How to Organize Individual Travel?

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Tourists' activities are often marked by unsustainable behavior or a lack of awareness of the environmental, societal and economic impact of travel. Because of this, the chapter presents factors influencing travel decisions and ways to make travel and mobility within them more sustainable. It focuses on trip organization and the influence of motivation and decision-making on it. Travel motivation is explored through four groups of motives: physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status. The selection of a destination, which is determined by various factors, is also examined, emphasizing the importance of understanding this process. Mobility in tourism has a significant impact on the environment, with air travel being the most burdensome. Different forms of transportation have different environmental impacts, which is crucial for sustainable travel. When individually organizing trips, considering destination choice, mode of transportation, weather conditions, duration of travel, accommodation, finances, and the reality of destination information is recommended. Mobility at the destination is crucial as tourist visits can burden the environment. Sustainable transportation modes such as walking, cycling, and public transport are recommended to reduce environmental impacts and enable more authentic tourist experiences.

1   Introduction

The Slovenian Literary Dictionary defines travel as »moving from place to place, especially by means of transport« (Meterc et al., 2024). It is a circular process, as a mandatory part of travel is also the return to one's home place of residence (domicile). Travel can in itself be a goal or the realization of a desire for an individual activity, with which we achieve various needs that cannot be satisfied in our place of permanent residence.

Travel organization falls within the broader field of travel activity, which can be defined as "the activities of tour operators, travel agencies and other travel-related activities, such as tourist guidance (Nemec Rudež, 2013). In this context, travel organization is viewed as an economic activity that encompasses the operations of a large number of different economic entities that provide their customers (tourists) with a range of different services.

In this chapter, we will focus on travel organization from an individual perspective. Therefore, the focus of the chapter will be on individual ways of organizing travel and introducing sustainable practices into individual phases of an individual's travel organization. Some of the definitions that we will present in this chapter may also apply to travel organization from an economic perspective.

2   Motivation for travel and decision to travel

Determining the motivation for travel actually means determining the reasons (motives) of behavior in the decision-making process about choosing a travel destination, which in turn always involves behavior with a specific reason. The reason for a certain behavior is mitigated by unsatisfied needs or desires. Schiffman & Kanuk (2004) designed a model of the motivational process, which can also be meaningfully applied to the field of motivation for travel. According to this model, unsatisfied needs, desires and expectations cause impatience and a desire for action. Important factors that influence behavior or the decision to travel are certainly prior learning and thinking.

Đeri (2009) lists four groups of motives for travel:

- physical motives, which include physical rest, sports activities and possible medical treatments, the aim of which is to improve the physical condition and physical health of the individual;
- cultural motives, which put the individual's desire to travel in the foreground with the aim of getting to know other countries, cultural heritage, art, music, etc.;
- interpersonal motives, with the reason for travel visiting family or friends or changing the everyday environment, which often includes escaping from family, friends, colleagues, business contacts, escaping the monotony of everyday life or simply the desire to meet new people and make new friends;
- status and prestige motives, which arise from personal needs for self-esteem and development, relating mainly to work and professional interest, with the aim of education or pursuing a hobby.

The United Nations & World Tourism Organization (2010) divide all tourist trips into two basic groups: private and business or professional trips. A large number of motives are cited for both types of trips. The following motives are typical for private trips:

- rest, relaxation and recreation;
- visiting relatives and friends;
- education and training;
- health and medical care;
- religious reasons;
- shopping;
- transit and
- other reasons such as: voluntary work, investigative work, migration, etc.

The decision to travel, and especially the choice of a travel location or tourist destination, is influenced by a range of different factors. Researchers have tried to simplify this complexity by creating different models to understand travel choice. One such model, which encompasses a holistic approach to deciding on the choice

of a tourist destination, is the »tilde« model developed by Schiffman & Kanuk (2004). The model is based on three main components:

- input data;
- decision-making process;
- output data.

In the »tilde« model, the input data are external influences, which are a source of information about a particular travel destination and have a significant impact on the behavior of individuals in the final travel decision. The input data are:

- marketing activities of tourism companies, which encompass all communication activities that tourism companies carry out with the aim of guiding individuals to choose a particular place as their travel destination;
- socio-cultural circumstances, such as: the influence of family, lifestyle, culture and subculture, the Internet and social networks, social class, etc.

The decision-making process in the »tilde« model includes several phases, among which we highlight:

- the psychological field, which includes the internal influences of the individual, such as: motivation, perception, learning, personality and individual attitudes;
- recognition of needs, which can be the result of external or internal factors and often manifest as "problems" that the individual faces (stress at work, dissatisfaction with the place of residence, anxiety, the need to experience something new, etc.);
- information search, which covers several different sources of information about the tourist offer of individual sources, such as: previous experiences, accessible marketing and non-commercial information that helps in organizing the trip and
- evaluation of alternatives, which includes a list of tourist destinations from which a choice is intended to be made and a list of criteria that will be used in evaluating each tourist destination.

The output data in the »tilde« model covers two activities that are closely related to each other:

- purchase/reservation of services at a selected tourist destination, which includes a trial purchase when we first decide on the services of a particular company and a repeat purchase, which is the result of loyalty to a particular company, which is the result of satisfaction with previous experience;
- evaluation after returning from a tourist destination, which includes comparison with expectations and can result in satisfaction, neutral feeling or dissatisfaction.

3 Mobility in a sustainable way

A key part of travel and tourism in general is mobility. The movement of people to and from destinations is a prerequisite for travel and tourism activities, but it also potentially constitutes the greatest burden on the environment and other aspects of sustainability. The most important factor in the impact of tourist mobility on the environment is the choice of transport modality, as each modality has its own patterns of use and environmental impacts. We limit ourselves to emissions; the differences between individual modalities per passenger per kilometer traveled are shown in Figure 1.
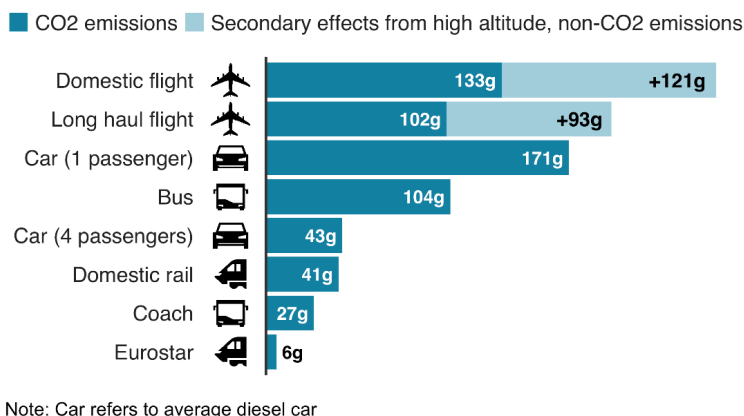

Figure 1: Emissions from different modes of transport per passenger per km travelled
Source: ('Climate Change', 2019).

Regardless of the research methodology, air travel is indisputably the most environmentally damaging mode of travel. In 2009, it was highlighted that aviation contributes a significant share of global CO_2 emissions and is also responsible for other emissions, such as nitrogen oxides, which have a significant impact on the state

of the atmosphere and the environment. As global mobility continues to increase, emissions from air travel are expected to increase, highlighting the need for sustainable travel interventions. An alternative to air travel is train travel, especially for medium-distance journeys of up to 500 km, where, with suitably fast train connections, train travel is cheaper, faster and more comfortable (Genter, 2019). Rail travel per passenger means a significant reduction in environmental impact compared to cars and planes, but this depends in part on the way locomotives are powered and the electricity for electric locomotives is generated. Individual car travel, especially those using petrol or diesel as fuel, is a significant contributor to global CO_2 emissions. For example, in the EU, cars and vans are responsible for around 15% of all CO_2 emissions (*Reducing Carbon Emissions: EU Targets and Policies*, 2023). The overall environmental footprint of cars is of course influenced by various factors, including fuel efficiency, number of passengers and distance travelled. In order to reduce the environmental impact, measures such as carpooling and the use of fuel-efficient vehicles are essential. Electric vehicles are one way to reduce the environmental impact of travel locally, although globally they can still have a significant negative impact on environmental well-being (Holland et al., 2016). Buses, especially when operating at full capacity, are a more environmentally friendly solution than individual car trips, but they are less comfortable and often slower than trains, so they are most often used for medium-long distances or as part of package tours. Other modes, such as walking or cycling, can also be used for local travel.

The decision about which mode of travel to choose is influenced by countless factors. The main factors that we consciously or unconsciously consider every time we decide on a travel modality are:

− Cost: This is one of the dominant factors. Travelers often weigh the costs of different travel options against their benefits or compare them with the values of other decision factors.
− Time: The duration of the journey is important, especially for business travelers or those with a tight schedule.
− Convenience: The ease of access to the mode, the frequency of availability and the directness of the route all play an important role. In the case of a private car, ownership is also an important factor in this context.

– Comfort: The perceived comfort of the mode of travel, which can include seating, cleanliness and available services as well as flexibility in terms of individual requirements.

– Ease of use: This factor refers to how easy it is for users to select and use a particular mode of transport.

– Reliability: This mainly refers to the consistency and ability of the mode to meet the set requirements in terms of travel time, frequency and comfort.

– Accessibility of information: It is important how passengers can find, understand and use information about the mode, such as: timetables, fares and real-time status. Access to this information via websites, mobile applications or other means can greatly influence a passenger's decision to choose a mode of transport.

– Environmental concerns: Travelers are increasingly considering the carbon footprint and other environmental and local impacts of their travels and are choosing more sustainable modes.

– Safety: Perceived safety and actual safety data about a modality can be an important factor in choice, especially in the case of risky modes.

– Cultural and social influences: The acceptability of some modes over others in different cultural contexts or peer groups can influence the choice of travel mode in certain groups.

– Personal preferences: Some people may have specific personal preferences, such as a desire for privacy or past experiences, which influence their choice.

According to research by Fiorello et al. (2016), EU residents most often choose to travel by private car for trips over 1,000 km, in half of all cases. This is followed by a decision to fly in a third of cases, and about 10% of EU residents choose to travel by train. The picture is similar for distances between 300 and 1,000 km, as in this range three quarters of trips are made by private car, and about 15% by train. In recent years, the trend in travel habits for tourism purposes has been towards longer trips, with travelers planning to travel by plane in about half of cases, with a quarter intending to travel by private car, and about 16% by train (*Monitoring Sentiment for Domestic and Intra-European Travel*, 2023).

4   Important questions when organizing individual travel

When planning an individual trip, we often have many questions. In other words, a large number of decisions need to be taken before   the implementation of an individual trip. On the Bontraveller website (www.bontraveler.com), we find 10 key questions that need to be answered before deciding on an individual trip. We list them below (Wright, 2023).

4.1   Choosing a destination – Where am I going or what do I need in life right now?

Choosing a travel destination is the first and perhaps most important question when deciding to travel. Choosing a travel destination is closely linked to the current unmet needs of the individual. For example, an individual who currently lives in a city and feels stress or the initial stage of burnout needs a contrasting experience; nature, rest, peace. These three words (nature, rest and peace) are the starting point for choosing a travel destination. Other elements, such as finances, length of stay, etc., will subsequently be aligned.

4.2   Choosing a mode of transport

A very important issue in individual travel organization is certainly the method of transportation to the destination. The trip itself should not be too expensive, too tiring or take a lot of time. Therefore, it is highly recommended thatall possible modes of transportation at this stage are considered, which is especially true for remote destinations, where it is imperative to consider flight connections. In addition to the time aspect, the financial aspects of travel should also be considered, which means that overpriced plane tickets with one or more transfers are not the right decision. For flight connections, the use of freely available online tools is recommended, such as: Google Flights, FlightConnections, Skycannner, etc., which allow for the optimal choice based on time, finances, number of transfers, etc.

4.3   Water temperature

If you are planning to go to a destination for swimming, the water temperature is a very important factor. This is especially true for places that are usually served by low-cost airlines with ticket prices that are often much more affordable compared to other destinations. Therefore, it is advisableto consider this factor before deciding to travel.

4.4   Weather conditions according to the season

Given climate change and possible natural disasters, which we have been witnessing frequently lately, it is essential to study and take into account the possible occurrence of the latter before deciding to travel. The frequency of individual phenomena is more pronounced in certain seasons, which in many cases means that the prices of tourist services are often lower during these times. Certain trips may also be cancelled more often. Therefore, it is even advisable to study the weather in a particular location on an annual basis according to the available data.

4.5   Number of days of travel – going abroad or staying local?

The decision to travel abroad or stay in your hometown depends on how many free days you have available. In the case of distant destinations, Bontraveller recommends the rule: "at least 1 day for every hour spent on the way", which is especially true for air travel. Such a rule allows us to more easily finalize the destination and determine whether we have enough time to stay at each stop.

For shorter trips, Bontraveller recommends visiting nearby destinations, which is also highly recommended from a sustainable development perspective. Traveling to nearby destinations in the local environment allows for a more relaxed experience in a shorter time.

4.6   What will work at the destination?

The opening times of individual tourist attractions are a very important factor in deciding whether to travel. Therefore, it is necessary to double-check before traveling what exactly will be open during your stay at the destination. If there is a

list of attractions that you want to visit, it is imperative to check the opening hours of public holidays separately from the reservations, as sometimes the calendars do not match.

4.7   How will I get around at my destination?

If you are not traveling with your own car, it is necessary to examine the mobility options at the destination level. Therefore, thinking about how you will move around the destination before deciding to travel is definitely recommended. If you decide to rent a car, you need to consider the rental costs, which can be high. Therefore, it is very important to also examine other modes of mobility at the destination, such as renting a bicycle or motorbike, public transport at the destination, which is much more acceptable from a financial and environmental point of view, if such options exist there.

4.8   Choosing the right accommodation

Accommodation is one of the most important considerations when deciding to travel. Important elements when choosing an accommodation facility are certainly safety, practicality and, last but not least, the location of the accommodation itself. Bontraveller lists a list of important questions that are good to have answers to before starting a trip. The questions are especially important in the case of a family traveling with a small child or baby. These are the following questions:

- Location: Is the accommodation close enough to easily visit the attractions I want to visit based on my travel itinerary?
- Safety: Are there open balconies, swimming pools, and other elements that could be a nuisance?
- Functionality: Does the accommodation have everything I need (kitchen, washing machine, baby bed, etc.)?
- Does the accommodation have air conditioning? This question is very important for summer travel.

4.9   Finances – does the trip make sense at this time from a financial perspective?

Depending on the different needs, desires and motives for travel, the budget for travel varies significantly. However, it is important to determine some criteria regarding travel that relate to the financial aspect. Bontraveller lists the three most important factors:

–   average price of transportation costs (planes, accommodation);
–   average price of accommodation (for example, the Airbnb portal offers this information on its website when choosing a destination);
–   mobility costs at the destination.

These are the most important costs incurred on a single trip in terms of the share they account for in the overall trip budget and consequently provide a quick insight into the planned budget for the entire trip.

4.10   Expectations and reality of information provided about the destination

The social media era we live in and the frequency of edited photos can lead to unrealistic expectations for a particular trip. This can in turn lead to disappointment upon arrival at the chosen destination. To avoid this, Bontraveller offers some useful suggestions, such as:

–   reviewing photos with a marked location, where you can quickly get a sense of whether the photo is real or edited;
–   monitoring people you trust, as this reduces the possibility of creating unrealistic expectations.

5   Mobility at the destination

Part of travel, regardless of its purpose, is also mobility at the destination itself. Tourist visits, although often economically beneficial for local communities, can bring a number of problems in terms of mobility and traffic, which we as tourists

need to be aware of and reduce through our activities. One of the main challenges is the strain on the environment and local resources. The seasonal influx of tourists can cause excessive strain on transport, public spaces and infrastructure, leading to congestion in city centres and tourist attractions. Such seasonal fluctuations can exceed the capacity of local infrastructure, especially in smaller towns and seaside resorts, which are not designed to handle such large numbers of tourists.

In addition, access to information for tourists may be limited or misleading, resulting confusion and inefficient use of transport. Tourists often have different needs and expectations from transport than the local population, which can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts. While the local population focuses on a quick and efficient journey to work, tourists may be looking for more tourist-oriented transport options. In addition, in many tourist destinations there is a lack of multimodality and intermodality in transport. This means that different transport modes may not be well connected or do not work together, making it difficult to switch between different modes of transport, such as buses, trains or bicycles, and thus reducing the efficiency and comfort of travel for visitors. All these factors should be considered when planning a trip, and at the destination itself, choosing modalities that are more friendly to the environment and the local population is advised.

It has been proven that tourists use different means of mobility at a destination than in their normal lives, mainly due to different travel goals and time constraints. The shift occurs in favor of more sustainable mobility alternatives (Zamparini & Vergori, 2021). Thus, as tourists, by using modalities such as walking, cycling and public transport, we can significantly contribute to reducing the impacts of our travel.

In the context of a tourist destination visitor, it is crucial to understand how our mobility patterns and decisions can affect the places we visit and at the same time enrich our experience. One strategy that we as individual travelers can use is to choose sustainable mobility alternatives, such as the concept of Mobility as a Service (MaaS). This innovative approach combines different forms of transportation, such as public transportation, bicycles, walking, and car-sharing programs, into a single user experience that allows for flexible and convenient travel (Hensher, 2017). By using platforms that offer such services, tourists not only contribute to reducing environmental impacts but also gain deeper insight into the local culture and environment.

Similarly, choosing slower modes of transport, such as cycling and walking, is not only beneficial for the environment but also for the visitor's experience. This allows for a more relaxed, authentic and engaging way of exploring destinations, which typically offers more direct and authentic interactions with the local community and environment. Choosing cycling or walking as your main mode of transport can provide access to more remote and less tourist-heavy places, creating unique and personal travel experiences.

Tourists generally have access to a number of platforms and tools to help them choose sustainable means of transport and plan their trips. Using digital ride-sharing platforms or public transport route planning apps can improve travel efficiency and enable more integrated and greener itineraries (Cohen & Kietzmann, 2014). Connecting with locals through these platforms or forums can also enrich the experience with valuable local advice and information.

In addition to digital technologies that support travel planning at the destination, it is also necessary to mention the concept of smart tourism, which closely coincides with the concept of smart mobility, in the context of tourism in the modern world. Smart tourism, which also takes advantage of smart mobility concepts, can offer tourists many benefits, especially by integrating information and communication technologies into the tourist experience. Gretzel et al. (2015) note that digital platforms that enable route optimization, transport reservations and car sharing do not only offer economic and ecological awareness but also bring flexibility and efficiency to the trip itself. Smart tourist destinations try to design more efficient and sustainably oriented mobility solutions through data analysis and behavioral studies and reduce traffic congestion, which can enrich the research experience (Buhalis & Amaranggana, 2015). By enabling connections between different modes of transport and ensuring easy access to different means of transport through digital tools, the logistical side of travel is thus facilitated. In this way, the concepts of smart mobility and smart tourism can enable the upgrade of the basic tourist experience, and consequently, when selecting a destination and planning tourist experiences, it makes sense to also consider the aspect of accessibility of modern support solutions.

In some regards, mobility at the destination can also be part of the tourist experience itself. Typical examples are cycling holidays or pilgrimages, as well as cruises. Despite the attractiveness of cruise ships, they are associated with heavy environmental

concerns. Comer et al. (2015) found that ships have a large environmental footprint, which is not only a result of fuel consumption, but also relates to waste disposal and potential disruptions to marine ecosystems. Sulfur oxides emitted by passenger ships can have a significant impact on air quality and health, and black carbon is also problematic, with cruise ships emitting up to three times more than the average cargo ship.

6   Conclusion and recommendations for green travel

Planning a trip can be a complex process that requires thoughtful decisions and careful planning. It is crucial that travelers who want to travel more sustainably focus on a range of important aspects that will contribute to a carefree and memorable experience in harmony with modern sustainability principles. Choosing a destination is the first and most important step in planning a trip. It is important that the destination meets the travelers' current needs and desires, whether the trip will be primarily a rest in nature, a cultural experience, sports activities, as the right choice of destination can have a significant impact on the entire trip. The next crucial step is choosing accommodation. Important factors here include location, safety and practicality, as well as the sustainability potential and range of places to stay at the destination and location. It is worth checking whether the accommodation offers the necessary amenities for comfort or special requirements when traveling.

The mode or modality of travel is the next decision that has a significant impact on the overall sustainability orientation of travel. The decision is usually made based on the available options, which depend primarily on accessibility and infrastructure potential, taking into account both time and finances. The wrong choice of transport can negatively affect travel experiences and outcomes. Of course, the sustainable aspect of travel is also important, because, as we have shown, the choice of travel modality and movement at the destination itself can have a significant impact on reducing the impact of travel on the environment and the local community. Choosing environmentally friendly modes of transport and respecting local culture and the environment can also improve the overall travel experience and contribute to sustainable tourism.

In addition, it is crucial to consider the motivation for travel, of course in connection with the consideration of factors that also influence the subsequent choice of modality at different stages of the journey. Understanding our physical, cultural, interpersonal or status motives can help to better plan the trip and choose the destination and modalities that best meet our expectations and requirements.

In conclusion, we can conclude that organizing a trip requires thought, planning, and consideration of various factors. Understanding our input needs, choosing a suitable destination, and caring about sustainability are key factors for a successful trip. By taking into account the factors and guidelines identified, your trip will also be green.

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