
'STAYCATIONS': WHAT ARE THE DRIVERS TO HOLIDAYING AT HOME?

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Abstract

Whilst international tourism has many economic benefits, there are growing concerns regarding the associated environmental impacts. The Davos declaration highlights the transport impacts for tourist travel, emphasising the environmental implications of consumer decisions. Furthermore, air travel dependency associated with international tourism threatens the ambitious target of the UK Climate Change Bill.

In response to the need to provide a clear understanding of the relationship between transport and tourism, this paper will explore consumer tourism demand and preferences. Specifically it will explore whether 'staycations', holidaying at home, can compete with holidays to destinations further afield. It will identify the drivers influencing such decisions.

This will be achieved through the analysis of a household survey and a series of interviews with family groups of holiday-makers. Whilst the survey examines revealed and stated holiday preferences, the interviews explore the influences upon such choices. Each method also examines tourism travel preference in the context of wider household decisions relating to the environment. The findings will be interpreted with respect to the wider context of reducing the energy intensive nature of leisure travel.

Introduction

Tourism is recognised as being distinct from travel, yet travel is one of its component activities. Given that the Davos Declaration [1] commits the tourist industry to, "mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, derived especially from transport and accommodation activities", and to encourage consumers to consider their, "climate, economic societal and environmental impact of their options", greater awareness of the motivators to and influences upon holiday choices in the context of wider household decisions is essential.

Academic literature has recognised the environmental cost of holiday and leisure travel choices. For instance, Hunter and Shaw [2] emphasised that whilst generally less damaging than mass tourism, flights required to partake in ecotourism opportunities rarely result in delivering environmental benefits and Dickinson et al. [3] explored the concept of slow travel, where holiday-makers select alternatives to air travel in order to reach their destination, with the journey becoming part of the holiday experience. Furthermore, there is recognition that there is a dependency on leisure air travel [4], which is threatening the ambitious targets of the Climate Change Act [5]. Research by Barr et al. [6] highlighted the challenge that environmental behaviours do not necessarily translate between spatial contexts, such as from household to tourism contexts, and that 'cognitive dissonance' exists between tourism behaviour and general environmental behaviour. Dobruszkes and Van Hamme [7], demonstrated the impact of the global economic downturn on air traffic volumes globally with noticeable reductions affecting the UK and Ireland amongst others.

Within Great Britain (GB) limited options exist beyond air travel for trips to most Europe destination and in particular those further afield and therefore the main alternative is to holiday at home. However, until recently GB was mainly identified as a supplementary destination for the ABC1 demographic (the three highest socio-economic grades by job status), who take multiple holidays per annum [8] rather than the destination for a main holiday. Yet, whilst the term 'staycation' has received limited coverage in the academic literature it received extensive coverage in the media. An academic article which attributes the term 'staycation' to the US media, examines 'the significance of pace in understanding tourism mobilities' [9] (p. 272). When comparing media coverage of 'staycations' to slow

travel and the 'the amazing race' (where teams compete to get to a given destination quickest) staycations were identified 'as an ambivalent account of staying still' (p. 283). This is in contrast to slow travel and the amazing race which were seen as positive trend in a modern world albeit for different reasons.

In response to the need to provide a clear understanding of the relationship between transport and tourism, this paper will explore consumer tourism demand and preferences. Specifically it will explore whether 'staycations', holidaying at home, can compete with holidays to destinations further afield, particularly when the economy recovers. It will identify the drivers influencing such decisions. This will be achieved through the analysis of a household survey and a series of interviews with family groups of holiday-makers, using both approaches this paper will explore leisure trips involving at least one overnight stay, influences on holiday travel choices, the motivations and influences for holiday choices and household consumer decisions with respect to the environment.

Methodology

The methodology adopted involved a combination of a household survey and interviews with adult members of family holiday groups. The household survey collected revealed and stated preference data providing a broad understanding and a basis for population segmentation. Survey questionnaire examined leisure trips over the previous 12 months, preference for a range of destination in GB, influences on leisure travel choices, household decision and composition, plus other socio-demographic information. Group interviews were carried out following an interview guide designed to ascertain the determinants and motivators determining consumer travel decisions and the influence of collective choices when making leisure time and travel mode decisions as well as household decisions. Essentially, the interviews explored similar topics as to those examined in the surveys in more depth.

The sampling strategy for the survey involved a combination of stratified-random and clustered sampling with the objective of enabling a response from a range of different areas and sub areas. Areas were differentiated by, distance from an airport and population density. The five sampled local authority areas were: Hinckley and Bosworth, Newark and Sherwood, Northampton, North East Derbyshire, and Nottingham. Two sub areas were then selected from each area to provide a range of sample populations differentiated by the level of deprivation as determined by the index of multiple deprivation [10]. Adjacent areas and sub area were rejected. The sampling frame for each of the surveys was the Electoral Register, the record of people living within the Council area eligible to vote. Each sub area received 500 survey questionnaires and response rate per sub area varied between 6% and 17%, with an overall response rate of 10%.

When the age and gender of the survey response is compared to the East Midlands adult population from the 2001 census [11] as a whole, response from the younger age group is under-represented. This is to be expected, given that the surveys were addressed to an adult member in a household, as younger adults are more likely to either live at home with their parents, and given that the age classification for the national statistics covers the 15-24 range and the survey covered the 18-24 adult population. Respondents approaching retirement or in early retirement are over represented, perhaps relating to availability of time to respond to surveys. Females are over-represented in the survey response, a bias which occurs regularly when using a survey methodology (e.g. [4]).

Interviewees expressed a willingness to take part in group interviews when completing the survey; in total 70 respondents were willing to be interviewed. Respondents aged over 65 and those who declared disabilities were excluded for two reasons: the impact this has on mobility and holiday choices and the ethical policy regarding vulnerable adults. Originally the intention was to survey a homogenous group of holiday makers who had only holidayed in Great Britain, however in exploring the survey results a wider sampling frame was developed. In selecting interviewees the following selection criteria were applied:

1. Respondents who have only holidayed in Britain, with others, who demonstrate an interest in the Environment regarding travelling and household choices

2. Respondents who have holidayed in Britain and Europe, with others, who demonstrate an interest in the Environment regarding travelling and household choices
3. Respondents who have only holidayed in Britain with others, who demonstrate an interest in the Environment regarding household choices
4. Respondents who have holidayed in Britain and Europe with others who demonstrate an interest in the Environment regarding household choices

For depth of understanding a combination of criteria was selected to understand more about decision trade-offs. It was anticipated that one family group would be surveyed from each of these categories, though this was influenced by the availability of interviewees fitting the selection criteria. Four couples were interviewed, contextual information for each is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1 Contextual information on the group interviewees

<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>Couple 1</i>	<i>Couple 2</i>	<i>Couple 3</i>	<i>Couple 4</i>
Household composition	Couple plus 2 adult children	Couple plus 2 children	Couple	Couple plus 3 children
Home circumstances	Detached house, owner occupier	Semi-detached house, owner occupier	Semi-detached house, owner occupier	Terraced house, privately rented
Household car ownership	2	1	1	2
Respondent gender	Male	Female	Male	Male
Respondent age	45-54	25-34	60-64	35-44
Respondent status (income)	Employed full time (£30,001-£40,000)	Employed full time (<£10,000)	Unemployed and seeking work (retired)	Employed full time (£40,001-£50,000)
Other interviewee*	Female, similar age, employed full time	Male, similar age, employed full time	Female, similar age, retired	Female, similar age, employed part time
Selection criteria	4	3	1	3

* Observation from interview

This paper examines leisure trips involving at least one overnight stay, over the previous 12 months, influences on leisure travel choices and household consumer decisions with respect to the environment based on each of these data sources. Survey data allows for a breadth of understanding where the statistical strength of relationships can be tested, this was achieved using Pearson's chi-square [12]. Statistically significant relationships are considered in this analysis at 99% confidence levels, unless otherwise stated. Thematic analysis [13] of interview transcripts provided a depth of understanding of processes, priorities and influences for selected holiday groups. A combination of a priori themes, based on significant relationships found from the survey, and empirical themes were applied for analysis purposes.

Holiday travel choices

The results of the survey demonstrated that a high proportion of respondents do enjoy leisure travel in Great Britain, with 74% of respondent having enjoyed at least one British holiday in the previous 12 months. This is compared to 57% who had been to Europe and 29% further afield. Of all respondents 27% had only holidayed in Great Britain. Respondents holidaying outside Great Britain are most likely to have taken one British holiday as well whereas those who only travelled in Great Britain have often enjoyed multiple trips. The most popular destinations for a main holiday globally were within Europe, though the Americas, Asia, Africa and Australasia also attracted holiday makers. Thirty four percent of respondents took their main holiday in Britain. The most popular regions for British holiday destinations were the South West, followed by the East of England and the North West. Whilst coastal resorts were attractive in the South West and the East of England, the Lake District was the

most common destination in the North West though regional cities and the coast also featured.

When opting to travel further for their main holiday respondents were most likely to optimise the time at the destination holidaying for around two weeks or more, whereas holidays in Great Britain were shorter in length. Regarding the time of year the majority of holidays within Europe took place during summer months, whereas when holidaying further afield autumn and winter months were popular times to travel. In terms of accommodation type hotel and conversely the homes of friends and relative were most popular when holidaying outside of Europe, whereas apartments were popular in the rest of Europe and cottages or campsites in Great Britain. Regarding the time of year the majority of holidays within Europe took place during summer months, whereas when holidaying further afield autumn and winter months were popular times to travel. Holiday activities outside Europe involved going on excursions (90% significance), suggesting that a greater level of organisation is preferred when travelling further from home, in Europe the focus was on relaxing (95%) on one hand and socialising (90%) on the other, whilst holidaying in Great Britain involved activities such as trekking, walking and biking as well as going to the beach. Popular activities across all destinations included water sports and shopping.

In examining how respondents travelled to these destinations there is a statistically significant difference dependent on destination choice. Outside Europe 100% of destinations were accessed by plane, whereas 22% of European holidays were accessed by ferry or via the Eurotunnel. Conversely, the majority of destination accessed in Britain involved travel by private motor vehicle, predominantly car (72%), though public transport also featured for 22% of journeys with the remainder accessed by ferry or boat (4%) and plane (1%). Flights featured for Scotland and the British Isles and Ferry for the British Isles and coastal areas of Great Britain. Related to this there was a statistically significant difference between destination and travel mode at the destination, with own car dominating for domestic holidays, whereas hire car or a friend's car being more common in Europe and the rest of the world. Bus and coach travel was also popular, particularly outside Europe whereas a walking and to a lesser extent cycling was commonplace in Europe.

As summarised from the survey, Table 2 outlines the holiday choices of each of the interview groups. Whilst two couples reporting sharing the decision as to destination choice, in Couple 1 the destination was selected by the man and then researched as a couple, whereas for Couple 4 the woman selected, researched and booked the holidays, with limited input from the man (excepting providing credit card details).

Table 2 Holiday information on the group interviewees

<i>Interviewees</i>	<i>Couple 1</i>	<i>Couple 2</i>	<i>Couple 3</i>	<i>Couple 4</i>
Annual holidays	2 holidays, 1 in GB, 1 in Europe	1 holiday in GB	4 holidays in GB	3 holidays in GB
Main holiday destination	Asturias, Spain	Dunfermline, Scotland	Norfolk, England	Lake District, England
Group composition	2 adults	3 adults & 2 children	2 adults	2 adults & 3 children
Duration and season	20 nights, summer	3 nights, spring	9 nights, summer	14 nights, summer
Travel modes	Ferry/Motorbike	Car	Car	Car
Accommodation	Apartment	Bed & breakfast	Campsite	Cottage

The interviews largely supported the survey, though Couple 1 had recently returned from a holiday outside Europe with their adult sons, the remainder if they had holidayed since had taken similar holidays to those reported in the survey. The interviews also highlighted the range of holidays each couple, and in most cases their family, enjoyed over the previous year and beyond. For instance whilst three couples generally holidayed either as a couple (Couple 4 and 1) or family group (Couple 1 and 2) Couple 4 also enjoyed individual activity holidays independent of the of each other and their children. Plus, as well as the destinations mentioned as a main holiday, which were primarily coastal and / or rural, interviewees highlighted the role of shorter city breaks where a group of adults enjoyed cultural activities.

This would either involve the couple (Couples 1 and 3), or one member of the couple and other adults (Couple 4).

Active holidays were particularly popular with Couples 3 and 4. Couple 4 found them particularly effective when holidaying with children as 'it tires them out quite nicely'. Couple 2 were most interested in visiting historic sites and museums. When travelling as a family both Couple 2 and 4 highlighted an approach to balancing what they would like from a holiday with what the children might prefer, each had a way of finding a balance. For instance, Couple 2 spent one day visiting heritage sites and then the next day at a play park, or similar. Each of the couples with young families (Couples 2 and 4) reported a desire to return to GB destinations they had visited as children, perpetuating an idea of a childhood holiday. Whereas, Couple 1 and 3 reported that either they did not personally go on family holidays as a child, or their childhood experiences of holidays were distinctly different to their subsequent family holidays when their children were younger. Couple 4 reported that GB provided more opportunities for active holidays, which was in part influenced by language or potential language barriers in both finding out information and once at the destination. Whilst on one level this contrasted with Couple 1's experience of the cultural heritage of destinations visited, activities such as 'visiting the spice farm' were only engaged in on the first visit, on subsequent visits the focus was on going to the beach, eating and drinking and reading books, more recently the classics.

Holiday length was influenced by destination but also by other commitments, in particular work. The tradition of the two week summer holiday had influenced Couple 3 up until their recent retirement. Work commitments also influenced the time at which the holidays were taken, extending to school commitments when travelling with school-aged children. Interviewees presented a unanimous negative opinion of taking children out of school, though Couple 2 and 4 each reported doing this. Couple 1 who tended to holiday abroad preferred to travel out of season, so they could enjoy a GB summer and then enjoy a summer elsewhere.

For 'staycations' car travel dominated as an access mode and when at the destination, though tourist travel options, such as funiculars also featured once at the destination. Walking was enjoyed as both an activity and mode of travel, particularly when parking is not readily available, or for couples travelling without children, or with older children, for evening activities. When taking a motorbike holiday in Europe Couple 1 used the ferry to access northern Spain and aside from that their primary mode was a motorbike. On their most recent holiday they flew to Goa, yet rented scooters once there in order to be 'independently mobile'. Both within GB and further afield private motor transport was viewed as being essential to enjoy more remote destinations, which Couple 1 and Couple 4 in particular viewed as an essential part of a relaxing and varied holiday.

Influences on holiday choices

In investigating the main holiday destination for the previous 12 months, details were collected on the motivations for destination choice. There were significant differences between the motivations for travel and destination choice and holiday activities. Respondents were motivated to holiday in Europe and the rest of the world because of the climate, and European destinations were also provided the opportunity to relax (90% significance). Whereas, GB was a popular destination for sightseeing and also allowed holidaymakers to return to destinations they had enjoyed previously. Less significantly GB provided opportunities to spend less money on holidays (90% significance) and was frequently a destination choice when travelling with children (95% significance). Indeed, holidays within Great Britain were significantly more popular when travelling with children, though children were not generally involved when holidaying outside Europe. Other motivations for the destination choices included visiting a new destination and the beauty or cultural heritage of a destination. These motivations did not vary significantly according to the destination selected. . Each of the holiday groups enjoyed active holidays, spending time walking, trekking, biking and / or swimming or taking part in other land-based or water sports.

In examining the influence of socio demographic factors those with a significant relationship are the number of children in the household, age of interviewee and personal income. Again

households with families are most likely to holiday in Great Britain, however with respect to the other household variables of significance, the pattern is less clear, whilst respondents earning under £20,000 are most likely to restrict themselves to GB, so are respondents in the highest income band.

One view that each couple shared when interviewed was the importance of a holiday to them as a family or a couple and in the case of Couple 4 as individuals. Holidaying as a family was seen as an opportunity for 'togetherness' (Couple 4) and 'something to look forward to' (Couple 3) around the commitments of everyday life. The only couple which did not insist that an annual holiday was essential, was Couple 2, though they still felt it was important to 'get away' when they could. Couple 1 highlighted that there was only one year they did not holiday abroad, the year when their son was born; having been careful in other areas of their life in order to afford the luxury of a holiday. Couple 3 highlighted that they holidayed each year 'even if it was just a week in a caravan at Skegness' when money was less readily available. As highlighted above Couple 1 holidayed in Europe and GB whereas the other couples holidayed only in GB. Couple 3 did go through a phase of holidaying abroad following a particularly wet summer which affected their camping holiday, however, the stress of travelling by air led to a return to camping more locally. Couple 4 the one couple who were trying to fly less had two further influences. The male flew frequently for business purposes and the female has 'to be drugged to get on a plane'.

Motivations for holiday choice included the overall reason for the holiday, qualities of destination and the climate. For instance the overall reason for Couple 2 to select Dunfermline was to attend a family wedding, whereas Couple 4 selected destinations with activities for them to do as a family and ideally which combine the seaside and the countryside. Couple 1 opted to holiday somewhere they had not previously been whereas, Couples 3 and 4 were returning to a destination they had previously enjoyed, which, given the destination choice reflected the findings of the survey. All couples referred to the beauty of the destinations selected and while Couple 1 made particular reference to the culture in Spain, Couple 2 highlighted the opportunities available to visit heritage sights en route to Dunfermline. Whilst all interviewees made some reference to the weather, for GB this was with reference to having to prepare for all eventualities, whereas for holidays abroad the climate was a motivating factor.

Influences on holiday choices included the sources of information available to the couples, including their 'social network', and the availability of time and money. A core source of information for all couples is the internet, which is identified as a resource for research, booking and reviewing, capable of assisting with destination choice, accommodation selection and activities to do in and around the selected destination. Specific sites mentioned by interviewees include review websites such as UK campsites (Couple 2) and Google, including Google maps (Couple 4). Interviewees see the internet as more influential than their social network, though other people did a varying influence on holiday choice. Couple 4 were particularly adamant that the decision is not influenced by other people, with the exception of the accommodation on one holiday. Couple 1 mention that in some instances the recommendation of a 'person' has influenced their choice, though the couple's relationship to the people mentioned could not be easily classified. Couple 2 did not see their family as being influential in their holiday decisions beyond family events or when holidaying with family, this is attributed to distance between them and their family, so they viewed friends and 'maybe' having more influence. Both Couples 1 and 3 mentioned they knew people with similar interest, motorcycling for Couple 1 and camping for Couple 3 and these had greater influence than others in their social network.

The life stage of interviewees were also influential with respect to holiday and interviews picked up how holiday choices developed from pre-family, to family, then to 'empty nesters', sometimes with dependent, elderly parents. Of the 'dependents' identified children have the greatest influence on holiday choice across the couples, though aging parents were also identified by Couples 1 and 3 and grandchildren by Couple 3. Pets were an additional consideration for Couple 1. Pre-family holidays were identified as being more flexible in terms of destination and for Couples 2 and 4 more likely to be abroad. For Couples 1 and 3 there was also greater flexibility in deciding the destination and accommodation type. For Couple 1 this meant they could be more choosey about the destinations and accommodation

and for Couple 3 they opted to start camping rather than going to hotels, something they identify as 'the wrong way round'. With respect to the type of accommodation selected when holidaying with children caravans (Couples 2 and 4) and apartments or cottages (Couples 1 and 4) are preferred, this is in part because of the flexibility though also the cost. Though only mentioned explicitly by two couples the cost implications of travelling as a family (Couple 1 and 4) has an impact, with all couples identifying money as being a major limiting factor to the number of holidays they enjoyed.

Household environmental decisions

The survey examined household environmental decisions under the broader categories of environmentally conscious purchasing, everyday travel behaviour and waste reduction, results are summarised in Table 3. Of these, waste reduction is most accessible to all respondents with, e.g. the majority agreeing that they separate waste for recycling. The response to environmentally conscious purchasing is mixed with e.g. a high proportion agreeing that they buy energy efficient household goods but fewer respondents agreeing that they buy local produce or would purchase the most energy efficient car. The remaining category, everyday transport, has the greatest proportion disagreeing, e.g. that they would use public transport rather than drive, this is relatively similar to the response relating to reducing flight frequency, though a greater proportion were willing to use non-motorised transport for short journeys.

Table 3 Household environmental behaviour

	<i>Strongly agree and agree</i>	<i>Neither agree or disagree</i>	<i>Disagree and strongly disagree</i>
If purchasing a car I would buy the most energy efficient	220 (48%)	165 (37%)	67 (15%)
I have invested in my home to improve energy efficiency	328 (72%)	70 (15%)	56 (12%)
I buy energy efficient household goods	341 (74%)	79 (17%)	38 (8%)
I buy things produced locally	227 (51%)	172 (38%)	48 (10%)
I use public transport instead of driving	136 (29%)	80 (18%)	241 (53%)
I walk or cycle for short journeys	288 (63%)	51 (11%)	118 (26%)
I reduce the amount of energy used	364 (78%)	53 (11%)	45 (10%)
I reduce the amount of water needed	343 (74%)	64 (14%)	57 (12%)
I separate waste for recycling	436 (94%)	14 (3%)	14 (3%)
I reuse packaging	329 (71%)	78 (17%)	58 (12%)

All interviewees identified separating waste and recycling as the most accessible environmental behaviour available to them. Couple 4 highlighted that this is not straightforward when on holiday as it is not immediately apparent where amenities are. Couple 1 also compost and reuse paper for packaging. Saving energy in the home was also prioritised by most interviewees, though both children and pets (snakes) were identified as having specific energy demands (Couples 1, 2 and 4). Whilst Couple 1 identify that whilst they try to reduce fuel use in the home, this did not transfer to travel behaviour. Couple 4 however made a purchasing decision to reduce demand for fuel, through selecting a more energy efficient vehicle, though the couple recognised that this was negated to some extent by the need to for the man to fly on business. Couples 3 and 4 had installed water butts and other measures to reduce water use. Yet, despite these generally positive efforts, which are

to be expected given the selection criteria, environmental consideration does not come into decision-making for the interviewee's holiday choices and it is rarely a priority for their day-to-day travel.

Conclusions

This research has identified that 'staycations' provide an alternative to holidaying abroad for a range of holiday segments, in addition GB provides a supplementary holiday destination. The drivers to holidaying at home are related to life stage, the characteristics of the holiday as a whole, and the selected destination, for instance 'staycationers' were attracted to destinations they had visited as a child and destinations providing specific activities or attractions, such as historic sites. There was limited evidence to support much influence upon choice from friends and family though the Internet played a key role in information sharing in decision making and booking, thus suggesting that this is potential tool for altering holiday travel choices. The contextual relationship between household consumer behaviour with respect to the environment is not a driving factor. Environmentally respondents and interviewees readily considered recycling and energy reduction but did not consider day to day or holiday travel in the same way. Whilst environmental motivators have limited impact upon holiday choice finances do, with money being a core influence on the number of holidays taken and the destinations visited. Though unpopular, this would suggest that financial measures are required in order to influence leisure travel choices.

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