

Book Review

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Tourist Behaviour – The Essential Companion

by: Philip L. Pearce

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Understanding tourists' behaviour has been the aim of numerous influential and emerging scholars, yet given the heterogeneity of the market, fluid identities and constantly changing needs, it remains a seemingly endless mission to fully grasp what contemporary tourists are looking for, why they are behaving in a specific way, and what this means for the wider society and environment. In this edited book –*Tourist Behaviour – The Essential Companion* – 28 emerging and established scholars from five different continents rose to the challenge to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of tourists' behaviour and take the reader in 20 chapters on a journey through the different stages of the travel experience. As one of the most renowned scholars in the field of tourist behaviour, Philip L. Pearce succeeds with the structure of this inspiring book to overcome the challenges of missing cohesion that edited books often suffer from. In a thought-provoking way, he masters to deliver a well-organised, logic and comprehensive discussion of the (mis-)behaviour of today's tourists that leaves the reader with inspirations and encouragement to keep searching why tourists and their behaviour are interesting and important to understand.

Starting with the provoking questions whether tourists are interesting after all (chapter 1 – *Are tourists interesting?*), P.L. Pearce lays the foundation of this book by defining the core terms and setting boundaries. He emphasises that tourists cannot be seen in isolation of the wider society, symbolically argues that tourists are not islands and highlights the many different stakeholders that are interested in tourists for various reasons. The next chapters deal with the typical consecutive stages in the anticipation phase of the travel journey and introduce well-established models and theories related to *dreaming and longing* (chapter 2) and *deciding and choosing* (chapter 3). Yagi and J.R. Pearce argue in chapter 4 (*packing and preparing*) that more research is needed in the anticipatory stages that go beyond motivation and destination choice but rather examines mental and physical preparing and packing as these might reveal tourists' expectations and behaviour. The largest proportion of the book relates to the on-site phase of the travel journey. Chapters discuss tourists' behaviour while satisfying more mundane needs of travelling, such as *getting around* (chapter 5), *sleeping and staying* (chapter 7), *consuming food and drinks* (chapter 8) or *shopping and browsing* (chapter 10). Although addressing basic/psychological human needs, authors highlight

the subtleties of fulfilling these needs when travelling. In chapter 8, Hall describes the symbolic significance and importance of eating and drinking while travelling and reasons this by heightened sensory awareness and experiential imagination as well as involvement. However, he also critically remarks that these experiential and symbolic dimensions of travelling can also be consumed at home, oftentimes at less (felt) risk with similarly high satisfaction and more research is needed to understand behaviour in consumer's living and travel environments. A better comprehension is not only important given the multiculturalism of tourists, their religious or secular food restrictions and food ethics, but also against the background of increasing interest in co-creation and active involvement when travelling.

The interactional elements that underpins P.L. Pearce's claim that tourists cannot be seen in isolation are addressed in chapter 6 (*communicating and interacting*), chapter 9 (*co-creating good times*) and chapter 12 (*interacting with animals*). Kim, Ma and Uysal (chapter 9) elevate the role of tourists in experience creation and consumption by describing them as resource integrators, providers, mediators and moderators. Putting consumers at the heart of the value-creation process, however, is often associated with challenges of sustainability, risk and ethics. With reference to animal welfare and rights, Cohen (chapter 12) critically discusses tourists' desires of close embodied encounters and illuminates the oftentimes poor management practices under neoliberal governments that commodify 'wildlife' animal encounters leading to imbalanced human-animal interactions. In chapter 16 (*Behaving altruistically*), Wearing, McDonald, Nguyen and Bernstein note that not only experiences are commodified but also tourists' behaviour. The authors use the example of volunteer tourism to explain how altruism is exploited for economic value and call for a decommodification to regain the potential of altruistic and more self-less, mindful behaviour for an ethically responsible and sustainable tourism development. However, in chapter 14 (*Joining the crowd*), Rickly questions whether avoiding the crowds and travelling off the beaten track to engage in less staged and authentic experience is really more sustainable given that this desire often draws tourists to more ecologically fragile and culturally sensitive destinations. She further argues that travelling is a collective activity that is performed individually, yet as tourists are outsiders to a destination they constantly need to learn how to behave properly. This requires interpretation and improvisation which often entails observation and imitation of others, making one's own actions part of the crowd while stressing the necessity of crowd management and control to eliminate inappropriate behaviour. Managing visitors and their (bad) behaviour was also covered by Wen (chapter 13 – *Visiting attraction*) and P.L. Pearce (chapter 15 – *Behaving badly*) who emphasise on tourist's personal moral compasses and cultural differences when trying to understand why tourists intentionally or unintentionally behave badly. P.L. Pearce refers to four types of undesirable behaviour – deconstructive, unsafe, intrusive, unsustainable – and remarks that visitor management practices need to be reconsidered to modify habitual, mindless behaviour and undermine neutralisation arguments while acknowledging cultural diversity. The heterogeneity and multiculturalism of tourists were also observed with reference to rituals of *taking photographs* (chapter 11). An activity that P.L. Pearce proposes to have high symbolic value and meaningfulness.

Similarly, photographs are declared decisive elements for long-term memorability by Zare (chapter 17 – *Remembering*) who argues that they facilitate retrieval of memories. The author not only establishes links between on-site and reflective behaviour, she also maintains the importance of remembered experiences for future behaviour, therewith

stresses the importance of understanding behaviour throughout the different stages of the travel journey and directs the reader towards the concept of savouring. Alizadeh and Filep (chapter 18– *Well-being*) describe savouring as positive reminiscing and highlight its importance to restore and enhance subjective well-being. They further propose a recognition of the self as an outcome of tourist experiences, therewith underlining the contribution of travelling to self-discover, self-development and eventually identity. This is also discussed by Pabel (chapter 19 – *Returning home*) who illuminates the dialectical tensions of returning home which can be a relieve or a strain given the required re-integration of the newly defined self in the home environment. While bad or undesirable behaviour and negative impacts are discussed in many parts of this edited book, Fesenmeier and P.L. Pearce dare a look into the future in chapter 20 (*Searching...for what is important*), suggest ways how tourist behaviour can contribute to the fulfilment of the 17 UN sustainable development goals and ask for more critical and brave ideas to find less destructive alternatives to travel.

Throughout the book, references are made to theories from philosophy, psychology, sociology and business studies, illustrating the multidisciplinary of tourism research. Several case examples are given that determine the context dependence and relevance of inter-cultural perspectives and open avenues for future research. As a reader of the companion, I take with me that the concepts of involvement, co-creation, cognition and emotions are increasingly central in understanding tourist behaviour. More research is needed particularly with reference to mental processes to close the circle between *returning home* and *dreaming and longing* while encouraging more ethically responsible and sustainable behaviour. For future editions of this valuable and important book, I hope to see more on transformative experiences and trip honouring and recommend this refreshing edited work to any tourism researcher, student and practitioner interested in understanding today's tourist behaviour.