

The German and the Austrian travel habits. An analysis over time based on the German Reiseanalyse and the Austrian official travel behaviour surveys

Abstract

Within many Western European countries, a high share of the population goes on holiday travel at least once a year: In 2013, 60% in Austria and 75% in Germany. This means that these countries are important source markets for outbound and domestic tourism. The growth of tourism into a mass phenomenon in these countries started in the late 1960ies. During this time tourism destinations, ministries and the travel industry in Austria and Germany recognised their need to know the tourism demand and travel behaviour. In both countries surveys on the travel habits of the population have a long tradition: Since 1969, tourism demand and travel behaviour in Austria are measured every three years within the official Microcensus; since 1971 in Germany with the annual Reiseanalyse. The proposed paper should highlight the similarities and differences of the two approaches concerning set-up, methodology and results as displayed in the following structure:

1. Set-up: Government funded, now part of the official statistical system (Austria) vs. non-profit multi-client study not integrated in official statistics (Germany)
2. Methodology: within Microcensus until the reference year 2002 (face-to-face surveys comprised a sample size of 60 000 individuals); since reference year 2003 surveys carried out by CATI technique on a quarterly basis, since 2005 at Statistics Austria's telephone studio (3 500 individuals; Austria). Innovative mix of 8.000 face-to-face and 5.000 online interviews to guarantee continuity and the highest possible quality (face-to-face) while at the same time profiting from the general advantages of online surveys such as low cost and fast results (Germany).
3. Results:
 - a. Compare the evolution of tourism demand and travel behavior of the Germans and the Austrians. This prosperous development has been supported by the increasing availability of tourism offers (package tours), but it is also due to socio-economic changes, such as increasing number of elderly people travelling, more travel experienced young persons, increasing single households, increasing available income for travelling, increasing urbanisation etc. and the overall change to a work-life balanced society.
 - b. Compare actual travel behavior of Austrians and Germans in Austria in order to highlight the value of this knowledge for decision-making in tourism policy, marketing and strategic planning.

c. Show some examples how even far away outbound destinations could benefit from the results, by giving insights about interests, motivations and decision-processes that are necessary to understand tourist behaviour, e.g. by showing a rising interest for Asian destinations, together with all the necessary information on how to address the potential guest.

The paper is mainly aimed to share experiences in regard to travel behaviour related surveys, and in particular related to techniques and limits and different options in set-up. Furthermore, the paper intends to show the changes and developments of the travel behaviour of the German and the Austrian population over a long period of time. In addition, socio-economic developments of the German and Austrian population are taken into account which have effects on the overall travel behaviour.

The paper will try to foster and to enhance a common understanding, what tourism demand related figures are able to provide, considering in addition general demographic developments. Furthermore, the limits will be shown, and what users are able to expect from this kind of data. The topic of the paper could encourage and convince countries in putting more emphasis on doing more research related to tourism demand and behaviour. Sharing the experiences in this field could create additional awareness concerning the value of these data and improving a better understanding of tourism activities related to its importance for the overall population.

Key words

Travel behaviour, socio-economic developments, travel intensity, holiday trips, sample surveys of individuals

We are looking forward sharing our joint knowledge and experience with this new international approach!

If there are any open questions please do not hesitate contacting us 😊

Best regards,
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