

# An Analysis of Push and Pull Travel Motivations of Foreign Tourists to Jordan

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## Abstract

The importance of outbound market to a destination country has drawn scholars' interests in understanding tourists' motivation to travel overseas. The success of marketing destinations should be guided by a thorough analysis of tourist motivation, and for this reason, this study adopts a model based on push and pull factors as the conceptual framework. As little information has been documented about travel motivations to Jordan, this study attempts to identify motivation factors of foreign tourists to the country as different tourist markets demonstrate different domains of behavior. This may have important marketing implications to the country especially in terms of examination of motives in segmenting markets, designing promotional programs and decision making about destination development.

**Keywords:** Tourist, Motivation, Push and pull, Jordan

## 1. Introduction

Travel motivation has been investigated by many researchers from different fields such as from sociology, anthropology, and psychology (Cohen, 1972; Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997). Maslow's hierarchical theory of motivation was one of the most applied in the tourism literature (1970). The theory was modeled as a pyramid whose base consists of the physiological needs, followed by higher levels of psychological needs and the need for self-actualization. Numerous tourism scholars have attempted to modify the model empirically, with the notable success by Pearce (1982), who proposed a tourism motivation model that mirrors the model of Maslow, but free of prepotency assumption.

A review of the past literature on tourist motivation indicates that the analysis of motivations based on the two dimensions of push and pull factors have been generally accepted (Yuan & McDonald, 1990; Uysal & Hagan, 1993). The concept behind push and pull dimension is that people travel because they are pushed by their own internal forces and pulled by the external forces of destination attributes. Most of the push factors which are origin-related are intangible or intrinsic desires of the individual travelers. Pull factors, on the contrary, are those that emerge as a result of the attractiveness of a destination as it is perceived by the travelers. They include tangible resources and travelers' perception and expectation such as novelty, benefit expectation and marketed image of the destination (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996).

Crompton (1979) first sought to draw seven socio-psychological, or push motives (escape, self-exploratory, relaxation, prestige, regression, kinship-enhancement, and social interaction) and two cultural, or pull motives (novelty and education). The conceptual framework that he developed would influence the selection of a destination, and this approach implies that the destination can have some degree of influence on vacation behavior in meeting an aroused need.

Since Crompton's initial empirical effort, many studies have attempted to identify push and pull motivational factors in different settings such as nationalities, destinations and events (Jang & Wu, 2006). Examples included Yuan and McDonald's (1990) study on motivations for overseas travel from four countries: Japan, France, West Germany and the UK. Uysal and Jurowski (1993) also studied the nature and extent of the reciprocal relationship

between push and pull factors of motivations for pleasure travel by using data from the Canadian Tourism Attribute and Motivation Survey. A study in Australia examined the nature and usefulness of the relationship between push and pull factors of motivation by utilizing canonical correlation analysis (Oh *et al.*, 1995).

Thus, as mentioned earlier, this paper attempts to identify motivation factors of foreign tourists to Jordan as they demonstrate different domains of behavior, which may have important marketing implications to the country. It is also important to recognize the fact that knowing the importance of both factors can help destinations meet the desired needs of individual travelers from different markets. At the same time, knowledge of traveler's motivation is critical to predict future travel patterns.

## 2. Literature Review

Baloglu and Uysal (1996) argue that the concept of product bundles is used to refer to the perceived importance of the interaction between push and pull items of motivations. This implies that certain reasons for travel may correspond to certain benefits that are to be valued and obtained at the destination site. Thus, marketers and destination promoters in tourism should keep in mind that most successful products are those which respond best to a bundle of needs within a given market segment, and should give more marketing efforts to matching a destination's major attributes to the tourists' diverse psychological needs.

Based on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, as discussed above, the individual tourist builds his or her perceptions, and the perceptions can be different from the true attributes of the product depending on how the individual receives and processes information (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997). A general conclusion can be drawn that the personal motives (push motives) and the view of the characteristics of the tourism destination (pull motives) determine perceptions. These motives interact in a dynamic and evolving context (Correia, 2000), and the tourist motivation is seen as a multidimensional concept that explains tourist decision (McCabe, 2000).

As tourism paradigm is related to human beings and human nature, it is always a complex proposition to investigate why people travel and what they want to enjoy (Yoon and Uysal, 2005). In major studies, it is generally accepted that push and pull motivations have been primarily utilized in studies of tourist behavior. The discoveries and issues undoubtedly play a useful role in attempting to understand a wide variety of needs and wants that can motivate and influence tourist behavior. Nevertheless, Yoon and Uysal (2005) argue that the results and effects of the motivation studies of tourist behavior require more than an understanding of their needs and wants.

In tourism destination management, it is commonly agreed that maximizing travel satisfaction is crucial for a successful business. The evaluation of the physical products of destination (instrumental performance) as well as the psychological interpretation of a destination product (expressive attributes) are necessary for human actions (Swan and Combs, 1976; Uysal and Noe, 2003), which could be further represented as travel satisfaction and destination loyalty. Both concepts can be examined within the context of a tourism system representing two major components of the market place, namely, demand (tourist) and supply (tourism attractions) (Jurowski *et al.*, 1996). In travel motivation study, demand refers to motives (push factors) that sustain tourists' desire while supply relates to destination's characteristics (pull factors).

## 3. Research Methodology

### 3.1 Study Site

The research was conducted in Jordan, a small country in the Middle East that borders Palestine to the west, Iraq to the northeast, Saudi Arabia to the south, and Syria to the north. The country's market share in terms of tourist arrivals to the Middle East was increased from 5.6% in 2000 to 7.7% in 2005 (MOTA, 2008). Table 1 further illustrates that income and employment generated from tourism also increased from 2002-2008. The growth was attributed by the variety of tourism product offerings particularly its antiquities and religious attractions as well as its natural resources. Despite tourism growth, little information has been documented about travel motivations to Jordan, although few studies concentrated on destination quality or overall tourist satisfaction than identifying specific motivation dimensions. In recognizing the fact that knowing the importance of both push and pull factors can help the country meet the desired needs of individual travelers from various markets, this study has carefully selected Amman and Petra as the primary case study sites. Amman was selected as it was the main entry point of foreign tourists to the country, while Petra was chosen as it was the most visited attraction site in Jordan (see Table 2).

**(Insert tables 1 and 2 here)**

### 3.2 Measure and sampling

A four-part self-administered survey focused on demographic variables, push motivational items, pull items, and tourists' needs and wants at destination. Demographic questions included age, gender, occupation, nationality, length of stay and travel companion. The questionnaire design was adapted from previous researchers' work such as Dann (1977, 1981); Uysal & Jurowski (1994); Hanqin & Lam (1999); and Kim & Lee (2002). Push factors, which were origin-related and intangible desires of individual travelers, consisted of 25 items and grouped into eight dimensions. Likewise, 26 pull motive items, which were the external forces of destination attributes in the country, were put together. The push and pull items were assessed, using a 5-point Likert scale, from 5 = very important to 1 = not important at all. Reliability test was conducted, and the result of Cronbach's Alpha was 0.8533. Nine hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed among foreign respondents at the two locations during May to July 2008, out of which 750 were returned (response rate was 82 %) but only 615 were usable for analysis.

## 4. Research Findings

### 4.1 Respondents demographic characteristics

Table 3 shows that 58.7 per cent of respondents were males while the remaining were females. 62.1 per cent were above 30 years old. Respondents from Europe constituted the biggest percentage (44.9) followed by North America (22.9) and Australia (10.2). Nearly more than half of respondents (57.2 per cent) visited Jordan for the first time, and over three-quarter of respondents (75.9 per cent) would return as repeat visitors in future. 86.2 per cent of those surveyed would recommend the country as a tourist destination to their friends.

**(Insert table 3 here)**

### 4.2 Analysis of push and pull factors

Tables 4 and 5, respectively, rank the mean values of push and pull motive items from the highest to the lowest. In Table 4, five items recorded mean values above 4 while eighteen items were placed between the ranges of 3.17 to 3.97. The item 'to visit a place that I have not visited before' recorded the highest mean value of 4.14, while item on 'to visit friends and relatives' scored the lowest mean value (2.71). In Table 5, Petra, the site of new seven wonders' obtained the highest mean value of 4.39. Other heritage sites, natural attractions, food and local culture are also considered significant pull factors as they obtained high mean values. Shopping, nightlife and entertainment were placed at the lower range.

**(Insert tables 4 and table 5 here)**

### 4.3 Factor analysis of push and pull factors

To identify motivational dimensions, principal component factor analysis was used to group the push and pull motive items with common characteristics. Eight push motivational factors were analyzed using Varimax Rotation procedure to delineate the underlying dimensions associated with travel motivations. The same procedure was also applied to 26 pull motive items. All factors had an eigenvalue greater than one. The composite reliability test indicated that the reliability coefficients for push factors stood at 0.75, and 0.73 for pull factors.

Table 6 reports that the factor analysis of 25 push attributes results in eight factor groupings, which accounted for 53.45 per cent of the variance. The factor groupings of push factors are 'fulfilling prestige', 'enhancing relation', 'seeking relaxation', 'enhancing social circle', 'sightseeing variety', 'fulfilling spiritual needs', 'escaping from daily routine' and 'gaining knowledge'. 'Fulfilling prestige' is the most important push motivational factor to travel to Jordan, and this explained 10.77 per cent of the variance (eigenvalue is 4.03). The second most important push factor is 'enhancing relation' with a variance score of 6.36. These two factors reflect foreign tourists' desire to discover something new from their trip to this country.

**(Insert table 6 here)**

Table 7 reports that the factor analysis of 26 pull attributes results in eight factor groupings. They are 'events and activities', 'easy access and affordable', 'history and culture', 'variety seeking', 'adventure, 'natural resources', 'heritage sites', and 'sightseeing variety'. These groupings accounted for 47.78 per cent of the variance. 'Events and activities' are the most important pull motivational factor to Jordan, and this explained 10.03 per cent of the variance (eigenvalue is 3.63). The second most important pull factor is 'easy access and affordable' with a variance score of 6.36. These two factors demonstrate that Jordan is a value for money destination that offers broad choices of activities and events for tourists from various market segments.

**(Insert table 7 here)**

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The study offers an attempt to understand tourist motivation and extend the theoretical and empirical evidence on the relationships among push and pull motivations, although the relationship is not significant. Nevertheless, the study suggests that the conceptual framework of push and pull factors in the literature was generally supported. The study reconfirms that tourists' travel behavior is driven by internal and external factors. In other words, they decide to go on a holiday because they want to fulfill their intrinsic desires, and at the same time, their decisions on where to go are based on destination attributes.

Looking into factors identified as push attributes, the study claimed that the needs for prestige and social interactions are among important motives which trigger the need to travel. This evidence is consistent with Crandall's argument that people travel with specific motives to explore and evaluate themselves, to gain prestige and to enhance kinship relationship (1980). The pull attributes, on the other hand, demonstrate that Jordan, understandably, has a variety of offerings which could potentially extend visitors' stay and expenditures and promote repeat visits. The country should capitalize on its heritage, natural attractions, food and culture. The abundance and diversity of tourism resources are widely recognized as essential tourism assets for the country to develop its tourism industry. Besides, the country is also seen as an affordable, safe destination with friendly image and hospitable local people.

Not surprising, Petra, the site of the new seven wonders is the most visited attraction in the country. Tourist sites which are listed as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO, such as the one in Petra, should be treated as catholicons in promoting the tourism industry, as claimed by Yang *et al.* (2010). Hence, the government authorities and tourism operators should make the most out of this by enhancing the service sector particularly tourist facilities and infrastructure at the destination, as the findings disclose that Petra is the most significant pull factor of Jordan. To fairly distribute tourist flow to other secondary attractions, the country may also exploit a new thrust of nature-based or adventure type of tourism to attract specific niche markets. Mass media, at the same time, should play a critical role in forming a distinctive destination image for Jordan, in order to distinguish itself from competitors within the region. The strategic challenge for destination is not only on how to perform positive images that induce travel to the country, but also on how to develop sustainable differential images from other competing locations.

A successful matching of push and pull motives is essential for a marketing strategy in destination areas, and the examination of the motives are useful in segmenting markets, designing promotional programs, and decision-making about destination development. Identification of a clearly defined market segments permit specifically directed promotion programs. Thus, the tourism authorities in Jordan can develop a variety of different marketing strategies based on specific motivations of tourist market in order to satisfy their underlying needs.

## 6. Conclusion

The empirical results of this study provide tenable evidence that tourist motivation is closely associated with destination's competitive advantage and image. As tourism is increasingly becoming an important sector in Jordan's economy, it can be argued that major findings of this study have significant policy and managerial implications for the country's core attractions and support services in tourism. These are fundamental in extending length of stay, increasing satisfaction and enhancing destination loyalty of foreign tourists. Future research may consider generating more precise applications related to destination behavior, especially concerning satisfaction and destination loyalty. Subsequent studies may also consider multiple dimensions in tourism motivation and integrate the approaches used by previous models.

The study, however, has its own limitation as the study does not examine the interactions among the push and pull factors. Moreover, motivation is only one of the many variables that explain tourists' destination attraction attribute preference behavior. The focus of this study can only be generalized to Jordan's unique environment. It is suggested that the approach be applied to other countries in the Middle East region that experience dramatic growth in tourism development. Comparative studies may unearth a new understanding of tourist behavior and motivation factors in different domains and various stages of progression.

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Table 1. Major Tourism Indicators in Jordan

Item	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total number of arrivals	4,677,018	4,599,243	5,586,659	5,817,370	6,573,669	6,528,626	7,100,499
Tourists (overnight visitors)	2,384,474	2,353,088	2,852,809	2,986,586	3,225,411	3,430,960	3,728,707
Same day visitors	2,292,544	2,246,155	2,733,850	2,830,784	3,348,258	3,097,666	3,371,792
Tourism income/MJD	743.2	752.6	943.0	1,021.6	1,164.1	1,638.9	2089
No. of package tours tourists	137,600	145,601	254,145	338,787	277,913	359,625	506,674
No. of employment in tourism sector	21,293	22,110	23,544	29,384	31,063	34,455	38,294

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquity (MOTA, 2008).

Table 2. Number of Tourist Arrivals to Attraction Sites in Jordan

Sites	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>Petra</b>	160,658	310,271	311,318	271,017	458,466	813,267
<b>Jaresh</b>	105,734	166,195	181,000	134,039	193,354	351,508
<b>Umm Qais</b>	53,440	211,913	49,513	37,386	49,969	125,358
<b>Madaba</b>	39,952	87,354	137,554	201,474	162,382	298,602
<b>Ajloun</b>	93,852	111,200	65,262	49,142	64,862	141,869
<b>Wadi Rumm</b>	26,080	66,438	122,749	82,353	98,030	206,890
<b>Mount Nebo</b>	54,962	119,654	179,273	130,300	199,402	326,706
<b>Amman Citadel</b>	41,472	94,145	112,918	82,626	111,466	187,700

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquity (MOTA, 2008)

Table 3. Demographic Profiles of Respondents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Descriptions</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	58.7
	Female	41.3
<b>Age</b>	11 – 20	14.1
	21 – 30	23.7
	31 – 40	26.3
	41 – 50	15.8
	51 – 60	10.6
	More than 60	9.4
<b>Marital Status</b>	Single	34.8
	Married	57
	Widowed	8.2
<b>Nationality</b>	North America	22.9
	Latin America	9.9
	Europe	44.9
	Australia	10.2
	Africa	8.0
	Asia	4.1
<b>Number of Visit</b>	First time	57.2
	Second time	24.1
	Third time	13.2
	More than 3 times	5.5
<b>Travel Companion</b>	Family and families	35.3
	Family plus friends	34.6
	Friends and acquaintance	21.1
	Package by employer	5.4
	Others	3.6
<b>Would come to Jordan as repeat visitors?</b>	Yes	75.9
	No	24.1
<b>Would recommend Jordan as a destination to friends?</b>	Yes	86.2
	No	13.8

Table 4. Mean Values of Push Motive Items

<b>Push Factors</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Mean</b>
To visit a place that I have not visited before	1	4.14
To experience new and different lifestyles or traditions	1	4.08
To appreciate natural resources	1	4.02
To explore cultural resources	1	4.01
To increase knowledge about a foreign destination	1	4.01
To see how people of different cultures live	2	3.97
To exchange custom and traditions	2	3.94
To have visited a destination listed as world's seven wonders	2	3.93
To be away from home	2	3.89
To relax physically	2	3.75
To fulfill my dream of visiting a foreign land/country	2	3.74
To participate in new activities	2	3.71
To satisfy the desire to be somewhere else	2	3.69
To sightsee touristic spots	2	3.66
To find thrills and excitement	2	3.59
To enhance communication with local community	2	3.56
To reconnect with spiritual roots	3	3.49
To meet new people	3	3.47
To relax spiritually	3	3.33
To increase my social status	3	3.30
To have enjoyable time with my travel companion(s)	3	3.24
To visit a place that my friends have been to	3	3.23
To visit a destination that would impress my friends & family	3	3.17
To seek solitude in a foreign land	4	2.97
To visit friends and relatives	4	2.71

Table 5. Mean Values of Pull Motive Items

<b>Pull Factors</b>	<b>Ranking</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Petra, the site of new seven wonders	1	4.39
Heritage sites	1	4.09
Natural Reserves	2	3.97
Dead Sea	2	3.92
Safe Destination	2	3.89
Convenience of Visa	2	3.86
Local Bedouin Life	2	3.78
Affordable Tourist Destination	2	3.66
Desert Camping	2	3.59
Culture, Arts and Traditions	2	3.53
Cosmopolitan City of Amman	2	3.51
Exotic Atmosphere	2	3.50
Traditional Food	3	3.48
Outstanding Scenery	3	3.47
Weather/Climate	3	3.46
Value for Money	3	3.44
Beautiful Beaches	3	3.43
Shopping	3	3.37
Festivals and Events	3	3.32
Nightlife	3	3.30
Outdoor Activities	3	3.22
Entertainment	3	3.21
Historical Sastles	3	3.19
Activities for Entire Family	3	3.07
Mount Climbing	4	2.46
Amusement/Theme Parks	4	2.21



Table 6. Principal Components of Push Motive Items

Push Factors	Factor loading	Communality	Eigen Value	Variance	Mean	S D
<b><i>Fulfilling Prestige</i></b>			4.03	10.77	3.32	0.84
To increase my social status	0.740	0.636				
To visit a place that my friends have been to	0.735	0.567				
To visit a destination that would impress my friends and family	0.718	0.557				
To have visited a destination listed as world's seven wonders	0.534	0.437				
To seek solitude in a foreign land	0.469	0.479				
<b><i>Enhancing Relation</i></b>			2.03	6.36	3.81	0.68
To enhance communication with local community	0.604	0.565				
To exchange custom and traditions	0.408	0.387				
To participate in new activities	0.665	0.560				
To appreciate natural resources	0.551	0.480				
<b><i>Seeking Relaxation</i></b>			1.39	6.09	3.74	0.78
To be away from home	0.628	0.512				
To relax physically	0.424	0.512				
To find thrills and excitement	0.666	0.536				
<b><i>Enhancing Social Circle</i></b>			1.35	5.38	3.14	0.79
To have enjoyable time with my travel	0.615	0.529				
To meet new people	0.623	0.557				
To visit friends and relatives	0.532	0.527				
<b><i>Sightseeing Variety</i></b>			1.28	5.28	3.81	0.70
To fulfill my dream of visiting a foreign land/country	0.413	0.616				
To sightsee touristic spots	0.685	0.587				
To explore cultural resources	0.659	0.508				
<b><i>Fulfilling Spiritual Needs</i></b>			1.14	5.03	3.41	0.90
To reconnect spiritual roots	0.396	0.510				
To relax spiritually	0.803	0.715				
<b><i>Escaping from Daily Routine</i></b>			1.13	4.91	3.92	0.77
To satisfy the desire to be somewhere else	0.680	0.509				
To visit a place that I have not visited before	0.476	0.490				
<b><i>Gaining Knowledge</i></b>			1.00	4.78	4.06	
To increase knowledge about foreign destination	0.754	0.609				
To experience new different lifestyle or traditions	0.688	0.568				
To see how people of different cultures live	0.761	0.632				
<b>Total Variance explained</b>						<b>53.45</b>
<b>Total Scale Reliability Alpha</b>						<b>0.75</b>
<b>KMO</b>						<b>0.78</b>

Table 7. Principal Components of Pull Motive Items

Pull Factors	Factor loading	Communality	Eigen Value	Variance	Mean	S D
<b><i>Events and Activities</i></b>			3.63	10.03	3.25	0.80
Activities for Entire Family	0.502	0.372				
Festivals and Events	0.549	0.383				
Entertainment	0.661	0.485				
Shopping	0.664	0.499				
Nightlife	0.803	0.515				
Amusement/Theme Parks	0.605	0.455				
<b><i>Easy Access and Affordable</i></b>			2.02	6.36	3.71	0.66
Affordable Tourist Destination	0.653	0.480				
Safe Destination	0.695	0.538				
Convenience of Visa	0.495	0.520				
Value of Money	0.460	0.515				
<b><i>History and Culture</i></b>			1.47	6.24	3.37	0.79
Historical Castles	0.655	0.463				
Culture, Arts and Traditions	0.536	0.337				
Outstanding Scenery	0.479	0.398				
<b><i>Variety Seeking</i></b>			1.34	5.83	3.40	0.80
Traditional Food	0.555	0.431				
Outdoor Activities	0.606	0.482				
Exotic Atmosphere	0.655	0.458				
<b><i>Adventure</i></b>			1.16	5.67	3.30	0.69
Local Bedouin Life	0.627	0.479				
Weather/Climate	0.493	0.438				
Mount Climbing	0.562	0.481				
Desert Camping	0.446	0.498				
<b><i>Natural Resources</i></b>			1.14	4.84	3.68	0.80
Natural Reserves	0.631	0.508				
Beautiful Beaches	0.661	0.564				
<b><i>Heritage Sites</i></b>			1.05	4.43	4.24	0.58
Petra, the Site of New Seven Wonders	0.634	0.506				
Heritage sites	0.726	0.594				
<b><i>Sightseeing Variety</i></b>			1.04	4.35	3.72	0.79
Cosmopolitan City of Amman	0.580	0.524				
Dead Sea	0.686	0.574				
<b>Total Variance Explained</b>						<b>47.78</b>
<b>Total Scale Reliability Alpha</b>						<b>0.73</b>
<b>KMO</b>						<b>0.77</b>