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Analyzing The Factors of Visitors' Heritage Location Choice in The Context of Mass Tourism

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Abstract

The popularity of must-see tourism destinations has negative impacts on the cultural heritage and its landscape such as pollution, vandalism, and crowdedness. Understanding the underlying reasons from visitors' perspective what makes urban heritage locations attractive and why visitors find these locations attractive could result in policy suggestions that support sustainable tourism development and combat overtourism challenges. This study aims to increase insight in choice behavior and underlying motivations of tourist and then to support planners in policy making with evidence-based and data-driven analysis through visitors' perspectives to reduce the negative effects of mass tourism in Amsterdam. We designed an experiment that was implemented in an on-line survey that involved four sections: socio-demographic questions, experiences about respondents' last visit, statements regarding the benefits of visiting heritages, and preference for heritage location choice. Statements were used for understanding visitors' motivations for visiting heritage locations; they were classified as knowledge and learning, personal bond, popularity, pleasure and entertainment. Preferences for heritage location choices with respect to the attributes "heritage category", "historical urban landscape value", "entrance fee", "availability of pre-visit information", "other heritages and facilities within walking distance", "perceived heritage attractiveness by other visitors", "overall evaluation of other visitors", and "perceived average crowdedness level by other visitors" were measured by conducting the stated choice experiment (SCE). This method urges individuals to opt between location choices under a hypothetical scenario where attributes vary. The results lead to a better understanding of the relation between heritage and overtourism based on tradeoffs among attributes. The results of a SCE with a sample of visitors of Amsterdam (N=437) show significant preferences for all attributes except for availability of pre-visit information.

Keywords: Amsterdam, choice modelling, overtourism, policy, urban heritage