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Family Tourism: Understanding the concept and improving the parents - children relationship

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Abstract

Family tourism is driven by the increasing importance placed on promoting family togetherness, keeping family bonds alive and creating family memories. It not only builds life long memories, but also gives break away from the usual routine, opening the minds to new cultures, foods and experiences and even good for health. According to the researchers, positive relationships between parents and children are important for children's overall development and builds trust. Various articles on family tourism were gathered from the Web of Sciences, UGC Journals, Scopus indexed journals, books, websites and was reviewed by the researchers.

Keywords: Family tourism, Holidays, Relationship, Well-being

Introduction

A family is defined as a “the people who think of themselves as part of the family, whether related by blood or marriage or not, and who support and care for each other on a regular basis” (Poston et al, 2003, p. 319). More specifically, DeFriar & Asay (2007, p. 284) defined a family as a unit of “two or more persons who share resources, share responsibility for decisions, share values and goals, and have a commitment to one another over time. Family travel and tourism is one of the largest sub sectors within the travel industry. This is especially true as more people realize the importance of spending quality time and experiencing new things with one's family. This can encourage connections that are often missed in the frazzle of everyday life and create memories of memorable moments. In the tourism market, family tourism is one of the most important and fast-growing sectors, which takes up around 30% of the total leisure travel market (Schänzel et al., 2012). Park et al. (2020) defined family travel as “a purposive time

spent together as a family group, which may include extended family, doing activities different from normal routines that are fun, but that may involve compromise and conflict at times.”

Review of Literature

The grandparents are now part of the customary family holiday. Families want to spend more time together and strengthen their ties across generations (Birtles K. 2023). For families, tourism has become a necessity rather than a luxury. It enables family members to spend unforgettable time together and create collective memories, thereby forming an effective connection (Lehto et al., 2009; Carr, 2011). Tourism is considered to be the best education (Yang and Lau, 2019). Therefore, learning experience has become one of the important motivations of family tourism. Family tourism is driven by the increasing importance placed on promoting family togetherness, keeping family bonds alive and creating family memories. This could be in the form of a nuclear family, just the grandparents and grandchildren, or multi generation trip. Now children do not passively obey the decisions made by their parents and play an important role in tourism product purchase and on-site decision-making (Blichfeldt et al., 2011). Parents’ decisions related to the choice of a place, accommodation or a type of holiday are guided by the preferences of their children, following the principle that “a happy child is a happy parent”. In addition, family tourism pays more attention to children’s experience (Rhoden et al., 2016), especially the pursuit of learning experience. Tourism has been playing an important role in building family ties (Backer, E. et.al 2013; Durko, A.M.et.al 2013; McCabe, S. 2009; Schänzel, H.A. et.al 2015), and the experience of travelling together has a positive impact on the functioning of the family (Lehto, X.Y et.al 2009, Li, M. et.al 2020, Zabriskie, R.B. et.al. 2003) . Tourism has become one of the main ways that families spend their free time together, and parents are willing to spend increasing amounts of money and energy on travelling with children (Shuxia, W. 2018). Families have been looking for destinations that offer relaxation, the opportunity to spend their time outdoors, discover art and cultural heritage, but also include adventure, excitement and some form of “newness” (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015).The extension of the average life expectancy and of social development make the intergenerational relationship between grandparents and grandchildren increasingly important in family life, and the number of “multi-generational holidays” and “grand travel” groups is increasing (Gram et al., 2019). This situation is particularly prominent in family tourism with Chinese cultural context, in which most adult children maintain close ties with their parents, grandparents help to take care of their grandchildren, and adult children provide care and spiritual comfort for their parents (Gruijters, 2017; Wang et al., 2018). A study

by Visa INC together with Oxford Economics (Business Wire, June 2016) revealed that by 2025 around 282 million families worldwide will plan at least one international trip a year, which is almost 35% more than in 2015. Families desire to spend quality time together and have memorable experiences through family tourism (Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015; Schänzel et al., 2012; Shaw et al., 2008), indicating a positive impact on parent's well-being. As children initiate, gather information, evaluate and make actual decisions, just like their parents, they are active holiday consumers, family holiday planning has become a shared project. Thus, the decision-making role is not only held by the person who possesses the economic power, the parent, but also by the person who possesses knowledge about the activity/product, that is, the child. In this way, the child becomes involved in the family economy (Wu et al., 2010). This means that, although children are not necessarily always in positions where they can easily access money, they are involved with how holiday money is used and spent (Cardell, 2015). According to the researchers, whether holidays are short but they create a family bonding, we-relationship and ever-lasting memories.

Research Methodology

The method of the research is descriptive in nature. In order to complete the objective, secondary data covering the period from 2003 to 2023 was obtained from various research publications that were published in peer-reviewed and UGC journals, books by various authors and researchers working in the associated field, conference proceedings, and websites. A thorough analysis of the various aspects of family tourism and child-parent relationship has been given by the literature study.

Parents/Children Relationship – Why it's important?

The Parent-Child Relationship is one that nurtures the physical, emotional and social development of the child. It is a unique bond that every child and parent will can enjoy and nurture. The enriched environment triggers the brain fertilizers which are associated with higher IQ in kids and exploring a new place together, helps in making your child smarter. Some of the benefits include young children who grow with a secure and healthy attachment to their parents stand a better chance of developing happy and content relationships with others in their life, promotes the child's mental, linguistic and emotional development, helps the child exhibit optimistic and confident social behaviours, children also gain strong problem-solving skills when they have a positive relationship with their parents, every time a kid travels to a new place, they get exposure to a new language, new dialects and dictions. This exposure will be extremely beneficial if your child is into learning new languages, travelling with children to new places gives them a lot of exposure. At an early age, they get exposed to different

geographies, cultures, environment, and modes of transport. The massive exposure helps the kids gain confidence. They tend to speak and behave in a certain manner which is beneficial when they go out in the world and interact with them, experiencing different cultures gives our kids an edge in the future job market, travel teaches kids about the importance of planning and also about responsibility. They would need to plan their luggage, pack their stuff, chart out the itinerary along with their parents, research about the local attractions, etc., travel teaches to be patience like to wait in lines, be strapped into a stroller, sit on a curb to wait for a cab, walk longer than expected, and be patient while parents are talking to other adults. These experiences help teach kids how to be tolerant, resilient and easy-going. ***In the tourism industry, children take the lead, offer advice, and make decisions.*** They are choosing their trip location more and more often as a consequence of watching a television or Internet advertisement. As kids get older, their involvement in family travel decisions also grows dynamically (Therkelsen 2010). Children under the age of seven may not be able to actively participate in decision-making, and as a result, they have not received as much attention as children in middle childhood (7–10 years old) or youth (11–18 years old), who are better able to articulate their needs regarding vacation due to their greater etymological and cognitive abilities.

Conclusion

The best gift for a child is not a video game or a new smartphone, but quality time spent with the family on a family vacation. Every parent aims at building and strengthening their relationship with their children as a relationship in which a child respects, trusts and feels comfortable in the company of its parents, enables the child to learn and develop holistically. According to the literature done, researchers conclude that kids who take a vacation once a year can improve their overall development and make them more productive and active. The daily challenges, the stress and school activities for the kids are the main reasons for encountering some serious health issues at an early age. Not having proper meals and poor sleeping habits can also be few reasons for stress and anxiety. Taking a vacation can help to set life straight with ease, and also spending time with family helps to relax more easily. Thinking back to happiest vacation memories can be a powerful tool for the children when they are going through a tough time—reflecting on magical excursions experienced as a family may bring them a sense of comfort.

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