

## **A Comparison Between Motivations and Personality Traits In Religious Tourists and Cruise Ship Tourists**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the motivations and the personality traits that characterize tourists who choose religious travels versus cruises. Participating in the research were 683 Italian tourists (345 males and 338 females, age range 18–63 years); 483 who went to a pilgrimage travel and 200 who chose a cruise ship in the Mediterranean Sea. Both groups of tourists completed the Travel Motivation Scale and the Big Five Questionnaire. Results show that different motivations and personality traits characterize the different types of tourists and, further, that motivations for traveling are predicted by specific —some similar, other divergent— personality traits.

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to the definition of the World Tourism Organization, tourism comprises the activities of persons who are traveling to and staying in places outside of their usual environments for not more than one consecutive year, for leisure, business and other purposes. Different types of tourists correspond to different types of tourism. The types of tourists include those who are interested in visiting architectures and/or cultural and historical aspects of unknown regions; those who are mainly aiming to a rest and relax; and those who are traveling for special purposes (e.g., educational, sportive, or religious events). Social and psychological analyses are needed in order to understand the specific characteristics of these categories of travelers. Among these different types of tourists, two seem to be very different regarding aims and modalities of travelling: religious tourists and cruise ship tourists.

Religious tourism involves traveling to holy sites for pilgrimages, spiritual journeys, and conventions. According to estimates from the World Tourism Organization, more than 300 million travelers move about for religious reasons. However, up to 18 billion of dollars every year swell the coffers of what could be called a full-fledged religious tourism industry (UNWTO 2013). In Europe, with some exceptions such as Rome and Santiago de Compostela, the most popular destinations are represented by Marian shrines, e.g., Lourdes, Fatima, Czestochowa, Medjougorje, and Pompei.

With very different aims and modalities, cruise ship tourism is also making its mark in the tourism industry with its dynamic development of the peculiar, arousing more interests and providing specialized operators. It is a business that sources identify as the fastest growing of all of tourism businesses by virtue of its lower costs, which make it accessible to even larger segments of the market and favor a decisive seasonal adjustment of tourist flows.

The cruise may be perceived as an all-inclusive holiday, engaging in an experience very different from everyday routine, in a microcosm perfectly structured and planned in detail, protecting from any problem. In this sense, the cruise ship can be defined a “non-place” i.e. a typical product of postmodern society - such as resorts, airports and hypermarkets - with all the structural and functional characteristics outlined by Augé (1992): standard spaces and facilities where nothing is random, each particular is programmed, e.g. meal times, path lengths, internal and external events. Defined as the collective experience more comfortable and reassuring from a psychological point of view, the cruise has become a growing tourism product not only in terms of social expectations, but also on the economic dimension. The latest estimates of the World Tourism Organization set cruises as 1,8% of the global tourism, with a significant growth potential that can predict achieving a total of 30 million cruise passengers in 2020 (UNWTO 2013).

These two types of tourism have some elements in common because both are popular and represent accessible, reasonably priced travel. At the same time, both are supposed to symbolize different meanings: reflective and contemplative for religious tourism, and comfort and levity for cruise tourism.

The objective of this research is to point out and to compare the central motivations that underlie religious and cruise ship travel and to investigate the personality traits that characterize the two types of tourists associated with both types of travel.

The substantial importance of the motivation for tourism research and management can be exemplified by the fact that researchers, when defining a “tourist,” commonly refer to the person’s motives for travel (Leiper 1979). In travel-motivation studies, the underlying idea is that specific psychological needs and motivations qualify travel behavior and that a traveler chooses a type of travel to satisfy his or her internal requests (Dann 1977; Meng and Uysal 2008). Thus, push motivations can drive the tourist to search for destinations, situations, and events that assure his/her psychological needs, i.e., escaping from a daily routine, rest and relaxation, prestige, health and fitness, adventure and social interaction, family togetherness, and excitement. Pull factors, such as a destination’s attractiveness—art, beaches, facilities, cultural attractions, entertainment, natural scenery—can also motivate people to travel.

The past decades have produced noteworthy advancements in interpreting and understanding tourist motivation (Crompton 1979; Moscardo and Pearce 2004; Plog 1994; Prentice 2004), as by evaluating motivation, researchers can classify types of tourists (McIntosh and Goeldner 1990) and better decide their corresponding travel and behavioral patterns (Crompton 1979). Furthermore, findings that are derived from tourist motivation research can be useful to tourism marketers for the development and evaluation of services, brand image, promotional activities, and destination positioning.

A number of studies empirically identify the motivations of travelers (e.g. Crompton 1979; Jamrozy and Uysal 1994; Hoyer and Lillis 2008; Lee and Pearce 2002; Pearce and Lee 2005; Yuan and McDonald, 1990) but very sparsely with regard to religious tourism or cruise ship tourism (Kerstetter et al. 2005).

A review of religious travel motivation literature suggests that deciding on this kind of travel is related to numerous factors. Timothy and Olsen (2006) emphasized how some people travel in order to maintain certain identities, others to satisfy the feelings of nostalgia, some to experience the transcendent, and some to fulfill the requirements of particular faith-based groups. MacCannell (1976) referred to these tourists as “pilgrims of modernity,” choosing holy sites for reasons other than religious ones, specifying that many different motivations—not all of a religious nature—drive people to engage in pilgrimages, particularly in the context of the worries and concerns that are typical of the modern world. A question has arisen in scientific debates concerning the tourist who searches for modernity or authenticity. Sharpley (2008) has pointed out the spiritual dimension of tourism by examining the relationship between authenticity and tourism and by considering the ways in which tourists look to their heritages and histories in searching for the authentic roots of their identities. Religious travel may be an occasion for meditation and may also provide experiences that afford individuals the

potential to reconstruct meanings related to identity. Indeed, Cohen (1979) proposed that tourists often choose elective spiritual centers that are external to the mainstream of their native societies and cultures.

With regard to cruise ship tourism, Hung and Petrick (2011) analyzed the role of motivation regarding the intention to go on a cruise by developing a measurement scale for cruise motivation. Their findings suggested that relaxation, enhancing kinship, relationships, or friendships, and convenience were the major motivations for taking a cruise. Both Petrick (2004) and Petrick and Sirakaya (2004) found that fidelity and being a satisfied first-time cruiser had a great impact on intentions to go on a cruise. Further, Petrick (2004) suggested that less loyal or first-time cruisers are less price-sensitive and spend more. Li and Petrick (2008) found that a cruise passenger's fidelity is a function of his or her satisfaction with earlier cruises, the quality of the alternatives offered, and the size of the investment made in the relationship. Petrick, Li and Park (2007), using Crompton's (1992) choice set model, more deeply analyzed cruise passengers' decision-making processes and found that loyalty, familiarity, and social influences were the main motives for a passenger's decision to go on a cruise. Finally, Teye and Leclerc (2003) examined the motivations for going on a cruise on the basis of tourists' ethnicities and observed that the most important motives for Caucasians were dimensions that referred to social aspects, such as cultural discovery or family and kinship, whereas for ethnic minorities, they were the opportunity for uninhibited pursuits and entertainment.

Another area of interest that has received much relevance in tourism research has been the connection between personality traits and touristic choices (e.g. Crouch, Perdue, Timmermans and Uysal 2004; Berno and Ward 2005; Landers and Lounsbury 2006; Leung and Law 2010). In fact, personality has often been taken into consideration for market segmentation purposes; for example, Plog's (1974) delineation of *travel personality* types along an allocentrism-psychocentrism continuum received considerable interest. The motivational concepts of *strangeness-familiarity* (Cohen 1972) and *travel career ladder* (Pearce 1988) are pertinent also to personality traits. Personality has also been associated with the choice of travel destinations, of leisure activities engaged during the vacation, and of other travel-related decisions (Madrigal 1995; Nickerson and Ellis 1991). In addition, classifying a tourist's personality has been established as appropriate in order to direct a client to a destination in the course of travel agent-client contact (Griffith and Albanese 1996).

Several studies have analyzed the personality profile of religious tourist traveling to different religious destinations. Religious tourism in general is changing, so today, it should not be described in a stereotypical way (Ambrosio 2001; Collins-Kreiner and Kliot 2000; Lanquar 2008). Scaffidi Abbate and Di Nuovo (2013) explored motivations for choosing travel to Medjugorje and the relationship between such motivations and personality traits. The authors found that that both gender and age differentiate religious travelers along certain psychological variables. In synthesis, male travelers to Medjugorje seemed to be characterized primarily by a motivation focused on the need for discovery, while women showed a greater desire for socialization and openness to other people.

## THE STUDY

This study aims to assess the differences in motivations and in personality traits for people who choose religious travel and people who choose to take cruises.

## METHOD

### *Participants*

Participants were Italian tourists who had chosen a travel package for the Marian Sanctuary of Medjugorje and others who had chosen to take a cruise in the Mediterranean Sea. The participants were selected with the help of a specialized travel agency; data were collected before the travel. The sample was composed of 683 subjects, 345 males, and 338 females. The age range was 18–63 years (Mean = 40.23; s.d. = 13.96). Religious tourists totaled 483 (244 males, 239 females), and cruisers totaled 200 (101 males, 99 females). Preliminary statistical analyses were carried out to ensure that the two groups were matched on all of the main variables: age (religious tourists Mean = 40.35, s.d. = 12.82; cruisers Mean = 40.11, s.d. = 15.10;  $t = 0.21$ ,  $p = 0.83$ ); level of education (chi-square between groups = 2.55,  $p = 0.64$ ); and gender (chi-square = 0.06,  $p = 0.94$ ).

### Instruments

The instruments used were:

1) The *Travel Motivation Survey* developed by Figler, Weinstein, Sollers and Devan (1992) and adapted in Italian by Maeran (2000). The questionnaire explores, by means of 35 items on a five-point Likert scale, seven motivational categories: Culture, Self-seeking, Sensation-seeking, Status, Sociality, Relaxation, and Nature. In a previous principal components factor analysis using a Varimax rotation, the items of the scale loaded on three main factors that accounted for 40% of the total variance, and were labeled *Curiosity and discovery*, *Out-of-routine*, and *Self and sociality*. The *curiosity and discovery* factor includes items that measure a wish to see unknown sites and a curiosity for different cultural experiences. The *out-of-routine* factor includes items that measure a wish to have unusual experiences and to escape from one's daily routines. The third factor, *self and sociality*, includes items that measure the extent to which travel is seen as a means of rediscovering one's self through socialization. Cronbach alphas for the three factor scores were .82, .64, and .68, respectively.

2. The *Big Five Questionnaire* (BFQ, Costa and McCrae 1992) aimed to measure five personality factors, summarized as follows:

*Energy/Activity*: tendency to show assertiveness, active behaviors, and positive emotions.

*Agreeableness/Cooperation*: tendency to behave friendly and cooperatively rather than showing antagonism in interpersonal relations.

*Conscientiousness*: tendency to show planned, self-disciplined behavior and to control, regulate, and direct impulses.

*Emotional stability*: tendency to avoid unpleasant emotions and excessive sensitivity as well as to be calm and free from persistent negative feelings.

*Openness to experience*: tendency to appreciate new emotions, unconventional beliefs, adventure, curiosity, and a variety of experiences.

The Italian edition of BFQ, adapted by Caprara, Barbaranelli and Borgogni (1993), was used for our study.

### RESULTS

Preliminary analyses on the whole sample (Table 1) show significant differences between genders in one out of three motivational factors (self and sociality), and in three out of five personality factors: energy/activity and emotional stability are higher in females, and conscientiousness is higher in males, as expected on the basis of the general standardization of the test. Therefore, subsequent analyses were performed while taking into account the gender variable.

**Table 1:** Gender differences in motivation and personality factors.

	M		F		t
	Mean	s.d.	Mean	s.d.	
Curiosity and discovery	3.39	0.78	3.32	0.89	1.11
Out-of-routine	1.88	0.98	1.85	1.03	0.34
Self and sociality	3.05	0.78	3.26	0.79	-3.64*
Energy/Activity	78.43	8.96	76.33	8.80	3.23*
Agreeableness/Cooperation	79.23	8.98	80.43	9.69	-1.74
Conscientiousness	82.42	9.59	79.51	10.49	3.93*
Emotional stability	72.47	14.94	68.00	12.18	4.51*
Openness to experience	80.60	8.58	79.20	10.53	1.98

\*  $p < 0.05$ , after Bonferroni's correction

Independent sample t tests were conducted to examine whether tourist motivations differed significantly by group of tourists (tables 2 and 3). Significant differences in all three motivational variables were found between the two groups. In particular, cruise ship passengers compared with religious tourists have significantly higher scores in curiosity/discovery, out-of-routine, and self/sociality factors. These differences are found for both males and females.

Regarding personality factors, significant differences were found between the two groups divided by gender. In fact, as Table 2 shows, male cruisers have higher scores in the BFQ energy factor than do male religious tourists, while male religious tourists have higher scores in the agreeableness factor. Comparing the two groups of male tourists, no difference was found in the other personality factors.

A similar pattern of differences occurs in the female sample (Table 3), in which cruise tourists have higher scores in energy (as is the case with males) and also in the openness-to-experience factor. As do males, female religious tourists have higher scores in the agreeableness factor.

**Table 2:** Differences in motivation and personality factors in different types of male tourists.

	<i>Religious Tourists</i>		<i>Cruise Tourists</i>		<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	
Curiosity and discovery	3.33	0.86	3.53	0.51	-2.23*
Out-of-routine	1.40	0.48	3.02	0.94	-21.27*
Self and sociality	2.92	0.72	3.37	0.83	-5.03*
Energy/Activity	77.66	9.01	80.32	8.58	-2.53*
Agreeableness/Cooperation	82.64	8.04	71.00	4.85	13.56*
Conscientiousness	81.85	7.77	83.79	12.92	-1.72
Emotional stability	71.51	12.17	74.78	20.02	-1.86
Openness to experience	80.57	8.65	80.69	8.45	-0.13

\*  $p < 0.05$ , after Bonferroni's correction

**Table 3:** Differences in motivation and personality factors in different types of female tourists.

	<i>Religious Tourists</i>		<i>Cruise Tourists</i>		<i>t</i>
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>s.d.</i>	
Curiosity and discovery	2.94	0.92	3.86	0.50	-9.47*
Out-of-routine	1.38	0.49	3.34	0.83	-26.86*
Self and sociality	3.13	0.75	3.81	0.58	-8.12*
Energy/Activity	75.28	8.50	79.05	9.48	-3.59*
Agreeableness/Cooperation	83.17	8.91	71.71	6.81	11.48*
Conscientiousness	79.49	9.98	77.79	11.99	1.34
Emotional stability	68.61	12.17	67.19	11.32	-0.99
Openness to experience	77.45	10.44	82.02	10.22	-3.69*

\*  $p < 0.05$ , after Bonferroni's correction

A discriminant analysis performed on the whole sample confirmed the utility of the motivational and personality variables in differentiating the two groups. For motivational factors, the analysis obtained a Wilks' Lambda =

0.38,  $F = 413.76$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), canonical correlation = 0.79. The classification matrix yields a satisfying total percentage of correct classification (0.90). The most discriminant factor is out-of-routine ( $F$ -to-remove = 985.81), and the less discriminant is curiosity/discovery ( $F = 0.02$ ).

For personality traits, an analogous analysis obtained a Wilks' Lambda = 0.64,  $F = 83.81$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), canonical correlation = 0.60, total percentage of correct classification = 0.84. The most discriminant factor is agreeableness ( $F$ -to-remove = 377.87), and the less discriminant is conscientiousness ( $F = 0.92$ ).

A multiple regression analysis separated by group of tourists was carried out to explore what personality traits, measured by BFQ scores, significantly predict the motivations for travel in each group.

Table 4 shows that in the religious tourists group, the openness trait (positively) and agreeableness (negatively) are predictive for motivation to curiosity and discovery. The agreeableness and conscientiousness traits, both negatively, are also predictive of out-of-routine motivation. Finally, the openness-to-experience trait is negatively linked to self-and-sociality factor scores.

In the cruiser group, the regression analysis (Table 5) shows a different pattern. Curiosity motivation is positively predicted both by openness (as in the other group) and agreeableness; in the religious group, this predictor was in the opposite direction. Curiosity is also predicted inversely by conscientiousness. Conscientiousness and emotional stability predict, both negatively, out-of-routine motivation. While for the religious tourist group the openness-to-experience trait negatively predicts self-and-sociality motivation, for the cruisers, the trait is positively linked to this motivation, which is also predicted by the energy and conscientiousness traits.

**Table 4:** Multiple regression analysis of personality traits on motivational variables for religious tourists.

<i>Dependent Variables:</i>	<i>Curiosity and discovery</i> $R^2=0.15$		<i>Out-of-Routine</i> $R^2=0.22$		<i>Self and Sociality</i> $R^2=0.20$	
	<i>Std</i> <i>coeffic.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Std</i> <i>coeffic.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Std</i> <i>coeffic.</i>	<i>t</i>
Predictors:						
Energy/ Activity	0.02	0.41	-0.02	-0.37	0.08	1.56
Agreeableness/ Cooperation	-0.11	-2.31*	-0.18	-4.04*	-0.01	-0.23
Conscientiousness	-0.01	-0.16	-0.11	-2.11*	-0.06	-1.22
Emotional stability	-0.02	-0.46	0.01	0.22	-0.03	-0.60
Openness to experience	0.13	2.44*	0.01	0.28	-0.17	-3.34*

\*  $p < 0.05$

**Table 5 –** Multiple regression analysis of personality traits on motivational variables for cruise tourists.

<i>Dependent Variables:</i>	<i>Curiosity and discovery</i> $R^2=0.24$		<i>Out-of-Routine</i> $R^2=0.21$		<i>Self and Sociality</i> $R^2=0.28$	
	<i>Std</i> <i>coeffic.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Std</i> <i>coeffic.</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Std</i> <i>coeffic.</i>	<i>t</i>
Predictors:						
Energy/ Activity	0.00	0.04	-0.18	-1.87	-0.42	-4.46*
Agreeableness/	0.15	2.07*	-0.02	-0.31	0.07	1.01

Cooperation						
Conscientiousness	-0.57	-5.67*	-0.36	-3.53*	-0.50	-5.05*
Emotional stability	-0.12	-1.65	-0.15	-1.96*	-0.11	-1.53
Openness to experience	0.42	3.66*	0.17	1.50	0.65	5.84*

\*  $p < 0.05$

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore motivations for choosing different types of travel—in particular, religious tourism and cruise ship tourism—and the relationship between such motivation and personality traits.

Data show that cruisers, compared with religious tourists, seem to be characterized by the strongest motivations, showing significantly higher scores in curiosity-and-discovery, out-of-routine, and self-and-sociality factors. We can hypothesize that, in the experience of religious tourism, the travel generates less curiosity to see new things and to be willing to meet new people, with the spirit of inquiry and adventure or a willingness to change the previous outlook on life being less prevalent. Religious tourists, probably driven mainly by reasons of faith, do not start to feel out of their routines, as the people's religious sentiment creates a continuum between everyday life and travel. Compared with the cruise ship tourists, religious tourists have a less marked dynamic personality—i.e., a confident and enthusiastic approach to the various circumstances of life; they are less openness to experience—a willingness to accept new ideas and others' values and feelings. According to the principles of their faiths, religious travelers are more cooperative and empathic and have a friendlier attitude.

Moreover, the findings of our research indicate that motivations to travel are predicted by specific personality traits, some similar and other divergent, in different types of tourists.

Openness to experience, i.e. a willingness to understand new ideas and to appreciate others' values, positively predict curiosity for discovery both in religious and cruiser tourists; in both groups, conscientiousness (i.e., the tendency to control and to regulate impulses and show self-discipline) is a negative predictor of out-of-routine motivation.

Some personality traits are predictors that differentiate motivations in the religious and cruise travelers. Agreeableness (i.e., predisposition to friendliness) predicts curiosity negatively in religious tourists, while the opposite case exists for cruisers, who are more driven by relational aspects and expectations in search for discovery. Openness to experience is a positive predictor of the motivation for traveling, linked to self and sociality in cruisers, who are more open to variety in emotional experiences, while the opposite happens in religious tourists, who tend to prefer familiarity over novelty. Out-of-routine motivation is negatively predicted by agreeableness in religious tourists and by emotional stability in cruisers. This signifies that travelers for religious reasons tend to preserve usual routines when they are more disposed to friendliness, while those who choose cruise ship travel tend to maintain routines depending on their emotional instability, i.e., their tendency to experience unpleasant emotions easily. Finally, motivations that are pertinent to self and sociality are negatively predicted in cruisers by energy and conscientiousness, i.e., characteristics such as surgency and assertiveness and preference for planned rather than spontaneous behaviors.

The complexity of the experience of each type of tourism, the inherent heterogeneity of motivational components and content, and the difficulty with ordering them in a unified theory are all evident. For this reason, we think that trying to capture the motivations—also on the basis of personality traits—of specific categories of tourists can be a useful tool for designing appropriate marketing campaigns and for supporting a choice of the trip.

To know specific tourists' attitudes, perceptions, motivations is relevant for promoting their satisfaction (Ryan 1995), and for developing more suitable services and promotional activities by tourism marketers. Also, personality traits could be predictors of satisfaction both during and after traveling differentiating the genders.

Tour operators and guides should pay attention to participants' specific personality traits to ensure optimal treatment in organizing and monitoring different types of touristic experiences.

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