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New Approaches to Market Segmentation, Targeting and Positioning: The Case of Maribojoc, Bohol, Philippines

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Introduction

Market segmentation, targeting, and positioning are key marketing concepts. Strategies for finding viable markets have been a subject matter of interest for tourism businesses and destinations. Many destinations have developed different products and services that show the beauty and character of the destinations. Tourism products are unique because they are experiences and composite products. Tourism experience is portrayed as a quest for the inversion of everyday life; the upper-middle-class tourist seeks to be a 'peasant for a day', while the lower middle class will seek to be a 'king/queen for a day' (DeCrop 2014). Broadening the scope, in view of this, Pine and Gilmore (1999) have suggested a shift from a commodity- and service-based economy to an 'experience economy' in which

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the consumption experience itself becomes the primary source of value. The increasing focus on consumers as active value co-creators means that traditional segmentation goals and methodologies may no longer be relevant (Rihova et al. 2019).

A review of the literature on tourism and hospitality from 1969 to 2020 by Mulet-Forteza et al. (2021) revealed that topics related to management, with concepts such as loyalty, purchase intention, satisfaction, and repeat visit intention, have been heavily researched. In a similar review conducted by Morrison and Coca-Stefaniak (2020), there were six predominant research themes or areas of study on managing and marketing city tourism destinations, three of which are marketing related. Scholars have produced a significant number of research articles and books on specific markets, but very few have investigated the process, benefits, challenges, and issues of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning for emerging destinations.

A new shift is currently taking place, focusing on experience and offering unique ways to connect and engage with local people and gain insights into local lifestyles, cultural heritage, and sense of place (World Tourism Organization and European Travel Commission [WTO and ETC] 2017). Moreover, these experiences can include unique, more intimate, customised experiences that reflect traveller values and aspirations, or larger cultural events and festivals that reflect the personality of the territories concerned (WTO and ETC 2017), as younger tourists seek the experience more than the actual destination in itself (Fyall 2019). As tourism marketers are marketing experiences rather than mere products, identification of market segments has become increasingly challenging, as it has gone beyond usual descriptors such as country of origin, age, and income levels. Therefore, destination marketers need to have a better understanding of tourists' perspectives and be more creative in their offerings of the tourism experience. The prevalence of new trends in tourism calls for a better understanding of how the postmodern tourist markets consume touristic experiences and how emerging destinations can tap into the growing tourist market amidst the challenges they face.

Understanding the Market Through Travel Motivations

As marketing centres on identifying the needs and wants of customers, destination marketers need to identify their customers first. Identifying customers and deciding how to meet their wants and needs is a basic task facing every destination (Cook et al. 2017). Kotler et al. (2017) define a market as a set of actual and potential buyers of a product who share a particular need or want that can be satisfied through exchange relationships through the marketing process.

In emerging destinations, the challenge of finding profitable market niches needs to be overcome in order to create successful tourism destinations. Morrison (2019) argues that predominant market trends have an impact on tourism destinations. Such trends result in changes in the characteristics of tourists, the purpose of travel, trip planning, and travel arrangements. The use of technology and how tourists co-create the travel experience also impact travel motivations and destination choice. Destinations historically considered to be dependable may be less so in the future, as increasing demand for experiential tourism is driving more tourists to seek less traditional, 'venture' destinations (Plog 2001).

Understanding travel motivations and behaviours of specific markets have implications for product development ideas, targeting, positioning, and service enhancements that can attract and satisfy the specific segments. Categorising these travel motivations into segments identifies specific groups of tourists with similar needs, wants, likes, and travel behaviour patterns. This allows marketers to better understand market opportunities and maximise them. Destination marketing organisations (DMOs) of emerging markets do not feel the need to invest in market research because international markets still represent a small portion of their tourist demand, but as international demand and competition grow, research data will become more valuable for emerging destinations (Morrison 2019).

Motivations alone cannot be used for segmenting a traveller market segment. For example, youth travellers' category is limited if the subject of the investigation is too broad (Han et al. 2019b). Other variables

should also be considered to fully understand the particular market. While examining a traveller segment would allow for a better understanding of the people in that particular market (Stainton 2016), geographic and demographic profiling has become quite limiting.

In fact, if destination marketers understand the 'psychographic curve' (Plog 2001), they will be able to control and maintain an ideal positioning in a destination's tourism development (Fyall 2019). The concept of experiential tourism has allowed marketers to develop psychographic approaches to customer segmentation that gives destination marketing organisations (DMOs) and operators an insight into visitors' travel values that align most closely with the destination offering (WTO and ETC 2017). This shows the importance of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning in a destination's tourism planning, development, and management process.

Market Segmentation

The task of meeting diverse tourists' needs and wants gave rise to the idea of market segmentation. Instead of meeting the needs and wants of the entire market with a single product or service, marketers divide the market into smaller but more homogeneous market segments (Cook et al. 2017). Markets with similar characteristics and needs are identified as homogeneous groups to simplify the marketing process. Marketers need to carefully select their priority target markets to make more effective use of their resources and generate the best return on investment (Morrison 2019). Beyond statistics on tourist arrivals, marketers should dig deeper into a detailed understanding of their customers' travel behaviour. Segmentation allows the sharing of similar characteristics and motivations as well as similar likes and interests (WTO and ETC 2017). Segmentation encourages an alignment with consumers' needs. It helps to find new market opportunities; predict possible consumer behaviour that may likely lead to consumption and encourage purchase; and facilitate more efficient allocation of resources through a better understanding of the market (Kotler and Keller 2012). The concept of experiential tourism has resulted in the development of psychographic approaches to

customer segmentation that gives DMOs and operators an insight into visitors' travel values and those segments that align most closely with a destination's offerings (WTO and ETC 2017).

Marketing scholars provide a variety of segmentation variables which include (a) geographic, (b) demographic, (c) psychographic, and (d) behavioural (Kotler et al. 2017).

Geographic segmentation has been the simplest form of segmentation where the market is divided based on country, city, town, or neighbourhood of residence/origin. Studies profiling tourists based on country of residence are still pursued in current literature. Such studies include a study made on profiling and segmentation of international tourists in India (Singh et al. 2017). The study revealed that the majority of Asians visit to see India's rich history and culture, while Australians visit to experience spirituality and see its natural beauty. Europeans come to experience spirituality, and Americans visit to enjoy services that offer value for money. Age was also observed to attract people to India for different reasons; people aged 19–30 visit India for its spirituality, natural beauty, and food; and people aged 31–50 are attracted due to diverse factors, while visitors 51 years old and above visit India for spiritual activities (Singh et al. 2017).

Demographic profile looks into segmenting the market based on age, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, race, and life cycle (Kotler et al. 2017). Studies on the use of demographic profiling are not uncommon in the literature. Some examples of these studies include a segmentation analysis of cultural heritage tourism through the lens of youth in Thailand (Pansukkum and Swanson 2018) and how food value video clips were effective in promoting food tourism for Chinese Generation Y versus non-generation Y (Xu and Pratt 2018). Also, studies on religious tourism have recently been published as the Muslim tourism market is rising in significance, such as developing a Muslim tourism market in Taiwan (Hsu et al. 2020), and Halal-friendly hotels in Thailand (Jeaheng et al. 2019).

Psychographic segmentation involves grouping people on how they live, their priorities, and their interests; describing a person's lifestyle and personality; and showing similarities in hobbies, sports preferences, and musical interests (Cook et al. 2017). This type of segmentation is based

on social class, lifestyle, and personality (Kotler et al. 2017). The growth of niche markets was mainly due to the growing trend of psychographic segmentation. Adventure, cultural, food, leisure, farm, business, wellness, eco-tourism, and many others are examples of psychographic segmentation. The farm tourism segment in Taiwan (Chen et al. 2010) reveals the lifestyle characteristics of farm tourists.

Behavioural segmentation refers to dividing groups based on their knowledge, attitude, use of or response to a product or service (Badilla 2015). These behavioural variables include special occasion segmentation, benefits sought, user status, user rate, loyalty status, and buyer readiness. Scholars have examined behavioural segmentation in studies such as examining honeymooners' tourist behaviour in Thailand (Fakfare et al. 2020).

Product-related segmentation groups are travellers who seek different benefits based on their reason for travel together (Cook et al. 2017). The most popular reasons for travel are leisure, business, and visiting friends and relatives. Destinations need to consider developing products that will focus on specific segments that have the highest interest levels in using the specific products (Morrison 2019). Product-related segmentation is key to tapping the Muslim market, whereby marketers need to understand the special needs dictated by one's religion (Hsu et al. 2020).

There seem to be some overlaps in market segmentation using geodemographic segmentation, socio-economic profiles, and psychographic and behavioural. A variety of market segments have been identified, such as geodemographic on the Chinese Generation Y Market (Xu and Pratt 2018), using both geographic (country) and age (generation y) as variables for segmentation. Another example is that volunteer tourism and youth travellers as an emerging trend (Han et al., 2019) combine psychographic (volunteerism) and demographic (youth) variables.

New strategies for segmentation have emerged in the constantly changing travel trends. The literature identifies a variety of segmentation strategies used by destinations veering away from the one-size-fits-all marketing approach. These approaches include benefit segmentation, practice-based approach, stakeholder approach, and explorer quotient.

Benefit segmentation was first introduced by Haley (1968) as a segmentation approach that looks into how the benefits sought by consumers

determine their purchase behaviour more accurately than merely descriptive or demographic characteristics. Based on a study conducted by Nduna and vanZyl (2020) of Mpumalanga Province, South Africa, a benefit segmentation framework was proposed for a nature-based tourism destination using cluster analysis. Segmenting tourists using benefits sought identifies benefits relevant to consumers' needs and wants in order to design products and promotional messages to specific market segments identified.

Practice-based segmentation looks into social practices as an alternative way of segmenting the market. With the emerging world view of tourists as co-creators of the tourism experience, Rihova et al. (2019) conducted exploratory and evaluator research on practice-based segmentation as a potential conceptual alternative to more traditional segmentation approaches. They argue that social practices represent an altogether different starting point for strategic, customer-induced segmentation. Further research on co-creation practices as a basis for segmentation is highly recommended.

The *stakeholder approach* to destination segmentation takes the view of tourism stakeholders through a two-step process. The first involves understanding how multiple destination stakeholders view their market, and the second is segmenting the destination based on variables that were commonly identified by a broad range of destination stakeholders (Tkaczynski and Rundle-Thiele 2011). Using the four recognised bases of segmentation (geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural), stakeholders classify their tourists based on the use of services offered to tourists, namely accommodations, mode of transportation, dining, social interactions, and holiday patterns.

Other market segmentation strategies used by developed countries can be used to segment the markets for emerging economies. The *explorer quotient* has been developed by Destination Canada, which goes beyond traditional market research of defining people but looks into an individual's personal beliefs, social values, and views of the world to learn exactly why different types of travellers seek out entirely different types of travel experiences (Destination Canada 2015). Data-driven market segmentation is proposed by academic and industry data analysts, which provides a better quality of market segmentation solution derived from empirical

tourist data which can translate into a competitive advantage and increased business for destinations (Hajibaba et al. 2019). Market research studies on emerging destinations have been scarce.

Segmentation permits tourism service providers to better meet specific customer needs and wants while attempting to increase their satisfaction (Cook et al. 2017). Destination marketing organisations carefully select priority target markets to ensure that they make more effective use of their resources and generate the best return on investment (Morrison 2019). Destination marketers are increasingly streamlining their marketing efforts towards identified segments rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Nduna and vanZyl 2020). Segmentation provides a tool for destinations to effectively plan their marketing efforts (Nduna and van-Zyl 2020). Destinations need to identify the personal motivations of those who visit and those who are interested in the destination, determining what draws them to the destination, what is preventing them from visiting, and what their needs/wants are from the destination in question (Fyall 2019) to have a greater understanding of personality profiles of the destinations' target markets. Beyond statistics, marketers need to know why tourist behaviours are changing the way they do (Morrison 2019).

Specialised Tourist Segments

Among the challenges of market segmentation are (a) some markets are too small to segment, (b) some markets not considered a few years ago are growing in size and significance such as travellers with disabilities and volunteerism, and (c) individuals could be classified as members of many different markets (Cook et al. 2017). Further, it has also become difficult to identify emerging markets in international tourism, and competition among destinations has intensified greatly (Morrison 2019). Because of the size and significance of specific market segments, some have developed smaller segments within the larger market segments.

For instance, food consumption has become an important part of the tourism experience. This gave rise to the term 'foodies', which is defined as people with a passion for eating and learning about food but are actually not food professionals (Cairns et al. 2010). Such foodie travellers

who seek out unique food experiences have different preferences and behaviours. In a study conducted in North California, USA, three sub-segments of foodies were identified, and these were known as enthusiasts, creators, and samplers (Kline et al. 2018). Compared to another study of Chinese foodies who have travelled to Taiwan, correlations existed among foodies' consumption motivations, emotions, perceived well-being, and experiential values (Chang et al. 2021). The findings revealed that foodies give a high premium to food experience; hence, preparers of food should emphasise local cultural characteristics to make the food consumption experience unique. In Ecuador, a study showed the existence of three types of tourists based on their interest in local gastronomy during travel. Based on the interest and previous cultural motivation of tourists, the typologies included survivors, enjoyers, and experiencers (Galvez et al. 2020).

Further, the volunteer tourism industry started as a micro-segment but has now developed a variety of smaller segments, which include medical, environmental, and cultural niches (Stainton 2016). A study conducted with 342 highly educated youths from 58 countries came up with a structural model assessment of the volunteer travel motivations, which include altruism, personal development, education, ego-enhancement, and escapism (Han et al., 2019). By identifying these travel motivations, marketers will be able to target and attract these specialised tourist segments such as the foodies and volunteer tourists by designing communication strategies that are congruent with their travel motives.

Another example of niche segmentation, wine tourists, has varied typologies. In India, wine-related lifestyle was segmented in the context of urban Indian consumers. The study yielded six kinds of wine-related lifestyles, namely drinking ritual, social drinking, consumption reason (mood, enjoyment, and relaxation), consumption practice, consumption planning, and quality (Sharma et al. 2020). Further, through clustering, three typologies were identified as cautious social drinkers, lone regular drinkers, and highly engaged drinkers (Sharma et al. 2020). If a niche market as small as wine tourists can be segmented into different typologies, there are boundless opportunities for research on market segmentation of other types of markets.

In order for these specialised markets to be accessible to marketers, these are also described based on countries of origin, age or generational groups, gender, and level of education, among others.

Market Targeting

Market targeting involves evaluating each segment's attractiveness and selecting the ones on which the business can operate (Kotler et al. 2017). Kotler et al. (2017) identified three factors used for evaluating market segments, namely segment size, attractiveness, and company's objectives and resources. Segment size refers to sales growth and potential for profit. Segment attractiveness shows the profitability of the segment in relation to the presence of competitors, market saturation, and demand. The company's objectives should be aligned with the markets being identified, and the company has enough resources to succeed in the specific market segment.

There are several ways of tapping market segments based on a company's resources. These are the degree of product homogeneity, market homogeneity, and competitors' strategy. Kotler et al. (2017) recommend market coverage strategies as follows: (a) *undifferentiated marketing* where a company ignores segmentation and goes after the entire market with one offer, (b) *differentiated marketing* where the company targets several market segments with different product offers to capture a bigger chunk of the market, (c) *concentrated marketing* where a company allocates most of its resources to a specific market segment to pursue a substantial market share of a few smaller markets, and (d) *micromarketing* where a company tailors its products and marketing programmes to the tastes of specific individuals and locations. The market segments can be tapped through an efficient marketing communications plan to create awareness, interest, and desire for the tourism products and services offered by destinations.

The use of social media (SM) platforms has become more prevalent and is the preferred channel to convey messages to specific target markets (Yetimoglu and Ugurlu 2020). Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are the most commonly used channels in effectively tapping

target markets. Social media is a cost-effective digital platform for attracting potential customers and promoting tourism products and services through direct interaction with customers (Alalwan et al. 2017; Lin et al. 2020; Styvén and Wallstrom 2017).

Tourism marketers have seen the growing importance of social media influencers in conveying information and messages to their followers, as these are perceived to be with higher credibility than destination-generated content (Yetimoglu and Ugurlu 2020).

A Muslim market is a new market segment that has become very attractive for emerging economies. There are over two billion Muslims globally (worldpopulationreview.com), and interest in tourism has been growing. Taiwan wants to diversify its inbound tourist market by attracting Muslims from Southeast Asia, India, Middle East, and China (Hsu et al. 2020). Marketers, however, need to consider the special needs of this market segment. In order for emerging destinations to tap into this market, they need to comprehend that their travel requirements are dictated by Islamic rules and obligations, which include Halal food, toilets, prayer facilities, transportation, and entertainment (Hsu et al. 2020).

Market Positioning

Positioning is a natural extension of market segmentation and targeting, with destinations constantly under review with regard to a myriad of factors such as destination attributes, price, competitor destinations, and type of tourist (Chacko and Marcell 2008).

Once destinations have identified their target markets, they need to identify the appropriate value proposition for differentiation and positioning (Kotler et al. 2017). Market positioning involves developing a competitive market position for the product and designing a marketing mix to achieve and maintain the desired position (Kotler et al. 2017). Several positioning strategies based on specific product attributes, service offered, personnel quality, location, and brand image can be used (Kotler et al. 2017) to help identify its competitive advantage and unique selling proposition.

DMOs play an important role in developing the positioning and branding of destinations. In the cities of Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata, food tourism is emphasised in their place branding initiatives but has been found to fall short in positioning themselves as food urban destinations (Amore and Roy 2020). Enhancing the visibility of food trails by interacting with international tourists on different social media platforms and the quest for authenticity in the urban visitor experience were some of the recommendations to enhance India's positioning as an urban food tourism destination (Amore and Roy 2020). On the other hand, positioning a destination may also vary depending on who is marketing it. A study on Islamic marketing proposed a framework on how to position a destination to the Muslim market, namely using the halal certification for non-Muslim marketers and Islamisation for Muslim marketers (Islam 2020).

Defining one's positioning successfully is key to creating a hierarchy of visitor experiences within the destination, ranging from 'iconic', 'signature', or 'must see' experiences and attractions, to supporting experiences, such as local foods and gastronomy (WTO and ETC 2017). With the emergence of new destinations around the world, the marketplace has become more competitive. Destinations need to maintain or increase their competitive position to be truly distinctive in the marketplace, as destinations that are historically dependable may be less so in the future because increasing demand for experiential tourism is driving tourists to newer destinations (Fyall 2019).

Role of Technology in Market Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

Information and communications technologies (ICTs) provide opportunities for market segmentation and market research. Despite an abundance of academic papers on market segmentation in tourism, there are only a few focusing on information and communications technology (Pesonen 2013). Technology has increased the capacity of marketers to analyse voluminous data through computer software. Segmentation has

become more sophisticated with the advancements in computer hardware and software (Bowen 1998). The use of statistical data modelling software provides easy identification of market segments and can compare the effectiveness of using different software techniques in identifying market segments. Bowen (1998) argues that with computerised methods, the steps to market segmentation are combined such that computer software can give information on whom to target for specific products, hence making the process easier for marketers. Through the use of digital techniques, segmentation by computers has become bias-free, absent of the bias of human judgement. With innovations such as data mining and big data analytics providing processed information, segmentation methods have prospered.

Also, advances in digital and mobile technology have given rise to location-based marketing. As consumers become more dependent on smartphones with GPS capabilities, companies can engage consumers with real-time and location-based marketing offers (Kotler et al. 2017). SoLoMo (social + local + mobile) is a new innovation that reaches on-the-go digital tourists as they navigate destinations. In recent years, targeting specific market segments is no longer a challenge for tourism marketers. Social media networks have drawn millions to seek travel information online, and tourism marketers have heavily relied and engaged on social media as an information and promotional channel (Morrison 2019).

The role of social media has grown in significance. As consumers travel more, they have become more dependent on social media for information and no longer rely on travel agents and tour operators (Wee 2017). The tourism and hospitality literature reveals a growing interest in the adoption and use of social media for management and other business activities, particularly marketing (Lin et al. 2020). This has also given marketers the ability to engage customers one on one, where marketing messages have become more personalised. Social media has allowed marketers to veer away from the one-to-many marketing model that has been prevalent in the past. Businesses have been able to communicate directly to customers, while consumers have also been able to directly communicate back to businesses and other consumers. This has allowed new and emerging destinations, which do not have as much marketing budgets as

more established and popular destinations to tap into the market previously dominated by such destinations.

The use of ICT in tourism is expected to grow in the coming years. With COVID-19 boosting the use of online technology for several purposes globally, such as the use of robots, artificial intelligence, and service automation, digital media provide destinations with the opportunity to be in the online world. However, emerging economies where ICT infrastructure is not fully developed will continue to experience the digital divide. Nevertheless, with online, word of mouth, and the tourist's active role in the co-creation of destination image and the tourist experience, new and emerging destinations can flourish. Technology convergence will ultimately lead to convergence of digital and traditional forms of marketing, which is seen to be more personalised and more customer-engaged (Kotler et al. 2016).

Steps in Market Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning

Market segmentation, targeting, and positioning are valuable tools for the marketing planning process. When segmenting a market, it is crucial for marketers to identify bases for segmenting the market and develop tourist profiles for the resulting segments. Targeting the market segment entails developing measures of segment attractiveness and selecting the markets to target. In market positioning, marketers should develop positioning strategies for each target segment and develop a marketing mix for each target segment. Each step in the process is identified in Fig. 9.1.

Traditionally, these steps happen one after another in a sequential manner. However, Bowen (1998) argues that these steps to market segmentation, targeting, and positioning are no longer sequential, especially with the rise of technology that has allowed the merging of segmentation and targeting through sophisticated data analytical tools.
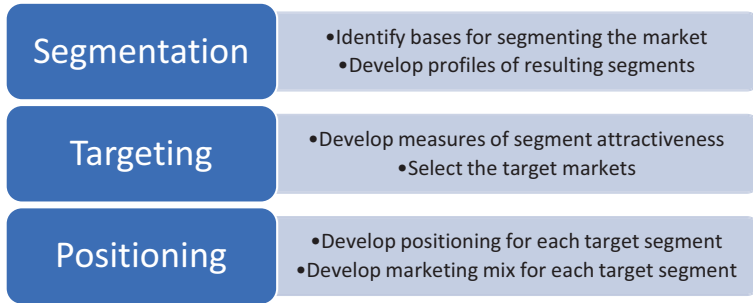
Fig. 9.1 Steps in the process of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning. (Source: Kotler et al. (2008))

The Maribojoc, Bohol, Philippines Experience

The Municipality of Maribojoc is a fourth-class municipality in Bohol, Philippines. It is divided into 22 *barangays* (Filipino term for the smallest unit of government, villages), with a total land area of 6956.8 hectares. It is a coastal town located in the southwestern portion of Bohol. Its famous attractions include the Punta Cruz Historical Watchtower, the centuries-old Holy Cross Church made of coral stones, the scenic Maribojoc Bay, the panoramic mountain ranges, the emerging Abatan River Tour, and its hospitable and peace-loving people (Bohol Philippines Travel Guide Tours and Packages n.d.). It is endowed with clear rivers, springs, and creeks that provide potable water for the people and irrigation for its rice fields. The rivers have also been adequate for swimming and river adventure tours and sports activities such as paddle boating and kayaking. It is also considered a high-tourism-value municipality in terms of the presence of heritage buildings and other interesting features that have the potential to attract tourists. The local government of Maribojoc had a strong desire to maximise the use of its resources for its tourism potential. With the popularity of Panglao Island and the capital city of Tagbilaran, it paved the way for the expansion of tourism development to the other towns of Bohol, including Maribojoc, which is 20 min (13.3 km) away from Tagbilaran and one h away (31.9 km) from Panglao Island, where the new Panglao International Airport is located.

In 2020, Maribojoc formally embarked on the creation of a tourism development plan, funded by the Tourism Infrastructure Enterprise Zone Authority. In developing its marketing plan, the planning team identified the market and its profile that can be tapped to give value to the planning area for the proposed sites. Further, the team identified gaps in the market demand and supply of leisure-based products and assessed opportunities to bridge these gaps. It also profiled the existing markets of the municipality and its immediate vicinity, including Bohol's flagship destination, Panglao Island, and its capital city, Tagbilaran, and provided other destinations as a benchmark for the destination development of Maribojoc.

Geographically, the top 10 international markets of Bohol are China, Korea, Taiwan, USA, France, Germany, Japan, Australia, United Kingdom and Canada (DOT Region 7 report). In 2018, 43% of tourists are non-Philippine residents and 57% are Filipinos with an average length of stay of 5-6 nights. The main reasons for travel is leisure and recreation followed by business travellers and the tourists' preferred travel companions were their family and friends.

Initially, three major tourism attractions were identified as the focus of development (Table 9.1). These three attractions are Punta Cruz watchtower, Anislag River complex covering the several barangays and Padhan Prayer Mountain. One of the constraints of emerging destinations is its lack of funding thereby not allowing for the conduct of a more methodical market research other than stakeholder consultations, analysis of prevailing tourist trends and benchmarking with existing profile of tourists to Bohol.

Table 9.1 Proposed product development themes and target markets

Sites	Proposed development	Proposed target markets		
		Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Punta Cruz	Eco-cultural development	Weddings and events	Leisure travellers	Educational/ training
Padhan Prayer Mountain	Pilgrimage/ religious	Religious pilgrims	Nature/ adventure seekers	Cultural
JANPPOBA River Network	River cruise	Leisure tourists	Nature	Cultural

The *destination weddings market* is a growing trend in the Philippines. Filipino couples tend to have longer engagement periods (12–24 months) to be able to plan their wedding day better. They choose a venue that has a romantic atmosphere and historical ambience and are excited to go out of town to celebrate in popular wedding destinations in the Philippines. With Punta Cruz's historical significance, it is envisioned as a premier events place in Bohol. Destination weddings now comprise 29.4% of the wedding market in the Philippines (bridestory.com). The *religious market* is known for its hallmark pilgrimage sites of the Holy Land and Mecca. Pilgrimage is a well-known religious phenomenon and exists in all the religions in the world, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity (Collins-Kreiner and Kliot 2000). Maribojoc's centuries-old church and Padhan Prayer Mountain look into attracting pilgrims from all over the country. One of the most important travel motivations is leisure. Dann (1977) and Crompton (1979) identified push factors of travel motivation, which include escape from a perceived mundane environment, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige and facilitation of social interactions as major travel motivations. Most of these motivations point to the leisure travel market.

The JANPPOBA river network seeks to attract the leisure market, with its river cruise, floating restaurants, and immersive activities, complementing existing eco-tours such as the firefly watching tour at night, nipa weaving, mangrove planting, and coconut climbing. In the UNWTO Highlights 2018, 55% of tourists travel for the main purpose of leisure, recreation, and holidays. Special interest tourism niches will also be tapped for Maribojoc, and these include the eco-adventure market, culture/heritage tourist, and the educational tourist.

The product development happens alongside the target market identification. Designing, communicating, and selling a product or service is difficult if it does not match consumers' expectations (DeCrop 2014). A product-market fit is crucial to the success of tourism marketing in emerging destinations. Maribojoc is positioning itself as the premier eco-cultural destination in Bohol, combining its environmental assets and the culture and heritage of the town to make it a worthwhile destination for tourists to extend their stay in Bohol.

Conclusion

The postmodern tourist is no longer satisfied with a passive role as a consumer (DeCrop 2014). Identifying tourism market segments and deciding how to meet their wants and needs are basic tasks that tourism marketers are faced with (Cook et al. 2017). As tourists wish to become co-creators of value and co-producers of travel activities, creating value now lies in both the hands of tourism providers and tourists (DeCrop 2014). Emerging destinations face the challenge of providing tourism experiences while maximising the tourist's role as a co-creator of experiences.

As statistics on tourist arrivals are not enough to identify the customer base, market research and market-planning techniques can provide a more thorough understanding of specific markets (Morrison 2019). Market segmentation continues to play a vital role in tourism market planning. The rise of sophisticated ICT tools for market segmentation allows emerging destinations to easily identify market segments to target without very costly market research programmes. With the emergence of many new destinations around the world, perhaps the most challenging task is the ability of destinations to be truly distinctive in the marketplace (Fyall 2019). Digital marketing and creativity can provide smaller destinations without huge marketing budgets the opportunity to be noticed in a crowded marketplace. As such, tourism marketers need to be updated on the latest trends in the market to stay relevant and competitive in the marketplace. Understanding tourists is more critical today, as they are more demanding and changeable, showing more complex preferences and decision patterns (DeCrop 2014). Emerging destinations that are able to respond to market trends, opportunities, and challenges can become successful in creating niches for themselves.

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