

The Relevance of Consumers' Need for Uniqueness in the Tourism Context

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This paper addresses the relevance of the psychological concept termed “need for uniqueness” (NFU) in the tourism context, for which the lack of its theoretical examination and empirical verification is evident. In order to address this gap, we define, conceptualize and empirically examine the CNFU concept on the sample of young adults in order to verify its potential relevance as a segmentation variable. The results obtained provide support for two hypotheses: 1) that segment of tourists who travel via a travel agency exhibits lower level of CNFU than that segment that travel via self-organized arrangements, and 2) that segment of more knowledgeable tourists exhibit higher levels of CNFU. Findings suggest that various components of CNFU have distinctive roles as segmentation variables and provide support for the theory of uniqueness, suggesting that tourists seek to be moderately (but not extremely) distinct from others. This paper concludes with a brief discussion of managerial implications and limitations.

Keywords: consumer behaviour, uniqueness theory, consumers' need for uniqueness, tourism

Introduction

Consumer behaviour is one of the most intensively researched areas in both the marketing and tourism fields (Cohen, Prayag & Moital, 2014). Contemporary issues and concepts in the field of consumer behaviour have provided new concepts and insights. Additionally, as world travel and tourism have grown faster than the global economy, it is essential to investigate the latest issues considering consumer behaviour, especially regarding young travellers. Global trends (IPK International, 2014) indicate that more young people than ever are travelling, seeking new destinations, and spending more money. In this vein, they are looking for unusual travel experiences and tourism products and services. In the social psychology literature, it has been argued that many people have a need to be special and unique, or at least to

be slightly different from others. This is congruent with Snyder and Fromkin's (1977) *theory of uniqueness* which indicates that the individuals' perception of too much similarity leads to a need for differentiation. Reflecting this view, authors (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980) later explain through the theory that the need to maintain a sense of uniqueness is a social desire, which is the motivating force of consumption (Belk, Ger & Askergaard, 2003). From this perspective, it represents an essential role in interpersonal decision-making (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). In the context of consumer behaviour, consumers choose products, services and even experiences that distinguish them from the mass, or the mass they perceive, in order to differentiate themselves from other consumers (Lynn & Harris, 1997).

By way of analogy, we investigated whether tourists also feel the need to be different from other (tourists) or even to be unique. According to available yet indirect evidence, we posit that they do. The ascent of the new tourist-consumer, driven by intellectual motives (see e.g., Middleton & Clarke, 2004) and the contemporary quest for authenticity, driven by trends like individualization (see Yeoman, Brass & McMahon-Beattie, 2007) suggest that modern tourists are increasingly reluctant to be typical (i.e. mass, 4S) tourists. Instead, tourists are seeking more unique experiences, such as less conventional unique hotels and unusual destinations (Puetz-Willems in IPK international, 2014). Therefore, in tourism, the same logic seems to be in place, yet the “tourist need for uniqueness” has, thus far, not been explicitly and comprehensively addressed from the theoretical or empirical perspectives.

Following this purpose, our paper aims to introduce, conceptualize and empirically examine the *consumer need for uniqueness* (CNFU) in the tourism context. In the theoretical part, the psychological origins of the concept are explained, and their importance for consumer behaviour is discussed. Afterwards, CNFU is empirically examined on a sample of Slovene students in order to examine its potential relevance as segmentation variable in tourism. In this study, we tested whether CNFU discriminates between segments of tourists who travel via travel agencies vs. self-organized arrangements and between segments that exhibit high vs. low knowledge of tourism products.

Origins - Theory of Uniqueness

Uniqueness theory (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980) deals with people's emotional and behavioural responses to perceptions and information regarding their similarity to others. The central tenet of this theory is that people are generally uncomfortable with extremes (high levels of similarity and dissimilarity) and, therefore, seek to be only moderately distinct from others. With uniqueness, the goal of a person is to be different and establish a separate identity from others, but not of course to the point of isolation (Fromkin, 1970). It may be useful to think of a continuum: at one extreme (Ruvio, 2008) people want to be like everybody else, while at the other people want to be

as different as possible. Given this range, conformity vs. nonconformity should be clarified.

Conformity – Similar vs. Dissimilarity

Naturally, people often act like those around them, e.g. wearing similar clothing, adopting the same musical tastes, etc. (Chan, Berger & van Boven, 2012). Conformity may be simply defined as the coming into the presence of group norms (Burnkrant & Cousineau, 1975). Yet, while conformity is then a typical social process, people also want to be different (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980; Tian et al., 2001). In regard to consumerism, buyers purchase products to satisfy their need for uniqueness to the point at which the value of the products increases proportionately to its perceived uniqueness. In other words, consumers may then value a product less when more own it. This behaviour has been shown to be evident even in the case as cookies, for example in the work of Worchel, Lee, and Adewole (1975). A similar study was conducted by Berger & Shiv (2012), the results of which reveal that those consumers who have a higher need for uniqueness are willing to pay more for food such as mousse cake, burritos and sushi.

Based on the conceptual models of social non-conformity, behaviour that differentiates a person from others is due to different motivational processes (Nail, 1986; Tepper, 1997). This *counter-conformity motivation* (Nail, 1986) arises from the feeling of a threatened identity, which occurs when consumers think that they are too similar to others (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Moving forward from these notions, Snyder and Fromkin (1977) studied both the concept of conformity and perceived uniqueness, observing that often people do have a need to see themselves as “somewhat” unique, yet individual differences in this regard exist. The more individuals value *uniqueness*, the greater their desire to see themselves as different from others (Fromkin & Snyder, 1980).

NFU in the Consumer Behaviour Context

In the consumer behaviour context, the need for uniqueness (NFU) is designated as the *consumer's need for uniqueness* (CNFU) and reflects the pursuit of distinctiveness or differentiation in consumption (Ruvio, 2008). Authors have defined the CNFU concept as “the trait of pursuing differentness relative to others through the acquisition, utilization, and dis-

position of consumer goods for the purpose of developing and enhancing one's self-image and social image" (Tian et al., 2001, p. 52). Generalizing this idea, individuals fulfil their desire to be unique in a variety of ways (Tian et al., 2001), including through their displays of their possessions (see Belk 1988 in Tian et al., 2001) and the style of interpersonal interaction (see Maslach et al. 1985 in Tian et al., 2001). Another possible way for consumers to satisfy their need for uniqueness through their purchase behaviour is through their knowledge about products (Holt, 1995). Consequently, CNFU is relevant for understanding the motivations involved in consumer behaviour related to perceptions of social belonging (Gentina et al., 2014). As a result (Tian et al., 2001), consumers are targeted by a variety of marketing stimuli that attempt to enhance their perceptions of uniqueness, which they acquire through the material possessions they display for the purpose of feeling differentiated from others.

In one of the earliest studies in the context of uniqueness and consumer behaviour, Lynn & Harris (1997) proved that some consumers pursue uniqueness more than others. Since then, a few studies have been done in the current context (e.g., Watson, 1998; Simonson & Nowlis, 2000; Zinkhan, Couchar, Gupta & Geissler, 1998). Tian, Bearden and Hunter (2001) introduced the concept of CNFU as an individual-level trait. Considering its contexts, other authors have described it similarly, i.e. as an individual trait (Kumar, Lee & Kim, 2009), a personality trait (Ranjbarian, Barari & Salehina, 2011) or a psychological trait (Zhan & He, 2012). According to Tian et al. (2001), a multidimensional CNFU construct consists of three factors. From this perspective, Ruvio (2008) states that the CNFU construct denotes three aspects/dimensions of consumer behaviour to describe how people fulfil their need for uniqueness:

1) Creative choice counter-conformity

This is the tendency to choose products/brands that are different from the established norms but still viewed as acceptable (Tian et al., 2001). In other words, consumers may seek a creative choice by making a product selection that is acceptable, yet original, novel, or unique compared to those choices made by others (Solomon & Rabolt, 2004). Consumers can thus make purchases that both allow them to conform (e.g.,

same brand as their reference group) while differentiating themselves somewhat from the peers of their social group in one aspect of uniqueness (e.g., colour) to satisfy their need for uniqueness (Chan et al., 2012).

2) Unpopular choice counter-conformity

Consumers may make an unpopular choice by choosing a product that is considered unacceptable and is thus rarely chosen by others. These consumers are not afraid of criticism; in fact, they tend to make purchase decisions that others might consider to be outright bizarre (Knight & Kim, 2007). On the continuum, this dimension is close to the extreme, indicating the selection or use of products or brands that deviate from group norms to the extent that the consumer risks social disapproval in order to establish their distinction from others (Tian et al., 2001). A positive outcome is that at times if the choice is initially unpopular it may later turn out to be widely accepted, distinguishing the consumer as innovative (Heckert, 1989).

3) Avoidance of similarity

This is the tendency that people intentionally avoid using commonly used products or brands (Tian et al., 2001) in order to avoid object conformism without risking status as an acceptable member of the social group. Selected products/brands are chosen by others but not overwhelmingly so (Tian and McKenzie, 2001); i.e. they are just distinctive enough to allow the consumer to feel a modicum of distinction. To avoid excessive similarity with others, consumers develop various strategies, such as purchasing styles no longer widely sold, shopping in vintage stores, combining their clothes in unusual ways, etc. (Knight & Kim, 2007).

Following the view of the extended self (Belk, 1988), one way to differentiate one's self from others is by possessing unique consumer products (Fromkin, 1971; Snyder, 1992; Simonson & Nowlis, 2000). Additionally, people with higher needs for uniqueness strive for scarce, new, exclusive or differentiated products (Lynn & Harris, 1997; Tian et al., 2001), novelty goods, handcrafted goods, and personalized items (Tepper, 1997). Contemporary studies in consumer behaviour contexts have investigated the

CNFU concept from different perspectives when purchasing different types of products, mostly apparel (Gentina, 2014; Park, Han & Park, 2014; Stokburger-Sauer & Teichman, 2013; Bian & Forsythe, 2012; Chan et al., 2012), luxury products, e.g., luxury watches (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Zhan & He, 2012) and high tech products, such as computers (e.g., Liang & He, 2012; He et al., 2010). Another means of differentiation asserted in order to project uniqueness of identity is by the purchasing of products with distinct aesthetic characteristics (Mowen, Fang & Scott, 2010).

Another way for consumers to enjoy the benefits of unique products they possess is by acquiring and displaying in-depth *knowledge* of them (Holt, 1998). *Consumer knowledge* is thus an important construct in understanding consumer behaviours such as the processing of information, which is a rather complex process (Rao & Monroe, 1998). For example, subjective knowledge includes perceptions of what or how much they know about a product class (Park, Mothersbaugh & Feick, 1994). Despite importance of consumer knowledge concept, we found that only few studies to date have investigated NFU in relationship with knowledge (Zhan & He, 2012). The results of their study show that consumer knowledge moderates the relationship between NFU and brand attitude.

CNFU has been mainly examined as an individual characteristic that is antecedent to various marketing constructs (e.g., Bian & Forsythe, 2011; Knight & Kim, 2007; Clark, Zboja & Goldsmith, 2007; Kumar, Lee & Kim, 2009; Fromkin, 1972; Clark & Goldsmith, 2005). Thus, it has received limited academic attention as a key concept (e.g., Ruvio et al., 2008), and this study aims to contribute to better knowledge about the CNFU concept in the tourism context.

Empirical Study

Purpose, Research Goals and Hypotheses

In order to explore and verify the potential relevance of CNFU concept for modern tourists, an empirical study was carried out to examine the differences in CNFU among Slovene students. A basic assumption that was tested is based on the finding that some consumers exhibit stronger uniqueness tendency than other (Lynn & Harris, 1997) and that consumers also differ in respect to various CNFU dimen-

sions (Ruvio, 2008). Another two research goals are more tourist-specific. One is related to the assertion that tourist segments also differ in respect of CNFU, according to which modern (e.g., intellectual, authenticity-seeking, individualist) tourists are expected to exhibit higher levels of CNFU than traditional tourists do (Middleton & Clarke, 2004; Yeoman et al., 2007; Puetz-Willems in IPK international, 2014). In order to test differences among the segments in our study, those tourists who travel via a travel agency were designated as “traditional” while those who travel by means of self-organized arrangements were designated as “modern”. Accordingly, the first hypothesis states:

H1: The tourist segment that travels via travel agency arrangements exhibits lower levels of CNFU than the segment of tourists who travel via self-organized arrangements.

In order to advance understanding of contemporary tourists and in line with CNFU findings, we also seek to examine the relationship of CNFU with tourist knowledge. This relationship is consistent with Holt's (1998) argument that it is likely that knowledge implicates the degree of each dimension of CNFU. Given the essential role of CNFU in the literature of contemporary consumer behaviour, further applications of this concept in various contexts and in relation to various concepts are warranted (Ruvio, Shoham & Brenčič, 2008). It thus seems plausible that more knowledgeable tourists also differ from those less knowledgeable in CNFU. Consistent with this argument, the second hypothesis is put forth:

H2: More knowledgeable tourists exhibit higher level of CNFU.

Sample

The research was conducted among tourism students in Slovenia. All 205 of the completed questionnaires were usable; 82.4% (N=169) of the respondents were female, and 17.6% (N=36) were male. The average age was 20.58 years (SD=1.047). It is likely that students represent an appropriate sample because, according to the behavioural literature (see Tian et al., 2001), traits regarding CNFU are not dependent upon factors such as income and social status. For all the variables, the values of skewness and kurtosis were above +/-2; therefore, their distribution is similar to a nor-

mal one, and in this phase no item was excluded from the analysis.

Instrument

In order to measure a CNFU concept, a CNFU-S scale was used by Ruvio et al. (2008). The authors of this paper developed a short-form scale, which is originally adapted from Tian et al.'s (2001) 21-item CNFU scale. Thus, CNFU-S scale represents a shortened version of a 12-item measurement scale. The items are shown in Table 1. For all items, a 5-point Likert scale was used (*1-strongly disagree, 5-strongly agree*). Knowledge about tourism products was measured using a dichotomy scale (yes/no), as well as respondents' usual way of travel (travel agency vs. self-organized arrangements).

Analysis and Results

Table 1 provides descriptive statistics by questionnaire items for each dimension of CNFU (mean values and standard deviations). Considering the mean scores for the three dimensions of the CNFU construct, the highest extent of agreement is shown by the item *creative choice counter-conformity* (CCC) dimension ($M=3.31$), followed by the *similarity avoidance* (SA) dimension ($M=2.71$). The lowest extent of agreement is the *unpopular choice counter-conformity* (UC) dimension ($M=2.49$). Specifically, most respondents prefer being different from other people, but still within social norms. For all the variables, the values of skewness and kurtosis were above ± 2 ; therefore, their distribution is similar to a normal one and in this phase no item was excluded from the analysis.

Table 1: Mean values, standard deviations, Cronbach Alpha coefficients, factor loadings

| CNFU items | Mean | SD | Cronbach Alpha |
|--|------|-------|----------------|
| Creative choice (CCC) | | | |
| I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image that cannot be duplicated. | 3.25 | 0.910 | 0.808 |
| I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original | 3.51 | 0.998 | |
| I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying particular products or brands | 3.07 | 0.995 | |
| Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assist me in establishing a distinctive image. | 3.41 | 0.933 | |
| Total CCC | 3.31 | 0.764 | |
| Unpopular choice (UC) | | | |
| When it comes to the products I buy and the situations in which I use them, I have broken customs and rules. | 2.49 | 0.958 | 0.728 |
| I have often violated the understood rules of my social group regarding what to buy or own. | 2.62 | 0.988 | |
| I have often gone against the understood rules of my social group regarding when and how certain products are properly used. | 2.58 | 0.980 | |
| I enjoy challenging the prevailing taste of people I know by buying something they would not seem to accept. | 2.30 | 1.136 | |
| Total UC | 2.49 | 0.756 | |
| Similarity Avoidance (SA) | | | |
| When a products I own becomes popular among the general population, I begin to use it less. | 2.48 | 1.096 | 0.857 |
| I often try to avoid products or brands that I know are bought by the general population. | 3.02 | 1.135 | |
| As a rule, I dislike products or brands that are customarily bought by everyone. | 2.63 | 1.107 | |
| The more commonplace a product or brand is among the general population, the less interested I am in buying it. | 2.74 | 1.084 | |
| Total SA | 2.71 | 0.925 | |
| TOTAL CNFU | 2.83 | 0.639 | 0.851 |

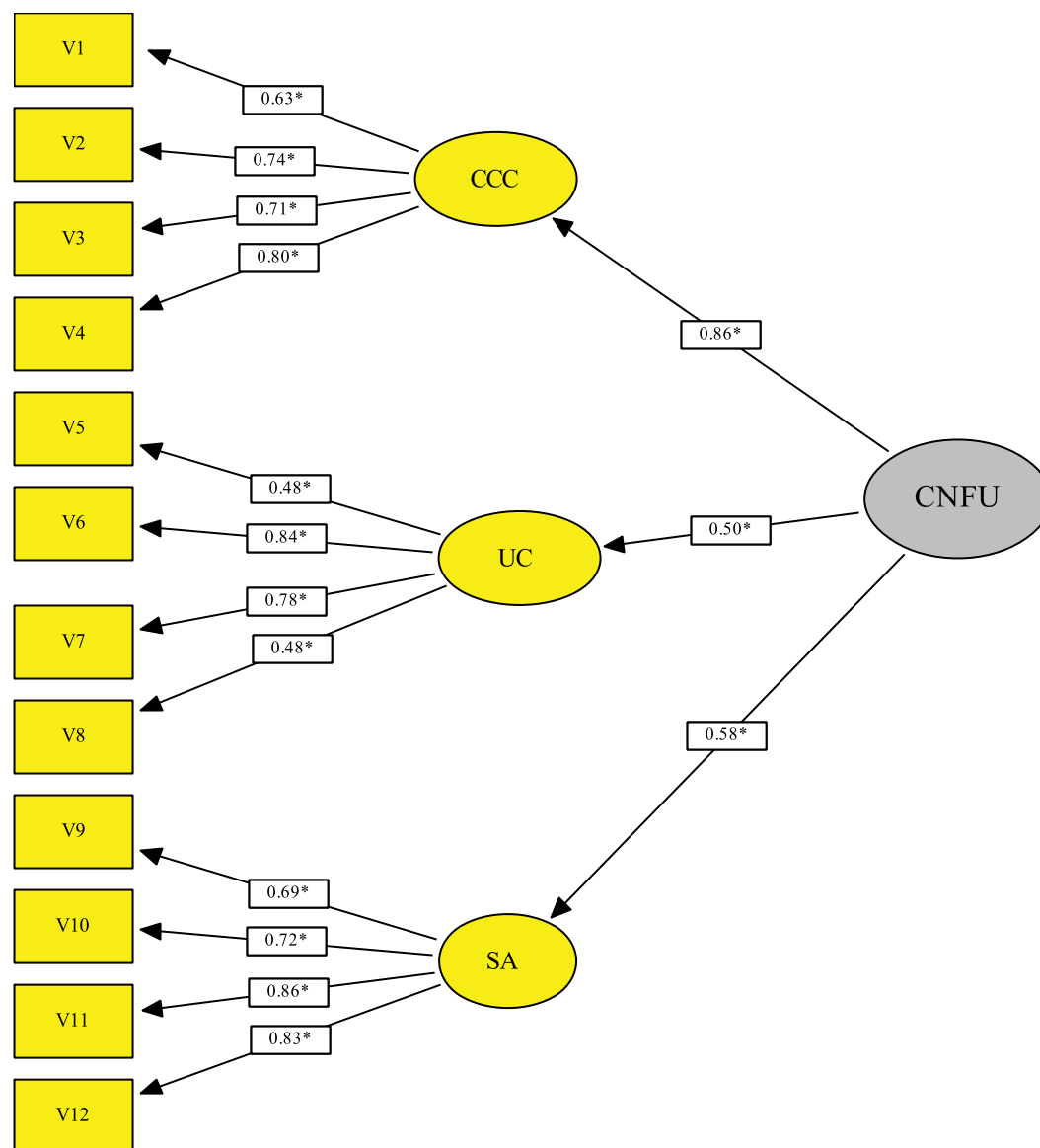
Source: own

Reliability of the constructs was measured with the Cronbach Alpha coefficient, ranging from 0.728 to 0.857. The internal consistency estimates (Coefficient Alpha) for each scale appear in Table 1.

Since the theory for CNFU constructs has already been established, a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for three dimensions of CNFU. The analysis confirmed the validity of variables for all three dimensions of CNFU as all coefficients are

positive and statistically significant. The structural relationships in the model including all three dimensions of CNFU were estimated using the elliptical reweighted least square (ERLS) method in EQS 6.1. EQS reported that parameter estimates appeared in order. The global fits are satisfactory (NFI=0.90; CFI=0.961; RMR=0.096; and RMSEA=0.083). The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: The model of CNFU and its dimensions



Source: own

Table 3 displays the respondents' knowledge regarding tourism products. The findings indicate that 62.4% (N=128) of the respondents indicated that they have knowledge about tourism products, and 37.1% (N=76) of the respondents indicated that they did not have knowledge about tourism products. For further analysis, the respondents' knowledge was ana-

lysed according to each CNFU dimension separately. The results of the independent t-test reveal that statistically significant differences appear only for the CCC dimension of CNFU (Sig=0.022). This suggests that respondents who have knowledge about tourism products also exhibit higher need for uniqueness in terms of CCC (Table 2).

Table 3: Independent t-test between CNFU dimensions and knowledge about tourism products

| CNFU dimensions | Knowledge | N | Mean | SD | T-value | Sig |
|-----------------|-----------|-----|------|-------|---------|-------|
| CCC | yes | 128 | 3.40 | 0.769 | 2.31 | 0.022 |
| | no | 76 | 3.15 | 0.737 | | |
| UC | yes | 128 | 2.48 | 0.788 | -0.130 | 0.897 |
| | no | 76 | 2.50 | 0.695 | | |
| SA | yes | 128 | 2.67 | 0.971 | -0.949 | 0.344 |
| | no | 76 | 2.79 | 0.846 | | |

Source: own

Table 4 displays the respondents' usual way of travel. The findings indicate that 76.1% (N=156) of the respondents indicated that they usually travel via self-organized arrangements and 23.9% (N=49) of the respondents indicated that they usually travel via travel agencies. For further analysis, the way respondents travel was analysed according to each CNFU dimen-

sion separately. The results of the independent t-test reveal that statistically significant differences appear only for the CCC dimension of CNFU (Sig=0.027). This suggests that respondents who usually travel via self-organized arrangements also exhibit higher need for uniqueness in terms of CCC (Table 3).

Table 4: Independent t-test between CNFU dimensions and the way of travel.

| CNFU dimensions | Way of travel | N | Mean | SD | T-value | Sig |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----|------|-------|---------|-------|
| CCC | self-organized arrangements | 156 | 3.37 | 0.785 | 2.228 | 0.027 |
| | travel agency | 49 | 3.10 | 0.657 | | |
| UC | self-organized arrangements | 156 | 2.48 | 0.753 | -0.350 | 0.726 |
| | travel agency | 49 | 2.53 | 0.771 | | |
| SA | self-organized arrangements | 156 | 2.75 | 0.921 | 1.086 | 0.279 |
| | travel agency | 49 | 2.59 | 0.937 | | |

Source: own

Discussion and Conclusions

In line with these findings, this research reveals that the most prominent dimension of the CNFU concept among young adults is CCC. This means that respondents acquire a desire for uniqueness to such an extent that it is still acceptable within group norms. As such, CNFU allows individuals to buy different products and brands that reflect creative choice in terms of uniqueness, but remain acceptable according to their socially desirable norms.

Additionally, in terms of consumer behaviour in the tourism context, the relationship between each dimension of CNFU and knowledge about tourism

products is investigated. The results reveal that young adults who have knowledge about tourism products are more likely to seek uniqueness in the context of general consumer behaviour. More specifically, the results show that consumers who have knowledge about tourism products have a higher need for uniqueness in terms of CCC. Differences considering knowledge and the other two dimensions of CNFU (UC and SA) are not significant. The findings of this study support Holt's (1998) notion that greater in-depth knowledge of several products increases their uniqueness benefits here in terms of CCC. In this vein, Hypothesis 1 is partially confirmed.

Another aspect regarding consumer behaviour is the investigation of the relationship between each dimension of CNFU and respondents' usual way of travel. The results reveal that young adults who travel via self-arrangements exhibit higher levels of CNFU than those who travel via travel agencies. This is evident only in terms of one dimension: CCC. The differences considering other two dimensions of CNFU (UC and AS) are not significant. In terms of uniqueness seeking, the findings support Yeoman et al. (2007), who emphasize the consumers' individualization. Therefore, the Hypothesis 2 is partially confirmed.

The results obtained provide support for the theory of uniqueness. The average values (close to 3 on a 5-point scale) suggest that respondents do exhibit the need for differentiation, yet not an extreme one. This is well in line with the central tenet of this theory that people seek to be only moderately distinct from others (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980). More substantive interpretation of examined components of CNFU concept points to the same conclusion. The first (CCC) component addresses a creative and relatively conformist (and thus not a very extreme) form of uniqueness. In addition, statements on the CCC component focus more on "intended" differentiation, rather than a "realized" one, which is more emphasized on the other two components (UC and SA). Consequently, the plausible interpretation might be that the uniqueness sought is on average more emphasized than subsequently realized uniqueness.

Following this view, the differences obtained among components thus provide support for recent calls for a distinction between consumers who acquire different uniqueness motives, such as CCC, UC and SA (e.g., Tian et al., 2001). The findings of this study indicate that the CCC dimension is the most prominent of the three, which means that consumers have a desire to be individual, original, and that they create a personal unique image by possessing particular products, though they prefer being different from other people in a way that is still accepted by the members of their social group. This is congruent with Bearden and Etzel (1982), who theorized that consumers often choose products associated with members of their own group. Therefore, the impulse toward uniqueness does not influence consumers' choice in such a way that they would make a different choice than others.

In this study, the three dimensions of CNFU were also examined regarding the level of customer knowledge and the way of travel, contributing to a better understanding of this relationship. According to Ling (2008), various areas have investigated uniqueness-seeking behaviour, but still only a few studies have placed this concept in a consumer behaviour context. Moreover, to date no research has been found that investigates this concept in the field of tourism. Therefore, this research takes an important step toward understanding the role of CNFU regarding tourism. Following this view, the tourism industry has great potential to use this uniqueness-seeking motive in developing marketing strategies for its products and services, as trends in tourism suggest that young travellers also desire unique, authentic, special products, services and/or destinations that enhance their CNFU. Moreover, consumers (in addition to desiring uniqueness in concrete purchases) are also eager to experience, for example, innovative, engaging restaurants (Postrel, 2003) and other environments, many of which tourism offers (Richards, 2001). Therefore, it is likely that they will seek uniqueness in various ways, e.g. customized and innovative products or services (e.g., themed accommodations, specialized travel agencies, customized travel plans, etc.) or means travel. Thus, focusing the research spotlight on CNFU in tourism is advisable, as, following Ling (2008), innumerable varieties of products are affected by the concept.

Moreover, according to IPK International (2014), youth travel is increasingly perceived as a massive part of the travel and tourism industry. The UNWTO reports that in 2012, young travellers represented more than 20% of the more than one billion international arrivals. Thus, marketers in tourism are, therefore, well advised to consider these results with regard to CNFU and consumer knowledge in several ways. According to Lynn and Harris (1997), CNFU is most commonly used by marketers in advertising, also using new approaches such as mobile advertising, etc. Other possible areas in which to use uniqueness-seeking motives are in product positioning, product differentiation, pricing, distribution and other promotional strategies. On this basis, Puetz-Willems (2014 in IPK international) argue that tourist providers should emphasize their unique selling propositions, offer more themes, reveal more his-

torical tales, and so on. For smaller operators, there is a real opportunity to return to the roots of hospitality and to benefit by being real hosts again. Marketers in tourism should be aware that young adults have a need for uniqueness, more specifically it applies to young adults who acquire higher knowledge about tourism products and who travel via self-arranged travels. This is congruent with the trends mentioned above.

The presented examination and findings lead to the conclusion that CNFU is a relevant and promising concept in the tourism context. As such, it warrants further theoretical and practical examination in order to upgrade the findings obtained in this study, which was subject of some limitations. The measurement of consumer knowledge, for instance, was very simplistic and a pre-requisite of more elaborated methodology in the presented study. Further study could include more rigorous measures regarding specific aspects of consumer knowledge. The convenience sample is, of course, also a limitation in respect to its representativeness.

This paper present responded to a call for further research using the shortened CNFU-S scale (see Ruvio et al., 2007). However, further study is advisable in order to compare samples from different countries. Most of the previous studies examined the CNFU concept as a one-dimensional construct (e.g., Stokburger-Sauer & Teichmann, 2013; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Khare, Labrecque & Asare, 2011). As discussed earlier, this research illustrated the expected three conceptual dimensions of CNFU following Tian's et al. (2001) suggestions, here toward consumer knowledge and the way of travel. Considering those three dimensions of CNFU adapted from Tian et al. (2001) and Ruvio et al. (2008), it is essential to investigate possible relationships with other relevant concepts like market mavenism (see Ruvio, 2008), as market mavens are consumers who are highly involved in the marketplace and acquire a great deal of knowledge about multitude products or services (Feick & Price, 1987).

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