

A dualistic model of tourism seasonality: Approach-avoidance and Regulatory Focus Theories

Abstract

Seasonality in tourism is a key but poorly understood issue in the context of the tourism industry. Furthermore, theoretical and conceptual developments regarding seasonality in tourism remain limited. This conceptual study aims to integrate approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories as frameworks for understanding seasonality in tourism. The study’s purpose is threefold. First, it evaluates current research on seasonality in tourism. Second, it outlines the features of approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories and their underutilization in the tourism setting. Third, it illustrates the potential of the above theories and frameworks in understanding seasonality in tourism. Also important is our development of a dualistic model to augment policymakers’ understanding of how certain factors, such as fruition-based factors, structural factors, unforeseen factors, and climate-based factors, can influence seasonality in tourism. Implications and suggestions for future research are also discussed.

Keywords: Seasonality, tourists’ responses, approach–avoidance, regulatory focus theory, dualistic model.

1. Introduction

Seasonality is a common and persistent feature that has been well documented in tourism literature (Ferrante, Magno, & De Cantis, 2018; Vergori, 2017). Studies have shown that the flow of tourists changes across seasons and time intervals (Turrión-Prats & Duro, 2017; Kastenholz & Lopes deAlmeida, 2008). Reintinger, Berghammer, and Schmude (2016) found that market segmentation in tourism undergoes continual changes due to seasonal variations. For instance, some segments of the tourist population might prefer sun and sea in one season but then switch to city and cultural tourism at another time. Given such fluctuations in spatial and temporal tourism demands, understanding the causes and impacts of seasonality is critical. For managers and policymakers, seasonality influences their return on investment, whereas for tourists, seasonality affects their perceptions and choices of destinations. Thus, this study is important for aiding academicians and tourism managers in dealing with the influences of seasonality, and we also present a strategic plan for understanding tourists' responses to variation in their tourism destinations.

Previous studies on seasonality in tourism have mainly focused on case studies or practical issues, with limited development of theories or conceptual and actionable frameworks from the tourist's perspective (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). In addition, numerous studies have addressed the push-pull factors that create high and low seasons (see Amelung, Nicholls, & Viner, 2007; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Ridderstaat et al., 2014). However, little attention has been given to investigating the underlying seasonality factors and relationships between tourists' motivations and the seasonal variations in climate, weather, and lifestyle at destinations (Goulding, Baum, & Morrison, 2005; Hamilton & Lau, 2006). For instance, Hinch and Jackson (2000) assessed seasonal tourism variations in the context of leisure constraint factors and found

that intrapersonal, interpersonal, and structural constraints are the main factors affecting those variations. Moreover, Turrión-Prats and Duro (2017) stated that “when designing strategies for tackling seasonality, it is thus necessary to measure, evaluate and understand the factors behind this phenomenon, recognizing the seasonal patterns of their markets and attracting appropriate target market segments in each one of the seasons” (p. 7). Thus, it is important that tourism managers should understand tourists’ motivations as well as what characteristics or factors contribute to seasonal variations in deciding visitor travel behaviors.

Although several economic theories and demand models have been provided to expand our understanding of seasonal tourism trends, seasonal patterns, and tourists’ choices or behaviors (Rosselló & Sansó, 2017; Vergori, 2017; Fernández-Morales et al., 2016; Duro, 2016; Martín, Aguilera, & Moreno, 2014; Nadal, Font, & Rossello, 2004), little is known about how tourists respond to various seasonality factors. Without that understanding, tourism managers cannot establish specific marketing plans to deal with the issues of seasonal variations. In accordance with that research gap, we suggest that seasonality in tourism is associated with a number of promotion–prevention foci and approach–avoidance motivating factors that can influence tourists’ travel behaviors. We extend the understanding developed from a broad knowledge on approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories, which are plausible in comprehending the phenomenon of seasonality in tourism. Thus, this study contributes important knowledge on the impact of approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories and how they pertain to visitor behaviors.

To contribute to the literature on tourism seasonality, the purpose of this study is threefold. First, the study systematically evaluates the causes and impacts of seasonality in the tourism context. Second, the study examines the merits of approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories for understanding seasonal variation in tourist behaviors. Third, the study develops a

dualistic model to integrate approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories in order to investigate the dimensions and factors that determine seasonal tourist variation. By integrating approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories into a framework for exploring seasonality in tourism, the mutual connection between seasonality in tourism and the theories benefits both fields of study.

Last, the dualistic model will assist policymakers and marketing planners in their efforts toward sustaining the high seasonal demands and searching for new and alternative markets during the off season. The four types of factors proposed in the model (i.e., structural, fruition, climate, and unforeseen factors) (see Figure 1) provide an ample view with which to examine tourists’ activations and inclinations, which in turn influence their seasonal travel patterns. Furthermore, the model helps us to examine marketing plans and strategies for targeting particular forms of tourism and purposes of travel, so that managers can cope with seasonal variations.

2. Literature Review

Seasonality is the primary aspect of the tourism industry, and it is examined as an inherent feature of that industry (Baum & Lundtorp, 2001). Hence, it is closely linked to tourism and has remained a critical issue in tourism studies (Verbos & Brownlee, 2017; Becken, 2013; Bar-On, 1975). Although the concept of seasonality in tourism, and its policy implications, received considerable attention in the last decades (Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Hinch & Jackson, 2000), researchers and practitioners are still paying attention to such issues because the cause-and-effect determination of seasonality in tourism is a complex phenomenon (Ferrante, Magno, & De Cantis, 2018; Connell Page, & Meyer, 2015). In addition, there is a call for a more theoretical framework within which to understand tourism’s seasonality (Boffa & Succurro, 2012) and to comprehend how tourists respond to seasonality.

2.1. Causes and Impacts of Seasonality in Tourism

The causes and effects of seasonality are vital issues in tourism. Various natural and institutional factors have been identified as the causes of seasonality (Higham & Hinch, 2002; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Baum & Lundtorp, 2001). Weather-related variables, such as temperature, rainfall, precipitation, daylight, and sunlight, are some of the natural factors that determine seasonal variation. In particular, temperature is the most influential climate-based variable; tourists are sensitive to destination temperatures in their intentions and decision-making behaviors (Hinch & Jackson, 2000). Special events, festivals, holidays (i.e., public, school, and industrial holidays), inertia, traditions, social pressures, sporting seasons, and fashion activities are some examples of institutional factors that create seasonal patterns in tourism (Pegg, Patterson, & Garidido, 2012; Getz & Nilsson, 2004; Baum & Lundtorp, 2001; Butler, 2001).

Institutional factors arise from human-oriented factors, and Amelung et al. (2007) noted that institutional factors are less predictable than climate-related factors, due to the unexpected and fashion-related changes in human traveling behavior. For example, the long-dated family trip to rural areas during the summer has presently been diverted to other vacation areas in many countries. In a comparison between climate and institutional factors, Hadwen et al. (2011) noted that climate is more influential in different climate zones, such as in temperate, equatorial, tropical, desert, and grassland areas, whereas institutional factors have a higher effect only in subtropical climates. In contrast to that, Ferrante et al. (2018) asserted that institutional factors could strongly influence seasonal variations. Moreover, other factors, such as destination and its corresponding attributes, and place of origin, also influence seasonality in tourism (Cisneros-Martínez & Fernández-Morales, 2015). Variations in seasonal tourism are broadly classified into off seasons and peak seasons, which are characterized by different push-pull factors. Butler and Mao (1997) identified three patterns of tourism seasons: one-peak, two-peak, and no-peak

seasons. A peak season is a period of time in which a high demand and a high number of tourists exist, whereas an off season is characterized by a low flow of tourists and a decline in the demand for tourist facilities. Studies on the factors that create seasonal tourism variations have noted that climate has a strong influence on tourist travel patterns (e.g., Li et al., 2017; Gössling et al., 2012; Amelung et al., 2007).

Previous studies have not reached a consensus on the impacts of seasonality in tourism. Several studies have argued about the seasonality-induced challenges to the sustainability of tourism businesses. For example, off seasons are characterized by reductions in tourist flow, occupancy, tourism receipts, and investment in general (see Terry, 2016; Pegg et al., 2012; Amelung et al., 2007; Getz & Nilsson, 2004). In addition, few studies have asserted that seasonality promotes sustainability, creates a conducive environment for tourism, protects biodiversity, minimizes resource exploitation, or provides time for recovery (Matheison & Wall, 2006; Butler, 2001; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). Furthermore, most studies have examined seasonality in tourism in well-developed countries and regions, such as in Europe, North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Relatively few have examined seasonality in developing regions, such as in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, or South America (Banki, Ismail, & Muhammad, 2016; Chen & Pearce, 2012; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). Hence, a considerable research gap exists in our understanding of the geographic and socioeconomic variations of seasonality in tourism, and that gap limits the generalizability and representativeness of the extant research on seasonality in tourism in general.

Apart from the causes and impacts of seasonality in tourism, research on the subject lacks a sound theoretical framework (Boffa & Succurro, 2012; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Hinch & Jackson, 2000; Lundtorp, 2001). Therefore, the current study aims to draw upon approach–

avoidance and regulatory focus theories to help us understand seasonality in tourism, and that goal can be fulfilled by discussing the features of those theories. In the following sections, we outline the main features of the theories and discuss tourism studies in accordance with those theories.

2.2. Theoretical Overviews of Seasonality in Tourism

Seasonality creates variations in physical, human, and socioeconomic environments and can be an important factor in individual lives and academic disciplines. Likewise, tourism has been recognized to be a seasonal phenomenon, although seasonality is one of its least understood aspects (Connell et al., 2015). At first, Bar-On (1975) examined seasonality in tourism from the perspective of supply and demand. He argued that seasonality results in an economic imbalance that leads to an undetermined demand and an inefficiency in supply. Although many definitions of seasonality have been proposed, no single definition includes all aspects of seasonality in tourism. Until now, studies have used Butler's (2001) recent definition of seasonality, which is a "temporal imbalance in the phenomenon of tourism, which may be expressed regarding dimensions of such elements as numbers of visitors, expenditure of visitors, traffic on highways and other forms of transportation, employment and admissions to attractions" (p. 5). The most common explanation is that seasonal tourism indicates an imbalance between demand and supply (Connell et al., 2015; Higham & Hinch, 2002; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005).

Previous studies explain seasonality in tourism from the perspectives of market, finance, community, and behavior. For example, some studies have used financial portfolio theory to assess mechanisms that mitigate seasonal fluctuations (Jang, 2004). Vargas-Sánchez et al. (2014) used social exchange theory to examine residents' attitudes toward seasonality in tourism. Vergori (2012) used spatial theory to identify variations in the impact of seasonality across regions and areas. In addition, traditional pricing theory has been applied to develop pricing strategies to help

suppliers in combating seasonality issues (Jeffrey & Barden, 1999). Psychological theories, such as cognitive consistency and arousal theories (Timmermans, 1990), have been proposed for understanding individual variations in behavior and decision-making. Moreover, the theory of planned and realized behavior and the theory of reasoned action have been used in psychological and behavioral models to illustrate individual intentions and readiness for action (Webb & Sheeran, 2006; Oreg & Katz-Gerro, 2006). Finally, the theory of reasoned action has been used to examine situations that limit behavioral intentions and associated variations in decision-making. Among these, the theory of planned behavior matches intentions and actions in specific contexts by assessing engagement and realization.

2.3. Characteristics of Approach–Avoidance and Regulatory Focus Theories

Approach and avoidance theory is a psychology-based perspective that has received researchers' attention in the fields of marketing and management. According to Elliot (2006), approach-avoidance motivation is “the energization of behavior by, or the direction of behavior toward positive (approach motivation) stimuli (objects, events, possibilities), and negative (avoidance motivation) stimuli (objects, events, and possibilities) provide the direction of behavior to avoid it” (p. 112). This theory is based on the recognition that approaching and seeking pleasure, and avoiding pain, are mechanisms that drive human behaviors (Ferris et al., 2011; Elliot & Thrash, 2010; Elliot, 2006). Another theory that works hand in hand with approach-avoidance motivation is regulatory focus theory. Regulatory focus theory explains how a person's self-regulation responds to positive or negative stimuli (Higgins, 1998). This theory is based on the principle of self-regulation, which is divided into two categories: promotion and prevention. A promotion-focused strategy is associated with development, excitement, and seeking pleasure and is mostly led by the ideal self, whereas a prevention-focused strategy pays

attention to safety, protection, and obligations and is directed by the actual self (Brockner & Higgins, 2001; Friedman, Higgins, & Shah, 1997).

Those two theories have a common pattern in exploring human behaviors from the perspectives of motivation and intention. Both theories are established based on the philosophy of hedonism (see Higgins, 2006). Approach motivation is characterized by positive emotionality and extraversion, and it activates behaviors that are associated with the positive aspects of promotion-focused strategies such as advancement, development, and aspiration (Elliot & Thrash, 2010). Hence, pleasure is characterized by approach motivation and promotion focus, whereas pain is characterized by avoidance motivation and prevention focus. Similarly, Scholer and Higgins (2008) mentioned that approach-avoidance motivation is an antecedent of regulatory focus theory. Approach-avoidance motivation and promotion-prevention focus are associated with an individual tourist's motivation and decision-making across several phenomena.

2.4 Approach-Avoidance and Regulatory Focus in Tourism Research

Approach-avoidance and regulatory focus theories can help us understand tourists' responses and behaviors but have been applied infrequently in tourism research. Tourism studies have mainly focused on tourists' intentions, emotions, and motivations (e.g., Lio & Rody, 2009; Ryu & Jang, 2007; Yüksel, 2007; Bigné, Andreu, & Gnoth, 2005; Lee, Shafer, & Kang, 2005) and on their behavioral responses, goal orientations, activation, and coping strategies (e.g., Kruger, Sirgy, Lee, & Yu, 2015; Abarbanel, 2013; Hutchinson, Baldwin, & Oh, 2006). On the other hand, regulatory focus theory has been applied to some tourism and hospitality scenarios, such as travel motivation (e.g., Chang & Teng, 2017; Stenseng, Rise, & Kraft, 2012), reaction, and coping (e.g., Harris et al., 2017; Jung & Yoon, 2015; Yang, Mattila, & Hou, 2013; Wan, Chan, & Su, 2011), as well as to studies of experience and satisfaction (e.g., Liu & Mattila, 2016;

Zhao & Namasivayam, 2012) and hope and trust (e.g., Choi, Law, & Heo, 2016; Kim, Kang, & Mattila, 2012).

Although some tourism studies have adopted approach–avoidance motivation or used regulatory focus theory to investigate intention, affection, the behavioral responses of tourists and hotel guests, travelers’ escape motives, and consumer service evaluations, existing studies have focused on a limited range of issues addressed by those theories. In response, the current study utilizes approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories to understand tourists’ seasonal travel behaviors. We suggest that integrating approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories would result in more in-depth knowledge and would shape future research on novel and theoretical developments (Ferris et al., 2011). Hence, approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories could assist us in understanding tourists’ reactions and could extend the current understanding by investigating the causes and impacts of seasonality issues.

3. A Dualistic Model of Seasonality in Tourism

Seasonality in tourism involves disparities between demand and supply (Connell et al., 2015; Higham & Hinch, 2002; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). The regularly high tourism demand in a peak season is relatively variant, and might be either changed or distorted by several events and mechanisms. Relatively, too, tourism supply is constant even though it is influenced by tourism demand. Economic theories suggest that demand is influential and can shape the characteristics of goods and services. However, supply can also be changed in the long run. Although previous studies have frequently identified push-pull factors that create off-peak seasons, few studies have examined the role of tourist motivations and decision-making in those phenomena.

Tourist motivation is a dialectical process of seeking and escaping places (see Jansson, 2007). Similarly, seasonal tourism variation represents tourists seeking a destination at peak

seasons and avoiding it during off seasons. According to Iso-Ahola and Mannell (1985), seeking and escaping are approach–avoidance motives and are the foundation of people’s travel motives. Given the influence of arousal and activation on an individual’s decisions, pleasure motivates a tourist to visit a destination, whereas pain motivates a tourist to avoid visiting a destination (Elliot, 2006). Accordingly, tourist motivations have two broad categories: 1) approach–avoidance motivations that are exhibited through tourists’ activation and inhibition, respectively, and 2) promotion-focused and prevention-focused strategies that are characterized by willingness and disinclination, respectively. All of these motivations have an impact on seasonal variations in tourism. For example, tourists with approach motivation and promotion-focused strategies are highly motivated and willing to travel at a particular time of year. However, tourists may choose not to travel or may cancel their travel plans if an avoidance motivation is raised or if they apply a prevention-focused strategy. Our conceptual dualistic model divides seasonal tourist behaviors into four types, on the basis of approach–avoidance motives and promotion–prevention strategies. Those four factors are fruition-based, structural, climate-based, and unforeseen factors. Figure 1 shows the dualistic model of seasonality in tourism and in tourists’ reactions toward the four factors.

Insert Figure 1 about here

Most studies have addressed seasonality by designing strategies, such as pricing, attractions, and product and/or market diversifications. However, an understanding of tourists’ views is an important goal for tourism organizations if they are to develop an effective strategic plan to cope with seasonality in tourism, especially with regard to the off-peak seasons. Therefore, seasonality in tourism should be understood from an individual tourist’s perspective.

By integrating approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories, we examine how each of the four factors influences the seasonal variations in tourists’ behavior.

Structural factors: Seasonal tourist behavior is characterized by an approach motivation, but it may be inhibited by a prevention-focused strategy. In other words, physical and socioeconomic limitations may reduce a person’s intention to travel at a particular time. Prior studies have pointed out that such things as physical factors, cultural factors, social distance (Ahn & McKercher, 2015; McKercher, 2008; Kim & Lee, 2000), time, income, and cost at destination (Marrocu, Paci, & Zara, 2015; Dickinson & Peeters, 2014) can influence travel behavior. For example, tourists traveling to sporting events prefer short journeys, whereas vacationers seeking sun and sea are willing to travel long distances. Turrión-Prats and Duro (2017) found that income and price play pivotal roles in influencing tourists’ seasonal patterns. Thus, older tourists are less sensitive to seasonal variation than younger tourists are because of the seniors’ greater spending power and fewer career commitments (Hinch & Jackson, 2000). In addition, costs at a destination and income play a pivotal role in elastic and inelastic tourist behaviors (Brons et al., 2002). For example, due to their greater spending power and income, senior tourists are willing to pay more for tourist services. Family tourists, on the other hand, arrange their vacations in accordance with the school calendar. Structurally, school schedules determine the time of year when teachers and students can travel. To summarize, structural factors arise from the differences among people in terms of their physical and socioeconomic conditions, which are expressed through approach motivation and prevention focus and influence their seasonal travel patterns.

Fruition-based factors: Unlike structural factors, fruition-based factors are driven by an approach motivation and a promotion-focused strategy. Tourism demand is much higher in peak seasons than in low or off seasons. Enormous demand during a peak season is driven by tourists’

motivations to attain and accomplish certain goals. Their motivation to travel is aroused, thereby resulting in positive activation and a willingness to travel to a destination. Aspirations, positive behavioral intentions, and affinity with a destination energize tourists to travel during peak or off-season periods. Kemperman et al. (2000) noted that personal satisfaction and aspirations determine tourists' seasonal travels. Moreover, tourist resilience has been shown to be a factor in tourists' decisions when they travel; resilient tourists have a high motivation and intention to travel under challenging circumstances (Ringbeck & Pietsch, 2009). Figini and Vici's (2011) findings supported that conclusion: With their soft budget constraints and their job commitments, business tourists are less sensitive to seasonal variations. Visiting friends and relatives is a type of travel motivated by commitments to visiting families and friends, kinship relationships, and piety rather than by seasonality issues or destination attractiveness. These fruition-based factors influence travel that is associated with attaining goals. In our model, seasonal variation in this type of travel arises from an approach motivation and a promotion focus strategy.

Unforeseen factors: Unforeseen factors arise from risks and uncertainties and represent an avoidance motivation and a prevention-focused strategy, which result in inhibition, deactivation, and unwillingness to travel. Unforeseen factors, such as risk and uncertainty, have a crucial impact on seasonality in tourism. For example, disasters and crises can alter people's travel patterns and disrupt normal off-peak trends. By using chaos theory, Boukas and Ziakas (2014) found that unforeseen events demonstrate that tourism is a nonlinear process. For example, a crisis or disaster affects tourist flow and creates uncertainties in their decisions to travel (Coshall et al., 2015; Moore, 2010; Hamilton & Lau, 2005). Such disruptions result in fluctuations in tourist arrivals, irrespective of the season. Blake and Sinclair (2003) noted that the 9/11 attack not only decreased the number of seasonal arrivals but also contributed to the overall decline in US

tourism. Similarly, such factors as the 2003 European heat wave (Gössling & Hall, 2006), and financial crises (Eugenio-Martin & Campos-Soria, 2014), epidemics, and terrorism (Rittichainuwat & Chakraborty, 2009), all have significant impacts on tourists' decisions to travel and have caused fluctuations in seasonal patterns. Consequently, anxiety, fear, caution, and insecurity can obstruct people's travel activation and willingness to travel. Such examples of avoidance motivations can lead tourists to prevent and avoid travel in order to ensure reasonable safety and protection.

Climate-based factors: Numerous studies have mentioned that climate-related issues are primary factors in seasonality in tourism (see Hamilton & Lau, 2005; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Gomez, 2005). Unlike other factors, especially unforeseen factors, climate-based factors are relatively predictable. For example, compared with crises and disasters, climate and weather-related issues certainly influence the seasonal demand for travel. People adjust their plans in accordance with the expected seasons—that is, with summer and winter. Research has found that climate-related variables determine tourists' decisions (see Ruddy & Scott, 2010; Scott, Gössling, & de Freitas, 2008; Gössling & Hall, 2006) to avoid undesired states and to seek desired states. In other words, they avoid unpleasant weather at home by seeking a destination with comfortable weather (Richardson & Loomis, 2004; Scott, Jones, & Konopek, 2007). Cultural tourists prefer mild temperatures, whereas vacationers who seek sun and sea holidays prefer warm temperatures. The overall effect of climate-based factors on tourists' motivations and decisions to travel at certain times of the year depends on their perception of the climate and weather-related issues at a destination (Gössling et al., 2012). Thus, on both the demand and supply sides, climate-based factors remain a crucial factor in seasonality in tourism. This issue will become increasingly important due to global warming and the alarming rate of climate change.

4. General Discussion

The main problem raised in studies of seasonality in tourism is that tourists' travel patterns change as a result of seasonal variations, and the factors behind such variations and changes are unclear. To date, various factors of seasonal tourist variation have been identified, such as time, associated interval (Turrión-Prats & Duro, 2017; Kastenholz & de Almeida, 2008), market segment, destination choice, and destination attributes (Reintinger et al., 2016). In addition, tourists' choices, behaviors, and responses to seasonal trends are mostly associated with seasonality in tourism in general and with seasonal variations in tourism in particular (Rosselló & Sansó, 2017; Fernández-Morales et al., 2016; Duro, 2016; Martín et al., 2014; Nadal et al., 2004). Nevertheless, previous studies have frequently indicated that the push-pull factors of seasonality in tourism are associated with off seasons and peak seasons (Amelung et al., 2007; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Ridderstaat et al., 2014). Moreover, existing research on seasonality in tourism has been dominated by a particularly case-based study approach, which is atheoretical. An in-depth theoretical foundation for understanding seasonal tourism variations is also limited (Hinch & Jackson, 2000; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005). Thus, the conceptual development of seasonality and its associated tourist motivations and decision-making requires further investigation.

By integrating approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories, this study addresses an important research question in tourism in terms of a theoretical understanding of seasonal tourism variations. Our conceptual dualistic model will help tourism managers make strategic decisions during off-peak seasons and will help us solve one of the major challenges in tourism organizations—namely, the problem of seasonality and how tourists respond to each of the seasonality factors. Considering these issues, we examine factors that will affect seasonality in tourism from the perspectives of approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories. The dualistic

model emphasizes the identification of specific factors, beyond the pull-push factors, that promote and inhibit seasonality in tourism. In general, this study establishes a dualistic framework by integrating the approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories to explain a broad range of seasonal variations in tourist behavior. The framework is also based on the four types of seasonality factors: fruition-based factors, structural factors, climate-based factors, and unforeseen factors.

This study contributes to the literature on tourism in several ways. First, the study provides a new understanding of seasonality in tourism by drawing upon a theory-based framework and demonstrating the conceptual understanding of applying approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories to the study of seasonality in tourism. Although extensive effort, time, and money have been spent to transform shoulder-to-peak and off-to-shoulder season, limited efforts have been made to tackle seasonality from the perspective of the nation, the firm, and the individual. Thus, the primary issues that influence seasonality should be understood from a variety of perspectives before we proceed to pursuing approaches to manage seasonality.

Second, the dualistic model assists tourism organizations in identifying tourists’ buying situations relative to their different motivational states, and in establishing business strategies to address seasonal variation and to effectively manage tourists’ seasonal behaviors. Considering the heterogeneity of tourists’ demands and their use of different products for different reasons, we contend that suppliers can influence tourist demand across seasons by balancing the demand during peak seasons and boosting it during off seasons. The current study explores potential approaches and avoidance factors that trigger individuals’ intentions, and thereby extends our understanding of tourist demand.

Third, the existing literature on seasonality in tourism has paid more attention to the demand side than to the supply side perspective. However, considering the heterogeneity of demand, suppliers can influence tourist demand across seasons by balancing and boosting tourist demand during the off and peak seasons. To achieve this, the proposed dualistic model assists our exploration of the seasonality factors, which in turn trigger individuals' intentions, and it thereby bolsters our understanding of tourist demand at the same time. In this study, structural factors, which are traced by approach motivation and prevention-focused strategy, were taken as an example. In such cases, tourism organizations and managers could segment the market by considering mechanisms to enhance approach motivation and reduce prevention focus.

5. Theoretical and Practical Implications

Our proposed dualistic model provides several theoretical and practical implications for tourism researchers and practitioners. From the theoretical standpoint, the study offers a mutual advantage to both fields of study by relating a conceptual framework of approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories to the management of seasonality in tourism. By drawing upon insights attained from approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories, the proposed dualistic model elaborates on the combination of different influential factors of tourism seasonality. Furthermore, the current study contributes to the literature on tourism seasonality and crisis management by revealing four important factors that influence tourism seasonality.

From the practical standpoint, the four factors for tourism seasonality—fruition-based factors, structural factors, climate-based factors, and unforeseen factors—imply that managers and marketers should consider them as influences on tourists' seasonal variation, especially in the low season when using an alternative mechanism is necessary. For example, the structural factors of distance, profile, income, time, and cost at destination influence tourists' seasonal variation

behaviors. To cope with that, managers need to examine local-market tourists, short-haul tourists, and senior tourists in order to better deal with those structural factors and help to induce the tourists' activation and to decelerate the factors' hindering influences.

In relation to fruition-based factors, managers need to sustain tourists' motivations and also manage their resilience in order to manipulate a high demand resulting from activation and inclination. To reinforce that high demand, tourism organizations need to invest in service quality, evaluation and handling of tourist/guest feedback, resolution of complaints, and expectation management. Delivering a good memorable experience can be another mechanism for retaining tourists' fruition motivations. In addition, studies have noted that business tourists (Figini & Vici, 2011), cultural tourists (Cuccia & Rizzo, 2011), and tourists visiting friends and relatives (VFR tourists) are relatively goal-oriented as a result of either passion or resilience, meaning that planning and marketing strategies need to be considered in order to keep abreast of tourists' fruition incentives.

With regard to climate-based factors, the level of climate comfort between the tourists' home and destination influences them and causes either a disinclination or a proclivity. In response to that, tourism managers should consider climate differences between home and destination areas in their planning and market-related strategies. More specifically, managers should pay attention to climate variations in their promotions, advertising, and publicity by considering the subjective attitudes of tourists toward climate. In addition, market positioning and promotion with respect to climate variation play a pivotal role in tourism organizations' efforts to manage seasonality.

Unlike structural, fruition, and climate-related factors, the influence of unforeseen factors is a sudden and unpredictable occurrence because it is more related to risks, crises, and

uncertainties. For example, the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) outbreak in 2003 and the 2008 recession, these crisis seriously affected tourists' behaviour patterns and choice of destinations. In such situations, managers need to be vigilant and prioritize safety and anxiety-reduction issues. They also need to carefully recognize the distinctive features of uncertainties, such as their internal and external features, antecedents, and outcomes, on tourist behavior. Furthermore, preparedness, responsiveness, and forecasting of a tourist trend need to be considered in an attempt to manage unforeseen factors. Overall, the study implies that tourism organizations should emphasize the rationale behind the off-peak season, by understanding the factors that influence tourists' seasonal travel patterns rather than by focusing on hard criteria such as occupancy in hotels and tourist arrivals.

6. Directions for Future Research

Although this study offers several contributions toward understanding seasonality in tourism by integrating approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories, it still has one limitation. The study is grounded on theoretical and conceptual analysis but did not collect data to validate the dualistic model. Consequently, we cannot confirm the applicability and generalizability of the proposed framework in other cultural settings. However, with the systematic analysis of approach–avoidance and regulatory focus theories in tourism research, our conceptual dualistic model can be rendered applicable and measurable by subsequent empirical evidence. Thus, this conceptual study inspires several suggestions for future research. First, empirical studies are crucial to any further examination of the dualistic model of approach–avoidance motivation and regulatory focus theory, and in particular to ensuring the validity and reliability of the four types of seasonal factors. Specifically, future qualitative and quantitative

studies using an experimental design, or a longitudinal study, are recommended for further exploration of the relationships between tourists' intentions and behavioral actions.

Second, seasonality has a variety of effects in terms of its economic, social, and environmental aspects. Future research could extend the current attempt by adopting a comprehensive analysis of tourism stakeholders and their reactions to seasonality in tourism. For example, the off season accelerates saturations and destroys service quality because of the difficulty in using resources and assets in the short run, and it also affects tourist satisfaction, destination marketing, and corporate profitability (Jang, 2004). Given the fact that seasonal variations influence changes in employment, investment expansion, and rate of return, the effects of seasonality on human resources, marketing, and financial investments should be investigated further. Future research also needs to analyze how seasonality influences seasonal tourist variations in travel behavior and associated tourism phenomena.

Third, climate is currently a principal factor in seasonality, and it is likely to become more influential in the future (Gössling et al., 2012). Seasonality is influenced by climate and weather-related variables that could determine managerial strategies and accelerate low-season demand. Moreover, the social and environmental aspects of seasonality should be examined to determine what positive and negative effects are associated with peak seasons and off seasons. As mentioned earlier, peak seasons bring high demand, resulting in overcrowding, and they impact host communities and their normal ways of life (Turrión-Prats & Duro, 2017; Vargas-Sánchez et al., 2014).

Theoretical arguments related to a particular tourism segment of low-season visitors need to be examined. For instance, Lundtorp (2001) suggested that "it is not an adequate policy to convince visitors in the peak season to prefer another time of the year, because off-season visitors

belong to another tourism segment'' (p. 46). Furthermore, Getz and Nilsson (2004) found that off-season and peak-season visitors are similar. Coenders, Espinet, and Saez (2003) also indicated that the effect of temperature is uniform when it is higher than 27°C. In addition, environmental quality, landscape, and urban services are not seasonal. Thus, they have relatively little influence on tourists. Future studies should also explore seasonality in tourism and tourist seasonal variation on emerging destinations where seasonality is becoming more relevant.

Methodologies and advanced statistical analyses should also be given utmost consideration in method processes. As suggested by Turrión-Prats and Duro (2017), the existing methodologies used primarily in research on seasonality in tourism are the coefficient of variation, the Gini coefficient, summary indices, correlation coefficients, panel data, and time series analysis. Future studies should be broadly applicable in analyzing seasonality in tourism in the context of market trends and management strategies. In addition, Fernández-Morales et al. (2016) suggested that additional empirical studies are important because seasonal tourism demands across national and international markets will seek further investigations to identify resilient markets that can cope with seasonality. Thus, region- and country-specific analyses will be significant for understanding seasonality in tourism in a wide context.

Lastly, existing seasonality studies have focused on tourists from developed countries or countries and regions located at high latitudes (Chen & Pearce, 2012; Koenig-Lewis & Bischoff, 2005; Butler, 2001). Future researchers should pay more attention to tourists from developing countries and places with a variety of climates, such as tropical and desert environments, rural locations, and remote areas. In addition, future studies should explore more theories and concepts to examine the generalizability of our dualistic model. Other potential theories, such as the theory of reasoned action (Prayag, Hosany, & Odeh, 2013), social exchange theory (Vargas-Sánchez et

al., 2014), spatial theory (Vergori, 2012), financial portfolio theory (Soo Cheong, 2004), and traditional pricing theory (Jeffrey & Barden, 1999), can be considered for examining different aspects of seasonality in tourism.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, seasonality in tourism is a practical concern for policymakers and tourism managers. Seasonality affects every aspect of tourism, including hospitality firms' performance and tourists' behaviors and choices of destination markets. This conceptual study presents the evolution of seasonality in tourism and develops a dualistic model of seasonal variation. We propose approach–avoidance motivation and regulatory focus theories to frame our understanding of the four types of seasonal factors (fruition-based, structural, climate-based, and unforeseen factors) that drive tourists' seasonal behaviors. We hope that our proposed framework can lead to a promising and better understanding of tourism variations, and that for future studies it can help others develop practical strategies in response to seasonality.

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Figure 1
A Dualist Model of Tourist Response to Seasonality

