

MODULE 1
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF TRAVEL

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

At the end of this chapter, you should be able to:

- discuss the factors that motivate the people to travel;
- elucidate the relationship of needs, wants and motives to tourist motivation;
- describe the push/pull model;
- explain the relation between motivations listed in travel literature discuss the Plog's Psychographic Tourist Profile describe the characteristics of psychocentrics, allocentrics and midcentrics;
- identify the characteristics of travelers based on purpose;
- explain the Iso Ahola's Model of Social Tourism; and
- analyze the travel constraints

The Psychology of Travel

A. Motivation for Travel

Several studies on tourist motivations have listed various reasons why people travel. Some of the motivations listed in travel literature are:

1. Escape
2. Relaxation
3. Relief of tension
4. Sunlust
5. Physical
6. Health
7. Family togetherness
8. self-discovery
9. root of ethics
10. maintaining social contacts
11. status and prestige
12. showing one's importance to others
13. convincing oneself of one's achievement
14. education
15. wanderlust
16. professional/business
17. interest in foreign areas
18. cultural
19. interpersonal relations
20. scenery

BASIC MOTIVATIONS CAN BE DIVIDED INTO FOUR CLASSES:

1. **PHYSICAL MOTIVATORS** - Include those related to physical rest, sports participation, beach recreation, relaxing entertainment, and other motivations connected with health.

Examples:

- **Relaxation:** Booking a week at a quiet spa to recover from "burnout."

- **Active Recreation:** Going on a mountain biking trip or a surf camp to get the adrenaline flowing.

2. CULTURAL MOTIVATORS - Include the desire to know about other countries- their music, art, folklore, dances, paintings, and religion.

Examples:

- **Heritage:** Visiting a museum in Florence to see Renaissance art in person.
- **Immersion:** Staying in a remote village to learn a traditional cooking method.

3. INTERPERSONAL MOTIVATORS - Pertain to the desire to meet other people, visit friends or relatives, escape from routine, from family, and neighbors.

Examples:

- **VFR (Visiting Friends & Relatives):** Flying across the country for a family reunion or a best friend's wedding.
- **Socializing:** Joining a "singles cruise" or a group tour specifically to meet new people.

4. STATUS & PRESTIGE MOTIVATORS - concern ego needs and personal development. Included in this group are trips related to business, conventions, study, and pursuit of hobbies and education. Travel would enhance one's recognition and good reputation.

Examples:

- **Recognition:** Visiting an "exclusive" or "hidden gem" destination that few others have seen.

B. Travel as a Means to Satisfy a Need and Want

Travel serves both functional purposes (meeting needs) and emotional or aspirational purposes (fulfilling wants).

EXAMPLE:

- **The Need (Functional):** A high-stress executive needs to disconnect from digital devices and work pressure to prevent a mental health breakdown. This is a functional requirement for biological and psychological recovery.
- **The Want (Aspirational):** That same executive wants to spend that recovery time in an overwater bungalow in the Maldives. The destination choice is a "want"—a desire for luxury, aesthetic beauty, and social status that goes beyond the basic requirement of rest.



This concept is deeply rooted in **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**. When we travel for a "need," we are often addressing the lower levels of the pyramid (Safety, Physiological, or Social). When we travel for a "want," we are usually reaching for the top (Esteem and Self-Actualization). In the psychology of travel, we often use the Hierarchy of Needs to show that as our basic needs (like safety) are met, our "wants" (like status or self-discovery) become our main reason for booking a trip.

C. Relationship of Needs, Wants, and Motives

Needs are the foundation, wants are the expression of those needs, and motives are the forces that push individual acts. Together, they explain why people make choice, such as traveling, purchasing goods, or pursuing certain lifestyles.

How They Work Together

Think of it like a car:

- The **Need** is the empty fuel tank (*the deficiency*).
- The **Want** is the destination programmed into the GPS (*the specific goal*).
- The **Motive** is the engine turning over (*the energy that gets you moving*).

PUSH / PULL MODEL

The Push/Pull Model explains why people decide to travel by dividing motivations into two main forces: push factors and pull factor.

Push Factors:

These are personal, psychological reasons that push a person to want to travel. They come from within the individual.

Pull Factors:

These are features of a destination that pull the traveler toward a specific place.

EXAMPLE:

- **Push (The Problem):** "I am exhausted and hate this cold weather." (Inner feeling)
- **Pull (The Solution):** "That resort in Boracay has sunny beaches and 5-star service." (Outside attraction)
- **Push (The Problem):** "My life is boring; I want to see something new." (Inner feeling)
- **Pull (The Solution):** "Tokyo has incredible food and neon lights I've never seen before." (Outside attraction)

The Push factors create the desire to go anywhere that isn't "here." The Pull factors determine exactly where that "anywhere" will be.

MASLOW'S THEORY OF MOTIVATION AND TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS

A study of travel motivations found in travel literature indicates that these motivations fit into the hierarchy of needs model of Abraham Maslow, a famous psychologist. Maslow proposed the following hierarchy of needs as determinants of behavior.

1. **Physiological Needs** - The absolute basics your body requires to stay alive. If you don't have these, you can't focus on anything else.
2. **Safety Needs** - Once you are fed and rested, you want to feel out of danger. This is about stability and knowing you are protected.
3. **Social Needs** - Humans are social animals. Once we are safe, we look for connection. We want to feel like we "fit in" somewhere.
4. **Self-Esteem** - It's not just about liking yourself, but also feeling that others recognize your hard work or talents.

5. **Self-Actualization** - This is the "peak." It's about becoming the best version of yourself and doing what you were truly meant to do.

PLOG'S PSYCHOGRAPHIC TOURIST PROFILE

Plog's Psychographic Tourist Profile (developed by Stanley Plog) is a model that classifies travelers based on their personality and willingness to take risks. A theory that explains tourist behavior based on personality traits and how these traits influence travel preferences and destination choices. Stanley Plog classified tourists along a psychographic continuum.

Profile Type	Simple Definition	Travel Style
1. Psychocentric (The "Dependable")	People who are non-adventurous and prefer the familiar .	They like "safe" destinations, often travel by car, stay in well-known hotel chains, and eat familiar food (like McDonald's). They prefer tour guides and pre-planned schedules.
2. Mid-centric	The majority of travelers who fall in the middle.	They like a mix of both. They want to see new things, but they still want the comfort of a nice hotel and a safe environment. They are the "average" tourists.
3. Allocentric (The "Venturer")	People who are highly adventurous and seek novelty .	They want to go where no one else goes. They prefer flying to exotic locations, staying in local homes or small inns, and exploring without a map or a guide.

ISO AHOLA'S MODEL OF SOCIAL TOURISM

Seppo Iso-Ahola's model is a psychological theory that explains why people travel based on two simple human desires: **Escaping and Seeking**.

He suggests that our motivation to travel is a tug-of-war between wanting to get away from our daily "mess" and wanting to find something new or rewarding. It explains tourist motivation by focusing on social and psychological needs. It suggests that people travel because of a combination of escape and seeking motivations.

The Escaping Force (Leaving things behind)

Personal Escape - Getting away from your own thoughts, failures, or personal worries.

Example: Going for a solo walk in a forest to stop thinking about work.

Interpersonal Escape - Getting away from other people (bosses, annoying neighbors, or even family).

Example: Taking a solo vacation specifically to avoid phone calls and social obligations.

The Seeking Force (Finding something new)

Personal Seeking - Learning a new skill, feeling a sense of achievement, or "finding yourself."

Example: Traveling to Nepal to challenge yourself by trekking to Base Camp.

Interpersonal Seeking - Meeting new people, making new friends, or bonding more deeply with your travel partners.

Example: A couple going to Paris to strengthen their romantic bond.

Iso-Ahola's model is very similar to the Push/Pull model we discussed:

Escaping is the Push (Why you want to leave).

Seeking is the Pull (What you hope to get when you arrive).

CLASSIFICATION OF TRAVELERS BASED ON PURPOSE

Business travelers

1. **Regular business travelers** - These are individuals traveling for their day-to-day job requirements. Their trips are usually functional and "no-nonsense" such as visiting a branch office, meeting a single client, or inspecting a site.

2. **Business travelers attending meetings, conventions, and congresses (M.C.C.)** - This group is often referred to as part of the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions) industry. People traveling to participate in large-scale professional gatherings with many other people in their field.

3. **Incentive travelers** - A trip given by a company to its employees as a reward for hitting a specific goal (like reaching a sales target).

Pleasure / Personal Travelers

1. **Resort Travelers** - These travelers prioritize the destination within a destination. For them, the hotel or resort is the vacation.

2. **Family Pleasure Travelers** - This group is driven by the needs of families, parents or guardians traveling with children for the purpose of bonding and creating memories.

3. **The Elderly** - Travelers typically aged 60 and above seeking for comfort, accessibility, and enrichment. They tend to prefer slower-paced trips, cultural tours, and destinations with high-quality medical facilities nearby.

4. **Singles and Couples** - Individuals traveling alone or pairs traveling together without dependents.

TRAVEL CONSTRAINTS

Travel Constraints are the barriers or limitations that prevent a person from traveling, even if they have the desire and a destination. The main constraints to travel are:

- lack of money
- lack of time
- lack of safety and security
- physical disability
- family commitments
- lack of interest in travel
- fears of travel

ACTIVITY 1: TRAVEL PERSONALITY POSTER (Individual Activity)

Design a poster that represents your travel personality. Use images, colors, quotes and visuals to showcase your ideal travel experiences.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Creativity & Visual Appeal	30 pts
Content & Representation of Travel Personality	30 pts
Organization & Neatness	20 pts
Effort & Completeness	20 pts
TOTAL	100 pts