# Understanding cruise passengers’ motivations: The case of Greece

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**Abstract**

This paper aims to examine cruise passengers’ profile and their motivations for taking a cruise in Greece. The study provides insights into the motivations of 456 tourists traveling to Greece to experience a cruise. This article uses existing literature relevant to tourists’ motivations. The population of the current study consisted of passengers who disembarked in the port of Piraeus after an 8-day cruise in the Aegean Sea. The sample concentrated only on passengers who experienced a cruise in the Aegean Sea and consists of both international and local cruise passengers. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used to perform statistical procedures. The findings suggest that motivation dimensions of cruise passengers are structured in three major factors, “culture and tradition”, escape and relaxation” and “enjoyment and shopping”. Also, there is no statistically significant correlation between satisfaction and likelihood of returning, in contrast with the word-of-mouth.

**Keywords**

**Cruise motivations**, **cruise passengers**, **factor analysis**, **satisfaction**, **likelihood of returning**

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**Introduction**

As global cruise travel is continuing to grow at a steady pace ([CLIA, 2017](#CLIA)), cruise tourism is of high interest to many researchers. [Parola et al., (2014)](#Parola) investigated the destination satisfaction attributes that contribute to create value in port destinations by influence passengers’ behavior. [Maehr and Mayer (1997)](#Maehr) examined that motivation is part of popular culture. Many fields examine motivation, including sociology, psychology and tourism. According to [Elliot and Covington (2001)](#Elliot) motivation may be defined as the energization and direction of behavior. Over the years, a good number of motivational theories have been discussed. Of these, some have explored the drive reduction theory to explain behavior, the basic, psychological and self-fulfillment needs, the level of aspiration, and the information-processing approach ([Lewin, 2013](#Lewin); [Maslow, 1943](#Maslow); [Hull, 1943](#Hull); [Bettman, 1979](#Bettman)).

Tourists’ motivations have been explained in a number of studies. Some discussed seeking authentic opportunities ([MacCannell, 2013](#MacCannell)), ego enhancement ([Dann, 1977](#Dann)), the motivation to take a pleasure vacation ([Crompton, 1979](#Crompton)), the psychology of leisure travel, the choice of holiday by tourists, and sightseeing tourists’ motivation and satisfaction ([Goodall, 2013](#Goodball); [Mayo and Jarvis, 1981](#Mayo); [Ross and Iso-Ahola, 1991](#Ross); [Witt and Wright, 1992](#Witt); [Pearce, 1994](#Pearce); [Ryan and Glendon, 1998](#Ryan); [Qiu and Lam, 1999](#Qiu)).

The purpose of this study is to analyse tourists’ motivations of tourists to take a cruise in the Aegean Sea. Additionally, this manuscript examines the post-satisfaction of the passengers, their likelihood of returning and their word-of-mouth (WoM) attitude towards the specific cruise. This paper proceeds as follows: Firstly, the literature review is presented in which many relevant studies are included following by the methodology section, sample selection and data analysis of the questionnaire. In the next section the findings, passengers’ profiles, and analysis of motivations are presented. After this section, discussion and limitations are included and the study concludes with the concluding remarks and the implications.

**Literature Review**

Motivation is the force that drives one to make a particular choice. People achieve goals because they are motivated to do so, and they feel satisfied when a goal is achieved. [Kozak (2002)](#Kozak) found that some tourist motivations differ by nationality and places visited, and [Swanson and Horridge (2006)](#Swanson) found that souvenir products were influenced by travel motivations. [Plog (2001)](#Plog) explored the reasons that some destinations rise and fall in popularity. In another study, it was mentioned that tourists have various needs, including the need to relax, to escape from everyday life, to have a hassle-free vacation, to get refreshed, and to have a sense of comfort ([Pesonen and Komppula, 2010](#Pesonen)). [Otoo and Amuquandoh (2014)](#Otoo) concluded that for international volunteerism in Ghana, the main motivations are altruism and learning, and [Munar and Jacobsen (2014)](#Munar) analyzed why people are sharing tourism experiences with the help of social media, revealing the strength of the visual content.

[Bideci and Albayrak (2016)](#Bideci) took a different approach by studying the Russian and German tourists’ motivations visiting the pilgrimage site of Saint Nicholas Church and found that the history of a church was the most important motivation for visitors. Research has also been conducted on motivations regarding Chinese and Russian tourists, rock climbing, wine and beer tourists’ motivation, heritage tourism motivations and e-satisfaction ([López-Guzmán et al., 2014](#Lopez); [Kraftchick et al., 2014](#Kraftchick); [Whang et al., 2016](#Whang); [Caber and Albayrak, 2016](#Caber); [Ramires et al., 2016](#Ramires); [Zhao and Timothy, 2017](#Zhao); [Tseng, 2017](#Tseng))

While many studies have been conducted regarding tourists’ motivations ([Dann, 1977](#Dann); [Crompton, 1979](#Crompton); [Iso-Ahola, 1982](#IsoAhola); [Kim and Chalip, 2004](#Kim)). [Hung and Petrick (2011)](#Hung) concluded that little attention has been paid to cruise travel motivations. Past studies have discussed the factors that influence cruise passengers’ intentions, and [Petrick et al. (2007)](#Petrick) found that some of the major factors which affect passengers’ decision to experience a cruise are loyalty and familiarity. [Crompton and Ankomah (1993)](#CromptonAnkomah) claimed that the choice set model ([Crompton, 1992](#Crompton1992)) does not apply to those who make habitual cruising decisions.

In the study by [Hung and Petrick (2011)](#Hung), a cruising motivation scale was developed by following the rigorous procedures recommended by [Churchill (1979)](#Churchill). One of their findings was that people, who are more likely to cruise in the future, have higher cruising motivation. Generally, the cruise literature is highly developed. Other researchers discuss economic aspects of cruise tourism (see, e.g., [Dwyer and Forsyth, 1998](#Dwyer); [Henthorne, 2000](#Henthorne)). On the other hand, [Duman and Mattila (2005)](#Duman), [Petrick (2004a)](#Petrick2004a) examined the relationships between perceived value and satisfaction and quality, and found that quality was the best predictor of intentions to repurchase. [Li and Petrick (2008)](#Li) identified the key determinants of brand loyalty, suggesting that the investment model may lend a theoretical foundation to the explanation of tourists' brand loyalty formation. Other researches dealing with cruise refer to the safety assessment of cruise ships ([Lois et al., 2004](#Lois)), social space and interaction ([Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005](#Yarnal)), McDonaldization of cruise tourism ([Weaver, 2005](#Weaver)) and tourist bubbles ([Jaakson, 2004](#Jaakson)).

[Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2010)](#AndriotisAgiomirgianakis) provided a better understanding of the cruise travel experience by studying passengers’ satisfaction, motivation, and likelihood of returning to the port of Heraklion (Crete). This paper indicated that ‘exploration’ and ‘escape’ were among cruise passengers’ main motivations. [Jones (2011)](#Jones) claimed that the level of influence may vary according to cruise passengers’ travel experience but not in relation to their cruise itinerary with WoM and spouse or travel companion being considered as the most influential factors.

The reasons why passengers take a cruise are closely related to their post-satisfaction attributes, their likelihood of returning and the possibility of spreading their experience. Some studies ([Li and Petrick, 2008](#Li)) applied the investment method ([Rusbult, 1980](#Rusbult)) and found that loyalty is a function of cruise passengers’ satisfaction. [Petrick (2004b)](#Petrick2004b) found that new and less loyal passengers are less price-sensitive and tend to spend more, whereas loyal cruise visitors are more likely to spread positive WoM. [Petrick and Sirakaya (2004)](#PetrickSirikaya) supported these findings, mentioning that loyal repeaters and satisfied first-timers are more likely to recommend cruises and have intentions to revisit in the future. [Silvestre et al. (2008)](#Silvestre) in their research suggested that destination satisfaction plays an important role in the tourists’ willing to spend, their likelihood of returning sometime in the future and the possibility of spreading their experience to others. As [Petrick et al. (2001)](#PetrickMorais) and [Gabe et al. (2006)](#Gabe) claimed that the interaction between the likelihood of return and satisfaction remains largely unexplored in the cruise industry. Researchers have been wondering whether satisfaction is a predictor of the WoM attitude ([Hui et al., 2007](#Hui); [Hutchinson et al., 2009](#Hutchinson)).

Conforming to these questions regarding satisfaction and WoM attitudes, a causal nexus was found between these two variables by [Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis (2010)](#AndriotisAgiomirgianakis) when investigating cruisers’ experience in the port of Heraklion. Similar results were found by [Brida and Risso (2010)](#BridaRisso) regarding the Pacific and Caribbean ports. Additionally, a later study ([Bruwer, 2014](#Bruwer)) demonstrated that satisfied tourists are more likely to recommend a destination to relatives and friends, as experience from previous visitors is a reliable source for future tourists ([Chi and Qu, 2008](#Chi); [Duman and Mattila, 2005](#Duman)).

[Qu and Ping (1999)](#QuPing) claimed that tourists’ level of satisfaction is related to their needs and purposes for travel. [Duman and Mattila (2005)](#Duman) discuss the roles of satisfaction and perceived value. Price sensitivity, critical incidents and perceived image of cruise travel are factors that influence cruising intentions, according to various studies ([Petrick, 2005](#Petrick2005); [Petrick et al., 2006](#PetrickTonner)).

**Methodology**

*Sample selection*

This study focused on tourists and their motivation to embark on a cruise in the Aegean Sea. According to [Swanson and Horridge (2006)](#Swanson), “tourists” are considered as temporarily leisured persons who voluntarily visit a different geographical location to experience a change. The population of the current study consisted of passengers who disembarked in the port of Piraeus after an 8-day cruise in the Aegean Sea, between September and November 2013. Staff members were asked to deliver the questionnaires on their return to the port of Piraeus after passengers had completed their cruise. The questionnaires were translated into 6 languages (Greek, English, Spanish, Italian, German and French), based on the cruise company’s data regarding the expected nationalities of passengers, and were distributed along with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study. Before the main survey, a pilot study was conducted by the author with 50 passengers on-board in August of the same year. The purpose was to assess the feasibility of the study and identify possible expression problems in the questionnaire. After making the necessary adjustments to the questionnaire, the survey was begun, and almost 600 questionnaires were gathered. Half-completed questionnaires were excluded from the survey, and 456 questionnaires were included in the final analysis.

A three-section questionnaire was designed to measure passengers’ cruise experience in the Aegean Sea. Questions in the first part addressed passengers’ previous experience on cruises (if any), their method of finding out about the cruise, and general questions regarding the procedures of the trip. The second part was comprised of motivation questions using a five-point Likert-type scale: 1) not at all important, 2) somewhat important 3) neither important nor unimportant, 4) somewhat important and 5) extremely important. Also, questions examining satisfaction, the likelihood of returning and the WoM were also included. The third part comprised demographic questions, like age, income, nationality, marital status and gender.

*Data analysis*

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 was used to perform statistical procedures. Univariate statistics were calculated, such as frequencies, standard deviations and means. Principal factor analysis was performed with a varimax rotation to identify the degree to which the motivations could be reduced to a smaller set of factor attributes.

**Findings**

*Profile of passengers*

Table I shows the profile of the cruise ship passengers who participated in the survey. Demographic variables were grouped as follows: Gender takes the value 0 for male and 1 for female; Marital status is a categorical variable, and takes the value of 1 for single, 2 for married, 3 for divorced and 4 for widow/er. Age is comprised of four intervals with the values of 1 for 18-25, 2 for 26-45, 3 for 46-65 and 4 for ≥66. Income level is grouped into six classes and takes the value of 1 for ≤€10,000, 2 for €10,001-20,000, 3 for €20,001-30,000, 4 for €30,001-40,000, 5 for €40,001-50,000, and 6 for ≥50,001. Nationality takes the value of 1 for European, 2 for North American, 3 for South American, 4 for Asian, 5 for Australian, and 6 for South African.

More than half of the participants (55.7) were women – the remaining 44.3% were men – and the majority of respondents (67.3%) were married couples, while the 15.4% were single, 9.6% divorced, and 7.7% widowed. In terms of age, 51.3% of the tourists were between 46 and 65, confirming the findings of [Marti (1991)](#Marti), which identified a false impression that cruise passengers consist mainly of older persons above 65 years old. More than 30% of participants had a personal annual income of €20,001-30,000 (32.7%), and it was interesting to see that the income of 22.4% of respondents was between €30,001-40,000 while another 14.9% had a personal annual income of more than €50,001. Finally, as for nationality, we found that most passengers were European (36.4%), and substantial amount came from North America (27%).

The majority of respondents (46.7%) experienced the cruise trip with their family, while only 7.5% were making the trip alone. Of the respondents, 41.9% had selected a standard outside cabin and very few (5.9%) stayed in a suite. At this point, a clarification should be made that cabin class and age intervals were recommended by the cruise company, which assisted the author with the present study and they did not bias the findings in any way. Finally, most respondents (79.2%) had never been to Greece before, while the majority (70.4%) had experienced a cruise in the past, and only 12.1% of the passengers had been to Greece for a cruise before. This means that the study’s results come mostly from experienced cruise tourists as they comprised the majority.

**Table 1: Profiles of Cruise Ship Passengers**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | % |
| Gender |  |  |
| Male | 202 | 44.3 |
| Female | 254 | 55.7 |
| *Marital status* |  |  |
| Single | 70 | 15.4 |
| Married | 307 | 67.3 |
| Divorced | 44 | 9.6 |
| Widowed | 35 | 7.7 |
| *Age* |  |  |
| 18-25 | 5 | 1.1 |
| 26-45 | 61 | 13.4 |
| 46-65 | 234 | 51.3 |
| ≥66 | 156 | 34.2 |
| *Income* |  |  |
| ≤10,000 | 18 | 3.9 |
| 10,001-20,000 | 54 | 11.8 |
| 20,001-30,000 | 149 | 32.7 |
| 30,001-40,000 | 102 | 22.4 |
| 40,001-50,000 | 65 | 14.3 |
| ≥50,001 | 68 | 14.9 |
| *Nationality* |  |  |
| Europe | 166 | 36.4 |
| North America | 123 | 27.0 |
| South America | 80 | 17.5 |
| Asia | 26 | 5.7 |
| Australia | 53 | 11.6 |
| South Africa | 8 | 1.8 |
| *Companionship* |  |  |
| Alone | 34 | 7.5 |
| With friends | 93 | 20.4 |
| With a group | 116 | 25.4 |
| With family | 213 | 46.7 |
| *Cabin Type* |  |  |
| Standard inside | 124 | 27.2 |
| Premium inside | 18 | 3.9 |
| Standard outside | 191 | 41.9 |
| Premium outside | 69 | 15.1 |
| Deluxe | 27 | 5.9 |
| Suite | 27 | 5.9 |
| *Prior visit to Greece* |  |  |
| No | 361 | 79.2 |
| Yes | 95 | 20.8 |
| *Prior experience of cruise* |  |  |
| No | 135 | 29.6 |
| Yes | 321 | 70.4 |
| *Prior experience of cruise in Greece* |  |  |
| No | 401 | 87.9 |
| Yes | 55 | 12.1 |

*Analysis of motivation attributes*

Data from the samples were aggregated to analyze cruise visitors’ motivation to visit Greece for a cruise. Passengers were asked to indicate the importance of 10 motivation factors for undertaking the specific cruise. Table II presents the overall responses to motivation attributes. The statements derived from the current analysis are presented in descending order from the highest to the lowest mean. According to the table, relaxation and culture are very important components while shopping local gifts seems to be a relatively unimportant.

**Table 2: Overall Responses to Motivation Attributes**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Not at all important |  |  |  | Extremely important | Mean | Std. deviation |
|  |  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |  |  |
| 1. | Discover new places | 6.1 | 5.0 | 10.3 | 43.2 | 35.3 | 3.96 | 1.101 |
| 2. | Change from routine | 6.1 | 5.0 | 10.3 | 51.5 | 27.0 | 3.88 | 1.056 |
| 3. | Relaxation | 8.1 | 13.4 | 17.8 | 34.4 | 26.3 | 3.57 | 1.236 |
| 4. | Visit historical and cultural sites | 8.6 | 19.5 | 12.9 | 37.5 | 21.5 | 3.44 | 1.258 |
| 5. | Learn about Greek history/culture | 12.5 | 11.8 | 18.4 | 37.5 | 19.7 | 3.40 | 1.275 |
| 6. | Visit museums and/or art galleries | 10.7 | 11.0 | 30.5 | 39.9 | 7.9 | 3.23 | 1.097 |
| 7. | Experience pleasant temperature | 14.3 | 14.3 | 24.1 | 33.8 | 13.6 | 3.18 | 1.251 |
| 8. | Learn about Greek traditions | 13.8 | 14.5 | 25.7 | 35.3 | 10.7 | 3.15 | 1.209 |
| 9. | Enjoy nature | 18.0 | 16.7 | 22.4 | 30.5 | 12.5 | 3.03 | 1.301 |
| 10. | Buy local gifts | 19.3 | 41.9 | 19.5 | 13.8 | 5.5 | 2.44 | 1.114 |

Then, factor analysis was conducted with varimax rotation to identify the dimensions of motivations so as to reduce the dimensions of the observations. Eigenvalues greater than 1 were used to determine the number of factors. Before continuing with the factor analysis, the validity of the data was tested using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test of sampling adequacy (.707), indicating that the number of variables and the sample size were appropriate for factor analysis. KMO of .707 can be described as “middling”, indicating that the data is suitable for factor analysis. Factor loadings were greater than .60 (except the factor “buy local gifts”), which means that there is a good correlation between the items and the factor grouping to which they belong to. Additionally, reliability of the factors was tested and Cronbach’s alpha was calculated. Cronbach’s alpha values were .919 for the first factor, .893 for the second and .808 for the third. Composite reliability was also used to check the internal consistency, which should be greater than the benchmark of .70 ([Fornell and Larcker 1981](#Fornell); [Hair et al., 1998](#Hair)) or .60 ([Bagozzi and Kimmel, 1995](#Bagozzi)) to be considered adequate. In that case, the composite reliability of all three factors was greater than .7 (factor 1 = .940; factor 2 = .925; factor 3 = .846); thus, the scale is reliable.

The results of the factor analysis are shown in Table III. The three factors accounted for 81.9% of the variance. Factor 1 accounts for the most variance (35.1%), the second accounts for 31.6%, and the third for 15.2%. Factor 1 is labeled “culture and tradition” because it indicates that culture and tradition are motivations of great interest to the passengers, with the factor loading ranging from .828 to .921. The second factor is labeled “escape and relaxation” indicating that cruise passengers’ motivations were based on the desire to discover new places, relax and change from their routine. Factor 3 is labeled “enjoyment and shopping”, and the fact that “buying local gifts” is related to “experience pleasant temperature” may indicate that respondents choose shopping when the temperature is pleasant.

**Table 3: Motivation Dimensions of Cruise Passengers**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Factors | Factor  loadings | Eigenvalue | Variance explained (%) | Composite reliability | Cronbach’s alpha |
| ***Factor 1***  ***Culture and tradition*** |  | 3.514 | 35.1 | .940 | .919 |
| Learn about Greek history/culture | .921 |  |  |  |  |
| Visit historical and cultural sites | .915 |  |  |  |  |
| Learn about Greek traditions | .903 |  |  |  |  |
| Visit museums and/or art galleries | .828 |  |  |  |  |
| ***Factor 2*** |  | 3.163 | 31.6 | .925 | .893 |
| ***Escape and relaxation*** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Discover new places | .952 |  |  |  |  |
| Change from routine | .919 |  |  |  |  |
| Relaxation | .817 |  |  |  |  |
| ***Factor 3***  ***Enjoyment and shopping*** |  | 1.515 | 15.2 | .846 | .808 |
| Buy local gifts | .523 |  |  |  |  |
| Experience pleasant temperature | .939 |  |  |  |  |
| Enjoy nature | .907 |  |  |  |  |

Note: KMO .707, Bartlett 3906.594, p<.001

The criteria were based on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important).

Many questions have been raised regarding the relationship among satisfaction, likelihood of returning and WoM. During the analysis, it was found that there was no statistically significant correlation between satisfaction and likelihood of returning (p=.356); on the other side, there was a statistically significant correlation between satisfaction and WoM (p=.000). The findings indicate that even though the cruise passengers were very satisfied with their trip, they might not necessarily repeat it but would recommend the trip to others.

**Discussion and Limitations**

The contribution of this study lies in the comprehensive view of the cruise passengers’ motivations to take a cruise in the Greek islands. This study’s results show that approximately 90% of respondents had not experienced a cruise trip in Greece before, although most (around 70%) had experienced a cruise in the past. This indicates the necessity of promoting Greek cruise tourism to people who are experienced cruise travelers, and also to focus on first-time visitors so as to increase future demand. [Bideci and Albayrak (2016)](#Bideci), who investigated demographic characteristics of tourists visiting the pilgrimage site of Saint Nicholas Church, found that almost 90% of respondents were visiting for the first time, and they raised the importance of promoting Saint Nicholas Church to repeat visitors to Turkey. Additionally, another research focusing on the Western Wall found that 70% of visitors were going there for the first time, and found that marketers should focus on first-time visitors to increase future demand for Western Wall tourism ([Fleischer, 2000](#Fleischer)).

From the analysis of the factors, the current study found that exploring the history, culture, nature, and relaxation were among the motivations that urged cruise visitors to experience cruise trips in Greece. Similar findings were indicated in another study that was conducted in the port of Heraklion and focuses on history, culture, nature and relaxation as the motives of the travelers as well ([Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2010](#AndriotisAgiomirgianakis)). The motivations of relaxation, history and cultural knowledge, and nature were among the factors examined in the study by [Zhao and Timothy (2017)](#Zhao). [Ramires et al. (2016)](#Ramires) found that monuments and museums are important destination attributes, which is similar to the author’s finding that “visiting museums and/or art galleries” is one of the motivation dimensions of cruise passengers.

Also, the motivation to “escape from normal life” in [Qu and Ping’s (1999)](#QuPing) study can be considered similar to the motivation to “change from routine” in the current study. Additionally, [Andriotis (2011)](#Andriotis) found that good weather was one of the motivations that led tourists to stay in a coastal area of the island of Crete, like the current findings that the pleasant weather of Greece was one of the main motives of cruise tourists. The motives of relaxation and enjoying nature were also found in [Caber and Albayrak’s study (2016)](#Caber) regarding rock climbing tourists’ motivations.

The last results of the current study verify former studies in which it is mentioned that a positive relationship exists between satisfaction and WoM ([Andriotis and Agiomirgianakis, 2010](#AndriotisAgiomirgianakis); [Brida and Risso, 2010](#BridaRisso); [Bruwer, 2014](#Bruwer)). Additionally, [Hui et al. (2007)](#Hui) found that tourists who were satisfied with their trip were more likely to recommend the destination to others rather than revisit in the future, as indicated in the present manuscript.

Like any study, this study has its limitations. Firstly, the sample concentrated only on passengers who experienced a cruise in the Aegean Sea. Future research could be done also on cruise trips in other parts of Greece, like the Ionian Sea, to examine possible differences or similarities in the demographic characteristics and to conduct a comparative study. Secondly, although there are important similarities with other studies, this should not be considered as a generic approach.

Additionally, the sample in this study consists of both international and local cruise passengers, which prevents the market-based comparisons like those in the study by [Caber and Albayrak (2016)](#Caber). Thus, future studies should distinguish between domestic and international tourists. The respondents in this study answered the questionnaire on returning to the port of Piraeus; however, many researchers claim that motivation may change before, during, and after the activity ([Prebensen et al., 2010](#Prebensen); [Wu and Pearce, 2014](#Wu)). Accordingly, future researches should measure the motivations before, during, and after the cruise to identify reasons why the motivations may change.

It is important to note that this study was conducted in an effort to analyze tourists’ experience over a short period of time; however, it would be interesting to conduct similar studies examining whether cruise tourists have different demographic characteristics during the summer, and/or behave differently regarding their pre-trip motivations. Additional research should be done in an effort to better understand cruise passengers’ motivations to Greek islands and perhaps other possible motives to be explored such as self-esteem or social recognition attributes.

Finally, more research should be done to examine the relationship among satisfaction, likelihood of returning and WoM. It would be very interesting to see whether the cruise passengers’ experience in the same destination changes over the years or remain the same.

**Conclusions**

The results of the current study confirm the findings of relevant previous studies regarding tourists’ motivations in general and more specifically cruise passengers’ motivations. However, the importance of cruise passengers’ motives has been extensively discussed in this study covering some gaps in the existing literature.

The outcomes presented in Table III suggests that cruise passengers’ motivations are associated with culture and tradition, escape and relaxation, and enjoyment and shopping. Culture and tradition attributes seem of high importance for cruisers with the relaxation coming in the second place. Although enjoyment and shopping attributes may not seem to be crucial for the passengers’ decision to take a cruise, however this can also be considered as an important factor. Additionally, it has been found that cruise visitors who have experienced a cruise in Greece are more likely to recommend the trip to others rather than revisit the same destination in the future.

Although the literature indicates that motives are of high importance to understand tourists’ behaviors, there is still much to be done regarding cruise passengers’ attributes to assess the importance of various strategies that should be followed by the cruise industry.

**Implications**

This study can provide some implications for the cruise industries to better develop the passengers’ needs and wants. Understanding the passenger attributes is very crucial for local policy makers in order to help them take all appropriate measures providing the right environment for the cruisers.

Destination managers and local government bodies are encouraged to cooperate and focus on this information to develop marketing strategies. They should concentrate on passengers’ attributes to improve destination satisfaction ([Brida et al., 2012](#BridaPulina)). “Culture and tradition” and “escape and relaxation” were found to be the strongest motivations. This suggests that visitors associate cruise tourism with culture and tradition and these are the mainly reasons for motivating them to experience a cruise in Greece. Thus, policy makers should try to promote Greek cruise tourism by promoting campaigns through which the importance of culture and tradition should be demonstrated. Cruise companies should further improve programs regarding culture and relaxation during a cruise trip. Thus, they will be able to assess cruise passengers’ motivations, allowing them to customize their actions.

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