THE PERCEIVED IMAGE OF BARCELONA BY SHORT BREAK TOURISTS

Raquel Camprubi, PhD
Faculty of Tourism, University of Girona, Spain
Lluis Prats, PhD
Faculty of Tourism , University of Girona, Spain

Abstract:
During last years research in tourism has put especial attention to tourist image as a factor that influences consumer behaviour. At the same time, previous research confirms that length of stay also is influenced by tourist image. Considering the differences between short break tourists and long stay tourist, and the new city tourism trends; this paper aims to analyse city break tourists considering three variables: tourists' profile, motivation and perceived image. Barcelona was the destination used as a case study for this explorative research. Findings reveal a classification of three kinds of city break tourists based on socio-economic variables, identifying some substantial differences in their motivations and perceived image of the destination. Although limitations of this study are linked to their explorative character, some future research lines are proposed.

Key Words: Short Break, Perceived Image, Consumer Behaviour, Barcelona

Introduction:
    Numerous academics, especially from marketing discipline, paid attention to consumer behaviour and variables that affect it. Within tourism field the analysis of tourist behaviour is also an issue extendedly analysed (Baloglu, 1997; Bigne, Sanchez and Andreu, 2009; Garner, 1993; Mazanec, 1983; Manente, Minghetti and Costa, 1996; Woodside and Lysonski, 1989), not only by the point of view of marketing, but also from other disciplines such as economics, anthropology, or sociology, among others. Gunn (1972) with her seminal contribution through the model of the seven stages of tourist experience brought to light the narrow relationship between the tourist behaviour and its influence on the tourism image of the destination.

    Moreover, a destination usually has as basis of its image its territorial identity. A territorial identity that usually is not perceived properly by tourists helping to increase the gap between the destination identity and the tourism perceived image. The gap is produced because "there are numerous internal and external perceptions of the territory – that is, different ways to regard it and different forms in which it is regarded" (Neto, 2007:238). Several of these forms to be regarded are the different tourist's glances, linked to their behaviour as tourist consumers of a destination. This generates the global perceived image of a destination. Due to the complexity of that global perceived image, especially in big and varied destinations like cities, a proper way to analyse it is to break the consumers into segments, and analyse deeply the behaviour of each segment in order to find out the perceived image of it.

    Linked to this context and trying to find out a possible segment to analyse, one of the research lines that gained power within the tourist consumer behaviour field insisted in defining the existing behaviour differences between short break tourists and long break tourists (Edgar et al 1994; Edgar, 1997). Even so, some of them just extrapolated these differences to the different profile of both segments.

    Furthermore, the appearance of the relationship between short breaks and city tourism, generating the new term of short city breaks created extra shadows to the consumer behaviour theories. In our opinion, the categorization of tourism attractions proposed by Shoval and Raveh (2003) and the compatibility or incompatibility of these attractions described by Weinfeld et al. (2009) can help to give light to relevant questions of consumer behaviour. For instance, the number of

941

first level attractions linked to the possibilities to return of short breakers, or the level of specialization of cities in terms of image, linked to the exerced attraction of these short break segments.

Considering the increase of short city breaks in Europe, thanks in part to the change on the consumer behavior, as well as the vast development of low cost airlines, Barcelona it's a perfect target for the analysis of short city break consumer behavior, as well as their image perception of a destination.

Taking into account gaps in academic literature, the aim of this research is to analyse the profile of short break tourists, assuming that short break tourist is a heterogeneous segment, where different profiles can be identified. Hypothesising about these differences short break tourists profiles influence, on the one hand, different travel motivations and consequently on the other hand, different perceived image of the same destination.

Methodology:

In order to attain the aims of this study an exploratory research was carried out. An exploratory research is appropriate when the researcher is searching evidence about the general nature of a problem, the various existing alternatives and the main variables to be considered (Aaker & Day, 1989). In our case, we used this exploratory research to isolate key variables (short break tourists profile, motivations and perceived image) and connexions among these variables for future research.

Barcelona was chosen as the study site to carry out this research. Barcelona is an important tourism destination for its cultural and architectural attractiveness, receiving around 7.1 million of tourists in 2010. During last years, Barcelona has been postulated as a relevant business centre, being the second city of the world in the International Congress & Convention Association Ranking (ICCA, 2007) in terms of number of participants and the fourth in terms of number of meetings. The 1992 Olympic Games have contributed positively to Barcelona's urban regeneration and positioning in the collective imagery over the world, becoming the third European city in The City Brand Barometer, after Paris and London (Saffon Consultants, 2007).

Data collection was carried out during weekends of December 2009, through a face-to-face questionnaire in front of the Sagrada Família. This place, being a first level attraction of Barcelona, was chosen because of its capacity to attract tourists with 2.7 million of visitors in 2008 is the first tourism spot (BTB, 2010), being the most interesting focal point to collect data, and taking into account that tourists and specially short breakers will visit firstly the top spots of the destination (Weinfield et al, 2009). The final sample was configured by 100 individuals (Table 1) that stay in the city for a short period of time, following the definition of short break tourists (Edgar, 1997). The sample was calculated considering a sampling error of +/-10% and a confidence interval of 95% where p = q = 0.5. Although, the sampling error is high, it was considered appropriate considering the exploratory character of this research.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Variables	%
Gender	
Male	53.00
Female	47.00
Total	100.00
Age in intervals	
Until 19 years old	1.00
From 20 to 29 years old	46.00
From 30 to 39 years old	30.00
From 40 to 49 years old	9.00
From 50 to 59 years	13.00

old	
60 years old and more	1.00
Total	100.00

Marital status	
Single	50.00
Single with partner	10.00
Married	34.00
Divorced	2.00
Separated	4.00
Total	10.00

Education	
University degree	76.00
High school	23.00
Primary school	1.00
Total	100.00

Occupation	
Student	21.00
Retired	4.00
Freelance	25.00
Employee	48.00
Other	2.00
Total	100.00

Income	
Less than 1000€	24.00
From 1000€ to 1999€	40.00
From 2000€ to 3499€	11.00
More than 3500€	21.00
Total	96.00
Lost values	4.00
	100.00

In order to achieve the aims of this paper, three aspects have been analysed: tourists' profile, motivation to travel to Barcelona and perceived image in situ. First of all, to analyse tourists' profile a cluster analysis was conducted, consisting in a multivariate technique of classification that aims at grouping data in a reduced number of clusters and groups that have to be mutually exclusive (Cea, 2004). The chosen algorithm of classification was Ward's method.

Secondly, to analyse tourists' motivation, a descriptive statistics was used to find the global tendency, but after that an analysis of dependence between short break tourists' profile and tourists' motivations variables was carried out. The statistic used to analyse inter-dependence between tourists' profile and tourists' motivations was "V of Cramer", which indicate if exist any relationship between two qualitative variables and to what extent this relationship exists.

Finally, the perceived image in situ was analysed using nine items that have been measured through a likert-scale of 5 points by tourists during interviews. Thus, after to analyse the results using descriptive statistics, an analysis of dependence among short break tourists' profile and valued items of perceived image was carried out. In this case was pertinent to use an analysis of the variance (ANOVA), because perceived image variables were quantitative.

Findings:

Firstly, visitors' profile has been analysed using a cluster analysis method, examining results by two, three, four and five groups. A total of six variables have been included in the model (gender, age, marital status, education, occupation and income), although gender was excluded because of p-value was higher than 0.05. Considering association measures, marital status, income and age are the variables with a higher eta squared, being the most influencing variables in the model.

From cluster analysis outcomes, results by three clusters were the most successful option to explain the profile of short break visitors. Such as we can observe in Table 2, group 1 is characterized by what we called our middle-agers, single or with partner, and their level of education is a university degree. They are freelance or employees and usually they have an income from 1 000€ to 1 999€ per month. Group 2 is characterized by this sample seniors people, usually married. In addition, these individuals generally have a high level of education with a university degree, and are freelance or employees. Their incomes are 2 000€ or above per month. Finally, group 3 is characterised by this sample youngest, which commonly are single, with a high school education level and studying to get a university degree. Their level of income is low, receiving, in general, less than 1 000€ per month.

Table 2: Short break tourists' profiles

Variables	1 (Middle-agers)	2 (seniors)	3 (youngest)	Total
Age	28,13	42,54	22,44	32,80
Marital status	1,30	3,02	1,00	1,96
Education	1,00	1,10	1,76	1,24
Occupation	3,80	3,46	1,48	3,05
Income	1,97	3,24	1,16	2,30

Initially, we focussed on the findings related to tourist's motivations. In general terms, Barcelona's short break visitors are motivated by specific tourism attractions (39%) or modernism (33%). In this sense, the heritage of the city is the main tourist attractor, although the visit of friends and relatives (22%), and Barcelona's nightlife (18%) are also important.

A relevant element to highlight is the great amount of tourists (22%) that have mentioned recommendation received as a motivational factor to visit Barcelona. This issue can explain two related facts: On the one hand, tourists who recommend Barcelona have experienced a positive stay and consequently a positive tourist image, being the main reasons why they recommend to other tourists visiting Barcelona. On the other hand, there exist a great number of tourists who are influenced by other tourists who have been previously in Barcelona. This situation in well documented by previous research, where is demonstrated that recommendations received from others influence both perceived tourist image (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Bigné et al, 2009) and tourist behaviour (Lee, 2009).

It is interesting to see that a 15% of visitors have been motivated by previous visits to the city, meaning mainly that they actually have not got enough time previously to visit all the main attractions of the city. This lets us to deduce that they probably came preciously as short breakers as well. In addition, the existence of previous visits also notes a high level of satisfaction of previous visits and a positive tourist image that influence subsequent behaviours.

Table 3: Motives to visit Barcelona

Variable	%
Tourism attractions	39
Modernism	33
Visit to friends and relatives	22
Recommendations	22
Nightlife	18
Previous visits	15
Proximity	8

Business	7
Climate	7
Mice	4
Shopping	4
Gastronomy	3
Price	3
Others	20

Trying to analyse more in depth the relationship between tourists' motivation to visit Barcelona and short break tourists' profile, an analysis of dependence has been used. Considering that both variables (tourists' motives and cluster results by 3 groups) are qualitative, it has been calculated the statistic V-Cramer, which indicates if a relationship between qualitative variables exist and to what extent this relationship exists. According to results (Table 3), only "tourism attractions", "modernism" and "nightlife" have a positive relationship. The higher p-value of other variables indicates that do not exist a relationship between short break tourists' profile and motivations to visit Barcelona. In this sense, we can think that do not exist substantial differences between motivations between short break tourists and long stay tourists.

However, considering variables with positive relationship to short break tourists, we can observe that middle-agers tourists are mainly motivated by tourism attractions that Barcelona can offer in general terms; while seniors tourists are especially interested by modernism. In this sense, Gaudí's sites (Sagrada Família, La Pedrera, Güell park, etc.) are postulated as the main attractions to be visited by this kind of tourists. Finally, the youngest, which are usually students such as we pointed out above, are mostly motivated by Barcelona's nightlife, this means, that they are interested on pubs, discos and concert areas.

Table 3: Dependence analysis among tourists' profile (cluster) and tourists' motivations

Variables	V-Cramer	P-value
Tourism attractions * tourists' profile	0.468	0.000
Modernism * tourists' profile	0.352	0.003
Visit to friends and relatives * tourists' profile	0.121	0.497
Recommendations * tourists' profile	0.242	0.061
Previous visits * tourists' profile	0.111	0.555
Climate * tourists' profile	0.144	0.372
Gastronomy * tourists' profile	0.113	0.541
Proximity * tourists' profile	0.079	0.739
Nightlife * tourists' profile	0.296	0.015
Price * tourists' profile	0.123	0.485
Shopping * tourists' profile	0.243	0.059
Business * tourists' profile	0.163	0.279
Mice * tourists' profile	0.033	0.948
Others * tourists' profile	0.202	0.141

Finally, the findings related to the perceived image initially have considered nine variables. Table 4 shows that in general perceived image of short break tourist in Barcelona is positive, considering that means are from 3.19 and 4.54, although almost all have received some low values.

Particularly, we can observe that the best valued items are "tourism attractions", "local culture and authenticity", and "transportation facilities". However, "cleanness" and "safety" are critical points of the city, considering a high standard deviation in both variables, as can be observed in Table 4. In addition, this opinion is also reinforced in an open question, where individuals were instead to determine three positive and three negative elements of the city. The tourists' answers remark Gaudi's heritage as positive item of the city and the need of more safety and cleanness as negative items

Table 4: Tourists' perceived image

Variables	Valid	Lost values	Mean	St. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Very pleasant weather	100	0	3,55	0,947	1	5
Tourism attractions	100	0	4,54	0,688	2	5
Local culture and authenticity	99	1	4,48	0,825	1	5
Good gastronomy and wines	99	1	3,92	0,997	1	5
Accommodation	76	24	4,00	0,909	1	5
Transportation facilities	100	0	4,21	0,998	2	5
Good price-quality relationship	100	0	3,46	0,834	1	5
Cleanness	100	0	3,82	1,077	1	5
Safety	100	0	3,19	1,261	1	5

Key: 1 very negative and 5 very positive

Additionally, analyzing the influence of short break tourists' profile in perceived image of Barcelona, we found a positive relationship between some of these variables. In particular, in Table 5 we can observe that variables "local culture and authenticity", "good gastronomy and wines" and "good price-quality relationship" have a p-value lower than 0.05, indicating that it exist some relationship between short break tourists' profile and these perceived image items. The results related to other variables shows that it does not exist a relationship between how they perceive Barcelona and the cluster where they belong.

At the same time, we have to say that these three variables ("local culture and authenticity", "good gastronomy and wines" and "good price-quality relationship"), although have a positive relationship with short break tourists' profile, actually they have a lower power to explain tourists' behaviour as it is indicated by low values of squared eta (Table 6). However, some tendencies can be observed. Firstly, senior tourists are those who value more positively and above average the variable "local culture and authenticity". Secondly, in the case of "good gastronomy" in general is well valued, except by young tourists who tend to give low punctuations to this item. This situation can be explained by the low purchasing power of this group of tourists, who try to travel with a low budget, and therefore, they spend less for food choosing low cost restaurants and/or fast food restaurants. But none of these restaurants offer a quality local cuisine. Finally, related to the variable "good price-quality relationship", the 90% of middle-aged tourists gave a punctuation of 3 or 4 to this item. Although the tendency is similar in the other group of visitors, we can observe that senior tourists tend to value this item more positively giving the maximum punctuation in the 17.07% of cases; and opposite to this situation is the case of young tourists who tend to give a punctuation of 2 in the 24% of cases. This situation can be explained by the difference of purchasing power of tourists included in each one of the short break tourists.

Table 5: Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Variables	Sum of squares	gl.	Sq. mean	F	P-value
Very pleasant weather * Ward Method	0,922	2	0,461	0,520	0,596
Tourism attraction * Ward Method	2,218	2	1,109	2,361	0,100
Local culture and authenticity * Ward Method	6,204	2	3,102	4,803	0,010
Good gastronomy and wines * Ward Method	8,323	2	4,161	4,461	0,014
Accommodation * Ward Method	3,742	2	1,871	2,297	0,108
Transportation facilities * Ward Method	0,074	2	0,037	0,036	0,965
Good price-quality relationship * Ward Method	10,728	2	5,364	9,365	0,000
Cleanness * Ward Method	0,018	2	0,009	0,008	0,992

| Safety * Ward Method | 0,019 | 2 | 0,010 | 0,006 | 0,994 |

Table 6: Association measures

Variables	Eta	Eta Square
Very pleasant weather * Ward Method	0,105	0,011
Tourist aytraction * Ward Method	0,220	0,048
Local culture and authenticity * Ward Method	0,307	0,095
Good gastronomy and wines * Ward Method	0,297	0,088
Accommodation * Ward Method	0,250	0,062
Transportation facilities * Ward Method	0,028	0,001
Good price-quality relationship * Ward Method	0,409	0,168
Cleanness * Ward Method	0,013	0,000
Safety * Ward Method	0,011	0,000

Conclusion:

In this study short break tourists profile has been analysed. As seen from the review of academic literature, previous research about this topic is limited to compare short break tourists and long break tourists. It is for this reason that this exploratory research aimed to identify short break tourist profiles, and at the same time, seeking differences in travel motivation and perceived image that allow better understanding of this segment.

From this exploratory research some relevant issues are highlight. Firstly, it is demonstrated the heterogeneity of short break tourists detecting three different profiles (young tourists, middle-age tourists and senior tourists) based on socio-economic variables (age, marital status, education, occupation and income).

In addition, according to the hypothesis that different tourist profiles in short break tourists imply different motivations, we found that there are three variables that explain in part motivations of each detected profile. In particular, senior tourists are mainly motivated by modernism; middle-age tourists are motivated by tourism attractions that offer the city in general; and young people are motivated by nightlife of Barcelona. This data put forward three different ways to consume the short city break, prioritizing different attractions of the city.

Considering image perception variables, generally experience has been positive. In particular, Short break tourists value positively tourism attractions, the local culture and authenticity of the city, and transportation facilities, among other items. However, some short break tourists consider that Barcelona is not enough clean nor safety. Regarding relationship between short break tourist profile and image perception variables we found a low positive relationship between short break tourist profiles and "local culture and authenticity", "good gastronomy" and "good price-quality relationship". Obtained results suggest that travel budget used for a short break have consequences in tourist image perception in situ, as well as the level of tourist product quality.

At the same time, findings have also validated the power of recommendations as a motivational factor for short break tourists in general. Recommendations have the capacity to influence decision-making of tourists and, thus their consumer behaviour. Maybe this is a factor more present in short break trips than long break trips, considering firstly that a long break trips need a more reflexive buy; and secondly, if the visited place is in fashion, usually people who have visited previously the place encourage strongly to other potential tourists to travel to the destination. However, further research is needed in order tot examine this issue deeply.

In summary, the detection of these three different profiles and the existence of different motivations among them, as well as image perception, suggest differences in tourism consumption of tourism products of the destination. However, we have to take these results as preliminary, considering the explorative character of this study, which have used a limited sample.

Is important to remark the limitations this paper has. Firstly, because of being an exploratory analysis the amount of interviews is not wide enough to extract complete conclusions but approximate ones. Furthermore, the existence of lost values is due to responder's skipped questions, so this minor the figures in some variables, influencing the final results.

It is important to reinforce that the sample is representative for the short breakers visiting Barcelona during December. This leads us to the second limitation regarding the segment sample because only taken December obliged us to dismiss holiday seasons where families can appear, or summer when motivations like sun & beach can also be present. Is possible to compare the results of the paper and the results of official statistics regarding the segments and these are the main differences, so this helps us also to understand that our sample even if limited is not biased.

In our opinion there are two main ways to do further research. Firstly all the development that can be done through the short breaker consumer behavior profile, and secondly the further research about the image perception topic.

Related to the first group, and since this paper presented a preliminary research, obviously our idea is to improve the questionnaire and obtain more data in order to contrast our conclusions. Since Barcelona is visited during the whole year the survey must be conducted during a whole year round, in order to really have the profile and behavior of Barcelona short breakers.

The whole year survey also can reveal different patterns according to motivations so a further step can be to conduct the analysis within a segment. For instance cultural tourists, vocational tourists, sport tourists, or even business tourists can be specific segment with specific behavior for short stays.

Taking another topic as option can be of interest to check separately the cluster groups that appeared in the present survey, so increasing the number of interviews in each segment to make them representative enough. This can help to better link each group with their motivations and their particular behaviors that were limited in the present research. At the same time can be interesting to analyze differences between tourists that have been previously to the destination and first visit tourists.

The second group of future research possibilities generates another perspective about image perception. Initially we can extract from each cluster how they knew about the destination before they decided to come, and afterwards to check with a bigger database is the image perception matched or not with their previous one during their visit.

It is also possible to find out more about the relationship between each cluster segment and the impact produced on them with the information elements before the visit. For instance, is internet the most influential media on them in order to decide? And if so, the young cluster prefers social media like Tripadvisor or blogs, and the oldest cluster on-line travel agencies or Official websites? And who they trust the most in terms of information?

Finally, the use of different kinds of support during the visit can influence the tourists as well, so it exist also the option of finding out the influence on image perception that elements such as travel guides, tourism offices, or official leaflets have on them.

References:

Baloglu, S. The Relationship between Destination Images and Sociodemographic and Trip Characteristics ofn Iternational Travellers. Journal of Vacation Marketing, 3: 221–233, 1997.

Baloglu, S., & McCleary, K.W. A Model of Destination Image Formation. Annals of Tourism Research, 26(4), 808-889, 1999.

Bigné, E.; Sanchez, I. & Andreu, S. The functional-psychological continuum in the cognitive image of a destination: A confirmatory analysis. Tourism Management 30: 715–723. 2009.

Cea, M.A. Análisis Multivariante. Teoría y práctica en la investigación social. Madrid: Editorial Síntesis, 2004.

Edgar, D.A. Litteljohn, D.L & Allardyce, M.L. Strategic Clusters and Strategic Space: The Case of the Short Break Market. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. 6 (5) 20-26, 1994.

Edgar, D.A. Capacity management in the short break market. International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management. 9 (2) 55-59, 1997.

Gartner, W.C. Image Formation Process. Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing, 2(2): 191-215, 1993.

Gunn, C. A. Vacationscape. Designing Tourist Regions. Washington DC: Taylor and Francis/University of Texas, 1972.

Lee, T.H. A structural model for examining how destination image and interpretation services affect future visitation behavior: a case study of Taiwan's Taomi eco-village. Journal of Sustainable tourism. 17 (6), 727-745, 2009.

Manente, M., Minghetti, V., Costa, P. Tourism demand segmentation and consumption behaviour: An economic analysis, Tourism Review, 51(3), 53 – 62, 1996.

MAZANEC, J.A. Tourist Behavior Model Building: A Causal Approach, The Tourist Review, 1: 9-19, 1983.

Neto, P.A. Strategic planning of territorial image and attractability. In Matias, A. Nijkamp, P. & Neto, P.A. (eds.), Advances in Modern Tourism Research, Berlim: Springer Verlag, 233-258, 2007.

Shoval, N. & Raveh, A. Categorization of tourist attractions and the modeling of tourist cities: based on the co-plot method of multivariate analysis. Tourism Management, 25 741–750, 2003.

Weidenfeld, A., Butler, R.W., Williams, A.M. Clustering and Compatibility between Tourism Attractions. International Journal of Tourism Research. DOI: 10.1002/jtr., 2009.

Woodside, A. and Lysonski, S. A general model of traveller destination choice. Journal of Travel Research, 27: 8-14, 1989.