The Relationship Between People's Personality Types by the MBTI and Tourist Behaviors

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to verify the relationships between personality traits and tourist behaviors in tourism. For the study, we used a famed Myers-Briggs personality test. Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) has been widely used to differentiate personality types but not much employed in tourism study to explain tourist behaviors. So this study was to identify the relationship among people's personality types, tourism destinations and tourist behaviors that they preferred. Data for this study were collected 145 young people who took MBTI test from 23th November to 11th December 2015. The main results were as follows. First, the relationships of personality traits and tourist behaviors showed significant differences in the EI (Extraversion-Introversion) and JP (Judging-Perceiving) index. E types preferred tourism destination for events and shopping. On the contrary, I types preferred to rest than to enjoy in tourism destination. J types preferred to package tour, while P types preferred free travel. Second, the relationships of personality traits and tourist behaviors did not show significant differences in the SN (Sensing-iNtuition) and TF (Thinking-Feeling) index. Third, the results showed statistically significant differences among the four personality types (IJ, IP, EP, EJ) in terms of tourist motivation and tourist behavior such as a travel motivation, main travel activity and so on. Finally, the results indicated that MBTI personality types were only associated with the styles of tourist behaviors in tourism. Then people acted differently by the personality types when they make a decision to travel and while they travel.

Keywords: MBTI (Myers-Briggs Type Indicator), Tourist Behavior

1. Introduction

In the competitive marketplace of tourism, an efficient and effective marketing strategy that attracts new visitors while maintaining (revisiting) current tourists is one of the key factors for success. Accordingly, a number of studies have been conducted to examine the behavior of tourists (Kim, Kim, and Goh, 2011). Recent years have seen a growth of interest in the relations between travel behavior and individual characteristics such as the personality, lifestyle and values. Specifically, the question of characteristic differences in travel behaviors has drawn considerable

attention. There is growing evidence that individual travel behavior is influenced by his or her personality like a hair or fashion style, lifestyle patterns and so on. Past studies have indicated that the human personality is related to marketing communication (Leung, & Law, 2010). Then, a recent study on personality traits in hospitality and tourism recognizes the important role of personality with regard to satisfaction and loyalty (Kim, Suh, & Eves, 2010). In the field of tourism, it is important to comprehend the presence and/or absence of permanent behavior related to specific destinations and the connection between these personality traits and the emotions of tourists (Berno &Ward, 2005). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) has been widely used in the field of psychology such as interpersonal relations, communication, and decision making (Rodriguez et al., 2013). The MBTI is a self-report test to determine the tendency of individual preference. Several studies have also related MBTI types with tourism destinations and tourist behaviors (McGuiggan & Foo, 2004). MBTI has been widely used to differentiate personality type but not much employed in tourism study to explain tourist behavior (Ryu & Kim, 2011). Studies that focused on the relationship between tourism and personality types are still lacking. Therefore, this study opted to take this perspective in understanding the travel-related activities. In this sense, the study recognizes that in fact the ultimate objective of destination marketing, with the support of the tourism psychology is to select activity programs and contents in order to capture the tourists. Thus, the study proposes a theoretical and practical useful framework to guide research and practice.

2. Literature Review

The Myers-Briggs type indicator (MBTI) was developed by Isabel Myers and Katherine Briggs (Myers & Myers, 1980). The questionnaire has 93 items for measuring people's personality. MBTI consists of four biopolar index: Extraversion (E) versus Introversion (I), Sensing (S) versus Intuition (N), Thinking (T) versus Feeling (F), Judging (J) versus Perceiving (P). The first index of preferences indicates differences in the way people orient their energy. E types focus on the outside world. They feel comfortable sharing and talking with others. They gain their energy from working with group. I types focus on the inner world. They feel comfortable working quietly on their own. They drain their energy from group interaction. The second index of preferences indicates differences in the way people seek information. S types get the information based on facts and details. N types get the information based on intuition and speculations. The third index indicates differences in the way people make decision. T type's decisions are made by using principles and policy. F type's decisions are made by values, harmony and sympathy. The fourth indicates differences in orientation to the world. J types are outcome-oriented. They have a preference for planning and organizing. P types are process-oriented, flexible. They make decisions slowly (Cohen et al., 2013; Rodriguez et al., 2013; Vincent et al., 2013). As described above, personality types was classified by four biopolar index (E-I, S-N, T-J, J-P). Additional it was classified by attitude index (IJ, IP, EP, EJ). Like this, personality is representative of the subjects with regard to all aspects of their individuality. Human activities and types of behavior are consistent with specific traits of personality (Servidio, 2015). Now as regards human personality, it has been said that continuous change in the tourism sector, competition among destinations and products, and tourists' motivations for choosing a holiday destination underline the importance of examining how personality traits can influence consumer behavior in tourism (Hosany, Ekinci, & Uysal, 2007; Jani, 2014; Jani, Jang, & Hwang, 2013).

3. Methodology

The purpose of this study is to verify the relationships between people's personality types by MBTI and tourist behaviors. To measure the differences of tourist behaviors by MBTI personality types, the questionnaire was designed based on a review of the literature and on an examination of the specific characteristics of personality types. The questionnaire consists of three parts. Part 1 measures MBTI personality test with 93 items. To measure the people's personality this study used a Korean translated version of Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Part 2 uses 17 items to measure tourist behaviors. Finally, Part 3 reports demographic information with 6 items including age, gender, occupation and monthly income. All items measured on a categorical scale and open-ended questions. The self-administered method was used for the main data collection that requires respondents to personally complete the questionnaire by deploying the questionnaire through the researchers. These had sufficiently understood the subject matter of the study to the respondents. The entire survey was conducted in Korean by the authors of this paper majoring in educational psychology and tourism management. The survey was conducted from November to December 2015 and it took about 15 minutes per person for answering a questionnaire. Out of 150 surveys collected, 145 were statistically analyzed after excluding 5 that appeared to be unsuitable for analysis. Collected data were analyzed to obtain the relationships between personality traits and travel-related activities using the statistics packages program SPSS 19.0. Frequency analysis and cross analysis were conducted to test the proposed hypotheses. The research is tested the hypotheses as follows.

4. Results

Characteristics of Samples

Respondents' demographic characteristics are shown in Table 1. Of the 145 respondents, 53.8% were male and 46.2% were female. Their ages ranged from teens to 40s and below, and 94.5% were aged between 20 and 29. A majority of the respondents were undergraduate (97.9%) and 18.6% indicated their household income to be less than 1,000,000 (KRW). Most of the respondents were students (95.8%) and 68.2% of the sample lived in Gyeongsang Province.

Table 1 The Respondents' Demographic Characteristics

Items		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	78	53.8
	Female	67	46.2
Age	10 - 19	5	3.4
	20 - 29	137	94.5
	30 – 39	2	1.4
	40 years and older	1	0.7
Education	Undergraduate	142	97.9
	Post graduate	3	2.1
Monthly household income (KRW, the monetary unit of Korea)	Less than 1,000,000	27	18.6
	1,000,000 – 1,990,000	5	3.4
	2,000,000 – 2,990,000	11	7.6
	3,000,000 – 3,990,000	11	7.6
	Over 4,000,000	21	14.5
	No answer	70	48.3

Occupation	Professions	4	2.8
	Owner-operator (self-employed)	2	1.4
	Student	139	95.8
Residential area	Seoul	6	4.1
	Gyeonggi Province	2	1.4
	Chungcheong Province	4	2.8
	Gyeongsang Province	99	68.2
	Jeolla Province	1	0.7
	Others	33	22.8
Total		145	100

Table 2 shows the respondents' travel-related behaviors. Specifically, types of tourism products were free travel with some people (36.6%), free travel by oneself (25.5%), package tour with some people (23.4%) and package tour by oneself (14.5%). 44% of the respondents selected activities related amusement and entertainment as a main tourism motivation. And most respondents preferred enjoyable experiences (48.3%) among tourism activities. Finally, tourism activity for natural landscape and scenery among detailed tourism activities has the highest ratio with 26.9%.

Table 2 The Respondents' Characteristics Related to Tourist Behaviors

	Items	Frequency	%
Types of tourism products	Package tour (alone)	21	14.5
	Package tour (with some people)	34	23.4
	Free travel (with some people)	53	36.6
	Free travel (alone)	37	25.5
Main tourism motivation	Educational / Learning	24	16.6
	Rest / Relaxation	42	29.0
	Amusement / Entertainment	64	44.0
	Health / Sports	11	7.6
	Others	4	2.8
Preferred tourism activities	Attractions / Spectacles	37	25.5
	Food	29	20.0
	Enjoyable experiences	70	48.3
	Shopping	7	4.8
	Accommodations	2	1.4
Preferred tourism activities (in detail)	Historical and culture	14	9.7
	Natural environment (landscape, scenery)	39	26.9
	Event / Festival	35	24.1
	Shopping / Theme park (man-made attractions)	23	15.9
	Recreation / Sports	16	11.0
	Casino / Entertainment	3	2.1
	Food	14	9.7
	Others	1	0.6
Total		145	100

The results of the MBTI personality test showed that there are four types of IJ (Introversion - Judging) 16.6%, IP (Introversion - Perceiving) 26.9%, EP (Extraversion – Perceiving) 32.4% and EJ (Extraversion - Judging) 24.1%.

Table 3 MBTI Personality Types

Classification	Frequency	%
IJ (Introversion - Judging)	24	16.6
IP (Introversion - Perceiving)	39	26.9
EP (Extraversion - Perceiving)	47	32.4
EJ (Extraversion - Judging)	35	24.1
Total	145	100

The relationships between MBTI personality types and tourist behaviors

Chi square tests were conducted to examine whether there were significant relationships between MBTI personality types and tourist behaviors. There were statistically significant differences of the personality types in tourist behaviors such as styles to travel, main tourism motivations, and preferred tourism activities. The types of tourist product showed significant differences in the personality types (χ^2 = 303.460, p = .000). These results mean that people who have extraverted personality type (EP and EJ) were more likely to travel with some people. I types (IJ and IP) were more likely to travel alone. Also, these results showed that people who had Judging personality types (IJ and EJ) preferred to package travel. On the other hand, P types (IP and EP) were more likely to prefer free travel (see Table 4).

Table 4 Cross Analysis of MBTI Personality Types and Tourism Products

	Types of tourism products					χ^2(p)
	Package tour (alone)	Package tour (with someone)	Free travel (with someone)	Free travel (alone)	Total	
IJ	20(83.3%)	2(8.3%)	2(8.3%)	0(.0%)	24(100.0%)	
IP	0(.0%)	1(2.6%)	6(15.4%)	32(82.1%)	39(100.0%)	
EP	0(.0%)	0(.0%)	43(91.5%)	4(8.5%)	47(100.0%)	303.460
EJ	1(2.9%)	31(88.6%)	2(5.7%)	1(2.9%)	35(100.0%)	(.000)**
Total	21(14.5%)	34(23.4%)	53(36.6%)	37(25.5%)	145(100.0%)	

* p < .05, ** p < .01

The results of main tourism motivations showed significant differences in the personality types (χ^2 = 116.964, p = .000). These results mean that people who have extraverted personality type (EP and EJ) were more likely to use amusement and entertainment facilities in tourism. I types (IJ and IP) were more likely to rest and relax while they travel (see Table 5).

Table 5 Cross Analysis of MBTI Personality Types and Main Tourism Motivation

	Main tourism motivation						$\chi^2(p)$
	Educational / Learning	Rest / Relaxation	Amusement / Entertainment	Health / Sports	Others	Total	
IJ	6(25.0%)	17(70.8%)	1(4.2%)	0(.0%)	0(.0%)	24(100.0%)	
IP	15(38.5%)	21(53.8%)	2(5.1%)	0(.0%)	1(2.6%)	39(100.0%)	116.964
EP	1(2.1%)	3(6.4%)	38(80.9%)	3(6.4%)	2(4.3%)	47(100.0%)	(.000)
EJ	2(5.7%)	1(2.9%)	23(65.7%)	8(22.9%)	1(2.9%)	35(100.0%)	**
Total	24(16.6%)	42(29.0%)	64(44.1%)	11(7.6%)	4(2.8%)	145(100.0%)	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The results of preferred tourism activities showed significant differences in the personality types ($\chi^2 = 90.192$, $p = .000$). These results mean that people who have extraverted personality type (EP and EJ) were more likely to experience with pleasure and enjoyment. I types (IJ and IP) were more likely to see or eat some attractions and food in tourism (see Table 6).

Table 6 Cross Analysis of MBTI Personality Types and Preferred Tourism Activities

	Preferred tourism activities						$\chi^2(p)$
	Attractions	Food	Enjoyable	Shopping	Accommodations	Total	
IJ	16(66.7%)	4(16.7%)	0(.0%)	4(16.7%)	0(.0%)	24(100.0%)	
IP	13(33.3%)	18(46.2%)	6(15.4%)	1(2.6%)	1(2.6%)	39(100.0%)	90.192
EP	4(8.5%)	5(10.6%)	35(74.5%)	2(4.3%)	1(2.1%)	47(100.0%)	(.000)
EJ	4(11.4%)	2(5.7%)	29(82.9%)	0(.0%)	0(.0%)	35(100.0%)	**
Total	37(25.5%)	29(20.0%)	70(48.3%)	7(4.8%)	2(1.4%)	145(100.0%)	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Finally, the results of detailed tourism activities showed significant differences in the personality types ($\chi^2 = 130.252$, $p = .000$). These results mean that people who have extraverted personality type (EP and EJ) were more likely to participate in events and festivals. I types (IJ and IP) were more likely to look around natural environment (see Table 7).

Table 7 Cross Analysis of MBTI Personality Types and Detailed Tourism Activities

	Detailed tourism activities									χ²(p)
	Culture	Nature	Event/ Festival	Man-made	Recreation	Entertainment	Food	Others	Total	
IJ	4 (16.7%)	15 (62.5%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	5 (20.8%)	0 (.0%)	24 (100.0%)	130.252 (.000) **
IP	8 (20.5%)	23 (59.0%)	0 (.0%)	1 (2.6%)	0 (.0%)	0 (.0%)	7 (17.9%)	0 (.0%)	39 (100.0%)	
EP	1 (2.1%)	0 (.0%)	21 (44.7%)	11 (23.4%)	11 (23.4%)	1 (2.1%)	2 (4.3%)	0 (.0%)	47 (100.0%)	
EJ	1 (2.9%)	1 (2.9%)	14 (40.0%)	11 (31.4%)	5 (14.3%)	2 (5.7%)	0 (.0%)	1 (2.9%)	35 (100.0%)	
Total	14 9.7(%)	39 (26.9%)	35 (24.1%)	23 (15.9%)	16 (11.0%)	3 (2.1%)	14 (9.7%)	1 (0.7%)	145 (100.0%)	

* p < .05, ** p < .01

5. Conclusion

This study tried to elucidate the influence of personality traits within the travel and tourism context. The purpose of this study is to extend the research on characteristic differences in travel patterns by examining in depth, the interrelationship of travel-related activities. This paper proposes a new approach to modeling travel behavior with people's personality. The most significant contribution of this study is a theoretical understanding with empirical results. The present study provided a model which was constructed based on the theory of previous studies to explain travel behaviors. This study was to identify differences of tourist motivation and destination preference among three different MBTI personality types (i.e., IJ, IP, EP, EJ).

The results showed statistically significant differences among the personality types in terms of styles to travel, main tourism motivations and preferred tourism activities. First, people of EP or EJ personality types tend to travel with some people, whereas people of IJ or IP were more likely to travel alone. IJ or EJ personality types tend to prefer package tour. On the other hand, people of IP or EP were more likely to prefer free travel. In preferred tourism activities, people of EP or EJ were more likely to use amusement and entertainment facilities. However, people of IJ or IP were more likely to rest and relax while they travel. And E types (EP and EJ) were more likely to experience with pleasure and enjoyment. People of IJ or IP were more likely to see or eat some attractions and food in tourism. Finally, EP or EJ types were more likely to participate in events and festivals. I types (IJ and IP) were more likely to look around natural environment.

We found that people's personality plays an important role in tourist behaviors such as tourism motivation, tourism activities and so on. The results of this study are expected to be used as a basis for tourism marketing strategy development and operation. The implications will be very useful for tourism destination organizers as well as destination marketing organizations. Tourism marketers could benefit from understanding the importance of the role of personality traits in communicating with their customers and their needs. It may be possible to predict the positions and types of each tourist destinations.

Although the study discovered insightful results and provided theoretic and practical contributions, it is not free from limitations. There is the limitation of objectivity in the composition of the sample consisting only of young generation not all. In future research, there is a need to examine the perspective of all generations. Second, as the temporal range of this study was a cross-section at a certain point-in-time, effort is needed for a generalization through a longitudinal study considering seasons and times by complementing this study. Directions of future research must be towards strengthening generalizations.

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