SINGLE AND MULTIPLE DESTINATION TOURISM TRIPS IN BRAZIL: UNDERSTANDING TOURIST CHOICES

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Abstract

Destinations choice is a major issue in tourism research. Although multidestination tourism trips (MTTs) account for a significant share of total trips in several cases, most tourism demand studies have assumed tourist trips to have a single destination. This assumption may be unrealistic and misleading. Consumers' choices of MTTs require further investigation, both in theoretical and empirical terms in order to allow for efficient management of tourism destinations and businesses. This paper reviews theoretical and empirical studies regarding the determinants of MTTs consumption and it develops an empirical study explaining these choices for inbound tourists in Brazil. The modelling process uses a logit model and confirms most propositions of the theoretical model.

Keywords: multidestination travel; destination choice; tourism demand; logit model; tourism in Brazil.

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Introduction

Destinations choice is a major issue in tourism research. Although multidestination tourism trips (MTTs) frequently account for a significant share of total trips, most tourism demand studies have assumed tourist trips to have a single destination. This assumption may be unrealistic and misleading. Tourists' choices may frequently be influenced not only by the characteristics of the destination, but also by other destinations included in the same trip. The conclusions of a study that does not recognize this fact might be substantially biased.

Although comprehensive statistics about this issue are not available, some studies have shown that MTTs account for a significant share of tourism flows in several cases (e.g., Hwang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2006; Oppermann, 1995; Shih; 2006; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999). As a highlight, the share of MTTs on the inbound tourism of Australia is around 87% (Tideswell and Faulkner, 2003). According to the data used in the present study, MTTs accounts for 40% of inbound tourism in Brazil.

The understanding of MTTs may be relevant for the development of several tourism products. Transport companies may benefit from this knowledge by designing efficient transport routes and special products, such as passes. Tour operators may benefit from offering tour packages that combines different destinations in an optimal set. Even firms that operate within the boundaries of the destination, such as hotels and ground operators, may benefit from this knowledge through the development of business chains that profit from economies of scale originated from multidestination tourists. Countries may benefit from the geographical distributive effects of MTTs, as well as from enhanced tourist expenditure. Finally, single destinations may take advantage of the complementarity between destinations, developing single and cooperative marketing strategies.

This paper is an extension of Santos, Ramos and Rey-Maquieira (2009b) and it aims to contribute for the understanding of consumers' choices in the MTTs context. Next chapter discuss the relevant variables for the consumption of MTTs as the main arguments and empirical findings of the academic literature are summarized. In the following part, some descriptive statistics of MTTs on inbound tourism in Brazil are presented. Finally, an empirical study models the choice of taking a MTT for inbound tourists in Brazil according to their personal characteristics. The conclusion highlights the main findings and proposes issues for further investigation.

Determinants of MTTs consumption

Studies focusing MTTs are not numerous and their approaches are varied. Some studies attempted to describe geographical patterns of MTTs (e.g., Flognfeldt, 1992; Lue, Crompton and Fesenmaier, 1993; Mings and McHugh, 1992; Oppermann, 1995). Some studies developed a theoretical microeconomic model for explaining consumers' choice of travelling to more than one site based the Economics theory. Rugg (1973) and Tussyadiah, Kono and Morisugi (2006) based their theoretical studies on Lancaster's (1966) characteristics theory, while Santos, Ramos and Rey-Maquieira (2009a) applied the traditional economic theory of consumer's choices. A third group of studies attempted to explain multidestination travel consumption by developing empirical studies (e.g., Nicolau and Más, 2005; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, 2003).

Both theoretical and empirical studies discussed the relationship between MTTs and its determinants. According to the study of Santos, Ramos and Rey-Maquieira (2009a), the determining factors influencing MTTs choices are tourist's monetary and time constraints, prices of stay time at destinations and transportation across them, the duration of journeys, and tourist's preferences.

Tideswell and Faulkner (1999) argued that the relationship between monetary constraint and the consumption of MTTs is ambiguous. According to them, a negative relationship might come from the fact that higher-income consumers do not feel such a strong necessity to "fit as much into the travel itinerary as possible to ensure that the economic costs incurred in making the trip are justified" (Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, p.365). On the other hand, a positive relationship between these two variables might come from the fact that higher-income tourists "are more able to extend the time of their stay and increase their mobility through the purchase of additional transport services" (Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, p.366). The impact of changes in the monetary constraint on the consumption of MTTs was not empirically tested by these authors. Empirical evidences about the relationship between these two variables were provided by the study of Mings and McHugh (1992). The authors found a positive relationship between monetary constraint and MTTs when they analyzed tourists visiting Yellowstone National Park in the USA.

The relationship between time constraint and the consumption of MTTs were discussed by Tideswell and Faulkner (2003). The authors theoretically defended a positive relationship, arguing that "visitors who stay in a (destination) country for a longer duration,

will clearly be less time constrained, and will often be found to visit a wider variety of destinations as a result" (Tideswell and Faulkner, 2003, p.180). They confirmed this argument on an empirical study that found that inbound tourists in Australia with larger time budgets are more likely to choose MTTs. Oppermann (1994) also found a positive relationship between both variables when studying tourism in New Zealand.

The choice of visiting more destinations incurs in some additional transport costs, competing for the same scarce resources with other alternatives, such as longer stays in tourism destinations or non-tourism consumption. Therefore, transport costs are theoretically expected to be negatively associated with MTTs.

The transport cost function with respect to the number of destinations is increasing, but on decreasing rates due to the existence of shared transport costs. The more destinations are visited in the same trip, the lower are transport costs required to visit an additional destination. Therefore, the cost of visiting a given set destinations in the same trip is usually lower than the cost of visiting them on separate trips.

The shape of this function has a strong relationship with the geographical position of destinations. When destinations are geographically concentrated, or approximately in the same route, the marginal transport cost of visiting an additional destination is lower, increasing consumer's propensity of choosing a MTT. This argument is consistent with Hwang et al. (2006) and Tideswell and Faulkner (1999).

The transport cost among destinations can also be analyzed in comparison to the transport cost between tourists' residence and their destination region. The same distance between two destinations is relatively smaller when compared to larger distances between the origin and the destination region. Thus, MTTs are more frequent on long distance trips since the transport cost among tourism destinations is relatively lower in these cases. This argument is consistent with several authors' argumentations and empirical findings (Hwang et al., 2006; Mings and McHugh, 1992; Oppermann, 1995; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, 2003).

Some authors mentioned "economic rationalism" as a determinant of consumer's choice of MTT (Lue et al., 1993; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999). Their argument is that consumers may choose a MTT as a way for reducing costs as comparing a MTT with separate trips to the same set of destinations. However, this idea is not fully compatible with the consumer's choice theory at least in two aspects. Firstly, there usually are more than two bundles in the consumer's consumption set. The consumer may compare the MTT with

innumerous other bundles of consumption, and not only the set of separate trips visiting the same destinations. The second best alternative for the consumer might not include visits to all destinations included in the MTT. The idea of reduced transport costs is inadequate when non-tourism goods are also been evaluated by the consumer. Secondly, the utility of visiting a given set of destinations in a single trip is different than the utility of visiting the same places on separate trips. The utility derived by the consumer from a given stay at a tourism destination is contingent on his actual condition and recent past. Therefore, these two alternatives cannot be considered as being the same bundle. Thus, the concept of reduced transport costs is also inadequate since the compared bundles are not the same from the perspective of the consumer. In fact, it is more accurately to say that they are comparing two different things with distinct prices.

Means of transport also influences the transport costs. More rigid means of transport, such as air transport and scheduled buses, are related to higher marginal transport costs with respect to the number of destinations visited. This happens because the consumer has little freedom to choose his way and his stops. Conversely, flexible means of transport implies on lower marginal transport costs. Following this argumentation, means of transport that provides more freedom to the tourist should be associated with higher propensity of choosing MTTs. This proposition is consistent with Koo, Wu and Dwyer (2010) and Tideswell and Faulkner (1999, 2003).

The determinants of consumers' preferences are innumerous, and some of them are discussed in the academic literature regarding MTTs. Psychographic characteristics are discussed and tested by Nicolau and Más (2005). The authors tested the influence of interest on discovering new places, and interest on broadening cultural knowledge, over the choice of multidestination vacations. Surprisingly, empirical results showed that people with these interests are less likely to choose a MTT. Oppermann (1992) found that younger and female tourists are more likely to visit several sites in the same trip than older and male ones. Researchers also suggested that consumers with multiple purposes for travelling are also more tended to consume MTTs (Lue et al., 1993; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999). As noted by Tideswell and Faulkner (1999), multiple interests may also arise from risk aversion, what is consistent with the portfolio theory.

The association of several other variables with the consumption of MTTs is discussed in the academic literature. However, the actual values of many of these variables are in fact

chosen by the consumer. Multidestination and single destination trips are the outcome of a complex consumption choice process that is compounded of several other choices. Besides the number of destinations visited, tourism consumers also choose for their length of stay, expenditure level, type of transport, accommodation, independent or organized trips, and many other aspects. Although some researchers assume these choices as being taken on a step process (e.g.: Dellaert, Ettema and Lindh, 1998; Nicolau and Más, 2005; Oliveira and Vassallo, 2006), it is likely that the choice process is actually fluid and not completely separable. Hence, there are no strong arguments supporting the hypothesis that one of these choices causes others. For example, one may not be certain that the type of transport determines the propensity to take a MTT instead of that the choice

The academic literature mention several variables with this characteristic as determinants of MTTs choices, such as purpose of the trip (Lue et al., 1993; Oppermann, 1995; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999), length of trip (Mings and McHugh, 1992; Oppermann, 1992), means of transport (Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, 2003), party size (Lue et al.; Oppermann, 1992; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999), consumption of tour packages (Oppermann, 1992; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, 2003), previous visits to the destination (Hwang et al., 2006; Mings and McHugh, 1992; Oppermann, 1992; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, 2003), and search for previous information about the destination (Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999). All these variables may be correlated with, rather than causal variables of MTTs consumption. There is no reasonable *a priori* argument to assume that any of these variables is chosen independently from the destinations to be visited. In fact, it is likely that the consumer to choose among bundles of goods, and not among partial aspects. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that length of the trip influence the consumption of MTTs, and not the opposite (i.e., the consumption of MTTs influences the length of the trip). The same point could be made using any other of these choice resulting variables.

It is worthy to stress that some of these choice resulting variables are closely related to non-choice resulting variables. Purpose of the trip, length of the trip, and means of transport, for instance, are closely related to preferences, time constraint and transport cost, respectively. However, the actual value of these variables also includes a consumer choice element. For instance, a tourist can choose between two different trips to be taken on his vacation period, each one related to a different purpose. For empirical purposes, these choice resulting variables may be included as proxies of their counterparts. Regarding length of stay, as

Tideswell and Faulkner noted, most empirical studies relied on the assumption that "a visitor's length of stay in a destination country is the most appropriate indicator of the time constraints faced by tourists" (Tideswell and Faulkner, 2003, pp. 180).

The study of these choice resulting variables has shown that leisure purposes lead to higher propensity to choose MTTs (Oppermann, 1995; Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999). The length of trip is positively associated with the number of destinations visited (Mings and McHugh, 1992; Oppermann, 1992). Overland means of transport, and particularly cars, are also associated with higher propensity to MTTs consumption (Tideswell and Faulkner, 1999, 2003). The relationship of party size and the number of destinations visited is not always the same. Oppermann (1992) found that MTTs are associated with smaller groups, while Tideswell and Faulkner (1999) found the opposite. The same happens with respect to the consumption of tour packages. While Oppermann (1992) found that independent tourists visit more sites in a single trip, Nicolau and Más (2005) found exactly the contrary. Empirical results have shown that previous visits to the destination are associated with a lower number of destinations visited in the same trip. Finally, in regard to the search for information about the destinations, Tideswell and Faulkner (1999, 2003) not surprisingly found a positive correlation of it with MTTs consumption.

Regarding the model of MTTs, it is worthy to stress that it adds a new variable to the discussion of MTTs determinants. No previous study suggested that the price of stay in the destination influences the number of destinations visited. However, this is likely to happen since stays, transport and non-tourism goods compete for the same resources. Therefore, a change in the destination price leads to a change on relative prices, influencing consumer's choices. Considering only the alternatives of single and multidestination trips (i.e.: excluding the alternative of not travelling), stays price should have a positive relationship with MTTs choices.

MTTs in Brazil

The study of MTTs in Brazil was conducted by using data obtained from a survey with inbound tourists in the country carried out by the Economic Research Institute Foundation (FIPE) and financed by the Brazilian Tourism Ministry. The main objective of this survey was to provide official tourism statistics for the country. Data was collected between 2007 and 2009 at the 27 main gateways of the country, including 15 airports and 12 land borders. A

total sample of more than 85 thousand interviews was obtained and considered useful for this particular study.

MTTs in Brazil accounted for 43% of total inbound tourism in 2009. This share is increasing since in 2007 it was 38% and in 2008 it was 41%. Most multidestination travellers visit only two destinations in the country (53%), while 24% visit three sites, 12% four, and 12% five of more destinations.

MTTs are highly associated with air trips, since 45% of tourists coming to Brazil by air visited more than one destination, while this share among road travellers was 18%. Only 29% of travellers that rent vacation homes are taking MTTs, while this share among tourists accommodating at friend and relatives homes is 47%. Finally, MTTs are most associated with independent trips, while organized trips are relatively more prone to take single destination trips.

Multidestination travellers usually spend more than single destination travellers while visiting Brazil. The average expenditure of tourists taking MTTs is US$ 1,637, while for STTs the average expenditure US$ 973, that is, 41% less. This figures show the economic relevance of MTTs as a source of enhanced income for Brazil. However, it is useful to stress that this superiority of MTTs regards total expenditure, whereas the daily expenditure of multidestination travellers is 15% lower than its counterpart. The superior total expenditure of multidestination travellers is due to their longer average length of stay: 25 overnights versus 14 overnights for single destination travellers. All descriptive statistics regarding MTTs and its associations with other tourist choices' variables are presented in the Appendix.

Modelling consumers' choices of MTTs

Several empirical studies attempted to explain the consumption of MTTs. However, most of them used fairly simple statistical procedures, such as simple statistics comparisons or hypothesis tests for sample means (Hwang, Gretzel and Fesenmaier, 2006; Mings and McHugh, 1992; Oppermann, 1992, 1995; Stewart and Vogt, 1997). These studies generally compared the share of MTTs within different groups, according to different explanatory variables. Tideswell and Faulkner (1999, 2003) used a more accurate procedure for explaining multidestination choices, modelling the number of destinations visited in a single trip through ordinary least squares regressions. This technique presents one relevant drawback in this case because it allows for zero and negative values of the dependent variable. Nicolau and Más

(2005) used a more accurate method, the random-coefficient multinomial logit model, which is an extension of the logit model, with the advantage of allowing for different parameters to each observation. Through this technique the authors modelled the propensity of consumers to choose MTTs.

In this paper the logit model was used to explain a binary variable representing MTTs consumption. The choices of inbound tourists in Brazil were observed, and the value 0 was attributed to those who chose a single destination trip, while 1 was attributed to those who chose a MTT. Only tourists who effectively visited Brazil were included in the sample, and only destinations within the country were considered. Therefore, the study excluded those who not visited Brazil, and it considered as single destination travellers those who visited only one destination in the country, regardless of the visitation of destinations abroad.

Several explanatory variables were included in the model, following the discussion presented in the previous chapter.

- Income: per capita monthly household income measured in thousands of US dollars. This variable represents the monetary constraint of the consumer.

- Overnights: the number of overnights spent in Brazil. This variable represents the time constraint of the consumer.

- Country of residence: this variable is associated both with consumer's preferences and transport costs between the home country and Brazil. The 20 major consumer markets were considered in separate, while the other countries were aggregated by region.

- Purpose of the trip: this variable is assumed to be a proxy variable for the shape of consumer's preferences. In this paper, the purpose of the trip to Brazil was represented by a multinomial variable including the following purposes: sun and sea, nature, culture, sports, shopping, other leisure purposes, business, visiting friends and relatives (VFR), study, health treatment, other non-leisure purposes.

- Age: the age of the tourist is also understood as a proxy for the shape of consumer's preferences, since different ages are usually related to different tastes and priorities. The squared age was also included in the model in order to allow for a non-monotonic demand function of MTTs with respect to age.

- Gender: this variable is related to the shape of consumer's preferences, since different genders usually have distinct tastes and priorities.

- Education level: also related to the shape of consumer's preferences, this variable identifies five levels of education: Post Graduation, Graduation, High School, Middle School, and No Formal Education.

- First timer: this variable identifies the tourist who was travelling to Brazil for the first time, contrasting with the repeater, and is also related to consumer's preferences.

Dummy variables were used to take account of missing values and avoid losses of observations. The logit model correctly predicted the choice of 67.2% of the tourists concerning MTTs. The Cox & Snell R^2 was 0.13, and the Nagelkerke R^2 was 0.18. The results of coefficients' estimations are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Logit estimation of multidestination travel choice

Explanatory variable	B	Standard error	Significance
Income	0.010	0.003	0.00
Overnights	13.0	0.00	0.00
Country of residence			0.00
Argentina	-1.01	0.11	0.00
Bolivia	-1.16	0.15	0.00
Canada	0.26	0.12	0.03
Chile	-0.58	0.12	0.00
Colombia	-0.23	0.13	0.08
France	0.44	0.12	0.00
Germany	0.39	0.12	0.00
Italy	-0.029	0.12	0.80
Japan	-0.29	0.13	0.02
Mexico	-0.12	0.12	0.33
Netherlands	0.45	0.12	0.00
Paraguay	-1.78	0.12	0.00
Peru	-0.41	0.13	0.00
Portugal	-0.15	0.12	0.18
Spain	0.041	0.12	0.72
Switzerland	0.36	0.12	0.00
United Kingdom	0.32	0.12	0.01
United States	0.071	0.11	0.53
Uruguay	-0.76	0.13	0.00
Venezuela	-0.22	0.14	0.12
Africa	0.061	0.13	0.63
Asia and Oceania	0.45	0.12	0.00
Central America	-0.050	0.14	0.72
European Union (others)	0.32	0.12	0.01
Europe (others)	0.17	0.13	0.21
Medium East	0.63	0.14	0.00
South America*	0.00		

Explanatory variable	B	Standard error	Significance
Purpose			0.00
Sun and sea	0.22	0.072	0.00
Nature	0.75	0.075	0.00
Culture	0.66	0.077	0.00
Sports	-0.065	0.093	0.49
Shopping	-0.60	0.28	0.03
Other leisure	0.052	0.088	0.55
Business	-0.28	0.071	0.00
VFR	0.22	0.071	0.00
Study	0.073	0.093	0.43
Health treatment	-0.49	0.13	0.00
Other non-leisure*	0.00		
Age	-0.022	0.003	0.00
Age^2	0.00020	0.000	0.00
Male	0.027	0.016	0.09
First timer	0.10	0.017	0.00
Education level			0.00
No formal education	-0.69	0.070	0.00
Middle school	-0.53	0.044	0.00
High school	-0.31	0.023	0.00
Graduation	-0.15	0.019	0.00
Post graduation*	0.00		
Constant	0.20	0.15	0.18

* Reference group

The monetary restriction, as represented by the variable income, has a significant positive coefficient. The higher is the per capita household income, the higher is the propensity to choose a MTT. This finding is consistent with Mings and McHugh (1992). The number of overnights, understood as a proxy for consumers' time constraint, also present a significant positive coefficient. This finding is consistent with Tideswell and Faulkner (2003). Moreover, it empirically shows that MTTs are associated with less constrained choices, no matter which resource is being considered.

It is clear that tourists coming from neighbouring countries are less likely to take MTTs as the lower coefficients were estimated for Paraguay (-1.78), Bolivia (-1.16), Argentina (-1.01), Uruguay (-0.76), Chile (-0.58) and Peru (-0.41). On the other hand, most relevant European markets present a relatively high propensity to take MTTs in Brazil (e.g.: France 0.44, Germany 0.39, Netherlands 0.45, United Kingdom 0.32). Most Latin European Countries presented a medium propensity to choose MTTs, as Portugal (-0.15), Italy (-0.029) and Spain (0.041).

Regarding tourists preferences, the most relevant trip motivations for the consumption of MTTs are nature and culture, while shopping, business and health treatment tourists usually visit a single destination in Brazil. In general terms, leisure related purposes displayed higher propensity, what is consistent with Oppermann (1995) and Tideswell and Faulkner (1999). The older the tourist, the lower is his propensity to take a MTT. This relationship is valid up to 56 years old, when the tendency is inverted. The propensity for choosing MTTs between men and women is not statistically different. First timers are more likely to take MTTs in Brazil than repeaters. Finally, MTTs are associated with higher educational level.

Conclusion

This paper proposed a theoretical model for explaining consumers' choices of MTTs. This model is simpler than previous proposed models based on the characteristics theory. Moreover, this model clearly highlights the determinants of choices regarding this type of tourism trip. Future studies could further develop particular aspects of this model.

Most findings of the empirical studies were consistent with previous empirical studies. Future studies could try to study the impact of the determinants theoretically relevant but omitted in this paper due to unavailability of data. Particularly, researchers could try to estimate the impact of the price of stay time in the destination, price and duration of journeys.

Besides complementing the explanation of consumers' choices of MTTs, future studies could concentrate on the practical implications of this type of trips to public and private tourism managers. The complementarity of destinations within MTTs should be further investigated, as well as the possibility of product development considering these characteristics.

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Appendix

Year	MTTs incidence (%)
2007	38.2
2008	41.5
2009	42.5

Type of international transport	MTTs incidence (%)
Air	45.1
Road	17.6

Type of accommodation	MTTs incidence (%)
Friends and relatives' home	47.2
Hotel	39.2
Rented vacation home	29.3
Own vacation home	42.0
Other	42.0

Travel agency services	MTTs incidence (%)
Tour package	36.7
Separate services	47.8
None	39.5