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# **Millennials' travel motivations and desired activities within destinations: A comparative study of the US and the UK**

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## ABSTRACT

Millennials are one of the largest groups to be targeted by tourism companies. This paper compares the travel motivations of Millennials from both the United States and the United Kingdom by ratings, rankings and perceptual structures of both push and pull factors. This exploratory study used a questionnaire to examine the inner motivations (e.g. push factors) and preferred destination activities (e.g. pull factors) of American and British Millennials ( $n = 322$ ). Data analysis included the non-parametric Mann–Whitney U test, Kendall's coefficient of concordance, an alternating least-squares algorithm (ALSCAL) model and ordinal regression. The results reveal that American and British Millennials are quite homogeneous in their push travel motivations and destination activity preferences. The most important motivational factors for both are 'to relax' and 'to escape from the ordinary'. Both nationalities also agree that the most attractive destination activities are 'to try local food' and 'to go sightseeing'. The findings indicate that the US and UK samples are similar and that there is room for segmentation according to demographics.

*Keywords:* motivations; push and pull factors; travel; Millennials; cross-country comparison

## Introduction

The tourism industry has long been recognised as one of the most influential economic sectors, oriented towards multi-generational visitors and served by a multi-generational labour force (Leask, Fyall, & Barron, 2013). More recently, an important modification in this sector's generational supremacy has been recognised, and Millennials have received increasing attention in the literature (Pendergast, 2010). This cohort encompasses individuals who were born between 1982 and 2002 (Howe & Strauss, 2000) and embraces teenagers, college students, young adults and professionals, who will soon become not only the next generation of managers in the tourism industry but also the largest tourist group to be served. Furthermore, researchers have revealed that Millennials are of crucial importance because of not only their sheer numbers but also their exceptional set of attributes. This cohort is distinctive as a result of their social and economic contexts, which have shaped the unique motivation, values and attitudes of this group towards travelling (United Nations World Tourism Organisation, 2008).

The Millennials category arguably applies throughout the world due to globalisation and monocultural tendencies in this age group (Leask et al., 2013), or, at the minimum, this generation can be seen as a pervasive phenomenon among Anglophones (Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2010). Notably, Leask, Fyall, and Barron (2014, p. 464) observe that 'one particularly contentious area of debate on generational cohorts is the degree to which cohort characteristics transcend national boundaries and the extent to which they do, or do not, truly represent a global phenomenon'.

Millennials' travel motivations have already been given attention in the literature (e.g. Carr, 1999; Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011; Thrane, 2008; Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009). Various theories of motivation have been applied to answer the question of why tourists, in general, travel and engage in certain experiences in destinations (Caber & Albayyeak, 2016). Explanations can include 'push factors [that] focus on whether to go, and pull factors [that] focus on where to go' (Kim, Lee, & Klenosky, 2003, p. 171). This push and pull

motivation framework has been increasingly used in research on this topic (Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011). Studies have also highlighted motivational differences in relation to demographics (Kim et al., 2003).

In studies focused on Millennials in particular, researchers have analysed either destination activities (e.g. Carr, 1999) or pull motivations (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002; Kim, Oh, & Jogaratnam, 2007). Only a few studies thus far have used an integrated framework of push and pull factors (Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011; Thrane, 2008; Xu et al., 2009).

The present paper seeks to contribute to the existing research in two ways. First, the present study analysed Millennials' push travel motivations and preferred activities and tested whether push and pull factors vary according to Millennials' demographics. Second, this research made a cross-country comparison of Millennials from the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) – two of the largest international tourist-generating markets. Thus, the current study sought to identify the similarities and differences between these two nationalities and their demographics in terms of Millennials' push travel motivations and pull destination activities.

## *Literature review*

### *Push and pull travel motivations*

Motivation research has sought to explain how and why consumers behave as they do, especially since motivation is the starting point of consumers' decision-making process. The conceptualisation of motivation is therefore rooted in the literature on consumer behaviour (Fullerton, 2013). Motivation is also one of the core theoretical issues of consumer behaviour in tourism (Woodside, 2017) as motivations help explain why tourists select trips and look for travel experiences in the first phase of their destination planning.

Yoon and Uysal (2005, p. 46) describe motivation as encompassing 'psychological/biological needs and wants, including internal forces that arouse, direct and integrate a person's behaviour and activity'. Various scholars have presented theories and models to explain motivation (e.g. Dann, 1977; Gnoth, 1997; Hsu, Cai, & Li, 2010; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Plog, 1974). In addition, some researchers have attempted to investigate the influence of demographic and travel characteristics on motivations (Kim & Prideaux, 2005; Kozak, 2002; Lau & McKercher, 2004).

Travel motivation has been widely studied in the field of tourism (Cohen, Prayag, & Moital, 2014). Lee, O'Leary, Lee, and Morrison (2002) maintain that travel motivation is closely related with travellers' behaviour and choice of activities within destinations. Motivation can be seen as a starting point for researching tourism behaviour and understanding tourists' travel choices (Kim, Jogaratnam, & Noh, 2006). Moreover, managers' awareness of visitors' motivations is particularly important for the development of comprehensive destination marketing strategies (Bieger & Laesser, 2002) and, consequently, the offer of different and more suitable products and services (Zoltan & Masiero, 2012).

Dann's (1977) seminal paper highlights that individuals are motivated by external and internal forces. The resulting push and pull theory has been generally accepted by tourism researchers (Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011) because of its simplicity and intuitive approach (Klenosky, 2002). This theory addresses two fundamental questions related to tourist behaviour: 'why' (i.e. inner inspiration) and 'where to' (i.e. outer incentives).

Push (i.e. internal) factors motivate individuals to travel away from home, and pull (i.e. external) factors draw them towards specific destinations (Prayag & Ryan, 2011). Therefore, push factors can be viewed as antecedents of pull factors as the former predispose most travellers to go on trips (Lee et al., 2002). These factors are linked with psychological drivers of behaviour (Caber & Albayyeak, 2016). Push factors can be grouped into categories, namely, escapism, status, healthiness, adventure, social interaction, rest and relax-

ation and family togetherness (Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011).

On the other hand, pull factors encompass destination attributes that play an important role in the destination decision process (Correia & Pimpao, 2008). Pull motivations relate to the attractiveness of destinations and encompass external or tangible resources that destinations possess and tourists' perceptions and expectations of these (Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011). Destination activities can be viewed as pull travel motivations. Hsieh, O'Leary, and Morrison (1992) suggest that by tracking tourists' preferred activities within destinations, marketing planners can design better packages and programmes for visitors. Preferred activities can vary by demographics, such as age, education, occupation and marital status (Hsieh et al., 1992), and by different holiday types (e.g. city trips, outdoor vacations, resort vacations, theme parks and cruise trips) (Rao, Thomas, & Javalgi, 1992).

### *Generation theory and Millennials*

In the context of generation research, the most important concept of the well-known Strauss-Howe generational theory (Strauss & Howe, 1991) is that people from the same age group exhibit and share – to some extent – identical values, beliefs and expectations, along with similar capabilities, skills and interests. Official US demographic statistics estimates currently point to a shift in generational dominance in favour of Millennials (Pew Research Center, 2016). This change in the size of generational cohorts could have a strong impact on the tourism industry (Schewe & Meredith, 2004).

Howe and Strauss (2000) identify Millennials as beginning in the time interval of 1982–2002. An intriguing detail noted by various authors is that the purchase power of Millennials is significantly greater than that of their predecessors was (i.e. baby boomers and Generation X) when Millennials are in the same age cohort (Bucic, Harris, & Arli, 2012; Farris, Chong, & Danning, 2002). According to some authors, Millennials have an increasingly extrinsic and materialistic orientation compared to previous generations, placing emphasis on money and image and identifying strongly with social groups (Twenge, 2006). Moreover, this generation is becoming an important source of visitors to some tourism destinations, and it is expected to develop into the most important tourism consumption cohort (Nusair, Parsa, & Cobanoglu, 2011; Pendergast, 2010).

Various authors have researched Millennials and come up with numerous personal characteristics, values, attitudes and behaviours (Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2010; Leask et al., 2013; Schewe & Meredith, 2004) that describe this generation. Overall, Millennials are characterised by researchers as multi-taskers, digital natives and, overall, skilled, energetic, polite, positive, socially conscious, hopeful, sophisticated and demanding individuals (Eisner, 2005; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010; Pendergast, 2010).

These features are outcomes of a combination of external forces (e.g. social context, demography, financial setting and technological progress). Millennials are technologically savvy as they are the first generation to be born and to grow up in a digital world (Maxwell, Ogden, & Broadbridge, 2010). However, they also are the first generation that has been exposed to constant acts of terrorism, with resulting contradictions that do not end with this one aspect. Huntley (2006) describes this generation as the 'Paradoxical Generation' due to their illogical way of living. The cited author explains this label with the following examples: 'They drink and take drugs but eat organic food; they are obsessed with technology but fear it is depriving them of deeper personal relationship; they want to get married but resist settling down with a partner' (Huntley, 2006).

### *Millennials' travel motivations*

Studies focused on Millennials' travel motivations have considered mainly single country samples, and only a few have offered cross-country comparisons (e.g. Xu et al., 2009).

Moreover, although the studies by Mohsin and Alsawafi (2011), Thrane (2008) and Xu et al. (2009) addressed both push and pull motivations, Carr (1999) targeted only destination activities, and Kim and Jogaratnam (2002) and Kim et al. (2007) analysed only push motivations.

In terms of motivational factors, Kim et al. (2007) conclude that knowledge, sports and adventure are important motivational push factors for US students. According to Mohsin and Alsawafi (2011), some of the most important push motivations for Omani students are 'to be mentally refreshed', 'to learn something new or increase knowledge' and 'to relax'. Escapism is an important motivation identified in Thrane's (2008) study. 'To relax' and 'to discover something new' are considered important motivations to travel for both UK and Chinese students (Xu et al., 2009). Kim and Jogaratnam's (2002) study revealed that 'having fun and being entertained, finding thrills and excitement and escaping from the ordinary and learning new things or increasing knowledge' are the most important push factors for US domestic students.

Although British students are more motivated than Chinese students are by 'having fun', 'doing things with friends and family', 'escaping from boredom' and 'enjoying a new challenge', Chinese students place higher importance than students from UK do on 'seeing famous sights' and 'learning about other cultures and history' (Xu et al., 2009). Kim and Jogaratnam's (2002) study also revealed differences between US domestic and Asian students. 'Finding thrills and excitement', 'escaping from the ordinary' and 'being daring and adventurers' are more important for US domestic students, whereas 'seeing and experiencing a foreign destination' is more important for US Asian students. These differences could originate from cultural factors. Xu et al. (2009) also found differences between male and female youths within each nationality. For example, in the UK, females give higher ratings to 'relaxing' and 'socialising' than males do.

Arbogast and Smith (2016) concluded that Millennials visiting New River Gorge, West Virginia, most frequently participated in adventure sports, but these were followed in popularity by scenic drives, walks or treks in natural areas and visits to protected areas and nature attractions. These Millennials demonstrated a preference for challenging adventure opportunities but also enjoyed softer ones.

Other previous studies also have attempted to examine differences across pull motivations by gender. However, their results differ. Carr (1999) analysed the behaviour of young beach-oriented tourists in the UK and identified apparently little difference by gender in the leisure activities of young tourists. The only significant difference was found regarding shopping, which appeals more to young female tourists. A female preference for shopping is highlighted in Xu et al.'s (2009) findings. Regarding gender, the studies by Kim and Jogaratnam (2003) and Xu et al. (2009) revealed that males tend to be active more than females do and that males also to participate in outdoor and sport activities more often. Mohsin and Alsawafi (2011) also conclude that gender has a significant impact on some travel motivations. With respect to marital status, Kim and Jogaratnam's (2003) study showed that single young people are usually more active than married young people are.

A review of the literature revealed that, despite the increasing attention paid to Millennials and the wide use of generational segmentation, few researchers have studied Millennials in particular. More specifically, little work has been done on identifying possible cross-cultural differences in this generation's travel motivations and preferred activities within tourist destinations. Despite all the traits that bring Millennials together into a distinct cohort and even as a cultural phenomenon, some evidence has been found that individual members of this group may have different travel motivations and preferred activities and attitudes. These depend on the geographical locations and cultural, demographic, social and economic factors surrounding these individuals.

Based on the above literature review and the lack of research on Millennials' cross-cultural differences in a travel context, this study sought to test the following hypotheses:

H1: There is intra-heterogeneity regarding (H2a) push motivations and (H2b) travel activity preferences within the Millennial cohort, with motivational factors varying according to demographic variables.

H2: UK and US Millennials differ in (H1a) their push travel motivations and (H1b) their travel activity preferences.

## *Methodology*

### *Target population and sample design*

The target population for the present study comprised American and British outbound travellers from 18 to 33 years old. The questionnaires were distributed through an online survey development platform (i.e. SurveyMonkey Audience). This software facilitates the collection of responses from specific target groups defined by variables such as age, gender, occupation, location and relationship status. Respondents are reached via e-mails sent from a SurveyMonkey panel and given incentives to complete questionnaires. Thus, the present results were obtained from a non probability convenience sample.

In total, 322 completed questionnaires were collected (164 from the UK and 158 from the US). The sample's characteristics by country can be found in Table 1. Notably, the sample is composed of almost equal numbers of females (156) and males (166) and Americans (158) and British (164), as well as 18–25 (157) and 26–33-year-old (165) Millennials. These figures, therefore, provide evidence to support the accuracy of the comparison discussed below.

### *Questionnaire design*

A three-part questionnaire written in English was developed to measure the inner motivations (e.g. push factors) and preferred destination activities (e.g. pull factors) of American and British Millennials who were outbound tourists. The first part of the questionnaire included items covering the basic demographic characteristics of participants (i.e. age, gender, origin, relationship status, children, education and income).

Table 1. Sample characteristics (both nationalities).

Variable	Category	The UK ( <i>n</i> = 164)		The US ( <i>n</i> = 158)	
		Count	%	Count	%
Gender	Female	88	53.7	68	43.0
	Male	76	46.3	90	57.0
Age Group	18 to 25	76	46.3	81	51.3
	26 to 33	88	53.7	77	48.7
Relationship Status	In a relationship	84	51.2	54	34.2
	Married	34	20.7	35	22.2
	Single	46	28.0	69	43.7
Children	No	127	77.4	125	79.1
	Yes	37	22.6	33	20.9
Education	High school diploma	93	56.7	86	54.4
	Bachelor degree	42	25.6	56	35.4
	Master's degree or more	29	17.7	16	10.1
Income Group	Less than \$20,000	57	34.8	50	31.6
	\$20,000–\$39,000	50	30.5	33	20.9
	\$40,000–\$59,000	28	17.1	31	19.6
	\$60,000 and above	29	17.7	44	27.8

The second part of the survey consisted of questions related to Millennials' inner motiv-

ations to travel. Eight validated motivation items were adopted from Lee et al. (2002). Participants were asked to rate the importance of these motivations: 'to escape from the ordinary', 'to experience a new and different lifestyle', 'to enhance my knowledge about new places', 'to meet new people with similar interests', 'to relax', 'to visit places my friends have not visited', 'to find thrills and excitement' and 'to visit family and friends'. Responses used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ('Not at all important') to 5 ('Very important').

The third section concentrated on Millennials' destination activity preferences. Instead of focusing on specific activities and travel destinations, the questionnaire focused on a broad selection of push travel motivations. The list of eight desired activities was adopted from Dotson, Clark, and Dave's (2008) study. Respondents were asked to rate the likelihood that they would participate in these activities: 'sightseeing', 'shopping', 'partying', 'gambling', 'trying local food', 'visiting museums', 'attending events' and 'outdoor activities'. Again, a five-point Likert scale was used, ranging from 1 ('Definitely not') to 5 ('For sure').

### *Data analysis*

As the data to be obtained were measured on an ordinal scale, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was applied to test for differences in the distribution of ratings between the two nationality groups. In order to assess the extent to which these different groups agreed on their rankings of motivations and destination activity preferences, Kendall's coefficient of concordance was applied, while multidimensional scaling offered a visual display of the perceptual structure of both push and pull travel motivations. Further, perceptual space similarity was analysed by means of the asymmetric Euclidean distance model (ALSCAL). Finally, ordinal regressions assessed the potential influence of demographics in the set of push and pull factors under analysis.

Four hypotheses were checked. The dependent variable was measured at the ordinal level (i.e. a five-point ordinal scale). The independent variables were converted into dummy variables. No multicollinearity was included since categorical variables were converted in the number of categories minus one. An assumption of parallelism was made because the test of parallelism produced insufficient evidence to reject the parallelism hypothesis.

## *Results*

### *Push travel motivations*

The results reveal that, in general, US and UK Millennials give similar importance to the same motivational factors (see Table 2). The most important motivations for travelling are 'to relax' (mean = 4.05), followed closely by the desire 'to escape from the ordinary' (mean = 3.65), while the least important ones are travelling 'to meet people with similar interests' (mean = 2.73) and 'to go to places my friends have not visited before' (mean = 2.53). Both nationalities rated the eight motivational factors almost equally, with exception of the item 'to visit places my friends have not visited before'.

Next, all rankings given by the two nationality groups were compared collectively. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance is  $W = 0.98$  ( $p = 0.00$ ), indicating that the groups agree in their ranking of the motivational factors (i.e. do not differ). Therefore, the US and UK samples are quite similar in terms of push travel motivations.

For each country, a visual representation was then performed of the motivational push factors. The ALSCAL calculated the proximities among the eight factors under analysis for both countries. The results (see Figure 1) show that a two-dimension solution allows a meaningful interpretation of the data, with a stress value of 0.071 for the UK sample and a stress value of 0.078 for the US sample. The R-squared value was 0.977 for the UK sample and 0.971 for the US sample. The correlations between the scores of the US and UK



samples for dimension 1 ( $r = 0.99$ ) and dimension 2 ( $r = 0.90$ ) are strong, indicating proximity in the perceptual structure of both countries. The first dimension appears to organise travel motivations according to their importance, displaying ‘to meet people’ and ‘to visit new places’ on the left and the other items on the right (e.g. ‘to relax’) on

Table 2. Travel push motivations by country.

Travel Motivation	Total		Total US		Total UK		Mann-Whitney U Test
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
To relax	4.05	1	3.99	1	4.1	1	$U = 11,683$ ; $W = 23,159$
To escape from the ordinary	3.65	2	3.59	2	3.71	2	$U = 11,362$ ; $W = 22,838$
To experience a different lifestyle	3.62	3	3.58	3.5	3.67	3	$U = 11,627$ ; $W = 23,103$
To enhance my knowledge about new places	3.55	4	3.58	3.5	3.52	4	$U = 11,365$ ; $W = 23,768^{**}$
To find thrills and excitement	3.5	5	3.52	5	3.49	5	$U = 11,520$ ; $W = 23,923$
To visit family and friends	3.4	6	3.47	6	3.34	6	$U = 10,879$ ; $W = 23,282$
To meet people with similar interests	2.73	7	2.83	7	2.64	7	$U = 10,878$ ; $W = 23,281$
To visit places my friends have not visited	2.53	8	2.74	8	2.32	8	$U = 9675$ ; $W = 22,078$

Kendall's coefficient of concordance (US vs. UK) = 0.98\*\*

\* and \*\* = statistically significant at the 5% and 1% level, respectively.

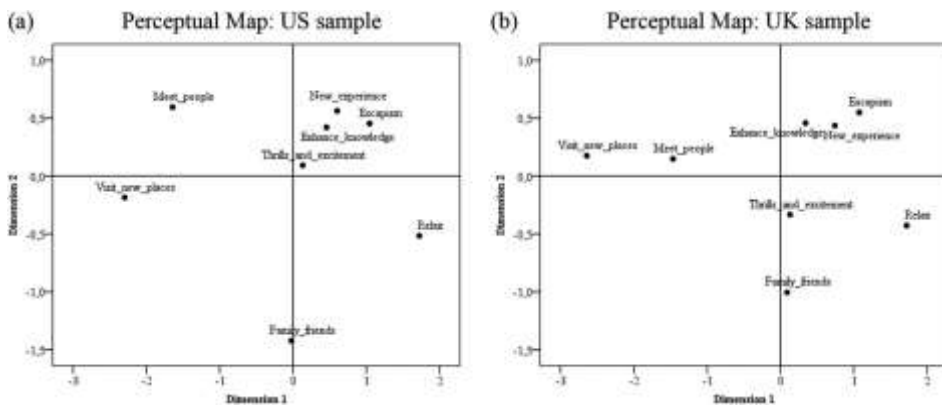


Figure 1. Perceptual map for push travel motivations in the US (a) and the UK (b).

both maps. The second axis splits ‘to relax’ from knowledge enhancing activities, such as ‘to experience new lifestyles’ and ‘to enhance knowledge’, from ‘to visit new places’.

The country of origin does not appear to be related to the ratings of the push factors under analysis (see Table 3). The only exception is ‘to visit new places’, as US Millennials are more likely to assign higher ratings to this than UK Millennials are. Males are less likely to assign higher ratings to ‘to relax’ and ‘to visit family and friends’ than females are. Those

respondents who are single or in a relationship are more likely to give higher ratings to the motivation 'to meet people' than are those who are married. Those who have only a high school degree are less likely to be motivated 'to enhance knowledge about new places' than are those respondents who hold a masters or a doctorate. Finally, the age group 15–25 is more likely to be motivated 'to meet people', 'to find thrills and excitement' and 'to visit family and friends' than the sub group 26–30 is.

#### *Pull travel motivations: destination activities*

In this section, all comparisons deal with eight possible destination activities: 'sightseeing', 'shopping', 'partying', 'gambling', 'trying local food', 'visiting museums', 'attending events' and 'outdoor activities'. The overall means and ranks of each activity, in general and by country, are shown in Table 4. It is noticeable that UK and US Millennials give different ranks to three activities – 'shopping', 'attending events' and 'outdoor activities'. According to the Mann–Whitney U test, there are two significant differences between the groups. The first one is related to 'attending events', towards which US Millennials demonstrate higher interest than UK Millennials do. The second difference is associated with interest in 'gambling', towards which Americans show, once again, a higher interest than British respondents do. The Kendall's coefficient of concordance, although statistically significant ( $p = 0.01$ ) is lower (0.71) than is the coefficient registered for motivations.

Subsequently, a visual representation was prepared of the pull motivation factors for each country (see Figure 2). The ALSCAL calculated the proximities among the eight factors under analysis for both countries. The results show that, here too, a two-dimension solution allows a meaningful interpretation of the data, with a stress value of 0.144 for the UK sample and a stress value of 0.145 for the US sample. The R-squared value is 0.928 for the UK sample and 0.931 for the US sample. With respect to the perceptual structure, the correlation for the first dimension is high ( $r = 0.969$ ) between the two nationality-based

Table 3. Ordinal regression of push motivations on demographics.

Variable		Age (1)	Gender (1)	Country (1)	Rel Status (1)	Rel Status (2)	Children (1)	Educ (1)	Educ (2)	Inc (1)	Inc (2)	Inc (3)	Model Fitting
Escapism	B	-0.028	-0.110	-0.065	0.357	0.152	-0.127	0.052	-0.030	-0.058	0.456	0.245	$\chi^2 = 1.820$ ; $p = 0.460$
	S.E.	0.153	0.140	0.143	0.211	0.190	0.182	0.232	0.235	0.828	0.830	0.822	0.035 0.037  0.02
New Experience	B	-0.181	-0.142	0.031	0.133	0.085	-0.102	-0.127	-0.017	-0.253	-0.367	-0.477	$\chi^2 = 7.177$ ; $p = 0.785$
	S.E.	0.151	0.139	0.142	0.207	0.188	0.180	0.227	0.231	0.930	0.931	0.924	0.023 0.025  0.08
Enhance Knowledge	B	-0.104	-0.123	0.270	0.027	0.249	-0.169	-0.508	-0.278	-0.411	-0.446	-0.602	$\chi^2 = 1.928$ ; $p = 0.144$
	S.E.	0.150	0.138	0.142	0.204	0.188	0.177	0.236*	0.241	0.955	0.956	0.950	0.051 0.054  0.018
Meet People	B	-0.322	0.072	0.192	0.483	0.388	0.251	0.148	0.070	1.337	1.255	1.010	$\chi^2 = 33.727$ ; $p = 0.000$
	S.E.	0.138*	0.127	0.130	0.191*	0.174*	0.168	0.206	0.208	0.781	0.782	0.775	0.106 0.111  0.036
Relax	B	0.190	-0.546	0.030	-0.183	-0.261	-0.228	0.239	0.387	-0.458	-0.303	-0.385	$\chi^2 = 20.578$ ; $p = 0.038$
	S.E.	0.170	0.158**	0.160	0.244	0.223	0.206	0.250	0.259	1.134	1.138	1.132	0.066 0.071  0.027
Visit New Places	B	-0.225	0.133	0.298	0.083	0.060	0.060	-0.198	0.057	-0.862	-0.932	-1.170	$\chi^2 = 18.874$ ; $p = 0.063$
	S.E.	0.137	0.126	0.129*	0.189	0.172	0.165	0.205	0.208	0.948	0.949	0.943	0.061 0.064  0.021
Thrills and Excitement	B	-0.421	0.023	0.069	0.012	0.121	-0.221	0.089	0.122	-0.941	-0.939	-1.064	$\chi^2 = 19.279$ ; $p = 0.056$
	S.E.	0.148**	0.136	0.139	0.202	0.184	0.175	0.220	0.222	1.090	1.090	1.084	0.062 0.065  0.022

Family and Friends	B	-0.302	-0.264	0.180	-0.116	0.108	0.151	0.253	0.425	-0.471	-0.697	-0.647	$\chi^2 = 19.359;$
	S.E.	0.147*	0.135*	0.138	0.202	0.185	0.179	0.214	0.219	0.956	0.957	0.951	$p = 0.055$ 0.062 0.065  0.021

Notes: Age (1) = 18 to 25; Gender (1) = 18 to 25; Country (1) = US; Rel Status (1) = single; Rel Status (2) = in a relationship; Children (1) = yes; Educ (1) = high school; Educ (2) = bachelor; Inc (1)  $\leq$  €20.000; Inc (2) = €20.000–€39.999; Inc (3) = €40.000–€69.000; B = Estimate; S.E. = Standard Error; Model Fitting  $\chi^2$  = chi-square statistics; Pseudo R-squared values Cox and Snell| Nagelkerke| McFadden; Link function: Complementary Log-Log.\* and \*\* statistically significant at the 5% and 1% level, respectively.

Table 4. Destination activities by country.

Destination Activity	Total		Total US		Total UK		Wilcoxon ( <i>M</i> ) Mann-Whitney ( <i>U</i> ) Test
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank	
Trying Local Food	4.24	1	4.22	1	4.27	1	<i>U</i> = 11,479; <i>W</i> = 22,505
Sightseeing	4.18	2	4.11	2	4.24	2	<i>U</i> = 10,786; <i>W</i> = 21,812
Shopping	3.78	3	3.7	4	3.79	3	<i>U</i> = 11,078; <i>W</i> = 22,104
Attending Events (e.g. music festivals and sporting competitions)	3.70	4	3.86	3	3.54	6	<i>U</i> = 9468; <i>W</i> = 21,714***
Museums	3.65	5	3.65	5	3.66	5	<i>U</i> = 11,471; <i>W</i> = 22,497
Outdoor Activities (e.g. cycling and hiking)	3.65	6	3.62	6	3.68	4	<i>U</i> = 11,230; <i>W</i> = 22,256
Partying	2.93	7	2.85	7	3	7	<i>U</i> = 10,829; <i>W</i> = 21,855
Gambling	2.03	8	2.2	8	1.87	8	<i>U</i> = 9842; <i>W</i> = 22,088**

Kendall's coefficient of concordance = 0.71\*\*\*

samples, but the correlation for the second dimension is low ( $r = 0.137$ ). The first dimension depicts the destination activities, according to their importance, from left (i.e. lower importance) to right (i.e. higher importance). In both perceptual representations, 'museums' are close to 'outdoor activities' and 'local food' to 'sightseeing'.

Regarding destination activities, females are more likely to assign a higher value to 'shopping' and 'sightseeing' and less likely to be attracted by 'gambling' than males are (see Table 5). Those who report a lower income level are less likely to search for 'sightseeing' activities than the other respondents are.

Those Millennials who are single or in a relationship are more likely to value 'partying' than are those who are married. Those who hold a high school degree are less likely to assign higher values to 'local food' and 'museums' than are those who hold a masters or

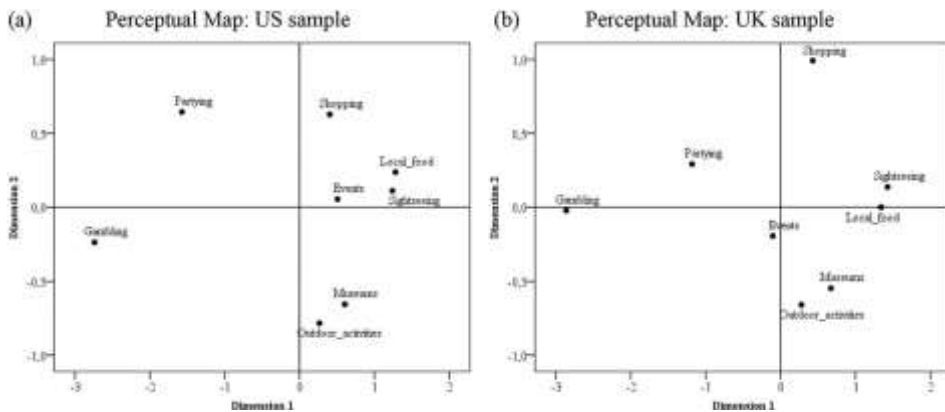


Figure 2. Perceptual map for pull travel motivations in the US (a) and the UK (b).

Table 5. Ordinal regression of pull motivations on demographics.

Variable		Age (1)	Gender (1)	Country (1)	Rel Status (1)	Rel Status (2)	Children (1)	Educ (1)	Educ (2)	Inc (1)	Inc (2)	Inc (3)	Model Fitting
Sightseeing	B	0.229	-0.418	-0.041	-0.333	0.070	-0.264	-0.575	-0.337	-15.673	-15.948	-15.718	$\chi^2 = 28.435$ ; $p = 0.003$
	S.E.	0.180	0.168**	0.169	0.250	0.237	0.216	0.308	0.316	0.212**	0.205**	0.000	0.091 0.101  0.041
Shopping	B.	-0.159	-0.540	-0.044	-0.203	-0.039	0.073	0.372	0.435	0.034	-0.071	-0.130	$\chi^2 = 22.186$ ; $p = 0.023$
	S.E.	0.158	0.147**	0.149	0.218	0.201	0.194	0.229	0.232	0.892	0.893	0.887	0.072 0.076  0.027
Partying	B.	0.234	0.177	-0.124	0.580	0.596	0.129	0.226	0.054	3.613	3.617	3.554	$\chi^2 = 113.961$ ; $p = 0.000$
	S.E.	0.144	0.132	0.134	0.197**	0.178**	0.174	0.212	0.214	2.697	2.699	2.697	0.318 0.332  0.121
Gambling	B.	0.179	0.374	0.154	0.651	0.555	0.194	0.534	0.368	2.158	2.397	2.505	$\chi^2 = 89.539$ ; $p = 0.000$
	S.E.	0.137	0.127**	0.128	0.193**	0.175**	0.165	0.208*	0.209	1.797	1.800	1.799	0.260 0.278  0.112
Local Food	B.	0.072	-0.079	0.021	-0.264	0.099	0.060	-0.796	-0.351	0.158	-0.536	-0.033	$\chi^2 = 22.528$ ; $p = 0.021$
	S.E.	0.186	0.175	0.177	0.258	0.244	0.229	0.324*	0.333	1.042	1.042	1.038	0.073 0.081  0.033
Museums	B	-0.112	-0.147	0.108	0.035	0.307	-0.109	-1.050	-0.368	-0.745	-1.103	-1.319	$\chi^2 = 37.424$ ; $p = 0.000$
	S.E.	0.155	0.143	0.146	0.210	0.192	0.182	0.254**	0.257	1.102	1.104	1.099	0.118 0.125  0.044
Events	B	-0.173	0.048	0.447	0.238	0.394	0.148	-0.202	-0.120	2.042	2.071	1.711	$\chi^2 = 25.199$ ; $p = 0.009$
	S.E.	0.153	0.141	0.146**	0.208	0.190*	0.185	0.229	0.233	1.796	1.797	0.787	0.081 0.086  0.030
Outdoor Activities	B	-0.270	-0.028	-0.103	-0.104	-0.010	-0.203	0.032	0.301	0.955	0.823	0.814	$\chi^2 = 10.172$ ; $p = 0.515$
	S.E.	0.155	0.143	0.145	0.212	0.193	0.182	0.228	0.234	0.793	0.793	0.786	0.034 0.036  0.012

Notes: Age (1) = 18 to 25; Gender (1) = Female; Country (1) = US; Rel Status (1) = single; Rel Status (2) = in a relationship; Children (1) = yes; Educ (1) = high school; Educ (2) =

bachelor; Inc (1) ≤ \$20,000; Inc (2) = \$20,000–\$39,999; Inc (3) = \$40,000–\$59,000; The base categories are: Age = 26 to 33; Gender = male; Country = UK; Rel Status = married; Children = no; Educ = Master's degree or more; Income = \$60,000 or above; B = Estimate; S.E. = Standard Error; Model Fitting  $\chi^2$  = chi-square statistics; Pseudo R-squared values Cox and Snell| Nagelkerke| McFadden; Link function: Complementary Log-Log.\* and \*\* statistically significant at the 5% and 1% level, respectively.

doctorate – and the former are more likely to gamble. Even after controlling for the effect of demographics, US Millennials are more likely to attend events than are UK Millennials.

## *Conclusions*

### *Theoretical contribution*

This study analysed and compared the travel motivations and preferred destination activities of Millennials from two countries (i.e. the US and UK) in order to find out whether these motivations vary according to Millennials' demographics. The results from the survey indicate the existence of some similarities between the two samples. Indeed, this study's findings reveal that American and British Millennials give relatively similar importance to the eight push motivational factors considered in this research. The most important motivations found for considering a vacation, for both nationalities, are the need 'to relax', the desire 'to escape from the ordinary' and the hunger 'to experience different lifestyle'. These results are consistent with previous studies (e.g. Kim et al., 2007; Mohsin & Alsawafi, 2011).

With respect to push motivations, the present study's results reveal that US and UK Millennials are often motivated to travel in order 'to relax', while, at the same time, 'to experience a different lifestyle' is also part of their motivation to travel. Likewise, the two groups agree that the least important motivations are 'to visit family and friends', 'to meet people with similar interests' and 'to visit places my friends have not visited'.

In general, socioeconomic variables do not appear to have much influence on Millennials' push travel motivations. However, the ordinal regression results point to some heterogeneity in the sample. For example, 'to relax' and 'to visit family and friends' are more likely to be assigned higher values by females than by males. These results match those found by Xu et al. (2009) for their UK sample. Moreover, those respondents that belong to the first wave of Millennials and those who are not married are more likely to be motivated 'to meet other people'.

Regarding the importance of destination activities, the present study's results indicate that 'trying local food' and 'sightseeing' are the most appealing to both samples. In addition, 'partying' and 'gambling' are the least attractive destination activities to both samples. The findings also reveal that a significant difference exists between the two nationalities in regards to two destination activities. Americans are more willing to attend 'events' and 'to gamble' than are their British counterparts.

The ordinal regression results account for the net effect of the demographic variables under analysis. Female Millennials tend to rate 'sightseeing' and 'shopping' more highly than males, who also are less likely to enjoy 'gambling'. Those respondents who are not married are more likely to assign higher values to 'partying' and 'gambling' than are those who are single or in a relationship. Finally, those with lower education levels are less likely to value attending 'museums', as are those with lower income to go for 'sightseeing'.

To summarise, Millennials from the US and the UK are quite similar in terms of their evaluation of push motivation activities (i.e. by ratings, rankings and perceptual preferences). Regarding destination activities, the respondents are also quite similar. The empirical results validate the Anglophone phenomenon reported by Moscardo and Benckendorff (2010). Besides the above mentioned similarities between the two nationalities, the present research confirmed previous studies' findings that factors such as gender, marital status, children, education and income influence travel motivations and desired activities within destinations.

Therefore, the present study's results reveal intra-group heterogeneity, in so far as demographics impact the importance of travel motivations in the overall sample. This study,



thus, sought to contribute to previous research by examining Millennials' cross-country differences in a travel context, including considering push travel motivations, destination activities and the role of demographics (e.g. gender and relationship status). Therefore, the present results also clarify Millennials' motivational differences in relation to demographics.

### *Managerial implications*

With a clear understanding of the Millennials' preferences in regards to travel motivations and destination activities, managers targeting this cohort can effectively market their particular destinations and offerings. Indeed, the above results could help managers develop communication strategies and match visitors' motivations with adequate products and services at destinations.

The inner or push motivations of travellers can be used to position better destinations targeting this age group. As for Millennials, the desire to relax, escape from the ordinary and experience new lifestyles adds up to extremely important motivators. Hence, the messages sent by destination marketing organisations (DMOs) to potential customers should address these demands. This may also be done, to some extent, by offering preferred activities at destinations. In addition, young travellers have been shown to be highly interested in sightseeing and trying local food, which means that destinations need to be classified as having a rich cultural and historical background or as focusing their attention on offering an authentic local cuisine. DMOs can include these distinctive features in their promotional mix or in their marketing communication, in general, and take advantage of marketers to create advertisements that are tangible projections of Millennial visitors' desires. Bearing in mind the above empirical results, companies in the travel and tourism industry should consider demographic heterogeneity in order to satisfy more of these tourists' needs.

### *Limitations and future research directions*

Along with the above implications, this study has a few limitations that merit attention and that can be overcome in future studies. The most important limitation is related to the characteristics of trips. The survey used in this study did not include questions related directly to trips. Factors such as distance (e.g. long or short haul), travel purpose (e.g. outdoor activities, city trips, business and cruises) and trip design (e.g. package or non-package), as well as if tourists are travelling alone or in a group, can change outcomes (Hsieh et al., 1992; Law et al., 2004). Therefore, future studies could focus more precisely on these specifications.

A further limitation is that the questionnaire included only eight motivation items and eight destination activity items. This may have automatically reduced the chances of discovering significant differences between respondents. Further research on this topic needs to cover more items from each construct (i.e. travel motivation and destination activity).

Due to the sampling design employed in this study, namely, a convenience sampling procedure, the findings may not be representative and the results should not be generalised without due caution. Finally, given the exploratory nature of the present study and the ever-changing characteristics of tourists, this study needs to be conducted repeatedly using a longitudinal approach because results could be quite different, for example, 10 years from now.

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