

Tourists' Motives and Perceptions of Destination Card Consumption

Abstract

Considering the dearth of research investigating destination cards from the tourists' point of view, this study seeks to complement the growing stream of research on destination cards by elucidating *what motivates and inhibits tourists to purchase destination cards and how tourists perceive the importance of offerings available in destination cards*. Drawing on data solicited via in-depth interviews and a questionnaire survey, cost savings and time savings were found to be the primary motives leading tourists to purchase destination cards. In contrast, lack of knowledge about product value and product availability were the key inhibitors leading tourists not to purchase destination cards. Regarding the importance of destination card offerings, the participants perceived the most important card benefit to be a free admission ticket to major attractions. Furthermore, they rated a discount on pocket Wi-Fi rental as the second most important offering, and their third choice was free use of public transportation.

KEYWORDS: Destination cards; tourist cards; card offerings; motives.

1. Introduction

Defined as territorial offers that allow tourists to access a package of tourism services and guaranteed discounts at an inclusive price, destination cards have long been considered a promising tool for destinations to use to attract tourists and to increase the promotion of local and regional tourism products (Ispas et al., 2015; Schnitzer et al., 2018). Because the introduction of destination cards can enhance inter-organizational collaboration among the primary stakeholders of a destination (d'Angella & Go, 2009) and can increase tourists' use of tourism facilities (Zoltan & Masiero, 2012), many renowned tourist destinations have introduced proprietary destination cards (e.g., Chicago's Chicago Card, London's London Pass, Taipei's EasyCard and Vienna's Vienna Card).

Since most destination cards provide cardholders with various benefits (e.g., cost savings, value-added product bundles), destination cards have grown in popularity among tourists in recent years. According to the Prague City Tourism (2018), more than 60,000 Prague Cards were sold in 2018. The Paris Convention and Visitors Bureau (2018) reported that nearly

41,000 Paris Passes were sold in 2018. In line with the growing popularity of destination cards in the field, an upsurge of research pertinent to destination cards has also emerged in recent years. Previous research on destination cards examined diversified topics, ranging from exploring the opportunities of using destination cards for cultural tourism packaging (cf. Pechlaner & Abfalter, 2005), to validating the potential of destination cards in measuring the economic impact of cultural events (cf. Lucia et al., 2011), to examining the possibility of using destination cards to track tourists' behavioural patterns at the destination (cf. Scuderi & Dalle Nogare, 2018), and to assessing suppliers' motives in joining a destination card alliance (cf. Schnitzer et al., 2018).

Undoubtedly, the findings and discussions from those prior studies have contributed significantly to both knowledge and practice. In spite of their merits, extant studies about destination cards have predominantly focused on management- and supplier-related issues. Even though tourists are the end users of destination cards (Lee et al., 2008), knowledge about tourists' motives and perceptions of destination card consumption is still in its infancy at the moment of this writing. Numerous studies (cf. Kim et al., 2019; Wen & Huang, 2020) have demonstrated that the identification of tourists' consumption motivations can provide useful insights for both researchers and practitioners. Given that destination cards are primarily introduced to improve tourists' mobility and convenience at a destination (Ispas et al., 2015), we need to improve our understanding about *what motivates and inhibits tourists to purchase destination cards*. In addition, in order to entice tourists' intention to purchase destination cards, it is imperative that we understand *how tourists perceive the importance of offerings available in destination cards*. Considering the dearth of research investigating destination cards from the consumers' point of view, this exploratory study aims to complement the growing stream of research on destination cards by achieving the following two objectives:

Objective 1 – To identify the motives leading tourists to purchase destination card(s) while traveling;

Objective 2 – To identify the inhibitors leading tourists not to purchase destination card(s) while traveling;

Objective 3 – To examine tourists' perceptions of the importance of various destination card offerings.

2. Literature Review

Although the first destination card was introduced almost 40 years ago (Schmalz, 2000), surprisingly, the cards have received scant scholarly attention from either researchers or practitioners. Table 1 summarizes the findings of all studies pertaining to destination cards that have been published in tourism and hospitality journals.

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2.1. Destination Cards: Definition

The definition of destination cards varies across different studies. Also known as a tourist card, city card, city pass and tourist pass, Steinbach (2003) defined destination cards as territorial offers that combine various services and certain discounts in order to generate additional demand at the destination. Lee et al. (2008) underscored the payment function of destination cards, and they defined destination cards as card-type payment methods that are mostly used for travel-related purposes. Digiorgio (2016) suggested that destination cards resemble a set of cumulative tickets allowing tourists to access a series of services offered by destinations at a lower total price than that for single purchases. Despite the absence of a consensus definition, researchers generally agree that a great variety of local and regional cards is now at the customers' disposal (Pechlaner & Abfalter, 2005; Lee et al., 2008). The currently available cards vary in terms of price tiers, validity period, geographic coverage, attractions covered, and additional benefits (Angeloni, 2016).

2.2. Destination Cards: Functionality

Several studies have discussed the functionality of destination cards. According to Pechlaner and Abfalter (2005), the first generation of destination cards was not equipped with a payment function, and the cards only entitled cardholders to free or discounted access to tourist attractions at the corresponding cities. Equipped with a microchip, the second generation of destination cards could collect tourists' behavioural data (e.g., their movements, services used, and expenditures) and thereby could enrich suppliers' knowledge about consumers. Some

cards (e.g., EasyCard from Taipei) can even store value and can serve as a payment method (Lee et al., 2008).

Through integrating the functionality of traditional destination cards with the near field communication (NFC) technology, Egger (2013) envisioned that future destination cards would be stored directly on mobile devices. Basili and colleagues (2014) and also Angeloni (2016) advocated a similar notion, and they introduced the third generation of destination cards in 2014 and 2016, respectively. Like a mobile travel assistant that can offer a wide range of services (e.g., mobile ticketing, mobile payment, and management of loyalty points), Basili et al.'s (2014) NFC-enabled tourist cards could benefit cardholders by providing them with new levels of convenience and in so doing optimizing their visitation experience. Angeloni (2016) introduced the 'tourist kit' – a smart destination card issued by the largest public postal operator in Italy and the destination management organization (DMO) of Basilicata in Italy. In addition to providing an alternative payment option for cardholders to use to buy products and services at discounted prices, the tourist kit benefits local suppliers via providing them with tourists' behavioural data for planning and marketing purposes (Angeloni, 2016).

2.3. *Destination Cards: Implications for Destination Marketing and Management*

Given that destination cards are a collaborative product that is commonly issued by DMOs in collaboration with tourism stakeholders, the cards' implications for destination marketing and management have been extensively discussed in prior studies (cf. Angeloni, 2016; d'Angella & Go, 2009; Pechlaner & Abfalter, 2005; Wöber et al., 2001; Zoltan & Masiero, 2012).

Wöber et al. (2001) noted that the introduction of destination cards signified an increasing interest in interorganizational collaboration among the main suppliers at a destination. Indeed, as the primary added value of destination cards is their affordable and comprehensive access to diversified services or/and facilities, the introduction of destination cards requires the collaboration of museums, restaurants and shops in terms of their willingness to discount their tickets or to deliver their services for free to cardholders (d'Angella & Go, 2009; Schnitzer et al., 2018). Although clearly local suppliers need to bear costs and risks, d'Angella and Go's (2009) case studies on Barcelona and Vienna affirmed that the introduction

of destination cards could benefit local suppliers through gains in financial support as well as mitigation of the negative impacts of seasonality.

Besides documenting the enhanced coherence among suppliers at a destination, several research studies have empirically confirmed monetary returns from destination cards. According to Kuhn's (2000) Germany-based study, the increased number of attractions that the cards covered generally led destination cardholders to visit more places than they had originally intended to tour. Schmalz's (2000) study also discovered that the availability of destination cards had a decisive effect on tourists' level of satisfaction with their traveling experience. Drozdowska et al.'s (2018) latest study noted that destination cards could foster higher participation in cultural activities and use of public transport. Another Italy-based study, by Digiorgio (2018), also showed that having a presence on a destination's tourist cards could bring accommodation facilities a higher percentage of direct bookings.

In addition to the cards' monetary returns, several researchers underscore that destination cards can benefit practitioners via equipping them with knowledge about visitors' travelling behaviour. Wöber et al. (2001) illustrated that destination cards could provide valuable data on visitor flows for tourism authorities to optimize their marketing strategies. Angeloni (2016) echoed that conclusion and added that companies who join the card program have the opportunity to receive useful information for segmenting visitors and thereby devising adequate marketing actions. Because all contractual partners are connected with the destination card system and the use of any contractual partner's service can be traced, the data consolidated via destination cards can allow local operators to gain an increased understanding of what their visitors look for. That customer intelligence can then empower operators to develop personalised packages as well as to formulate marketing actions that can better meet visitors' expectations (Drozdowska et al., 2018; Pechlaner & Abfalter, 2005).

Recent studies have empirically verified the abovementioned notion and further demonstrated the potential of destination cards in providing valuable information for DMOs to use to improve their marketing efficacy. Through retrieving and analysing cardholders' activities and moving data from 986 valid visitation records from Ticino destination cards, Zoltan and McKercher (2015) successfully identified the differences in spatial concentration and activity participation among tourists visiting the Canton of Ticino in southern Switzerland. By analysing the activities captured by 3,679 destination cards issued in Trentino (Italy), Scuderi and Nogare's (2018) study indicated that tourists visiting Trentino preferred outdoor

activities to indoor ones. The same study also identified idiosyncratic profiles and behavioural patterns of cultural tourists.

Apart from the issues just discussed, previous researchers have also investigated other card management issues. Those issues include, but are not limited to, how destination cards can assist event organizers in improving their estimates of the economic impact of cultural events (cf. Lucia et al., 2011), and how destination cards can help in developing a destination-based loyalty scheme (cf. Main & O'Connor, 1998).

2.4. Research Gaps

Although studies exploring destination cards have surged and have expanded our knowledge (see Table 1), two significant gaps in our understanding have not been addressed. First, extant studies about destination cards have been predominantly supplier-side studies. While tourists are the end users of destination cards, consumer-side studies remain nebulous to date, and the question of what motivates and inhibits tourists to purchase destination cards has never been examined. As Moutinho (1987) noted, identification of the motives leading individuals to purchase or not to purchase tourism products and services constitutes an essential (albeit fundamental) realm of tourism studies. Moreover, numerous studies have empirically proven that knowledge about consumers' motivations towards acquiring specific products and services can provide useful insights for DMOs in formulating better marketing strategies (Xu & Huang, 2018; Ying et al., 2018). Despite that theoretical and practical significance, with the notable exceptions of Lee et al. (2008) and Zoltan and Masiero (2012), knowledge about the factors affecting tourists' intention to purchase destination cards remains scarce.

In addition to the dearth of research exploring tourists' motives to purchase destination cards, the issue of how tourists perceive the importance of offerings available in destination cards has also received limited attention from both researchers and practitioners. As elucidated by Wong and Lam (2002), in order to attract today's increasingly discerning hotel guests, it is of utmost importance for tourism operators to understand consumers' perceptions of product attributes. Several recent studies (cf. Kim et al., 2018; Liao & Chuang, 2020) also have underscored the fact that an enriched understanding of consumers' perceptions of the importance of various product attributes can help practitioners develop products that their markets will desire. Lee et al. (2008) analysed and reported that destination cards provide users

with three general functions (discount, convenience and gifts/souvenirs). However, their study did not examine how consumers perceive the importance of card offerings. To bridge that knowledge gap and to assist practitioners in designing a desirable destination card for tourists, another objective of this study was to examine the perceived importance of destination card offerings from the viewpoint of tourists.

3. Methodology

3.1. Study 1: In-depth Interviews

To identify the factors motivating and inhibiting tourists to purchase destination card(s) while travelling, Study 1 conducted a series of in-depth interviews with those who purchased at least one destination card (hereinafter referred to as past-purchasers) and those who did not purchase any card in the past (hereinafter referred to as non-purchasers). In June 2019, 14 tourists visiting Hong Kong were invited to join an in-depth interview session. Using the convenience sampling method, all interviewees were approached outside the Hong Kong Tourism Board's Visitor Information and Services Centre and invited to participate. Half of the interviewees are past-purchasers, and the other half are non-purchasers. The demographic profiles of the interviewees are summarized in Table 2.

*** Please insert Table 2 here ***

For past-purchasers, they were asked to explain the motives that had led them to purchase destination card(s) while travelling. For non-purchasers, they were asked to explain the reasons that inhibited them from purchasing a destination card while travelling. Each interview session lasted for 15 to 28 minutes, and the lead author moderated all interview sessions. The discourses of all in-depth interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim in English for further analysis.

As with the approach leveraged in Wantono and McKercher (2020), this study employed conventional content analysis to identify factors motivating and inhibiting tourists to purchase destination card(s) while travelling. In short, all interview transcripts were first

read multiple times to obtain a holistic understanding. The transcripts were then read word-by-word to derive codes and capture key factors. This process was repeated multiple times to ensure the accuracy and reliability of coding. To minimize personal bias, content analysis was conducted by the lead author and another senior researcher who had a major in destination management (Kolbe & Burnett, 1991).

3.2. Study 2: Questionnaire Survey

To validate the findings of Study 1 and to achieve the second objective (i.e., to examine tourists' perceptions of the importance of various destination card offerings), a questionnaire survey was conducted after the completion of Study 1. A questionnaire was designed that had three main sections. The first section comprised questions that were pertinent to factors motivating and inhibiting tourists to purchase destination cards. All motivators and inhibitors identified in Study 1 were presented in this section. Past-purchasers were asked to select all applicable motive(s) that led them to purchase destination card(s). Non-purchasers were asked to select all applicable inhibitor(s) that led them to not to purchase destination card(s).

In the second section of the questionnaire, both past-purchasers and non-purchasers were asked to rate the importance level of the card offerings (from 1 = extremely unimportant, to 7 = extremely important) when they consider buying a destination card. A total of 18 card offerings were included in the questionnaire, and they were classified into four categories according to their nature (i.e., attraction-related offerings, activity-related offerings, transportation-related offerings and other offerings). The 18 card offerings were chosen on the basis of a comprehensive review of the academic literature (cf. Angeloni, 2016; Lee et al., 2008) together with a content analysis of offerings available in currently obtainable cards (e.g., Barcelona Card, Paris Pass). The second section concluded by asking participants to name all additional offering(s) they would like to add to destination cards.

In the questionnaire's third section, participants were asked to report their demographic profile (e.g., gender, age group), travel history (e.g., number of leisure trips taken during the previous 12 months) and card purchasing history (e.g., number of destination card(s) bought previously). The questionnaire was first prepared in English, and the Chinese version was developed subsequently following Brislin's (1976) back-translation procedure.

As with the approach employed in Study 1, the participants of Study 2 were recruited using the convenience sampling approach. Following the method of Kucukusta et al. (2013), the survey was conducted at multiple Hong Kong tourist attractions (e.g., the Avenue of Stars in Tsim Sha Tsui, and PMQ in Central) in order to minimize bias. A pilot test was conducted with 25 tourists in early August 2019, and some minor changes were made in wording. The main survey was conducted in mid-August 2019, and it lasted for three weeks. The target respondents were tourists. Both past-purchasers and non-purchasers were eligible to participate. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed to the target respondents with the help of five student assistants. A total of 483 tourists were intercepted and 300 completed the questionnaires (acceptance rate = 62.1%). Fifteen responses were excluded from analysis due to incomplete information. This yielded a valid response rate of 95 percent ($N = 285$).

As presented in Table 3, the proportions of male and female participants in Study 2 are 46% and 54%. This ratio is similar to the gender mix of visitor arrivals to Hong Kong in 2018 (male: 43%; female: 57%) (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2019). Mainland China, Taiwan and South Korea were the top three source markets of visitors to Hong Kong in 2018 (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2019). Similarly, Study 2's participants are mostly Chinese ($n = 166$, 58.2%), Korean ($n = 24$, 8.4%) and Taiwanese ($n = 14$, 4.9%). Around 70% ($n = 207$, 72.7%) of Study 2's participants are aged between 21 and 40. This figure is resembled to those who visited Hong Kong in 2018 since 66% of Hong Kong visitor arrivals are aged between 16 and 45. These evidences exhibit that the representativeness of the recruited participants was considered appropriate. Non-response bias was tested by comparing the early (i.e., first 50) and late (i.e., last 50) respondents' demographic profiles (Lindner et al., 2001). The comparison test results exhibited that no significant differences existed between early and late respondents. This suggests that non-response bias was unlikely to be a significant influence on the research findings.

*** Please insert Table 3 here ***

Among those who participated in the survey, nearly 40% ($n = 109$, 38.2%) were past-purchasers who purchased at least one destination card in the past. The chi-squared test results showed that tourists' inclination to purchase destination card(s) was not associated with their

age ($\chi^2 (4) = 7.774$, n.s.), nationality ($\chi^2 (12) = 12.895$, n.s.) or trip experience ($\chi^2 (12) = 6.316$, n.s.). Yet, tourists' inclination to purchase a destination card was associated with their gender ($\chi^2 (1) = 4.955$, $p < 0.05$). Specifically, females (62.4%) were more inclined to purchase destination card(s) than males (37.6%) were.

4. Study 1: Findings

4.1. *What Motivates Tourists to Purchase Destination Card(s)*

Drawing on the analysis of the discourse provided by interviewees, the participating tourists purchased destination cards for four main reasons. Cost savings was the most frequently mentioned reason leading the tourists to purchase destination cards. According to the interviewees, destination cards allowed them to travel around their destination at a lower cost. As was the case with the notion shared by Zoltan and McKercher (2015), interviewee PP4 described that she had purchased a Vienna Card on her recent trip because the card allowed her to *'access a bundle of free entries to major attractions, plus other premium services at a total price that was lower than the cost of paying for each service individually'*. In addition, PP1 from Singapore and PP3 from China mentioned that destination cards mostly entitle cardholders to free access to major attractions at the destinations.

Time savings was another reason given frequently by the interviewees. As PP5 from Australia noted, destination cards offer cardholders the advantage of *'bundling all services needed by tourists, like use of public transportation and use of airport transfers'*. Since unfamiliarity with a new environment can result in a psychological burden for tourists (Lee et al., 2008), PP2 also stressed that the Roma Pass she had purchased offered her an *'extraordinary convenience'* as the card integrated all needed services at her fingertips. In addition to the benefits of saving cost and time, two interviewees (PP3 and PP5) mentioned that their acquisition decisions were primarily led by novelty seeking. According to PP3, she had purchased a Paris Pass during her latest trip because she sought new ideas on what to visit. As PP3 visited all signature attractions on her first visit, she hoped the Paris Pass could provide her with new ideas of *'what to visit'* and *'what to eat'* so she could revisit the destination in a novel way. The impact brought by social influence was also noted by two interviewees (PP2 and PP6). Interviewee PP6 underscored that he had purchased Taipei's EasyCard owing to his

friends' recommendations. Similarly, PP2 had purchased the Paris Pass on the recommendations of other members of an online travel community.

4.2. *What Inhibits Tourists to Purchase Destination Card(s)*

Four reasons were found to inhibit the participating tourists to purchase destination card(s). Lack of knowledge about product value was the primary reason. Five out of seven non-purchasers illustrated that they had never purchased any card because they did not know what benefit(s) those cards could offer them. Interviewee NP2 had never thought of purchasing a card since she had no idea about '*whether it is worthwhile to spend money on it*'. Both NP4 and NP5 made similar comments during their corresponding interviews. Interviewee NP4, who had just visited Berlin, knew that the Berlin WelcomeCard was available for sale, but the set of offerings and premiums were unclear to him. Interviewee NP5 from the Netherlands also stated that she had not considered acquiring the Barcelona Card on her previous trip, because Hola Barcelona (i.e., the transportation pass for Barcelona) provided cardholders with similar offerings.

Lack of knowledge about product availability was another key reason leading some interviewees not to purchase destination card(s). As NP6 from Nepal noted, he had not purchased any card in the past because he did not know if any destination card was available for the destination he planned to visit. Although he often sought many sources of information during his trip planning, he declared that he rarely found details pertaining to the availability and offerings of destination cards. NP1 echoed and added that she might have purchased the I Amsterdam City Card if she had known the card was in place. She also advocated for the DMO of Amsterdam to launch additional online promotional campaigns in order to enhance prospective travellers' awareness of that card.

Besides the lack of knowledge about destination cards, social influence and low value for money were two other motives named by interviewees. Interviewee NP3 stated that destination cards were not of interest to him because his friends recommended him not to buy them. Considering that NP3's friends deemed that destination cards lacked value for money, they jointly advised NP3 to buy museum and transportation tickets individually. Interviewee NP7 suggested that the average price of destination cards was not too high, but after completing the cost-benefit analysis, he and his friends concluded it was not worthwhile to acquire a card

because they might not visit numerous museums and attractions at one destination. Thus, NP7 advised the card inventors to allow buyers to customize their preferred offerings by themselves. That idea would not only increase the enjoyment of card consumption, it also would provide flexibility for buyers to ‘*self-select what they want*’.

5. Study 2: Findings

5.1. *Factors Motivating and Inhibiting Tourists to Purchase Destination Card(s)*

After the completion of Study 1, the list of identified factors was included in Study 2’s questionnaire for validation. Past-purchasers were asked to select all applicable motive(s) leading them to purchase destination card(s), and Table 4 summarizes the frequencies of all reasons. In line with the findings of Study 1, cost savings was the most popular motive leading ones to purchase destination card(s). Among those 109 past-purchasers who completed the questionnaire, nearly 75% ($n = 81$, 74.3%) of them selected cost savings. The second most popular motive is time savings, as more than half of past-purchasers ($n = 61$, 55.9%) reported that time savings motivated them to purchase destination card(s). These findings are in accordance with Zoltan and Masiero’s (2012) assertion that a destination card is appreciated by tourists if it helps them save time. While interviewees in Study 1 mentioned that social influence and novelty seeking are decisive motives, Table 4 shows that the percentages of survey participants who purchased destination card(s) due to social influence and novelty seeking were 34.9% ($n = 38$) and 17.4% ($n = 19$) only. These results suggest that cost savings and time savings are the primary motives leading tourists to purchase destination(s).

*** Please insert Table 4 here ***

Pertinent to the inhibitor(s) leading non-purchasers not to purchase destination card(s), as presented in Table 5, nearly 80% ($n = 139$, 78.9%) of 176 non-purchasers choosing lack of knowledge about product value as a reason for not purchasing a destination card. Over one-third of non-purchasers ($n = 60$, 34.1%) claimed that they had not purchased any destination card due to their lack of knowledge about product availability. Comparing to lack of knowledge, social influence ($n = 12$) and low value for money ($n = 10$) were rarely selected by non-

purchasers. To entice tourists' interest in purchasing destination cards, following Ispas et al.'s (2015) advice, DMOs will have to strengthen the promotion of their destination cards and thereby equip tourists with richer knowledge about what benefits their cards can offer to tourists.

*** Please insert Table 5 here ***

5.2. Perceived Importance of Destination Card Offerings

5.2.1. Attraction-related Offerings

Tourists consider attraction-related offerings to be important. As is presented in Table 6, a *'free admission ticket to major attractions'* was rated by the participating tourists as the most important offering (M = 5.45; SD = 1.44). More than one-fourth of the survey participants even chose this as one of the five most important card offerings. This aligns with the findings presented in Ispas et al.'s (2015) study conducted in Romania. Another attraction-related offering, *'Fast ticket line / Fast track entry'*, was also perceived as important to the participating tourists (M = 5.29; SD = 1.41).

5.2.2. Activity-related Offerings

Under the category of activity-related offerings, a *'discount on shopping'* (M = 5.28; SD = 1.44) ranked in first place based on the average rating given by participants. This result is understandable, given that nearly 60% of the survey respondents were Chinese and shopping is the primary Chinese tourist activity (Meng, Zhang, Li, & So, 2019). A *'discount on restaurant consumption'* (M = 5.21; SD = 1.39) was reckoned as the second most important activity-related offering, followed by a *'discount on accommodations'* (M = 5.12; SD = 1.51) and a *'discount on city tours'* (M = 5.12; SD = 1.30). Although a *'discount on the use of public facilities'* (M = 4.86; SD = 1.50) and a *'discount on stages / concerts'* (M = 4.78; SD = 1.42) are rarely offered by extant destination cards (e.g., Bratislava Card City and Oslo Pass), participants generally rated these two offerings as quite important.

5.2.3. *Transportation-related Offerings*

Regarding transportation-related offerings, Table 6 shows that ‘*free use of public transportation*’ ranked in first place (M = 5.39; SD = 1.41). This offering was also considered as the third most important offering overall, and two-thirds of participants chose it as the most important feature. Apart from public transportation, participants generally agreed that a ‘*discount on airport transfer*’ (M = 4.91; SD = 4.91) and ‘*free use of tourist shuttle service*’ (M = 4.65; SD = 1.41) were of importance. Among other transportation-related offerings, a ‘*discount on bike rental service*’ (M = 3.99; SD = 1.50) and a ‘*discount on car rental service*’ (M = 3.90; SD = 1.59) were rated as relatively less important. ‘*Free use of parking facilities*’ was considered the least important offering (M = 3.62; SD = 1.69).

5.2.4. *Other Offerings*

As Buhalis and Foerste (2015) envisioned, wireless Internet access has become a general necessity because mobile devices are seen as the remote controls of life. With wireless Internet access becoming increasingly indispensable, it is not surprising that a ‘*discount on pocket Wi-Fi rental*’ was recognized by survey participants as being highly important (M = 5.42; SD = 1.46). Interestingly, the ‘*free gift voucher*’, such as a voucher for redeeming freebies or buying souvenirs at a discounted price, was also perceived by participants as being an important benefit (M = 5.05; 1.46). Compared with those two offerings, the inclusion in destination cards of a ‘*free city map*’ (M = 4.94; 1.62) and a ‘*free city guide*’ (M = 4.81; SD = 1.47) was considered less important.

*** Please insert Table 6 here ***

A series of independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine if the importance ratings of all offerings differed between past-purchasers and non-purchasers. No significant difference between past-purchasers and non-purchasers was identified, however. Moreover, as is described in section 3.2, survey participants were asked to name any additional offering(s) they would like to add to destination cards, and they submitted a total of 18 suggestions. Eight participants advised DMOs to bundle and sell destination cards with prepaid SIM cards. The

inclusion of a '*discount on currency exchange service*' was suggested by three participants, and another three participants proposed to including a '*discount on buying souvenirs at designated shops*'. Two participants said that '*free local calls*' should be included in the set of card offerings. Another two participants proposed multiple-destination cards that would allow cardholders to enjoy benefits across boundaries.

6. Discussion and Conclusions

6.1. Discussion

Schmalz (2000) documented that the first destination card was launched in Stockholm in the late 1970s. Despite destination cards having been introduced almost 40 years ago, scholarly attention toward them is surprisingly scarce (see Table 1). In particular, only a handful of studies have focused decidedly on tourists' motives and perceptions of destination card consumption.

As one of the limited number of studies investigating destination cards from the consumers' point-of-view, this study provides academic researchers and industry practitioners with a better understanding about what motivates and inhibits tourists to purchase destination cards. Drawing on the study's qualitative content (from Study 1) and survey responses (from Study 2), tourists purchase destination cards for four main reasons: cost savings, time savings, novelty seeking and social influence. Zoltan and McKercher (2015) once noted that the major appeal of destination cards lies in cost savings for tourists who wish to visit multiple attractions and want a fast track entry into places. As cost savings were found to be the primary reason leading participating tourists to purchase destination cards (see Table 4), the findings of this study lend credence to Zoltan and McKercher's (2015) assertion.

Tourists' purchases of destination cards owing to the benefit of time savings was also deemed to be logical and understandable. Ispas et al. (2015) suggested that time savings is one major benefit that destination cards can offer to cardholders. Zoltan and Masiero (2012) also researched destination cards and reported that tourists appreciated the cards if they helped them save time. Considering that slow tourism is yet to be the mainstream trend, modern tourists still prefer the mode of consuming many attractions in a single trip (Dickinson & Lumsdon, 2010; Losada & Mota, 2019). Bundling all needed products and services into one card can indeed empower tourists to visit multiple attractions efficiently, and thereby enrich their travel

experience. Hence, it is understandable that tourists would appreciate the time savings function of destination cards.

With regards to what inhibits tourists to purchase destination cards, the results indicated that lack of knowledge about destination cards was the primary inhibitor. Lin and Chen (2006) stated that individuals who had poorer knowledge about the newly introduced subjects would have higher cognitive barriers in adopting them. In accord with that assertion, the non-purchasers who participated in this study reported they were unfamiliar with the value brought by destination cards. Such a lack of knowledge results in psychological burdens and thereby discourages people from making a purchase. To address this inhibitor, as noted earlier, DMOs will have to strengthen their promotion of their destination cards and thus equip tourists with richer knowledge about what benefits the cards can offer them. In fact, one interesting finding of this study was that social influence was influential in determining tourists' decisions to purchase destination cards (see Tables 4 and 5). In line with the related theorem suggested by past theories and studies (cf. Ajzen's (1991) *Theory of Planned Behavior* and Deutsch and Gerard's (1995) *Social Influence Theory*), this study confirms the significance of subjective norms in consumer decision-making and empirically validates the notion that advice from social groups also plays a significant role in the context of destination card consumption.

In addition to identifying the factors motivating and inhibiting tourists to purchase destination card(s) while traveling, the empirical findings of this study also unveil how tourists perceive the importance of various destination card offerings. In brief, attraction-related offerings, and particularly a free admission ticket to major attractions, were considered to be the most important offerings in the eyes of tourists. Activity-related offerings, in general, also were perceived as important to the participating tourists, and the importance level of a discount on shopping was exceptionally high. Regarding the transportation-related offerings, even though free use of public transportation was perceived to be very important, some offerings under this category (e.g., a discount on car rental service and free use of parking facilities) were rated as unimportant. Another point worth noting is that a discount on pocket Wi-Fi rental was rated by survey participants to be the second most important offering. As Li et al. (2018) previously underscored, habitual use of the Internet during vacations is becoming a widespread phenomenon among modern tourists. Because travellers are increasingly dependent on the Internet and digital technologies, and adding the fact that smart destination systems can only unlock a destination's full potential and best serve travellers when they are connected (Xiang, 2018), DMOs and other inventors of destination cards should actively cooperate with

telecommunication companies in order to create such a product bundle and thereby enhance the overall attractiveness of their destination cards.

6.2. Conclusions and Implications

The findings of this study contribute new knowledge to tourist motivation as well as travel constraints (or barriers) literature. Although tourists' motivations to seek special interest tourism (e.g., food tourism in Kim et al., 2019; justice tourism in Wen & Huang, 2020; and anime tourism in Kirillova et al., 2019) have been thoroughly documented in the literature, to the best of the author's knowledge, the examination of motives affecting tourists' consumption of tourism products has seldom been a matter of prime interest. Hence, the current study complements those prior studies by advancing our understanding about the motives leading tourists to purchase and inhibitors leading tourists not to purchase tourism products, in general, and destination cards in particular.

The current study also contributes new knowledge to destination card literature. As presented in Table 1, extant studies about destination cards predominantly have focused on management- and supplier-related issues. Conversely, knowledge about tourists' motives and perceptions of destination card consumption has lagged behind. Hence, this study bridges the gap in the literature by outlining the answers to the questions of what motivates and inhibits tourists to purchase destination cards, as well as how tourists perceive the importance of various offerings available in destination cards. In addition to filling those research gaps, the findings of this study also provide useful information for subsequent researchers in formulating criteria for evaluating and even benchmarking the quality of destination cards. The systematic synthesis of previous research findings (see section 2) is also expected to help subsequent researchers acknowledge the progression of research on destination cards.

For tourism practitioners, knowledge about the factors motivating and inhibiting tourists to purchase destination cards is one important lesson they can take away from this study. Drawing on the study's findings, DMOs are advised to highlight in their promotional materials the benefits of cost savings and time savings that can be gained by purchasing destination cards (versus buying all services individually). In addition, DMOs are urged to actively cooperate with various tourism stakeholders at the destination, so that they can help promote and assist tourists in their awareness of card availability. Finally, another key

takeaway that practitioners can acquire from this study is the identification of additional specific card offerings perceived by tourists as important. The analytic results as well as the additional offerings suggested by survey participants (see section 5.2) are expected to provide DMOs with clues for devising desirable destination cards for tourists.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

In spite of the significant contributions that have been outlined in this paper, this study had limitations. Considering that the sample size of this study was relatively small (e.g., 285), and adding that research subjects were predominantly Asians and particularly Chinese, researchers should interpret and generalize the study's findings with caution. To enhance the generalizability of the research findings, future researchers should consider replicating the study by recruiting a bigger and wider set of research subjects. Furthermore, as this study was exploratory in nature, future researchers could apply theoretical frameworks (cf. Dann's (1977) push-pull framework) to enrich the theoretical understanding of tourists' motives to purchase destination cards. Another direction for future research would be to employ the discrete choice modelling method to understand tourists' willingness to pay for a specific set of destination card offerings. Such findings should provide useful information for DMOs to use in further optimizing their revenue management practices, and in so doing, maximizing the profit generated by destination cards.

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Table 1. List of studies about destination cards in tourism and hospitality journals

Author (Year)	Research objective/s	Methodology	Findings
Kuhn (2000)	To explore how the development of a travel card can improve the attractiveness and destination management of Bodenese	Descriptive analysis on survey responses provided by 945 cardholders	Most of the cardholders claimed that they visited more places than they intended. Moreover, almost all cardholders agreed that the card offer made the region more attractive for a visit
Schmalz (2000)	To examine the impact of Kärnten Card on tourists' experience, perceptions and satisfaction with Carinthia	Descriptive analysis on survey responses provided by Kärnten Card holders	Cardholders noted that the card makes Carinthia an attraction destination. The card also played an influential role in their trip planning journey as well as the formation of satisfaction with the destination
Pechlaner and Abfalter (2005)	To explore potentials and opportunities for the use of destination cards for cultural tourism packaging	Review and synthesis of published references	Destination cards empower participating partners to access to valuable information on visitors' needs and leisure attitudes. Experience with destination cards can result into a better utilization of infrastructure and sustainable customer retention.
Lee, Lee and Hwang (2008)	To identify factors affecting Korean and Japanese travelers' preference of destination card payment type	Descriptive analysis on survey responses by 408 travelers to Busan (Korea)	Korean and Japanese travelers are more in favor of a pre-paid destination card. However, the preference of payment type varies by some individual- and trip-related characteristics of respondents.
Zeni, Kiyavitskaya, Barcera, Oztaysi and Mich (2009)	To propose an action tracking system to measure the economic impact of cultural events using a destination-card circuit	Case studies on two major cultural events of Trento	The proposed system demonstrates that it can efficiently collect and reveal the profile of (e.g., age group and region-of-origin) and places visited by events' participants.
Lucia, Zeni, Mich and Franch (2011)	To introduce a method for measuring the economic impact of cultural events using a RFID-powered destination-card circuit	Case studies on a major cultural event of Trento	The card-mediated system provides fruitful data pertaining to the economic impact of cultural event. The collected data also enables event organizers to plan the future editions as well as to improve the collaboration among partners more efficiently
Zoltan and Masiero (2012)	To profile tourists who may purchase a regional destination card via analyzing their trip purpose and trip activities at the destination	Regression analysis on survey provided by 586 tourists visiting Ticino (Switzerland)	The ideal targets of a destination card are those who: (1) visit the destination the first time; (2) wish to have a safe vacation; (3) has a lower-middle range holiday budget; and (4) are interested in novelties.

Egger (2013)	To analyze and discuss possible applications of near field communication technology in the tourism context	Review and synthesis of published references	Future destination cards can be stored directly on mobile devices. All payment functions, bonus systems and loyalty programs could be managed via mobile interface.
Basili, Liguori and Palumbo (2014)	To propose a new service which is designed for enhancing tourist experience via integrating mobile and contactless technologies	Conceptual paper	Through integrating the functionalities of a traditional city card with peculiarities of mobile devices, the new service can be a mobile travel assistant which provides a wide range of customized, interactive and geo-located service to tourists.
Zoltan and McKercher (2015)	To examine tourist movements in the Canton of Ticino via analyzing the data generated by Ticino card	Cluster analysis on usage records gathered from 986 Ticino cards	Destination cards can provide a robust set of information that can assist destination management organizations in enriching their understanding about profile, behavior, desire and satisfaction of card buyer tourists.
Ispas, Constantin and Candrea (2015)	To examine tourists' interest to purchase a potential tourist card, appropriate distribution channels and services should be included	Descriptive analysis on survey responses provided by 431 tourists visiting Braşov (Romania)	Tourists share poor knowledge of tourist cards, even though they are interested to purchase one. Accommodation units are considered the most appropriate distribution channel. Price facilities for accommodation and leisure services are inevitable.
Angeloni (2016)	To investigate the opportunities and challenges for the implementation of a new destination card as well as its supporting system	Case study on a new destination card released in Basilicata (Italy)	The new generation of destination card can enhance the competitiveness of participating operators and the destination as a whole. The new card can also benefit tourists via providing them with an integrated and flexible offering of services.
Digiorgio (2016)	To assess the relationship between promotional tools and the ratio of bookings received via direct (vs. indirect) channels	Descriptive analysis on survey responses provided by 1,194 accommodation facilities in Italy	Having a presence on destination's tourist cards can bring accommodation facilities a higher percentage of direct bookings.
Schnitzer, Seidl, Schlemmer and Peters (2018)	To examine suppliers' motives, effects and satisfaction with joining the Leisure Card Tirol alliance	Content analysis on qualitative data provided by 60 participants of Leisure Card Tirol	Firms' motives for joining the alliance are either economic or non-economic. Some firms experience an increased number of visitors, while most firms do not. Some smaller companies complain about their fixed profit-sharing mechanism.

Scuderi and Dalle Nogare (2018)	To investigate tourists' preferences by identifying the most common sequences of activities recorded by a destination card	Pattern recognition analysis on the activities recorded in 7,279 Trentino Guest Cards	Most tourists give preference to outdoors moderately engaging activities. They mostly choose a sequence in which an outdoors leisure or moderately engaging activity is followed by a more intellectually demanding one or vice versa.
Drozdowska, Duda-Seifert and Faron (2018)	To propose the model of a city destination card for a large city	Content analysis on the features of destination cards available in five European capital cities	Destination cards are proven to be used to commercialize an area and its resources by bonding a series of tourist service. The combined effect can lead to a better tourist experience, which improves the destination's image and competitive advantage.

Table 2. Demographic profiles of Study 1's interviewees

ID	Age	Gender	Nationality	Education level	No. of destination card(s) purchased before
Past-purchasers (who purchased at least one destination card in the past)					
PP1	35	Male	Singaporean	Bachelor's degree	3
PP2	26	Female	Korean	Bachelor's degree	1
PP3	26	Female	Chinese	Bachelor's degree	2
PP4	48	Female	British	High school	6
PP5	33	Female	Australian	Bachelor's degree	3
PP6	45	Male	Chinese	Master's degree	3
PP7	25	Male	French	High school	2
Non-purchasers (who did not purchase any destination card in the past)					
NP1	30	Female	Chinese	High school	-
NP2	33	Female	Chinese	Bachelor's degree	-
NP3	22	Male	Korean	Bachelor's degree	-
NP4	44	Male	Taiwanese	Bachelor's degree	-
NP5	56	Female	Dutch	Bachelor's degree	-
NP6	40	Male	Nepalese	High school	-
NP7	31	Male	Chinese	Master's degree	-

Table 3. Demographic profiles of Study 2's survey participants

	Past-purchasers ^a (<i>n</i> = 109)		Non-purchasers ^a (<i>n</i> = 176)		Total (<i>N</i> = 285)	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Gender						
Male	41	37.6%	90	51.1%	131	46.0%
Female	68	62.4%	86	48.9%	154	54.0%
Age group						
18 – 20	13	11.9%	39	22.2%	52	18.2%
21 – 30	46	42.2%	81	46.0%	127	44.6%
31 – 40	38	34.9%	42	23.9%	80	28.1%
41 – 50	7	6.4%	9	5.1%	16	5.6%
51 – 60	5	4.6%	5	2.8%	10	3.5%
Nationality						
Chinese	64	58.7%	102	58.0%	166	58.2%
Korean	6	5.5%	18	10.2%	24	8.4%
Taiwanese	4	3.7%	10	5.7%	14	4.9%
British	4	3.7%	10	5.7%	14	4.9%
Australian	3	2.8%	5	2.8%	8	2.8%
Malaysian	3	2.8%	4	2.3%	7	2.5%
Singaporean	1	0.9%	5	2.8%	6	2.1%
American	1	0.9%	5	2.8%	6	2.1%
Thai	3	2.8%	2	1.1%	5	1.8%
German	2	1.8%	2	1.1%	4	1.4%
Indonesian	1	0.9%	2	1.1%	3	1.1%
Dutch	1	0.9%	2	1.1%	3	1.1%
Others (e.g., French, Philippine)	16	14.7%	9	5.1%	25	8.8%
Educational level						
High school	8	7.3%	16	9.1%	24	8.4%
High diploma	15	13.8%	28	15.9%	43	15.1%
Bachelor's degree	68	62.4%	105	59.7%	173	60.7%
Master's degree	12	11.0%	21	11.9%	33	11.6%
Doctoral degree	6	5.5%	6	3.4%	12	4.2%
Number of leisure trips over the past 12 months						
Less than 2 leisure trips	36	33.0%	78	44.3%	114	40.0%
2 – 4 leisure trips	59	54.1%	77	43.8%	136	47.7%
5 – 7 leisure trips	12	11.0%	17	9.7%	29	10.2%
8 – 10 leisure trips	1	0.9%	3	1.7%	4	1.4%
More than 10 leisure trips	1	0.9%	1	0.6%	2	0.7%
Number of destination card(s) purchased before						
0 card	-	-	176	100%	176	61.8%
1 card	42	38.5%	-	-	42	14.7%
2 cards	43	39.4%	-	-	43	15.1%

3 cards	12	11.0%	-	-	12	4.2%
4 cards	6	5.5%	-	-	6	2.1%
5 cards or above	6	5.5%	-	-	6	2.1%

Note. ^a **Past-purchasers** = Respondents who purchased at least one destination card in the past; **Non-purchasers** = Respondents who did not purchase any destination card in the past.

Table 4. Motives leading tourists to purchase destination card(s)

	Freq. (%)
Motives leading tourists to purchase destination card (DC) ^a	
Cost saving: DC allows me to travel around the destination at a lower cost	81 (74.3%)
Time saving: DC offers much convenience to me when I travel around the destination	61 (55.9%)
Social influence: My friend(s) recommends me to buy DC	38 (34.9%)
Novelty seeking: DC allows me to get new ideas of what to visit	19 (17.4%)

Note. ^a Rated by respondents who have bought at least one destination card before (n = 109).

Table 5. Inhibitors leading tourists not to purchase destination card(s)

	Freq. (%)
Inhibitors leading tourists not to purchase destination card (DC) ^a	
Lack of knowledge about product value: I did not know what benefit / value DC can offer to me	139 (78.9%)
Lack of knowledge about product availability: I did not know if DC is available in the destination I visited	60 (34.1%)
Social influence: My friend(s) does not recommend me to buy a DC	12 (6.8%)
Low value for money: The cost of DC does not match with the benefit offered to cardholders	10 (5.7%)

Note. ^a Rated by respondents who have never bought any destination card before (n = 176).

Table 6. Perceived importance of offerings in destination card(s)

Offerings	Total (N = 285) ^a		Past-purchasers (n = 109) ^a		Non-purchasers (n = 176) ^a	
	M ^b	SD	M ^b	SD	M ^b	SD
Attraction-related offerings						
Free admission ticket to major attractions	5.45 (1)	1.33	5.41 (1)	1.36	5.48 (2)	1.31
Fast ticket line / Fast track entry	5.29 (4)	1.41	5.31 (2)	1.43	5.27	1.39
Activity-related offerings						
Discount on shopping	5.28 (5)	1.44	5.14 (5)	1.51	5.37 (4)	1.39
Discount on restaurant consumption	5.21	1.39	5.08	1.49	5.29 (5)	1.34
Discount on accommodations	5.12	1.51	5.08	1.55	5.15	1.48
Discount on city tours	5.03	1.46	4.92	1.55	5.10	1.41
Discount on the use of public facilities	4.86	1.50	4.88	1.32	4.85	1.61
Discount on stages / concerts	4.78	1.42	4.69	1.49	4.84	1.38
Transportation-related offerings						
Free use of public transportation	5.39 (3)	1.35	5.28 (3)	1.38	5.47 (3)	1.32
Discount on airport transfer	4.93	1.39	4.86	1.49	4.98	1.34
Free use of tourist shuttle service	4.65	1.41	4.57	1.44	4.69	1.38
Discount on bike rental service	3.99	1.50	4.00	1.45	3.99	1.54
Discount on car rental service	3.90	1.59	3.79	1.59	3.97	1.59
Free use of parking facilities	3.59	1.68	3.43	1.58	3.69	1.73
Other offerings						
Discount on pocket Wi-Fi rental	5.42 (2)	1.46	5.27 (4)	1.44	5.52 (1)	1.46
Free gift voucher	5.05	1.46	5.06	1.49	5.04	1.45
Free city map	4.94	1.62	4.78	1.60	5.05	1.62
Free city guide	4.81	1.47	4.78	1.51	4.82	1.45

Note: ^a 7-point Likert scale was used (1: Extremely unimportant – 7: Extremely important)

^b Numbers shown in the parenthesis represents the rankings of the offerings (only top five are shown).