

CHARACTERISTICS AND INTENTIONS OF CRUISE PASSENGERS TO RETURN TO THE CARIBBEAN FOR LAND-BASED VACATIONS

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Abstract

The cruise sector is the fastest growing area in tourism. In this sector, the Caribbean region continues to have the largest market share and tourism is a major driver of its economy. It is therefore imperative for agencies in this region to have a good understanding of cruise passengers. Cruise passengers not only contribute directly to the economy during shore excursions but also represent a future revenue potential if they return for land-based vacations. This paper examined characteristics of cruise passengers, with focus on information sources and booking methods they used for their cruise vacation. It also explored some factors that are associated with cruise passengers' intentions to return for land-based vacations. Results from a survey of cruise passengers, with an effective sample size of 314, are analyzed and implications for local tourism managers are discussed.

Key words: Cruise passengers, information source, intentions to return, land-based vacation.

JEL Classification: M31, L83.

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the five decades, tourism has experienced continued growth and deepening diversification to become one of the fastest growing economic sectors in the world. Modern tourism is closely linked to development and encompasses a growing number of new destination. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2016), an ever-increasing number of destinations worldwide have opened up to, and invested in tourism, turning it into a key driver of socio-economic progress through the creation of jobs and enterprises, export revenues, and infrastructure development. Likewise, international tourism receipts earned by destinations worldwide have surged from US\$ 2 billion in 1950 to US\$ 104 billion in 1980, US\$ 495 billion in 2000, and US\$ 1260 billion in 2015. These dynamics have turned tourism into a key driver for socio-economic progress (UNWTO, 2016). Tourism remains one of the most significant national economic activities showing substantial growth in the previous decades and it may be seen as a major instrument for regional development as it stimulates diverse activities with a positive economic impact on balance of payments, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employment etc.

Cruise vacations are the fastest growing segment in the tourism industry with an average annual passenger growth rate of 7.2% (CLIA, 2015). Cruising enables tourists to express their self-concepts (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005). The activity offers tourists

experiential benefits and opportunities to engage in a memorable experience (Duman and Mattila, 2005; Huang and Hsu, 2010). Despite a cruise vacation's symbolic nature, the study of cruisers' experiences and post-travel behavior remains underexplored in tourism research (Petrick, 2004). Cruise tourism is characterized by a relatively limited amount of academic research in relation to other areas of tourism (Wild and Dearing, 2000, Papathanasis and Beckman, 2011, Papathanasis 2012, Breja 2012). Papathanasis (2012) managed to identify 145 scientific papers during a 26 year period (1983-2009), many of them not directly focused on cruise tourism. Although some studies about cruise marketing and cruise tourists were developed in the last two decades, there is not so much evidence of studies which analyze the determinants that make a cruise tourist returning to a specific city or country (Brida and Coletti, 2010) and, additionally, what they really look for when they return. Actually, in the literature, there is a lack of approaches related to cruise destinations' feedback by cruise tourists and the relationship between their feedback and their decision of whether returning or not returning.

The purpose of this paper is to learn about characteristics of cruise ship passengers to Caribbean destinations, understand the information sources and booking methods they use and their intentions to return to the Caribbean for land-based vacations. This research has important implications for tourist attractions because land-based tourists have a bigger economic impact than cruise-based tourists on local economies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Cruise Passengers profile

Based on a study developed by Portugal Tourism's entity (Observatório do Turismo de Lisboa, 2012), it analyzed the profile of some 996 international cruise passengers during a stop in Lisbon. Most of them traveled with a companion; their wife/husband and/or friends, while 52% were first time cruise experience, 21% were second time. The most common past destinations already visited by them were the Caribbean, Mediterranean and Northern Europe regions. Cruise tourists obtained information related to the trip mostly through the internet (45%) and travel agencies (43%) and have as main motivations to do the cruise the following reasons: entertainment; relax and relieve the stress, also to be in contact with the sea. Lisbon surpassed the expectations in 55% of the cases and it was just as expected for 43%, classifying their overall satisfaction with the city with 8.3 points (on a 1 to 10 scale). As a result, the intention of returning to Lisbon is an option for many tourists of the survey, since 23% answered that it was very /quite likely to return in cruise and 86% said that is very/quite likely to return in leisure (out of cruise trip). Other good indicator is the recommendation factor, where 97% of the tourists agree with the possibility of recommend Lisbon as a port-of-call for cruises and as touristic destination as well. In general, tourists were very satisfied with Lisbon (since the average was 8.3 in a 1-10 scale) and 59% affirmed that would like to return, whereas 79% were likely to recommend the city.

In addition to economic effects, the cruise activity may provide to the destinations an additional benefit of presenting the touristic attractions to thousands of people who may return as independent land tourists. This experience together with the particular characteristics of the passengers may influence the likelihood of a return visit. In fact, this argument is generally used by policy makers to give incentives to the cruise lines in order to be considered for one of the port of call of their itineraries. This indicates that it is necessary for cruise destinations to study which factors determine returns, both those which refers to the characteristics and perceptions of the cruisers and those of the particular destination (Brida and Coletti, 2010). Understanding the reasons people travel and how those reasons influence their destination choices is critical to plan appropriate marketing strategies (Heung et al., 2001; Petrick, 2004; Duman and Mattila, 2005; Hung and Petrick, 2012; Chen and Lin, 2012). Pearce and Caltabiano (1983) applied the well-known Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) to the study of tourist travel motivations, suggesting that experienced travelers are more likely to go on trips to fulfill higher level of needs (i.e., self-actualization) than new travelers. Cruiser's principal

cruising motivations can be escape from usual environment and relaxation, prestige, enhancement of kinship relationships or friendships, novelty, convenience, destinations (which obtained 9 answers in 40 interviewees of a study), activities, services, etc. The motivation "Escape/Relaxation" was found to be the strongest cruise motivation, associating cruise tourism to freedom, escaping and relaxation (Huang et al., 2009).

Yet more recently, Juan and Chen (2012) performed a study demonstrating that, within three phases, trip price and duration were the two main influences on tourist decisions during the anticipation phase of planning their trip - first phase. Then, during the on-site experience phase - second phase - the determinants of tourist were using different services along their cruise. Particularly, price only slightly influenced total tourist satisfaction and repurchase intention during the recollection phase - third phase, whereas service quality exerted a major influence. After being motivated, whatever the cause, cruisers may have to pass through a decision-making process. Besides choosing a destination cruise, tourists must also decide the cruise line and the ship they will take (Petrick et al., 2007). Past research (Rompf, DiPietro, Ricci, 2005; Gursoy McCleary, 2004; Mottiar Quinn, 2004; Sirakaya, Sonmez, Choi, 2001) has revealed that this process may be moderated by: a tourist's familiarity with destinations, marital roles, gender, children, spouse, friends and relatives, lifecycle, culture, cognitive distance, group processes, local "experts" and advertising (Petrick et al., 2007). The servicescape of the ship and its many dimensions, such as ambient conditions, layout, facilities, furnishings and décor can influence people's choices (Kwortnik, 2007).

Relationship marketing is known by creating a relation with customers because of their loyalty, catching their choices through promotions and discounts and subtly evolving them emotionally with the vendor - loyalty programs (Hawkins et al., 2001). Those programs are decisive for profitability, because satisfied customers will probably mean repeat bookings and recommendation services: findings from previous study shows that 35% of all passengers were referred by family and friends, repeat customers tend to spend more and travel longer (Miller et al., 2003). However, even recognized the importance of repeat passengers, travel agents report that, in practice, the cruise lines do little to answer to complaints, which results in the loss of passengers, as Miller (2003) explains in the case of Apostles and Guerillas. Actually, ninety percent of non-satisfied customers will relate their experiences to at least nine other people and 13% will relate their experiences to more than twenty people (Sheth et al. 1999). Dissatisfactions will certainly lose potential and current customers (Miller, 2003). Safety, security, flags of convenience, health concerns, weather conditions,

accidents and environmental sustainability are some key topics that may directly impact customers' opinions. By managing these factors and the perception of the general public, cruise lines may be more successful in attracting new customers and thus work toward passing them into repeat and loyal customers (Douglas, 2010).

Tourists returning to a destination

Repeat visitors represent an important business opportunity for tourist destinations. These customers are known in the literature as psychocentric, mainly risk adverse, who choose the vacation destination on the basis of either their own or friends and family's past experience (Sinclair and Stabler, 1997). According to different authors, tourists are more confident returning to a familiar place (Prentice Andersen, 2000; Gursoy McCleary, 2004). They perceive an emotional attachment to the destination, they desire to experience new places or revisit those that were enjoyed previously (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984; Moutinho and Trimbel, 1991; Kyle et al., 2003; Silvestre et al., 2008). Familiar and satisfied customers with the destination provide a constant income source that can be used to further develop the business (Oppermann, 2000). Hence satisfaction is one of the main factors that drives tourists to return to the same destination. This is supported by several empirical studies (Juaneda, 1996; Kozak, 2001; Lau and McKercher, 2004; Petrick, 2004; Yoon and Uysal, 2005; Alegre and Cladera, 2006).

Although the literature on the likelihood to return to a tourist destination is extensive, little is known on the cruisers' intention to return as land tourists to the visited destinations. Only a few researches have focused on the probability of returning to a cruise tourism destination (Gabe et al., 2006; Silvestre et al., 2008; Hosany and Witham, 2010; Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2010). The study of tourist' satisfaction is regarded as an important indicator for destination managers to evaluate the probability of return (Petrick, 2005). The level of satisfaction have been broadly analyzed and the literature has demonstrated that tourists are likely to revisit those destination they were highly satisfied of (Kozak 2000 and 2001; Petrick, 2004 and 2005, Um et al., 2006; Gen-Quing and Hailin, 2008; Alegre and Cladera, 2006 and 2009). However, satisfaction is not the only factor affecting the return intention (Alegre and Cladera, 2009). Several studies have examined other aspects affecting the likelihood of tourists return to a destination.

In a study conducted in the port of call Bar Harbor (Gabe et al., 2006), authors use a logit regression to examine the factors that affect a cruise ship passenger's intention of returning to the visited port. The factor "number of visits" has evidenced a positive effect on the probability to return. These authors and others (Moutinho and Trimbel, 1991) found that passengers who are repeat visitors are more

likely than first-time visitors to state their intention to return. Another factor that depicts a negative influence is "distance". A long-haul cruise trip reduces the likelihood of returning. The number of hours spent at the port also seems to influence the returning intention. For passengers, this factor means extra time used to discover new places and get more information about the destination. This study reveals that demographic and economic factors such as "household income" do not play an important role in explaining the likelihood to return. Campo et al. (2010) evaluate the likelihood to return to a Spanish destination, focusing on the travelling group composition. They analyze how tourist satisfaction, the destination image and previous visiting experience may influence the tourist's decision to repeat a visit. The findings show that, on the one hand, tourists travelling as a family with children are more likely to revisit depending on the level of satisfaction rather than on their previous experience. On the other hand, the probability of return of tourists accompanied by a partner is more affected by their past experience rather than actual satisfaction. However, the intention to revisit by the group of single travelers does not depend on any of the mentioned factors. Alegre and Cladera (2009) use a structural equation model to analyze the determinants of a repeat visit, focusing on such as satisfaction and the number of prior visits. The findings show these two variables have a positive effect on the likelihood to return, though satisfaction is the main determinant. Wang (2004) studies the behavior of repeat travelers from Mainland China to Hong Kong, demonstrating how the number of visits is a factor that positively influences not only the likelihood to return but the economy of the destination.

III. METHODOLOGY

In an attempt to determine the cruise visitors' experience and intentions to return and stay in hotels in the Western Caribbean, an exploratory study was conducted aboard a ship cruising the Western Caribbean destinations. On the Carnival Liberty cruise ship, one of the authors accompanied 16 students from his tourism class on a cruise of the Caribbean ports of Cozumel, Belize City, Rotan Island and Grand Cayman Island. In order to learn more about tourism and cruising, each student was instructed to speak to passengers onshore at the final port of call and ask if they would be willing to complete a brief survey about their experiences. The students were trained in class on how to solicit participation from cruise passengers. The reason for this was to observe activities and behaviors of passengers while they were having the experience at the destinations and to enable the researcher and students to experience directly the ways in which passengers were experiencing the cruise. Given the scarcity of data on most aspects of cruise visitors experience in the Caribbean this current study was conducted. Following discussion with travel agents on

issues related to cruisers experiences, hospitality and tourism professors, a review of past studies, such as Duman and Mattila (2005); Qu, Wong, Ping (1999); Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2010), a self-completed questionnaire was designed. The cover letter provided information about the general purpose of the study, detailed instructions for administering the questionnaires, the data collection procedure and a request to fully complete the questionnaire. Baker 1994; Polit et al., 2001; De Vaus (1993) stated that one of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. The questionnaire was pilot tested (n=50) with cruise passengers six months earlier, their comments were used to revise and clarify the statements in the survey, the final version was then edited. The first section of the questionnaire contained questions about respondents' profile utilizing socio-demographic variables (age, gender, marital status, education, income, employment status and geographic origin), travelling party and major source of information used to book the cruise, previous cruising experience, types of onshore activities they participated in and their intentions to return to the Caribbean and stay in hotels. The second section asked respondents to indicate their level of satisfaction, while the third section dealt with attributes which affect various components of the cruise experience (e.g., quality of service received on board ship, itinerary, accommodations, quality of food beverages served on board, etc.). A 23-item 5-point Likert type scale, ranging from 5="extremely satisfied" to "1=very dissatisfied" was used to assess respondents agreement with a set of statements.

IV. RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

In all, 314 useable surveys were completed. This represents approximately 8% of the 4,000 passengers on board the ship during this particular cruise. The vast majority (77%) of respondents were from the United States (USA). Outside of the USA, Canada (10%) and UK (3%) were the countries most represented. Gender representation among the respondents was almost evenly split: 138 males; 164 females. Respondents ranged in age from 18 to more than 75 years of age. They were evenly split between those aged 18-44 and those aged 45 or greater. This was the first cruise experience for about 36% of the respondents. Sample characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Nearly half of the respondents were younger than 45 years. This is consistent with industry surveys (e.g., the Florida Caribbean Cruise Association 2016) that show younger generations including Millennials

and Generation X are embracing cruise travel, rating it as a better vacation type than land-based vacations, all-inclusive resorts, tours, vacation house rentals or camping. About 72% of cruisers were with family or spouse/partner. About 64% had been on a cruise before.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Characteristics	Sample size = 314
Gender	
Males	44%
Females	56%
Age	
18-24 yrs.	15%
25-34 yrs.	16%
35-44 yrs.	18%
45-54 yrs.	25%
55-64 yrs.	16%
+ 65 yrs.	10%
Income	
under \$30K	22%
\$30K-39K	32%
\$40k-49K	28%
\$50k-59k	17%
\$60k-69k	1%
Education	
High school and some college	48%
College (Bachelor's)	33%
Masters or higher	19%
Who are they traveling with?	
Spouse /partner	49%
Family	23%
Non-family group	25%
Alone	4%
Prior cruise experience	
Been on a cruise before	64%

Information source

Cruisers use a variety of information sources before they book their cruise. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the major source of information used to make their decision about their cruise. The most frequently reported source was "other travel web sites" such as Orbitz and Expedia. Nearly a third of the respondents (33%) used such sites as their major source of information in deciding about their cruise. The conventional travel agent continues to be a strong force. About 26% of respondents used a travel agent as their primary source of information. The cruise company's website was used by 17% of the respondents, while 13% of the respondents used friends and relatives as their information source. It should be noted that cruise companies are a major source of information. About 28% of the respondents used cruise company sources, such as company brochures, traditional advertising by cruise companies, and cruise

company websites. Clearly, cruise company brochures are no longer a preferred source of information. Online sources dominate over traditional sources of information.

Method to book the cruise

Though the vast majority of travelers book their trips through online booking services and even via their mobile devices, cruise travel is very different altogether. It can be a lot trickier to choose a ship, cabin type and dinner seating arrangements than it is to simply click a button and book a hotel room. But armed with the right information, booking a cruise online could be an ideal option for many travelers. Many cruise passengers go directly to the line's web site, choose an itinerary and follow the booking engine's prompts. One particularly helpful aspect of booking directly through the cruise line is that one is able to check out every last option in detail all in one place before making the final choices. Travel agencies especially online agencies have become favorite (Travelocity, Expedia, Priceline, Orbitz, etc.). Some passengers have rewards with travel agencies, one may be able to apply them to their cruise or earn more by booking a cruise through that site. There are also online travel agencies that specialize in cruises, (Cruises.com, Americandiscountcruises.com, cruisesonly.com, etc.). These are often more like traditional cruise travel agencies and have support staff that can answer more specific cruise-related questions before final reservations.

Cruise passengers varied in the method they used to book their journey. About 52% booked their cruise through an online entity (e.g., cruise company website, travel websites). Cruisers also tend to book directly through the cruise company (either through their website (30%) or directly with the company (13%)). Travel agents were also popular (29%). However, CLIA 2017 report indicates a far higher usage of travel agent (82%).

Factors influencing booking method

No significant patterns were observed to suggest differences in booking method based on education or income. However, age appeared to influence booking method. A cross-tabulation of age and booking method revealed interesting differences (see Table 2). Not surprisingly, for older customers, travel agent was the most common booking method. Travel agents will continue to be the matchmakers between travelers and cruise lines for a large number of cruisers (Crocker, 2016).

Cruise website was preferred over other travel sites for 18-24 yrs. cruisers. Travel websites were also preferred. Travel agents were not as preferred. Online booking methods were used by 72% of the cruisers. The online booking method was also preferred by those in the 25-44 years, with nearly 60% using online booking.

Table 2. Age by Booking Method

	Directly with cruise co	Cruise co web-site	Travel agent	other travel web-site	Row totals
18-24 yrs	13.00%	37.00%	15.20%	34.80%	100%
25-44 yrs	16.50%	35.90%	24.30%	23.30%	100%
45 yrs and older	12.90%	27.20%	40.10%	19.70%	100%
All	14.20%	31.80%	30.70%	23.30%	100%

Role of prior experience on booking method

Cross tabulation of booking method with prior cruise experience (see Table 3) revealed a significant difference in pattern of booking methods used by those with prior cruise experience and first-timers (Pearson chi-square = 8.984; df = 3, p = .03). Travel agent was the most preferred method to book for those with prior cruise experience (35%), followed by cruise company website (30%) and travel websites (20%). For those with no cruise experience, the preferred booking method appeared to be cruise company websites (36%) followed by travel websites (30%). It is interesting that a greater proportion of first-time cruisers are using web-based booking methods over travel agents (face-to-face). For those with previous cruising experience, age and relationship with travel agents are likely factors for use of travel agents.

Table 3: Role of prior experience on booking method

		Cruise Co	Cruise Co web site	Travel agent	Other travel web sites
Prior cruise	Yes	15%	30%	35%	20%
	No	12%	36%	22%	30%

Activities

Cruise passengers spent their time ashore in many different ways, nearly 60% spent time on the beach. (see Fig.1). Popular activities ranged from beach, shopping, snorkeling, visiting ruins, and bus tours. Sailing, glass-bottom boat tour, scuba diving, and paddle bikes were less popular.

Many of these activities have a direct impact on the local economies. Typically, cruisers have limited time on the shore. These shore excursions are important in shaping perceptions about the local area.

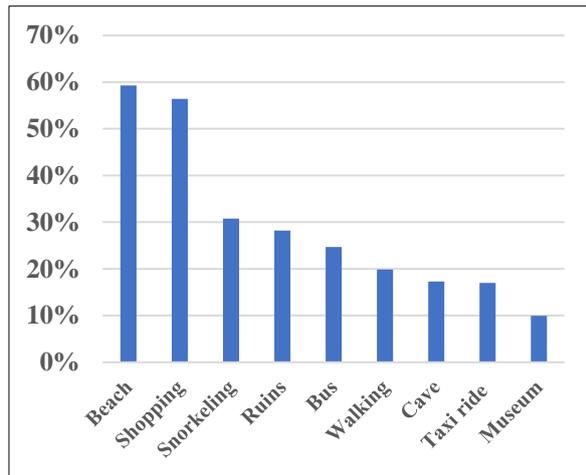


Figure 1 – Popular shore-based activities of cruise passengers

Return to the Caribbean for a land-based vacation

CLIA (2011, 2015) market profile studies have found that passengers generally rate the destination as more important than the “property or ship” when deciding on a cruise; however, their methodology did not just compare the ship to the destination, but included cost (highest rated), overall experience, and facilities. Furthermore, by measuring the relative importance of multiple onboard and onshore attributes, a more accurate representation of the ship’s importance could be identified; Passengers spend a significant amount of time onboard the cruise ship, up to 80% of total vacation time and do not generally spend more than one or two days at a single port (Underwood, 1993, as cited in Weaver, 2005c; Wood, 2004, as cited in Weaver, 2005c). In the case of cruises, the furthest location from one’s usual place of residence could be the port or the ship; however, the difference between the ship and port would be insignificant, even when tenders are used. Additionally, it has been found that passengers do not usually travel great distances from the ship (Jackson, 2004; Teye Paris, 2011), making the difference in distance between the ship and the furthest port of call even less significant. Sixty-eight percent of cruisers identified the destination of their vacation as the most important factor influencing their vacation choice, the vast

majority of cruisers see cruising as a good way to sample destinations for later trips. (FCCA, 2016)

Respondents’ intentions to return to Caribbean and stay in a hotel were assessed on a 5 point scale (1 = “very unlikely” and 5 = “very likely”). The mean intention score was 3.32 (standard deviation = 1.45). Nearly 30% of the respondents indicated they were unlikely or very unlikely to return and stay in a hotel, 50% indicated they were likely or very likely to return and stay in a hotel in the Caribbean.

Role of demographic variables on intentions to return

The role of various demographic variables on intentions to return to the Caribbean for a land-based vacation were examined. Gender did not appear to influence intentions to return. A one-way analysis of variance showed no significant differences in intentions to return between males and females (mean scores: male = 3.50 vs. female = 3.30). No significant differences were found for income as well.

A two-way ANOVA was run with age and education as factors and intention to return as the dependent variable. The model was significant ($F_{5, 300} = 6.08, p < 0.001$). There were significant main effects of age and education and an interaction effect of age and education on intentions to return. An examination of the means showed that intentions to return was significantly higher for younger respondents (mean scores: 18-25 yrs. = 3.83; 25-44 yrs. = 3.74; 45 yrs. and older = 2.98; $p < .01$). Millennials and Gen Xers, in particular, like this benefit to cruising and are more likely to have done pre-/post-cruise stays in a port city and/or returned to a visited destination first experienced on a cruise. (FCCA, 2016)

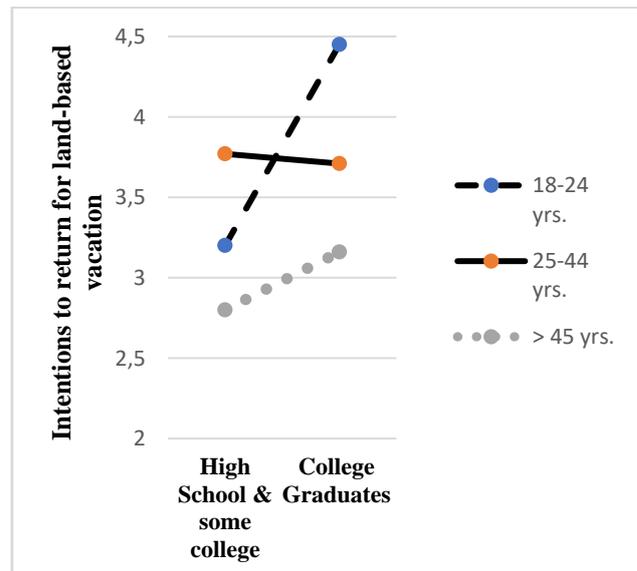


Figure 2 – Influence of age and education on intention to return for land-based vacations

More educated respondents were also more likely to return (mean score: high school and some college = 3.26; college educated = 3.78; $p < .01$). Interestingly, there was a two-way interaction effect

(see Fig. 2). An examination of the interaction (or the table) suggests that intentions to return are most pronounced for the younger college educated respondents. For the 25-44 year respondents, education did not have a significant effect on intentions to return.

Travel companion

Another relevant demographic variable was travel companion. A one-way ANOVA showed intentions to return to stay in a Caribbean hotel were greater for non-family groups (score: 3.58 vs 3.20; $F_{1, 304} = 4.575$, $p < .033$). Non-family cruisers (compared to those travelling with family or spouse) were more likely to come back and stay in a hotel in the Caribbean.

Prior cruise experience

There appeared to be a small difference in intentions to return between passengers who had cruised before (mean intention score = 3.21) and those who had not cruised before (mean intention score = 3.48). Even though they also take land-based vacations, the average cruiser has already taken more than five cruises as an adult. (FCCA, 2016).

An ANOVA with prior cruise experience and type of companion (family vs. non-family) showed significant main effects ($F_{3, 302} = 3.17$, $p < .025$). Fig. 3 shows the nature of these effects. Those who had not cruised before and were not travelling with family members were the most likely to return for a land-based Caribbean vacation (mean score = 4.00).

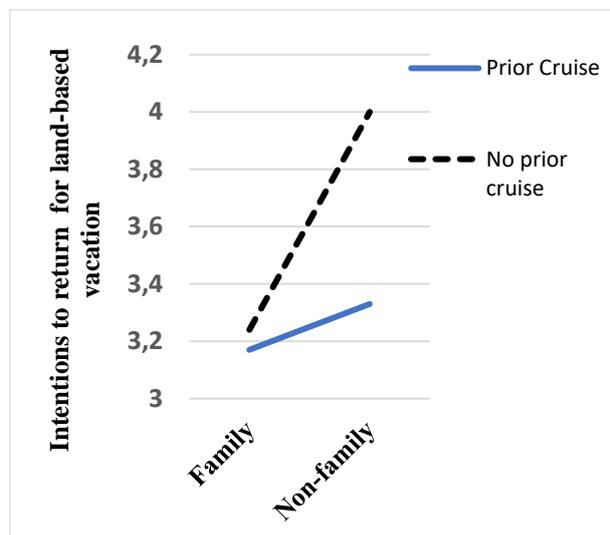


Figure 2 – Influence of travel companion and prior cruise experience on intention to return for land-based vacations

Reasons for not intending to return

Ninety-four respondents indicated a reason for not intending to return for a land-based vacation in the Caribbean. The reasons provided were grouped into three broad categories. These were: preference to be on a cruise, higher costs associated with staying in a hotel

in the Caribbean, and local issues. About 63% of cruise passengers indicated a preference for a cruise over staying in a hotel. The respondents provided varied reasons that suggested that preference for cruises over staying in a hotel. They perceived cruises to be more fun and more convenient. Many simply preferred a cruise ship over staying in a hotel. About 20% of respondents indicated local issues as reason for not returning and staying in a hotel. These included security concerns, sanitation, hygiene, and food options. These respondents perceived cruise ship to be a more safe and hygienic environment. Finally, about 17% of the respondents indicated that staying in a hotel would be more expensive; cruise ships simply offered a better value for money as they could see multiple locations and be exposed to many cultures on a cruise.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This paper examined the profile of cruisers in the Caribbean region. The data showed that cruise company websites, other travel websites, and the conventional travel agent are the major sources of information for deciding on a cruise. The more relevant finding is that traditional sources of information like cruise brochures and television advertising will continue to decline. Cruise companies will be an important source of information and given the role of friends and relatives in influencing cruise decisions, social media will become critical to draw cruisers.

Gender, income, and education had no significant effects on method of booking the cruise. However, age and prior experience had significant effects on method of booking. Younger age groups clearly preferred online methods for booking. The conventional travel agent was not their top choice. However, recent industry reports (CLIA, 2016) suggest that traditional travel agents will continue to play a critical role in attracting higher-revenue cruisers. The growth of booking through online sites will continue to grow. However, travel agents will continue to leverage their relationships with past cruisers and their expertise to provide the best packages to their customers. This study showed that those with prior cruise experience preferred travel agents over other booking methods.

Tourist destinations depend on regular and frequent visitors (Darnell & Johnson, 2001; Jayaraman et al., 2010). The determinants of repeat visit holds a special significance for stakeholders of the tourism industry because “by understanding the relationships between future behavioral and its determinants, destination tourism managers would know better on how to build up an attractive image and improve their marketing efforts to maximize their use of resources” (Chen & Tasi, 2007, p. 1116). This study examined intentions of cruisers to return for land-based vacations. Age and education were significant factors in cruisers’ intention to return for land-based vacations. Younger and more educated cruisers were more likely than older less educated cruisers to return to the Caribbean for

land-based vacation. Interestingly, those traveling in non-family groups and those with no prior cruise experience were more likely to return for land-based vacations.

These findings are relevant for land-based entities to attract cruisers to return for land-based vacations. Many cruisers view a cruise as a means to sample multiple destinations. The short stays in a port of call provide a glimpse of what a land-based vacation could offer. However, the short stay does not necessarily provide cruisers with a comprehensive idea of a destination. Their perceptions are based on the interactions they have while shopping or spending time on the beach. While cruise ships have a big economic impact on local economies, tourism agencies should use the opportunity to target cruisers and persuade them to return for land-based vacations. Caribbean destinations marketing managers should target younger educated cruisers when they are onshore.

From this study, only a small proportion of cruisers indicated local issues like hygiene and security as reasons for not wanting to return. The dominant reason for not returning was simply the convenience of being on the ship and better value for money. Hotel managers in the Caribbean should consider offering all-included packages to create a better value and reduce apprehensions of older cruisers. Repeat visit is a kind of lifeblood for tourism businesses from an economic value generation point of view for the destination in consideration. Consistent with popular belief in marketing, motivation pervious customers is way less effortless cost-wise compare to acquiring new ones (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). Past researchers (Weaver & Lawton, 2002; Lau & Mckercher, 2004) have established the promotional spending of influencing repeat visitors to be at lower end compare to spending required to bring in noble visitors. Thus, repeat visitors are great saves of marketing spending.

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