

TOUR PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT:
INFLUENCING FACTORS & BEST PRACTICES
IN TOUR OPERATORS'
SECONDARY DESTINATION SELECTION

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ABSTRACT

Tourists are inherently drawn to well-known primary destinations, yet they may also opt to explore lesser-known locales to enhance their overall travel experience. However, many secondary destinations encounter challenges in attracting visitors due to limited resources and support services. Consequently, they rely on tour operators to generate regular tourist influx. Simultaneously, tour operators depend on secondary destinations to provide a comprehensive itinerary. Nonetheless, there is a dearth of literature on the methods employed by tour operators in identifying, selecting, and incorporating these secondary destinations into their tour itineraries. To address this knowledge gap, the study interviewed 13 experienced tour operators. It applied the Theory of Planned Behavior as the conceptual framework and utilized the Thematic Analysis Method to examine tour operators' behavioral, normative, and control beliefs when formulating tour products. Additionally, the study scrutinized the factors influencing tour operators' selection of secondary destinations and outlined best practices to enhance the inclusion of secondary destinations in tour products, thereby bolstering the financial prospects for both tour operators and secondary destinations. Furthermore, the study contributes to the theoretical understanding of behavior by broadening the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior from a mere tool for comprehending behaviors to a framework for shaping them.

SYNOPSIS

Purpose

The tourism industry faces a paradox of popularity: while certain destinations draw an overwhelming number of visitors due to their renowned attractions, countless lesser-known places, replete with potential, remain under-visited. This uneven distribution of tourist traffic contributes to the degradation of natural and cultural assets in popular destinations, while secondary destinations miss out on the economic benefits tourism can bring. Despite the critical role of tour operators in shaping tourist flows, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding how they develop their tour products, particularly in selecting secondary destinations. This research seeks to bridge this gap by delving into the decision-making processes of tour operators, offering fresh insights into the factors influencing tour operators' selection of secondary destinations.

Problem of Practice

Creating compelling and varied tour itineraries that balance the allure of popular destinations with the charm of lesser-known secondary destinations is a pivotal challenge for tour operators in the dynamic tourism industry. This balancing act not only enriches the tourist experience but also plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable tourism by diverting tourist flows away from overcrowded primary destinations, thus aiding in the economic development of secondary destinations. The primary research question guiding this inquiry is: What factors influence tour operators' selection of secondary destinations when creating tour itineraries?

Results

In deploying Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Madden, Ellen, & Ajzen, 1992), the study reveals how TPB's constructs—behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs, and perceived behavioral control—can be intricately deconstructed to allow destinations to devise strategic interventions influencing tour operators' decisions.

Behavioral beliefs are explored in depth in the study, providing insight into the intrinsic motivations of tour operators when considering secondary destinations—these are the catalysts that either spur the inclusion of these destinations into tour products or serve as deterrents. The study exposes the crucial business imperatives that drive such decisions, such as the quest for uniqueness in a saturated market and the desire to offer comprehensive tour experiences that differentiate one's offerings from the competition.

Normative beliefs are dissected to understand the social and market pressures influencing tour operators. The study reveals how perceptions of customer preferences, industry standards, and competitive positioning guide tour operators' inclinations to include or exclude secondary destinations. Here, the subjective norms reflect an amalgamation of external expectations and internalized industry benchmarks, indicating that decisions are not made in isolation but are responses to the broader tourism ecosystem.

Control beliefs are scrutinized to uncover the extent of tour operators' perceived influence over the inclusion of secondary destinations. The findings here are revelatory, indicating that operators often feel their choices are bounded by the actions and initiatives of destinations' stakeholders. This suggests that while tour operators are the architects of their tour products, the building blocks of these products are often supplied by and contingent upon the collaborative efforts and resources of these stakeholders.

Conclusions

The study elucidates how the TPB framework can be harnessed to navigate and influence complex business decisions, offering a blueprint for strategic interventions in tour product development and, potentially, other realms of business decision-making. This investigation proposes that by knowing precisely what shapes tour operators' attitudes (behavioral beliefs), what pressures they perceive from the market (normative beliefs), and what they consider can facilitate (control beliefs), interventions can be converted to suit these dimensions, enhancing the prospects of secondary destinations in the competitive tourism market.

Practical Relevance

The research identifies a multifaceted array of factors influencing tour operators' selection of secondary destinations, from the intrinsic appeal of secondary destinations to the practicalities of itinerary planning. It highlights the impact of tour operators' attitudinal, normative, and control beliefs. Firstly, the attitudinal beliefs of tour operators suggest that they need secondary destinations and suppliers to collaborate in creating cohesive products that can enhance the attractiveness of their tour itineraries and accommodate logistics. Secondly, the normative beliefs of tour operators suggest that they require secondary destinations to offer engaging and memorable experiences that cater to their customers' interests and needs. Lastly, the control beliefs of tour operators suggest that they need secondary destinations to provide more support for research and marketing to tourists.

The study delineates practitioners a clear pathway for strategic interventions. Understanding the detailed factors that shape the selection decisions of tour operators enables destination stakeholders to tailor their approaches, ensuring to provide tour operators with compelling reasons and logistical support for including secondary destinations in their tours.

This strategic alignment between the destinations' efforts and tour operators' needs can lead to more diversified tourism flows and an enhanced tourist experience.

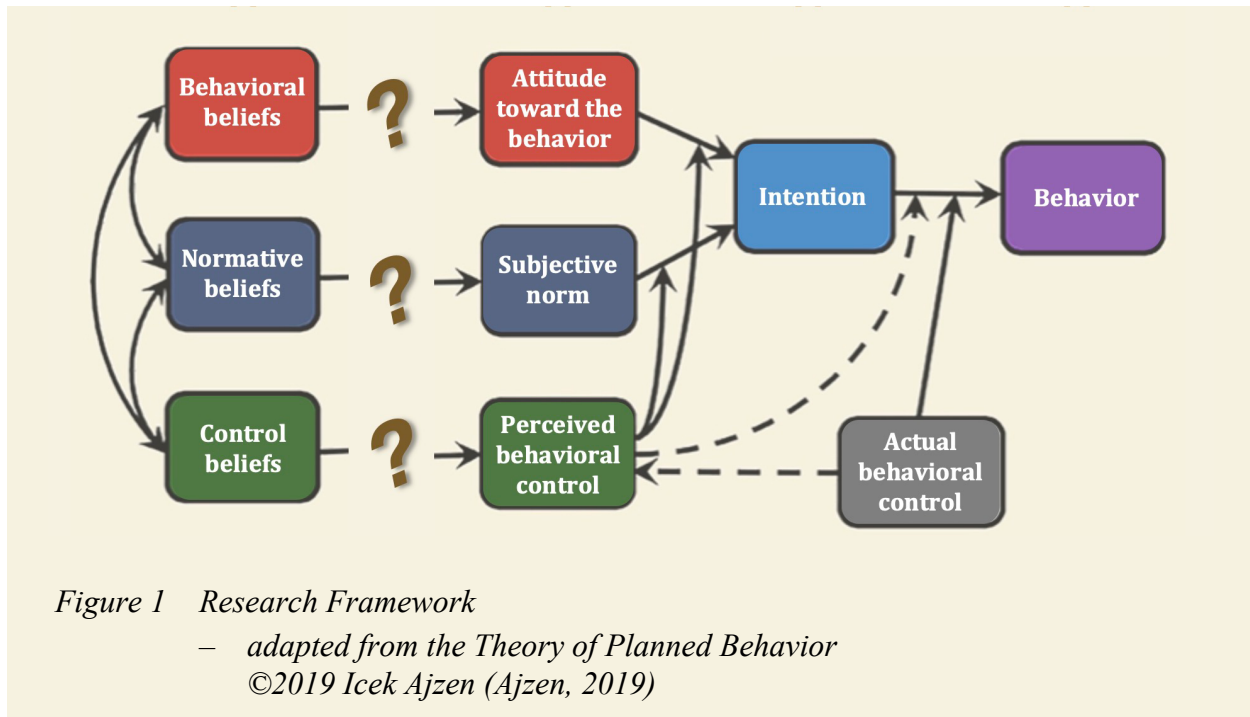
METHODS

Research Question

The study focuses on addressing two questions: What factors impact tour operators' destination selection for their products? What are the best practices to influence their decisions?

Method and Design

The study is based on the *Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)*, which suggests that human behaviors are rational (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977). TPB argues that behavioral intention results from an individual's attitudes toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). The study aims to understand tour operators' beliefs about including secondary destinations in their tour itineraries and the factors influencing these beliefs. See *Figure 1*.



Data Collection, Sample and Analysis

Over 200 email invites were sent to members of the National Tour Association and the United States Tour Operators Association. Interested individuals had to complete an online screener to ensure active participation in tour product development. [Table 1](#) outlines the process.

Table 1: Data Collection Process

Invitation emails sent	200+
Started screeners	41
Completed screeners	28
Qualified candidates	23
Interviews scheduled	18
Completed interviews	13

Thirteen participants were interviewed online for 50-75 minutes, following a semi-structured format based on TPB constructs. See [Table 2](#) and [Table 3](#) for participant profiles.

Table 2: Profile of Participating Tour Operators

Business Function			
<i>Design and wholesale escorted group tours</i>	7	53.85%	
<i>Design and retail escorted group tours</i>	9	69.23%	
<i>Customize tour itineraries for groups</i>	6	46.15%	
<i>Customize tour itineraries for FITs</i>	7	53.85%	
<i>Operate its own escorted tours</i>	11	84.61%	
<i>Receptive Tour Operator (RTO)</i>	6	46.15%	
<i>Destination Management Company (DMC)</i>	4	30.77%	

Tour Size			
<i>Big groups by bus</i>	9	69.23%	
<i>Small tours</i>	10	76.92%	
<i>Free independent travelers</i>	3	23.08%	

Business Operation			
<i>USA Only</i>	<i>CA, CO, MA, MD, NY</i>	8	61.54%
<i>Canada Only</i>	<i>Nova Scotia</i>	1	7.69%
<i>Global</i>		4	30.77%

Business Size in 2019			
<i>10,000 or less tourists</i>	6	46.15%	
<i>10,001 to 50,000 tourists</i>	4	30.77%	
<i>50,001 to 100,000 tourists</i>	3	23.08%	

Table 3: Study Interviewee Profile

Fictional Name:	Aaron	Betty	Charlie	Derek	Emma	Freddy	George	Henry	Ivy	Jenny	Katie	Lisa	Michael
Business													
Design/ Customize For Big Groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12 92.31%
Customize for FITs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							7 53.85%
Operate Escorted Tours	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		11 84.62%
DMC	✓	✓	✓			✓							4 30.77%
RTO	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓				6 46.15%
Personal													
Tour Guide Experience	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	9 69.23%
Direct Contact with DMO	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	9 69.23%
Tourism Experience													
40-49 yrs								✓					1 7.69%
30-39 yrs	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	8 61.54%
20-29 yrs			✓			✓				✓		✓	4 30.77%
Gender													
Female		✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	6 46.15%
Male	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					7 53.85%

The interview transcripts were sent to the participants for verification and then categorized using the Thematic Analysis Method (Holton, 1988), resulting in three main themes: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived constraints, each with three subthemes. See [Table 4](#).

Table 4: Thematic Analysis

Tour Operators'	Belief	Secondary Destinations	Suppliers
Attitudes	<i>What do tour operators think about having secondary destinations on their tours?</i>	<i>What can secondary destinations do to make them positive?</i>	<i>What can tourism suppliers do to make them positive?</i>
Subjective Norms	<i>What tour operators believe the market responds to the itineraries that include secondary destinations?</i>	<i>What can secondary destinations do to make them favorable?</i>	<i>What can tourism suppliers do to make them favorable?</i>
Perceived Constraints	<i>What restricts tour operators from including secondary destinations in their products?</i>	<i>What can secondary destinations do to eliminate them?</i>	<i>What can tourism suppliers do to eliminate them?</i>

MAIN

Practical Problem

Tour operators play a pivotal role in designing travel products for escorted tours, private groups, independent tourists, and other travel companies. Secondary destinations are often added

to a tour product to enhance the travel experience and logistics. These destinations rely on tour operators to bring in visitors, as they do not have the resources to attract them.

Despite the complexity of tour product development, there is a lack of literature on the subject. This study aims to identify the factors that impact tour operators' selection of destinations for their tour itineraries, and the possible interventions to direct them towards favorable outcomes.

Literature Review

Without a doubt, there exists a “hierarchy of destinations” (McKercher, 2001, p. 433). Primary destinations are typically more popular due to their favorable image, accessibility, and abundance of hospitality services such as hotels, restaurants, retail, and public amenities. As a result, they tend to attract more tourists who are eager to fulfill their travel goals (McKercher, 2001). On the other hand, secondary destinations serve as an extension of the primary destination and offer supplementary experiences (Botti, Peypoch, & Solonandrasana, 2008; Ladplee, 2018). If they possess the necessary resources, most tourists will add additional stops to their itinerary, especially those seeking a broad range of experiences (McKercher, 2001). Moreover, when traveling in a group, each person may have unique travel desires or motivations. It’s unlikely that one single destination will fulfill everyone’s expectations. A multiple-destination itinerary can be customized to meet the diverse needs. Furthermore, visiting more destinations can help reduce the risk of a disappointing trip (McKercher, 2001). If one destination falls short of expectations, other stops on the itinerary may make the overall experience satisfying.

Planning trips can be overwhelming for many tourists. To simplify things, travel agencies, tour operators, and *OTAs (Online Travel Agencies)*, such as Booking.com, Expedia, and Tripadvisor, offer travel packages that include accommodation, transportation, tours, and activity charges. Depending on the market and activities offered, the packages can be heavily or

lightly bundled (Lumsdon & Swift, 1999). Bus group tour packages are all-inclusive, and tourists only need to pay one price for all the activities along predefined itineraries. Optional activities may require an additional fee. In contrast, *FITs (Free Individual Travelers)* follow their own schedules and choose their itineraries and activities based on their budget and traveling style.

Most tour packages are developed by tour operators, whether group or independent. Some tour operators design itineraries, make reservations and consolidate the services (transportation, hotel, dining, attraction admission) into a wholesale and retail package (Lumsdon & Swift, 1999). Some customize products for FITs, groups, travel agencies and other tourism companies. They make the decisions or at least the recommendations on destinations (Trunfio, Petruzzellis, & Nigro, 2006). Collectively, they can determine the prosperity of destinations and suppliers (Lumsdon & Swift, 1999).

Given the ever-increasing number of destinations available to customers, tour operators must offer a wide selection of products to remain competitive. However, researching and developing new ideas is often resource-intensive. Consequently, many tour operators rely on recommendations from *Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs)*, aka *Destination Management Organizations*, to refresh their offerings and stay ahead of their competition.

DMOs are responsible for promoting tourism and attracting visitors to their territories. They encompass different authorities, stakeholders, and professionals and work towards a collective destination vision (UNWTO, 2019). They are often given a central role in marketing a destination. They act as gatekeepers and distributors of a destination's knowledge.

Findings

The study's findings, illustrated in *Figure 2*, are based on interviews with 13 tour operators. The first column presents tour operators' beliefs, while the second column outlines their expectations from secondary destinations and suppliers.

The three subsections delve into the findings presented in the result diagram, offering a thorough analysis of each TPB constructs. All findings are backed by interview statements shown in Appendix. Although the statement list is not exhaustive, it serves as representative examples of the overall dataset.

The summaries below also include cross-reference indicators for the corresponding interviewee statements. This attribution approach ensures confidentiality while enabling the tracing of connections between individual statements and the corresponding findings and themes presented in the result diagram.

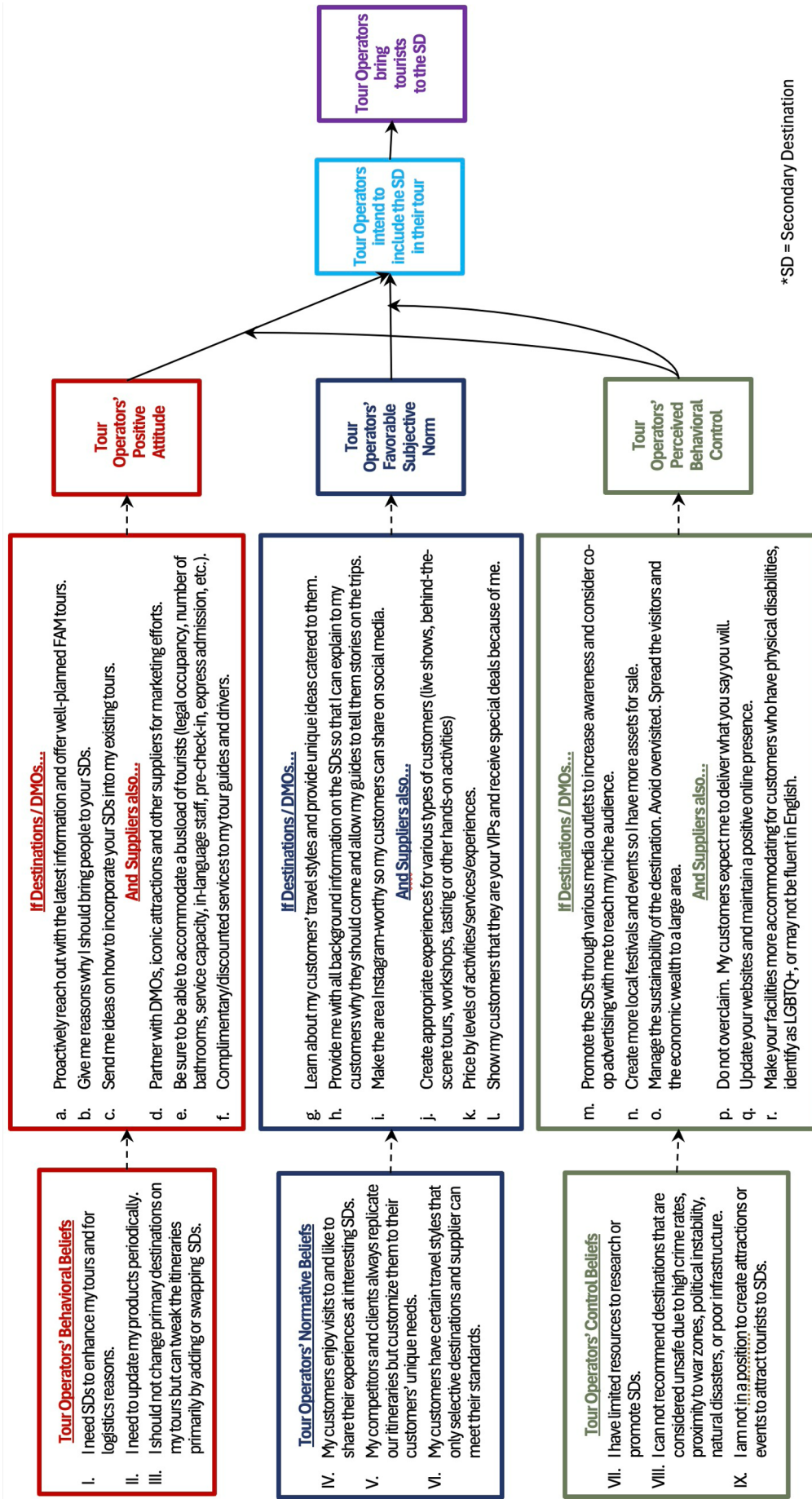


Figure 2: Research Result
 – adapted from the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) ©2019 Icek Ajzen (Ajzen, 2019)

Tour Operators' Attitudes

The research shows that the symbiotic relationship between secondary destinations and tour operators is paramount for tour product development. Secondary destinations need tour operators to attract tourists, while tour operators need secondary destinations to provide comprehensive itineraries. (1)

When designing tour itineraries, tour operators must consider the distance and timing between major destinations. They often include stops for meals, overnight stays, escorted tours or allow tourists free time for exploration and shopping. (2) While tourists may not be familiar with the secondary destinations, they are valuable additions that help connect the destinations they do intend to visit. These stopovers can significantly impact the local economy of destination. (3)

Tour operators have unique business models and interests. They focus on specific destinations aligned with their target audience. For example, those catering to upscale clients may not consider a destination unless it offers a 5-star hotel. (4) Regardless, secondary destinations must have compelling and engaging offers to be included in tour packages. (5)

Tour operators usually avoid making major changes to a well-received tour. Instead, they make minor adjustments like adding or replacing secondary destinations due to factors like facility unavailability, overcrowding, or price increases. (6) These changes can refresh the tour experience and encourage repeat visits. (7) Secondary destinations should proactively suggest ways to integrate their unique experiences into tour operators' existing itineraries, showcasing their offerings and enhancing tour packages. (8)

Tour operators often rely on DMOs for information and ideas due to their extensive knowledge of the area, insight into asset availability, and latest activity updates. Such

collaboration helps create unique and appealing tour products for tourists. (9) DMOs organize *FAM (familiarization)* tours for tour operators, media, and influencers to provide a comprehensive understanding of their locales, inspiration, detailed supplier information, and most importantly, reasons to visit. It is vital for tour operators to experience how their customers will be treated. (10)

Multiple study participants urge tourism suppliers to work together with DMOs and other nearby suppliers for the sharing of resources and expertise. Such partnerships are necessary to address the complex challenges faced by secondary destinations and create a tourism ecosystem benefiting all stakeholders. (11)

Not all communities welcome large groups due to concerns about traffic and land conservation. (12) Tour operators serving large groups must choose destinations that are willing and can handle busloads of people. Escorted groups require additional logistical arrangements. For instance, they are confined to select hotels that enable them to conduct pre-checks of their customers and collaborate with their tour leaders. (13)

Tour leaders are pivotal for escorted tours as they act as guides and caretakers for the group. Suppliers must establish a close relationship with tour leaders to understand the group's specific needs and tailor their services effectively to meet market demands. (14)

Tour Operators' Subjective Norms

All of the study participants have stated that secondary destinations are often hidden gems of the tours, and they usually provide customers with a pleasant surprise. (15) Some tourists may eagerly anticipate visiting lesser-known places. (16, 17)

The unexplored nature of secondary destinations encourages tourists to share their experiences online and offline, presenting opportunities for promotion. Secondary destinations

should offer picturesque environments and unique experiences for tourists to capture and share on social media. Tourists seek out distinctive locations to enhance their personal brand image.

(18)

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, more people want to engage in active and experiential travel. For example, when visiting a pottery museum, tourists prefer to learn about the pieces and take part in a pottery workshop. (19) Tour operators have seen a shift in travel choices, with tourists prioritizing activities over sightseeing when choosing destinations. (20) To attract tourists, secondary destinations should offer unique experiences like live shows, tours, workshops, and tastings. Even ordinary places like cookie shops can become attractions by providing behind-the-scenes tours, guides, samples, and hands-on activities. (21)

There is no one-size-fits-all tour experience. Tour operators must consider each tourist's unique needs and travel style when selecting destinations. Different groups, such as college students, seniors, adventure tourists, religious groups, and budget or luxury travelers, all have specific preferences and requirements that should be taken into account. Ultimately, the travel experience should be customized to meet these specific needs. (22) Destinations should also price each experience based on the activity level and involvement to ensure the pricing is fair and reasonable for all groups. (23)

Tour operators greatly influence tourist destination choices. However, it's challenging for them to promote destinations associated with negative feelings. They typically avoid unsafe areas; negative perceptions could stem from misinformed subjective views. (24) Secondary destinations should provide tour operators comprehensive information about the place, including its history, people, culture, and cuisine. This will help tour operators effectively communicate the

unique selling points to customers and enable tour guides to tell engaging stories to customers. This accurate and detailed information will support and promote tourism. (25)

Tour products are essentially a blend of services provided by several entities, such as transport, accommodation, and entertainment. However, tour operators do not have ownership of the services they use to create their products, making them susceptible to imitation. To remain competitive, tour operators must constantly innovate and improve their tour itineraries. (26)

Though it is imperative to treat all customers equally, tour operators could greatly benefit from exclusive deals or privileges offered by destinations to their customers. This approach can strengthen the relationship between the tour operator and the destination and provide a competitive advantage to both parties. (27)

Tour operators rely heavily on destinations to provide exceptional service and offer their customers a unique and personalized experience. Secondary destinations must provide the necessary support to help them promote effectively. The essence of a successful partnership between tour operators and destinations is reliant upon mutual efforts and cooperation. As such, secondary destinations must strive to meet the needs and expectations of tour operators to ensure a mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship.

Tour Operators' Perceived Constraints

The main goal of a tour operator business is to provide tourists with an enjoyable and unforgettable experience. While it's easier to sell tours to popular destinations, it's crucial to prioritize sustainability. Overcrowding in well-known destinations can have adverse effects, so it's wise to spread tourism more evenly across secondary destinations. (28) However, the study shows that tours with only secondary destinations are impractical for business because they won't

sell. Thus, tour operators emphasize the need to balance popular and lesser-known attractions for tour package success. (29)

Tour operators rely on destinations for marketing materials. The information destinations provide must be accurate to avoid customer dissatisfaction and problems for the operators. Therefore, it's crucial to ensure that all provided information is truthful and authentic to prevent misunderstandings. (30) In promoting secondary destinations, DMOs must educate tourists and make information easily accessible. Tour operators can't do this alone. (31)

Destinations should maintain a positive online presence as tourists often research online before traveling. Tour operators can benefit from favorable reviews, but the responsibility for safeguarding online reputation lies with destinations and suppliers. Negative reviews can harm both the destination and the tour operator, so all stakeholders should manage their online presence and seek positive reviews. (32)

Tourists often have their hearts set on visiting specific destinations, but these locations may no longer be safe due to factors like war zones, natural disasters, or climate change. For example, the Dead Sea has lost one-third of its surface area, the Great Barrier Reef is dying from heat stress, and the Maldives is slowly sinking. Tour operators must consider these issues when planning tours. (33)

According to research by [Nyaupane and Andereck \(2008\)](#), time and cost are the primary constraints for travel, while location-based factors like distance, traffic, and weather are less critical. Nonetheless, people may still travel to their desired destinations. Participants in this study emphasized the importance of destination capacity limitations and challenges related to tourist mobility or access. (34)

The tourism industry needs to be inclusive. This means being more sensitive and hospitable towards tourists with physical limitations, LGBTQ+ individuals, or those with limited proficiency in English. By being inclusive, more people can enjoy leisure travel, significantly benefiting tour operators, destinations, host communities, and the overall tourism industry. (35)

During research interviews, tour operators emphasized the need for unique and engaging experiences to motivate tourists to visit secondary destinations. Local events and festivals, such as the International Dragon Boat Races in Hong Kong and Oktoberfest in Munich, provide additional selling points for tour operators and offer customers unforgettable experiences. Therefore, tour operators' success is directly linked to destinations' ability to offer engaging events. (36)

Tourism is an evolving industry that requires constant innovation to meet customers' changing needs. Tour operators have unique travel experience ideas based on customer interests, but it's up to destinations to implement them. DMOs lack the authority to enforce their recommendations and rely on collaboration with stakeholders to implement new travel experiences and contribute to tourism growth. (37)

Establishing a household brand and iconic attraction requires a significant investment, as echoed by interview participants citing Iceland's transformation into a thriving tourist destination. Participants agreed that this success involved the active participation of multiple stakeholders and could be replicated for other destinations through collaborative efforts. (38)

Tour operators act as intermediaries, promoting and selling products created by tourism suppliers and destinations. They have limited control over product quality and are vulnerable to negative feedback. Secondary destinations must understand tour operators' operations and requirements to improve tour products' overall quality and appeal to tourists.

Lessons for Practice

The symbiotic relationship between secondary destinations and tour operators is fundamental to the success of both businesses. Secondary destinations depend on tour operators to attract tourists, while tour operators rely on secondary destinations to offer a complete itinerary. This interdependence is crucial for the optimal utilization of tourism resources and the generation of economic benefits for both parties.

The study shows secondary destinations must provide tour operators with compelling reasons to visit. They should offer high-quality information and materials for promotional use. In addition, they need to be creative in offering tourists exceptional experiences and Instagram-worthy moments. They should also learn about the travel style and preferences of tour operators' customers to cater to their interests.

Collaboration is key. Study participants stress that suppliers in secondary destinations should work with DMOs, partner with other suppliers in proximity, and collaborate with nearby iconic attractions. DMOs must take an active role in trade conventions. FAM tours must be strategically planned and targeted. It is not enough to bring tour operators to the facilities; they should experience how their customers will be treated and be fed with ideas.

Destinations must be equipped to accommodate tour operators' customers, particularly bus tourists and those with special needs. They should provide pre-check-in, express admission, fast service, and more restrooms for group tours. Fair pricing by experience and complimentary services for guides are expected. Suppliers that are more inclusive and environmentally conscious would likely receive more inquiries.

The study reveals that tour operators frequently update their tours without changing the primary destination. Secondary destinations must be able to identify what and how they can offer

tour operators to integrate seamlessly into existing tours. Destinations should organize local festivals and events to give tour operators more assets and reasons to sell.

Marketing creates primary destinations. Although secondary destinations may have limited resources to promote themselves to tourists, participants in the study emphasize destinations should maintain a decent online presence, especially reviews on third-party platforms. This is crucial as tourists research travel ideas and destination selections and verify tour operators' recommendations.

The essence of a successful partnership between tour operators and destinations is reliant upon mutual efforts and cooperation. As such, secondary destinations must strive to meet the needs and expectations of tour operators to ensure a mutually beneficial and sustainable relationship. Doing so will help enhance tour products' overall quality and appeal to tourists.

Contributions to Theory

Utilizing TPB (Ajzen, 1985, 1991; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1977; Madden et al., 1992) as the theoretical backbone and Thematic Analysis Method (Holton, 1988), the study offers a structured lens to examine tour operators' behavioral, normative, and control beliefs when developing tour products. The study makes significant theoretical contributions by expanding the utility of TPB from a tool for understanding behaviors to a framework for shaping them.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that TPB can be effectively utilized to guide product development processes, which is a novel application of the theory. By dissecting the considerations of TPB constructs, the study sheds light on how secondary destinations can influence tour operators' product development decisions. The strategic implications extend beyond the scope of tourism, suggesting a broader applicability of TPB in various business

decision-making processes. Thus, the study's contribution lies not just in using TPB to understand the development process but in leveraging it to shape that process actively.

Overall, this study serves as a testament to the evolving nature of tourism research, bridging the gap between theory and practice, and laying the groundwork for future academic inquiry and industry application. It challenges researchers and practitioners alike to look beyond traditional models and consider the broader implications of their work on the sustainable development of tourism and other industries.

Keywords

secondary destination, tour operator, tour product, itinerary, DMO,
theory of planned behavior

APPENDIX

Interviewee Statements

Each statement is associated with interviewees' fictitious names per [Table 3](#) and specific identifiers corresponding to the finding delineated in [Figure 2](#). cross-referenced to the finding summary.

Interviewee Statements	Interviewee	Finding
1. "I always look for great stops or opportunities to enhance my itinerary."	Henry	I
2. "There are a lot of different reasons and factors that go into picking a destination. A lot of times, it's logistical."	Charles	I
3. "[Secondary destinations] are residual sale... If you start adding that up, it can greatly benefit your community..."	Aaron	
4. "We choose to promote the destinations we think work for our client base. But it's important that these destinations share their strengths and weaknesses."	Michael	VI, b
5. "As long as they have something unique, different, and special to offer, they will be golden."	Betty	II
6. "If the [customers] enjoy it, we keep the status quo. But if things are not working, we'll change them."	Katie	III
7. "I have to do a ton of work to put up a new tour... we've got our tried-and-true tours. We'd tweak them based on new things that come on line."	Jenny	III
8. "[Suppose somebody say,] 'You could easily slip this in on Day 3 [of your tour]...' If I think it's a good fit for my clients, I will do it."	Jenny	II, III, c

Interviewee Statements	Interviewee	Finding
9. “We might not be fully aware of anything new going on. So, that’s where we rely heavily on the DMOs.”	Betty	a
10. “FAM trips... are about learning. But I think the important thing is that you build an emotional contact connection.”	George	a, b, d
11. “You have to collaborate with the other destinations... because no one’s coming to the small destination just for a small destination... It’s not about you standing out from everyone else. It’s about all of you looking good.”	Henry	d
12. “The key is that they know how to accommodate a group, and they want to accommodate a group...”	Betty	e
13. “[The attraction] arranges an in-language tour guide... We don’t have to wait in the general admission area. All these come into play, which make the stop-over more successful.”	Derek	e
14. “A lot of [suppliers] don’t see the value in [tour leaders]... but when we are treated poorly, [our customers] are fed off it.”	Katie	f
15. “Those hidden gems... are usually the most memorable.”	Emma	I, IV
16. “They have been to a lot of places already. Secondary destinations are something new to them.”	Lisa	I, IV
17. “Movies and pop culture definitely pique their interest, but also history and family history.”	Katie	IV
18. “[Experiences in secondary destinations] are the things that will create a wow effect. People come back and brag about it.”	Emma	I, IV, i, j
19. “...have the chef come out... talk about the menu and how they source things. It gives them a connection to the meal much more than just good food.”	Henry	IV, j

Interviewee Statements	Interviewee	Finding
20. "People are purchasing the overall experience... So long as we're providing the experience..., they don't necessarily need to know every one of those secondary destinations."	Betty	IV, j
21. "[Our customers] poke around... So, there's a tremendous amount of economic benefit... the Corning Museum was not the only benefactor of our stopping."	Jenny	IV, j
22. "We have to be selective and choose what we want to promote... it's about how you pair your products and destinations."	Michael	VI, g, h
23. "Not that you have to have different pricing for everybody, but for different experiences."	Emma	k
24. "Think about Columbia... they want the tourist dollars, they also want to change their reputation."	George	VIII, h
25. "Many [DMOs] are very good at ensuring we have what we need when we need it... They'll keep us informed."	Betty	I, a, h
26. "They steal my stuff all the time. But there is no way to copyright a tour... once you drill down into the specifics of... what we're doing, that's where we deviate."	Jenny	V
27. "...make sure our [customers] feel special and important... recognizing them as individuals and as VIPs."	Katie	l
28. "... find a way for you not to spend all 8 days in Paris [and] go to other places [for] other experiences... [and] share the wealth and the financial gain with these other smaller communities."	Jenny	o
29. "Our goal in designing a tour is to hang our hat on a couple of things that people already know... the stuff in the middle, you have to describe to them why they should go see these places."	Jenny	III, m

Interviewee Statements	Interviewee	Finding
30. "Having your websites up-to-date... and accurate. We use that information to sell our trips."	Emma	p, q
31. "We don't own the places... It's only logical and reasonable for DMOs and their local governments to support the businesses in their destinations."	Derek	VII, m
32. "If you can turn a 1 into 5, you have a super 5. You have a super ambassador..."	George	q
33. "We have to plan for uncertain weather, diseases, political... economic and technical factors."	Lisa	VIII
34. "There could be challenges with availability at certain destinations at certain times... Certain sites may require a certain level of mobility in order to fully experience them."	Michael	o, r
35. "You're doing group touring, and you have to have standardized activities for the masses."	Aaron	r
36. "Before we first promoted it, people didn't know what it was... [After the visit...] the word spread. People want to come to see it either with the tour or drive themselves..."	Derek	n
37. "Only DMOs have the local connections to make [the idea] happen. It may [need approval from the town]. It may involve maintenance and insurance."	Derek	IX
38. "You just got to tell the stories. And you need a lot of different people to contribute... [If] people can't get there... that doesn't help."	George	m

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ABBREVIATIONS

DMC:	Destination Management Company
DMO:	Destination Marketing Organization / Destination Management Organization
FAM:	Familiarization tour/trip
FIT:	Free Individual Traveler
OTA:	Online Travel Agency
RTO:	Receptive Tour Operator
TPB:	Theory of Planned Behavior
UNWTO:	United Nations World Tourism Organization