

Appeal difference between frequent and rare tourists

Collaborative consumption became popular and even gained enough market share in some business sectors such as accommodation (Zervas, Proserpio & Byers, 2015) and car sharing (Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012) to threaten traditional market players. Despite that there is currently a gap between traditional and collaborative consumption marketing theory, with the latter being underdeveloped in terms of general application and common practice (Ertz, Durif & Arcand, 2016b). One of the distinguishing factors in collaborative consumption is that its community members can be both providers and obtainers at the same time (Ertz, Durif & Arcand, 2016a). Thus, it is debatable if general marketing theory is optimal for collaborative consumption marketing purposes since several factors in collaborative consumption challenge the common understanding of marketing (Ertz, Durif & Arcand, 2016b). These factors include; that the goods or services exchanged in a collaborative consumption system are not new, the exchange itself involves unique agents (Gundlach, 2007) and that there is no standardised regulation for the process (Cheng, 2016).

The purpose of this research note is to contribute to understanding how the tourism related marketing approach to the phenomenon of collaborative consumption should be shaped. We aim to achieve this by providing empirical results that highlight the importance of appealing to different groups in collaborative consumption. Thus, we have created an experimental design to measure how strongly does the availability of collaborative consumption services affect travelers' appeal between two otherwise similar tourism places. The focus of this study is targeted at two different groups of travelers – frequent and rare. We hypothesize that in accordance with the functional attitude theory (Katz, 1960), the attitudes towards collaborative consumption between these two groups are different. We suggest that this difference may require the use of targeted appeals to attract them to travelling via collaborative consumption services.

The subjects of this study were Amazon Mechanical Turk workers (N=82, Aged 18-65, 40.2 % Male, 59.8% Female) who were asked to participate in a 2 by 2 experimental design study. The subjects were randomly allocated with one out of two case studies that required them to assume a scenario where they are planning a holiday abroad and are presented with either a) a travel destination where they would not be able to use collaborative consumption services or b) a travel destination where they would be able to use collaborative consumption services. After presenting the respective scenarios they were asked to rate the attractiveness of their case on a 7-point Likert scale. In addition, we asked them to share their perception on their potential mobility, expenses, trustworthiness and overall trip experience. These covariates were deemed to be suitable for our study based on the reports from the literature that highlighted the importance of these aspects in collaborative consumption in tourism (Cheng, 2016; Kannisto, 2017). Our sample was split into 2 groups based on their frequency of traveling abroad for a holiday; those respondents who traveled one or more times per year abroad for tourism purposes were classified as frequent tourists while those who travelled less than once per year were classified as rare tourists (N Rare -42, N Frequent – 40). After obtaining all the data a two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was utilized to process it. The dependent variable was attractiveness levels for each case while the independent variables were the division between tourists' types (rare or frequent traveler) as well as division between the cases they were presented (non-collaborative consumption destinations &

collaborative consumption destinations). Scores for perceived destination mobility, expense level, trustworthiness and quality of experience were used as covariates too control for individual differences.

The mean values for attractiveness levels revealed that for both frequent and rare tourists' the travel destination with collaborative consumption services is more attractive compared to the one that does not (Figure 1). The disparity in the attractiveness levels between collaborative consumption and non-collaborative consumption cases for rare tourists is much higher compared to frequent tourists. However, the statistical output suggested that even though the case type variable was significant ($P=0.000$; $F=14.975$) the tourist type variables appeared to be insignificant ($P=0.422$; $F=0.657$), meaning that we cannot explain the difference in attractiveness levels with this variable, despite the means showing a clear difference in this population sample. Such issue may be an indicator towards a need of replication of this study with a larger sample size.

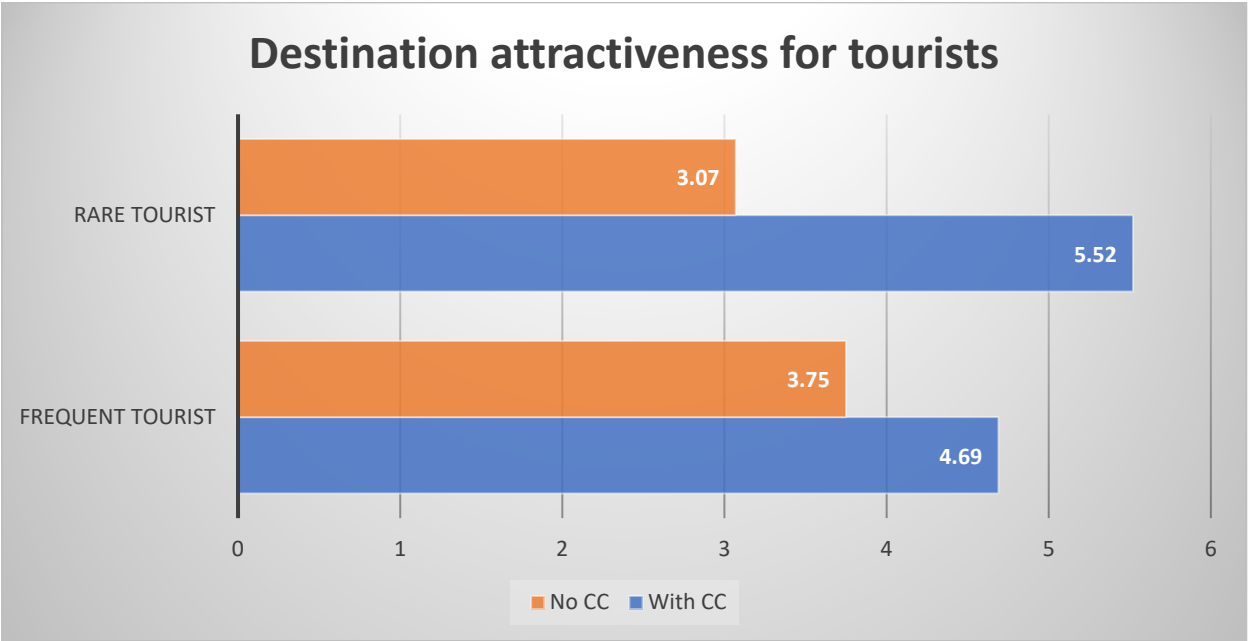


Figure 1

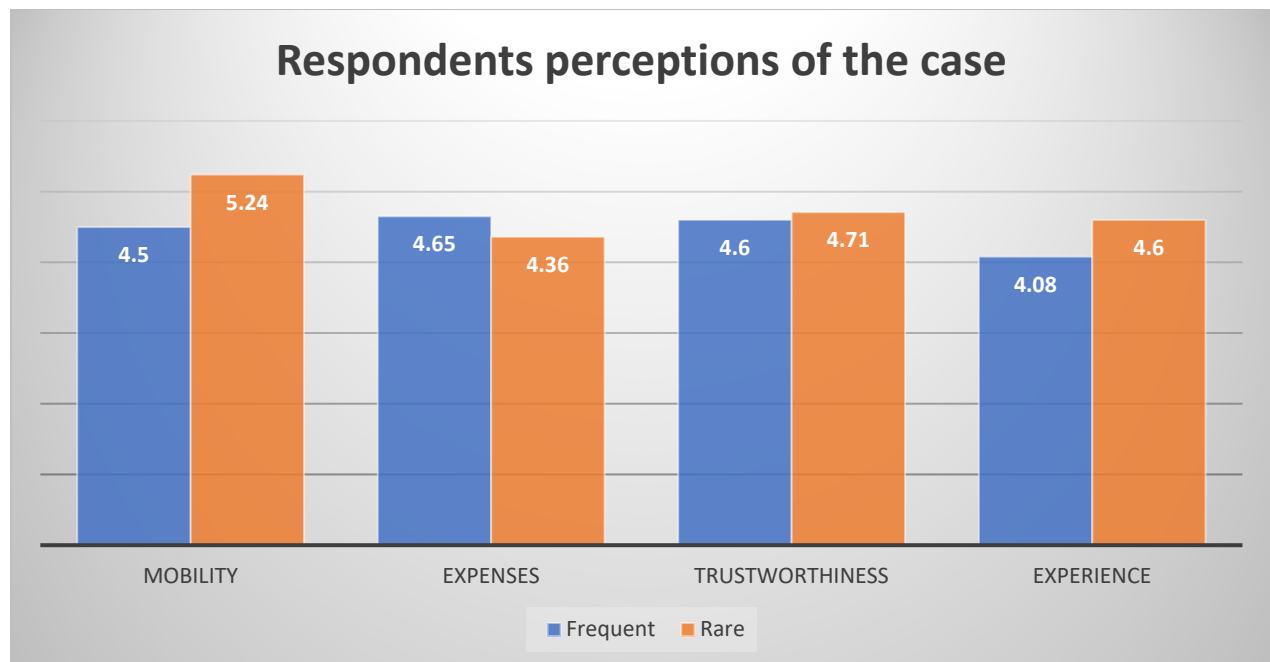


Figure 2

In the case of covariates three out of four of them had significant values; perceived expenses ($P=0.026$, $F=5.172$), perceived trustworthiness ($P=0.013$, $F=6.530$) and overall quality of perceived experience ($P=0.002$, $F=9.894$) while the mobility covariate had insignificant values of $P=0.121$, $F=2.466$. The mean effect of these covariates is illustrated in figure 2. Although the disparity in perceived mobility is the largest amongst all the covariates, we need to approach this information with care since the mobility variable in the model was found to have significant values only at 15% confidence interval. The trustworthiness and expenses variables had minimal difference while at the same time the experience variable showed a significant disparity.

The results from this experiment allow us to draw several conclusions. The theoretical contribution of this study is that we extend the functional approach theory and hint towards the fact that in collaborative consumption there is a need to distinguish between the two groups of tourists based on their frequency of travelling. The practical contribution is that we study how four different appeals – perceived mobility, trustworthiness, expenses and experience vary in their appeal strength. We derive that the perceived mobility and experience appeals act as the strongest deciding factors for travel destinations for rare tourists. As for frequent tourists, the experience variable falls off and is overtaken by the trustworthiness factor. Thus, depending on the case these appeals can be used to form a strong collaborative consumption based marketing campaign targeting tourists according to their travel frequency.

References

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