent of the data were checked by the second coder with acceptable agreement levels, for future studies improving coding programs can be used to reduce these effects. Another point is that self-reported data can over-emphasize the frequency of some socially acceptable concerns. Nevertheless, working with and for children in future tourism studies has much to commend it, not the least of

which is the reflective value obtained for researchers to respect and understand those “little people” who share their holiday and everyday world.

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