

TOURISM'S CHANGING FACE: NEW AGE TOURISM VERSUS OLD TOURISM

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Abstract: *Times are changing and so are the demands and expectations of the 'new' traveller, the search for different experiences, different adventures, different lifestyles has paved the way for this concept called the 'new tourism' Attention is being turned to exploring new frontiers or daring to go where traditional thought did not allow.*

"New" tourists however, are increasingly being seen to be environmentally sensitive, displaying respect for the culture of host nations and looking to experience and learn rather than merely stand back and gaze. "New" tourists are participators not spectators. Things that would never appear on the list of the "mass" tourist such as adventure, getting off the beaten track and mingling with the locals are now the foundations of the new tourist experiences.

Responding to the shift in market dynamics towards a "New" style of tourist, a number of initiatives have or are likely to fuel the growth of experiential tourism, these include: network tourism initiatives; the development of interpretive highways; the explosion of interpretive centers; the latest trend towards regional base camps. A new era has arrived, and a new kind of tourism is emerging, sustainable, environmentally and socially responsible, and characterized by flexibility and choice. A new type of tourist is driving it: more educated, experienced, independent, conservation-minded, respectful of cultures, and insistent on value for money. Typically these tourists are turning away from travel and prefer to have a high level of involvement in the organisation of their trip.

Key words: *old tourism, new tourism, market, changes, strategies*

Introduction

Until 19th century, travel for recreation was only undertaken by the elite. With the advent of rail, mass travel was available for the first time and destinations such as Brighton, UK and Coney Island, NY developed. Status was then defined by the mode of travel. In 20th century status was revealed by the nature of the destinations. Travel and tourism has been going on since time immemorial, and for the 'twentieth century tourist, the world has become one large department store of countrysides and cities'. By 21st century, travel became a new economy - *tourism* - available to all with enough money. The focus in the tourism industry has shifted from air travel, overnights, meals and so on to total experiences or fantasy worlds associated

with specific. This new tourism phenomenon is not only influenced by economic factors but also by new cultures and a new generation of tourists. In tourism, the different destinations compete worldwide through globalisation. The paradigm shift from mass tourism (also known as *Fordian Tourism*), which was the norm for more than three decades, no longer suffices to achieve competitiveness in tourism enterprises and regions. A new paradigm, or new tourism, is gathering momentum owing to its ability to face prevailing circumstances.

Modern information and communication technology development in symbiosis with the transformation of tourism demand gave rise to a *new tourism*. This paradigm shift is not easy to define but is indicative of a new

type of tourist who wants a new or different product. The new tourists are more experienced, more educated, more "green", more flexible, more independent, more quality-conscious and "harder to please" than ever before. Furthermore, they are well read and know what they want and where they want to go. The different approach of the new tourist's creates a demand for new products. The small, medium and micro entrepreneurs within the tourism industry are dependent on major tourism developments. It is essential role of these small entrepreneurs be increased to deal with the changing demands of the new tourists. In Canada, 20% of the population is truly entrepreneurial while in South Africa the role of entrepreneurs is still extremely small. Only about 4% of the South African population is truly entrepreneurial.

What is New Tourism?

New Tourism is characterised mainly by *supersegmentation of demand*, the need for flexibility of supply and distribution, and achieving profitability through diagonal integration and subsequent system economies and integrated values, instead of economies of scale. This paradigm permits the tourism industry to offer products adapted to the increasingly complex and diverse needs of demand, while being competitive with the old standardized products. These markets of experience have become global, affecting the demand as well as the supply side of the tourism industry. The tourism industry has undergone profound changes, which have been categorized by Poon (1993) in the following groups: (a) new consumers, (b) new technologies, (c) new forms of production, (d) new management styles, and (e) new prevailing circumstances. As result of the super segmentation of demand there is a very strong need for *in-depth knowledge* of the market in order to identify the *clusters of consumer traits and needs*. This knowledge will enable the tourism enterprises to develop those products that will give a greater

competitive edge, and to place them on the market using efficient methods of communication and distribution. *Flexibility* is also a very relevant factor since it can assist the enterprise in adapting to the new demand requirements. This factor is relevant in several areas: flexibility in the organisation and in the production and distribution of tourism products; flexibility in reservation, purchasing and payment systems; and flexibility in ways in which the tourism product is consumed. New technologies are fundamental in this respect and, in particular, in the expansion and development of new systems of tourism information. Diagonal integration is the final basic element. Compared with vertical and horizontal integration, which characterise the mass-standardised production paradigm, this is a process by which the tourism enterprise can develop and compete not only in one activity, but also within a wider framework, seeking profitability on the basis of system economies, obtaining synergies between different products and offering services well integrated in the value systems of consumers. Key shifts in global tourism market trends are as follows:

In the long term, the average standard of living in western developed countries will increase, as will the amount of discretionary money available for travel;

Rising affluence will bring with it increases in the amount of free time available. Longer weekends and increased paid holidays have helped to stimulate expansion in attraction visitation;

There is a shift in emphasis from passive fun to active learning;

Activity or special interest holidays are likely to gain at the expense of conventional sightseeing, visiting and other passive experiences;

There is growing concern about the impact of modern industry, including tourism, on the physical and social environment;

There is growing awareness of risks to personal health and safety;

Leisure time will be used more actively, for mental development as well as physical exercise;

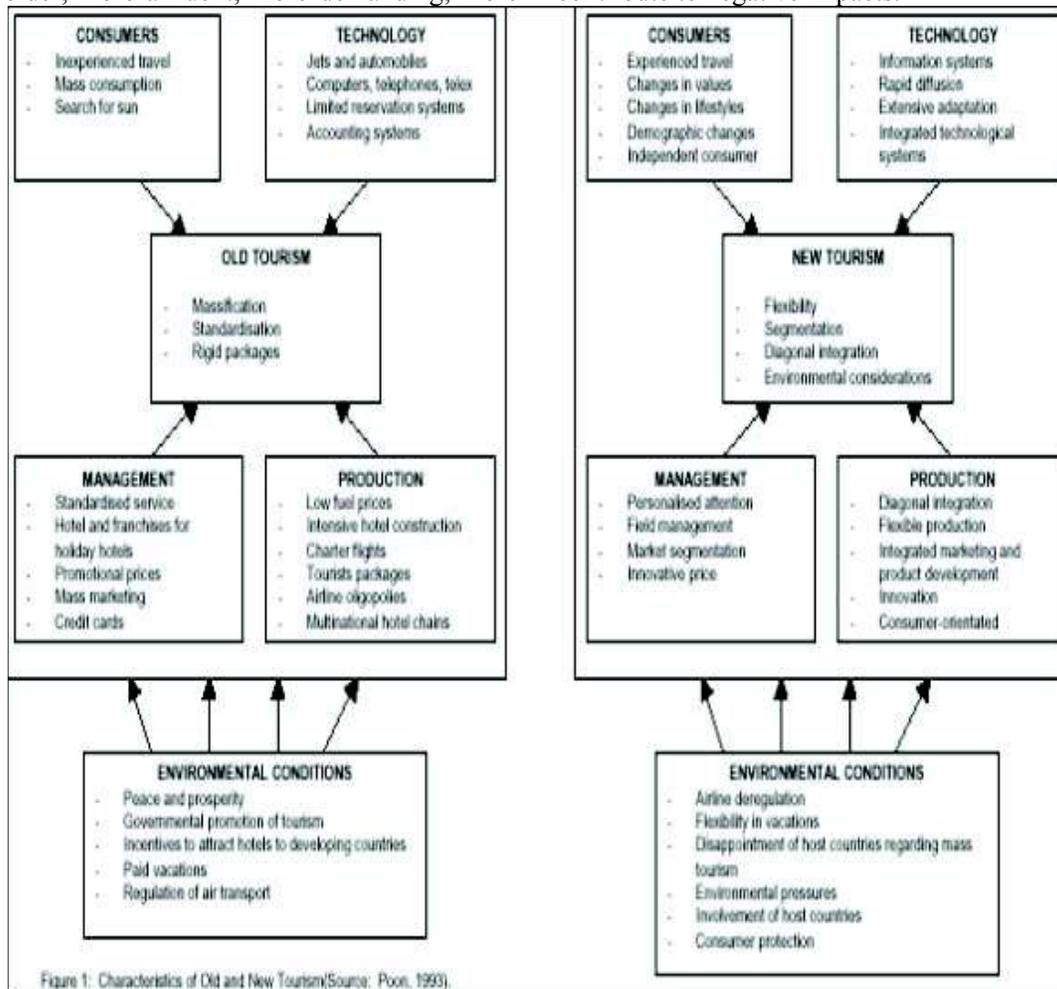
People aged 45 to 64 years of age will be growing significantly in number to the year 2010. In the United States alone, this age group is forecasted to grow by 31% by the year 2000;

The potential visitor of the future will be: older, more affluent; more demanding; more

thoughtful and discriminating; and more active physically and mentally;

Timeframes for decision-making windows will be smaller. Hence, one-stop-shopping for all-inclusive packages will continue to be appealing; and

Consumers will increasingly seek low impact tourism facilities, consistent with environmental values and the desire not to contribute to negative impacts.



The New Tourist

The travelling consumer of today (let alone in the future) is very different from any other time in history. The most successful businesses in the travel industry are those that respond to the challenge through the use of technology, innovative marketing programs, better training of staff and by developing a closeness and understanding of its customers/guests. The differences in travel patterns in the next century will be more related to what consumers are seeking in a travel experience than in how they travel.

Today's traveller, the well-heeled or footloose back-packer, is usually informed, educated, and more often than not, fully aware of what he or she wants from their travels. For them the optimisation of time and money is the key and they prepare for their trip by researching their destination through the Web and the experiences of friends and fellow travellers. Mass media has responded to this shift and further fuelled the search for experiences through the promotion of a vast range of lifestyle/adventure programs which have evolved more recently into experiential

voyeuristic docu-dramas referred to as reality programmes. Attention is being turned to exploring new frontiers or daring to go where traditional thought did not allow.

In *Tourism, Technology and Competitive Strategies*, author Auliana Poon speaks about the changes in consumer behaviour and values which are the critical driving forces for the new tourism. The new tourist is experienced, more flexible, independent, quality conscious and harder to please.

"New" tourists however, are increasingly being seen to be environmentally sensitive, displaying respect for the culture of host nations and looking to experience and learn rather than merely stand back and gaze. "New" tourists are participators not spectators. Things that would never appear on the list of the "mass" tourist such as adventure, getting off the beaten track and mingling with the locals are now the foundations of the new tourist experiences. Typically these tourists are turning away from travel and prefer to have a high level of involvement in the organisation of their trip.

Comparison of Old and New Tourists

	New Tourists	
Search for the sun	=>	Experience something different
Follow the masses	=>	Want to be in charge
Here today, gone tomorrow	=>	See and enjoy but not destroy
Just to show that you had been	=>	Just for the fun of it
Having	=>	Being
Superiority	=>	Understanding
Like attractions	=>	Like sports
Precautions	=>	Adventurous
Eat in hotel	=>	Try local fare
Homogeneous	=>	Hybrid

Source: *Tourism, Technology and Competitive Strategies*, Auliana Poon

Travel is no longer a novelty to the new tourist. Studies support what industry executives have been noticing for the last few years. People expect more out of their vacations than they used to and they are more adventuresome. Surveys done by the Canadian Tourism Research Institute indicate a high degree of interest in getaway vacations, ecotourism, cultural tourism and combining a business trip with a pleasure trip. Over the next ten years, tourism products and attractions will have to cater to visitors who are more demanding and discriminating, as well as more active and more purposeful in their choice of destination. There will be a shift in emphasis from passive fun to active learning, and the quality and genuineness of visitor experiences will be crucial to future success in a competitive market. An Acronym that is relevant to describe the 'new' tourist is REAL, which stands for: Rewarding Enriching Adventuresome Learning Experience.

A key underpinning concept for REAL tourism is authenticity of experience, which is often related to the environment and culture and seen to be unaffected by "mass" tourism. The New Tourists prefer to be regarded as travellers and not tourists. Some specific points which need to be kept in mind while dealing with the New Tourist are:

This type of traveller requires a completely different marketing approach.

They avoid conventional glossy marketing mechanisms and prefer to use reliable sources such as *word of mouth referrals*, their own independent research and trusted publications;

They desire *experiences* as opposed to products and services;

They can be called *experiential travellers*, they extend across all age groups and traditional market segments;

New Tourism for the New Tourist

To enable new tourism attractions to stand the test of time and satisfy the demanding requirements of the evolving 'new' tourist, the following criteria should be applied to existing and proposed attractions:

- That the attraction offers a distinct, unique experience that cannot easily be replicated by competitors;
- That the attraction is value added through 'best practice' interpretation, which preferably utilises a 'human element' such as interpretive guides, seasoned veterans and/or local characters;
- That, where possible, the experience is externalised within the natural/actual setting rather than internalised within a false/reproduced setting;
- That the attraction offers an exciting, authentic, interactive and educational experience;
- That 'comfort' should not compromise the authenticity of the experience;
- That the attraction adheres to ecologically sustainable development principles;
- That the attraction avoids the over reliance on technological interpretive devices that will become quickly outdated; and
- That the attraction offers a choice in the form of interpretation offered.

Responding to the shift in market dynamics towards a "New" style of tourist, a number of initiatives need to be taken so as to fuel the growth of experiential tourism these include:

- Network tourism initiatives;
- The development of interpretive highways;
- The explosion of interpretive centers
- The latest trend towards regional base camps.