

# A Theoretical Framework for Rural Tourism Motivation Factors

N. P. Tsephe, and S. D. Eyono Obono

**Abstract**—Rural tourism has many economical, environmental, and socio-cultural benefits. However, the development of rural tourism compared to urban tourism is also faced with several challenges added to the disadvantages of rural tourism. The aim of this study is to design a model of the factors affecting the motivations of rural tourists, in an attempt to improve the understanding of rural tourism motivation for the development of that form of tourism. The proposed model is based on a sound theoretical framework. It was designed following a literature review of tourism motivation theoretical frameworks and of rural tourism motivation factors. The tourism motivation theoretical framework that fitted to the best all rural tourism motivation factors was then chosen as the basis for the proposed model. This study hence found that the push and pull tourism motivation framework and the inner and outer directed values theory are the most adequate theoretical frameworks for the modeling of rural tourism motivation.

**Keywords**—Motivation factors, rural tourism, tourism motivation theories.

## I. INTRODUCTION

ONE of the benefits of rural tourism is the generation of income for local communities. Such income can then be used by these communities towards the sustainability of their traditional activities [19], the promotion and conservation of their local arts and cultures, and the prevention of rural-urban migration [9]. Other benefits of rural tourism are well documented by [9]. According to [9], local communities are benefiting from rural tourism in three aspects: Economic, environmental, and socio-cultural.

The following extract from [9] highlights the economic benefits of rural tourism. “It will create employment for the rural people and generate income for them. The villagers will [be] able to provide better food and education for their children. They will have an additional source of income along with their agricultural income. [The following possibilities are created by rural tourism.]

- Create employment especially for the rural youth.
- Generate foreign exchange.
- The price of the land will rise.
- The expenditure on housing will increase.
- Demand for other goods and services will increase.
- Improvement in the public services.

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- Generate revenue [f]or the government.
- Modernization of agriculture and other rural activities.
- Local small businessman will be benefited.”

The following extract from [9] highlights the environmental benefits of rural tourism. “The rural people will learn how to lead healthy and hygienic life from the urban people visitors.

- Help in create and maintain the natural park.
- Learn the importance of preservation of natural resources.
- They will learn to develop healthy environment with proper sanitation, roads, electricity, telecommunication, etc.
- They will learn to preserve the natural habitats, bio-diversity historical monuments.”

The following extract from [9] highlights the socio-cultural benefits of rural tourism. “Since the income from tourism is much higher than what rural people can earn from agriculture and other allied services,

- Education and health of the rural community will improve.
- Cultural understanding through fairs and festivals.
- Reduce migration of rural people to urban areas.
- Market for agro products and handicrafts will develop in rural areas.”

## II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to [1], although tourism is booming globally, rural tourism is still under developed compared to urban tourism despite the tremendous advances made by e-tourism. Rural tourism is still not the first choice of most tourists, probably because of the following challenges highlighted by authors such as [12]. “Developing rural tourism has its challenges. Any successful tourism development, whether pro-poor or not, depends on commercial, economic, and logistical issues, such as the quality of the product, accessibility and infrastructure of the destination, availability of skills, and interest of investors. In most of these aspects, rural areas may well be at a disadvantage compared to urbanised and more developed areas. These challenges may be compounded by political and institutional obstacles, particularly in developing countries, i.e. the administrative complexity of dealing with low-populated areas, the lack of policy co-ordination between rural development and tourism development, and low priority provided to rural areas by central governments. Thus, ways to deal with these challenges are needed.”

It is also important to note that, apart from the above highlighted challenges, some authors such as [9] also attribute some economical, environmental, and socio-cultural disadvantages to rural tourism, and these disadvantages may be detrimental to the development of rural tourism.

The following extract from [9] highlights the economic disadvantages of rural tourism.

- “The rural people can be exploited.
- The urban investor will take away most of the profit.
- Food, drink and necessary products will be imported from outside and not produced locally.
- Rural people may be under paid.
- Due to competition the local handicraft and farm produce products will be sold at lower price.
- Increase in the price of local agro products”.

The following extract from [9] highlights the environmental disadvantages of rural tourism. “The visitors may overexploit natural resources and it can have a heavy impact on the environment. In addition, rural tourism will require infrastructure, transportation and other facilities which can cause environmental distortion”.

The following extract from [9] also highlights the socio cultural disadvantages of rural tourism. “Poorly planned tourism can affect the villagers. It can disrupt the rural culture. It may affect the traditional and cultural practices, agriculture and other allied activities.”

### III. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to design a model of the factors affecting rural tourists’ motivations. The choice of rural tourists’ motivations as the main theme of this research can be justified by this argument from [6] according to which “it is possible that by studying tourist motivation in relation to rural tourism, existing knowledge on this under-researched and misunderstood tourism sector can be enriched.” The rural tourism motivation factors model to be proposed by this research is expected to be based on a sound tourism motivation theoretical framework. Therefore the two main objectives of this research are to investigate existing tourism motivation theoretical frameworks, and to identify rural tourism motivation factors.

### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Readers are invited to the next section of this paper on its research design where they will be informed that the results of this paper are obtained from a two-stage’ literature review.

### V. RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is designed in the form of a literature review. A first literature review will be conducted to identify motivation theories for tourism in general. A second literature review will be conducted to identify factors that are affecting the motivation of rural tourists. The authors will then attempt to fit these factors into each tourism motivation theory, and then choose the best theory using factors fitness as the comparison criteria.

### VI. RESULTS

This section presents the results of this research in terms of the identification of exiting tourism motivation theories, and

of rural tourism motivation factors. The section ends with the presentation of the fitness of the above mentioned factors in the theoretical frameworks mentioned earlier, as the basis for the selection of the most appropriate theoretical frameworks.

#### A. Tourism Motivation Theories

The result of the literature review conducted by this study on tourism motivation theoretical frameworks reveals that there are at least five existing tourism theoretical frameworks: the sunlust and wanderlust theory, the push and pull theory, the personal and interpersonal theory, the physical, status and prestige, cultural, and impersonal motivation theory, and the inner-directed and outer-directed values theory.

##### 1. The Sunlust and Wanderlust Theory

According to [15] cited by [3] and [11], the concepts of sunlust and wanderlust can explain the reasons why people travel (Fig. 1). The concept of sunlust refers to the fact that travelers are attracted to places that can provide them with specific facilities that do not exist in their own place of residence. The concept of wanderlust refers to travelers’ desire to go from a known place to an unknown place.

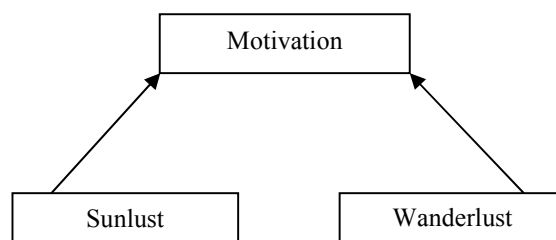


Fig. 1 The sunlust and wanderlust theory proposed by [8]

##### 2. The Push and Pull Theory

According to [4] cited by [10], the concepts of push and pull can explain why people travel (Fig. 2). The concept of push refers to the fact that one wants to travel in order to satisfy a need. The concept of pull refers to the fact that tourism destinations are designed such a way that their attributes will attract visitors.

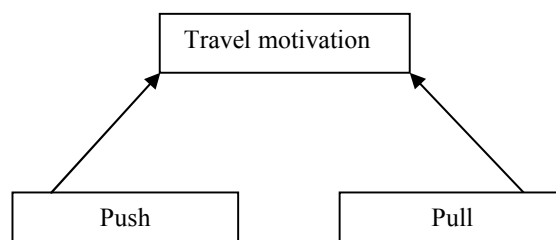


Fig. 2 Push and pull theory proposed by [6]

##### 3. The Personal and Interpersonal Theory

According to [14] cited by [10], people travel because of personal and interpersonal reasons (Fig. 3). Personal reasons refer to personal rewards such as self determination, a sense of competence or mastery, challenge, learning, exploration, and relaxation. Interpersonal reasons refer to rewards generated from social interactions.

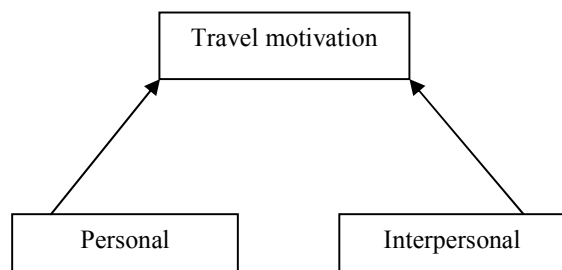


Fig. 3 Personal and interpersonal theory proposed by [14]

#### 4. The Physical, Status and Prestige, Cultural and Impersonal Motivation Theory

According to [15] cited by [20], tourism motivation has four dimensions: physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige (Fig. 4). Physical motivation is directly connected to a person's bodily health: physical rest, participation in sports, and the need for recreation at the beach. Status and prestige motivation refers to tourists' self-esteem and personal development. Cultural motivation refers to the fact that travelers desire to gain knowledge about the cultural activities of other countries. Interpersonal motivation refers to the fact tourists want to meet new people, visit friends or relatives, get away from the routine conventions of life, or make new friends.

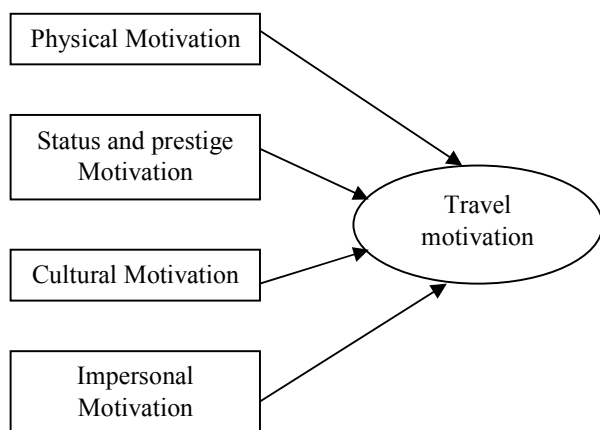


Fig. 4 Physical, status and prestige, cultural and impersonal theory proposed by [15]

#### 5. The Inner-directed and Outer-directed Theory

According to [7] cited by [20], people travel because of inner-directed reasons and because of outer-directed reasons (Fig. 5). Inner-directed reasons predominantly refer to tourists' emotions, while outer-directed reasons are cognitive in nature.

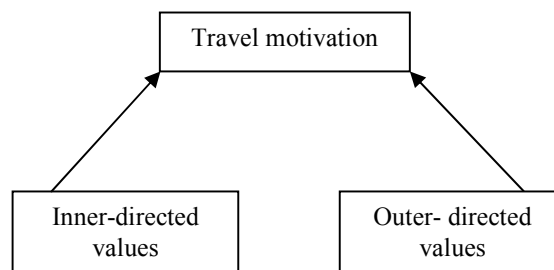


Fig. 5 Inter-directed and outer-directed theory proposed by [7]

#### B. Rural Tourism Motivation Factors

The following factors were found during the review of literature on rural tourism motivation factors: the need to escape, the quest for pleasure and relaxation, the quest for a memorable and life time experience, the quest for adventure, the quest for intellectual enrichment, the need to learn more about nature, the quest for safety, the quest for beautiful landscapes, the quest for a hassle free, peaceful, and pollution free environment, and affordability (Table I).

##### 1. The Need to Escape

According to [18], most travellers visit rural areas to escape from their busy lives.

##### 2. The Quest for Pleasure and Relaxation

Research conducted by [9] and [18] found that most rural tourists are in search of "pleasure and relaxation of body and mind", and they want to relax away from their usual environment.

TABLE I  
 TOURISTS MOTIVATIONS

Factors	References
B.1. Escape	[18]
B.2. Pleasure and relaxation	[9], [18]
B.3. Memorable and life time experience.	[17], [5]
B.4. Adventure	[2], [9]
B.5. Enrich themselves	[5]
B.6. Learn about local nature	[17]
B.7. Safety	[5], [13], [16]
B.8. Hassel free, peaceful, pollution free, environment, and beautiful landscape	[17],[9]
B.9. Affordability	[2], [9]

##### 3. The Quest for a Memorable and Once in a Lifetime Experience

References [17] and [5] found that most families want to build family togetherness and have a "memorable and once in a lifetime experiences" at a rural destination.

##### 4. The Quest for Adventure

Reference [2] found that rural tourists are driven by the quest for adventure through activities such as mount climbing and desert camping. According to [5] and [9], rural tourists have the desire "to seek adventure and pleasure" through exciting outdoor activities such as hiking, skiing, fishing, hunting, horse riding, etc.

### 5. The Quest for Intellectual Enrichment

According to [5], most rural tourists are driven by their willingness to enrich themselves intellectually, and to discover new things by taking advantage of the learning opportunities offered by rural tourism: Learning about a destination, its culture, its history, and its people.

### 6. The Need to Learn More About Nature

Reference [17] found that rural tourists want to explore nature.

### 7. The Quest for Safety

According to [13], [16], and [5], rural tourists visit a place where they feel that they will be safe and welcomed by friendly local people.

### 8. The Quest for Pollution Free, Peaceful, Hassle Free Environment, and Beautiful Landscapes

Research conducted by [9] found that rural tourists are attracted by rural areas because they offer a pollution free and peaceful environment with lots of greenery. According to [17], rural tourists are attracted by beautiful landscapes and hassle free environments.

### 9. Affordability

Findings from [2] and [9] indicate that tourists choose rural destinations because of their affordability.

#### C. Matching Factors with Theories

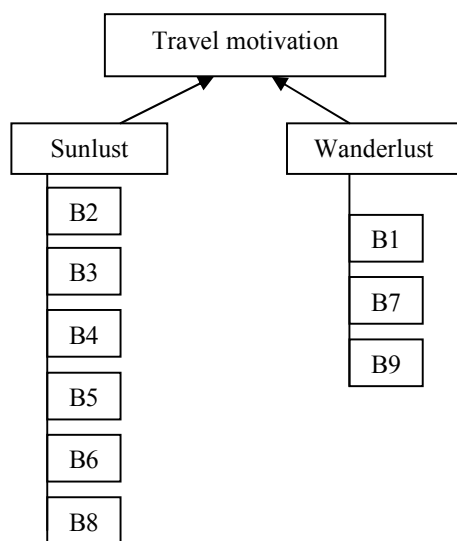


Fig. 6 Sunlust and Wanderlust Rural Tourism Motivation Factors

This section presents how the above identified rural tourism motivation factors were fitted in the tourism motivation theoretical frameworks described earlier.

#### 1. The Sunlust and Wanderlust Theory

Fig. 6 shows that it is possible to model rural tourism motivation factors according to the Sunlust and Wanderlust tourism motivation theory. However, the classification of the following rural tourism motivation factors is questionable: the

need to escape, the quest for safety, and affordability.

#### 2. The Push and Pull Theory

Fig. 7 shows that it is possible to model rural tourism motivation factors according to the Push and Pull tourism motivation theory. However, the classification of the following rural tourism motivation factors is questionable: the quest for memorable and once in a lifetime experience, and affordability.

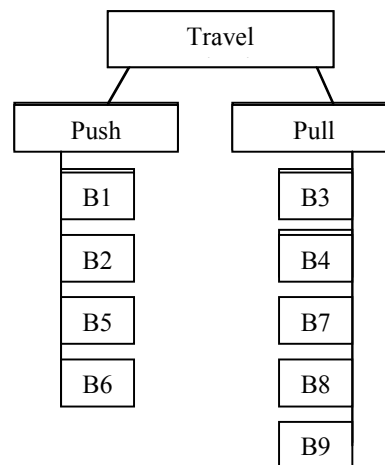


Fig. 7 Push and pull rural tourism motivation factors

#### 3. The Personal and Interpersonal Theory

Fig. 8 shows that it is possible to model rural tourism motivation factors according to the Personal and Interpersonal tourism motivation theory. However, the classification of the following rural tourism motivation factors is questionable: the quest for safety, the quest for pleasure and relaxation, and the quest for memorable and once in a lifetime experience.

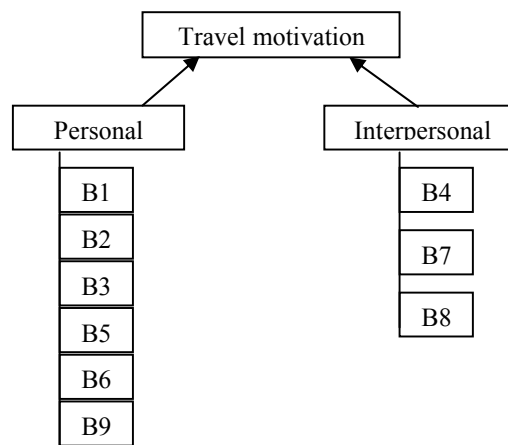


Fig. 8 Personal and interpersonal rural tourism motivation factors

#### 4. The Physical, Status and Prestige, Cultural and Impersonal Motivation Theory

Fig. 9 shows that it is possible to model rural tourism motivation factors according to the Physical, Cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige tourism motivation theory. However, the classification of the following rural tourism motivation factors is questionable: the need to escape,

the quest for memorable and once in a lifetime experience, and the quest for intellectual enrichment.

destinations' attributes, or they are motivated either by their emotions or by their quest for knowledge.

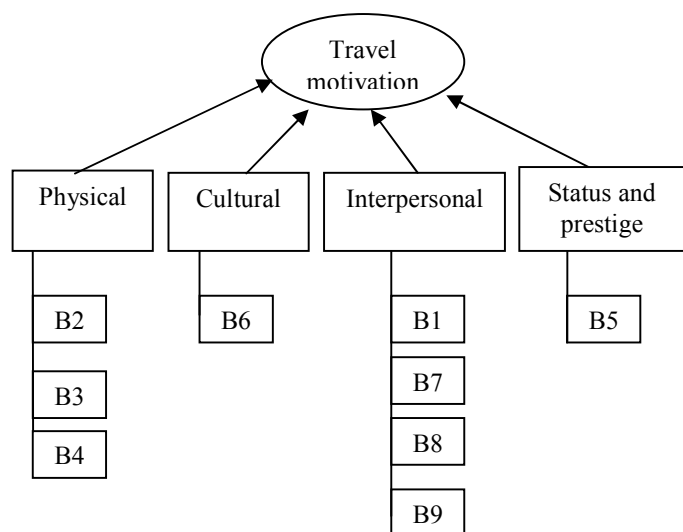


Fig. 9 Physical, cultural, interpersonal, and status and prestige rural tourism motivation factors

#### 5. The Inner-directed and Outer-directed Theory

Fig. 10 shows that it is possible to model rural tourism motivation factors according to the outer-directed and inner-directed values tourism motivation theory. However, the classification of the following rural tourism motivation factors is questionable: the quest for safety, and affordability.

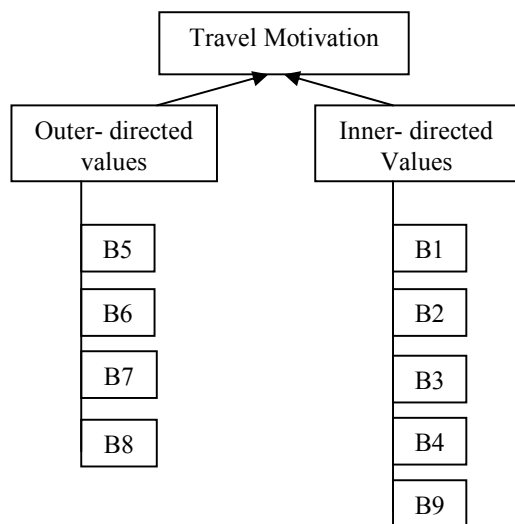


Fig. 10 Outer-directed and inner-directed rural tourism motivation factors

#### D. Modelling Rural Tourism Motivation Factors

When matching rural tourism motivation factors with existing tourism motivation theories, one reaches the conclusion that rural tourism motivation factors can be adequately modeled using the push and pull tourism motivation theory or using the inner-directed and outer-directed values theories. This seems to mean that rural tourists are either pushed by their own needs or they are pulled by the

#### VII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this paper, a review of existing tourism motivation theories was conducted followed by a review of rural tourism motivation factors. These rural tourism motivation factors were then matched with the tourism motivation theories to identify the best tourism motivation theories for rural tourism. According to the results of this paper, the push and pull, and the inner-directed and outer directed values theories are the most suitable theories for the modeling of rural tourism motivation factors. The main contribution of this paper resides in the fact that it provides evidence on the suitability of existing tourism motivation theories for the modeling of rural tourism motivations, instead of just choosing one theory over another as usually done in other existing research. Future research will attempt to empirically validate the theoretical models proposed by this paper.

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