

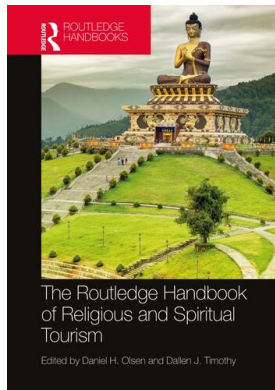
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Daniel H. Olsen, Dallen J. Timothy

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Farooq Haq

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MARKETING RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL TOURISM EXPERIENCES

Farooq Haq

Introduction

People's interest in religion and spirituality seems to have awakened from the horrible events of 9–11. The subsequent wars, known as wars on terror, and various global crises have further motivated others to join religious organizations or otherwise enrich their spiritual lives by visiting sacred sites and locales. These journeys of spiritual development increased the recognition of religious and spiritual tourism by academic researchers (Moal-Ulvoas & Taylor 2014; Norman 2014; Olsen 2013; Timothy & Olsen 2018). Intellectuals from diverse backgrounds have meditated, studied, and delivered on spiritually motivated travel for centuries, although it seems to have entered the commercial travel glossary more recently (Andriotis 2009; Haq & Medhekar 2019; Mitroff & Denton 1999). Beyond its expansive research coverage in the social sciences, spirituality and religiosity have recently become an increasingly important research subject in business studies and travel industry management (Coats 2008; Cochrane 2009; Norman 2014; Olsen 2013; Pesut 2003). Although an important part of business management studies, marketing has received considerably less research attention in the spiritual and religious tourism arena (Eid 2012; Štefko, Kiráľová & Mudrík 2015).

This chapter examines the marketing of religious and spiritual tourism experiences and may be useful for tourism service providers, destination managers, religious groups, and government agencies. A thorough conceptual comparison of religion and spirituality is beyond the scope of this chapter and has already been discussed at the outset of the book; however, it will be examined briefly in the next section. Moreover, based on what other authors have already concluded, this chapter considers religion and spirituality to be similar concepts with respect to tourism marketing strategies, and although the author is aware of conceptual and practical differences, the two terms will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter.

Religion has inexplicitly influenced spiritual tourism, and the religious tourism literature has focused descriptively on pilgrims, religious tourists, and other people visiting sacred destinations, shrines, sacrosanct attractions, and religious-themed festivals. Most of the literature has focused on religious tourists who are affiliated with a specific faith or religion. There has been a much leaner analysis to develop theory in the realm of religious tourism. However, three recurring themes appeared during the process of reviewing the literature for this chapter. The dominant theme is descriptions of travel to specific destinations. The secondary

theme focuses on the impact of significant people associated with a religion. Third, there is much written about the organization and management of religious events.

Although some consider marketing a necessary evil in the commercialization of any product or service, business success depends on the effective design and implementation of a marketing-oriented roadmap. Some passionate spiritual tourists engaged by the author, when inquired about marketing spiritual tourism, were offended, considering such action to be taboo, as if it were a sin to talk about the marketability of their sacred journeys. Likewise, some Hajjis in Makkah considered it oxymoronic to connect spiritual tourism with marketing. The fact remains that the billions of dollars the Saudi government earns from the Hajj every year is the outcome of cleverly crafted and implemented marketing strategies, just as it is in many pilgrimage destinations. This chapter evaluates various strategic options for marketing religious and spiritual tourism, ranging from a conventional marketing mix approach to a pragmatic relationship marketing strategy.

Understanding religious and spiritual tourism

Tourism is a service industry driven by many consumer motivations and comprising many services (Cohen 1979; Olsen 2013; Shackley 2002). The elements of all of these motives (demand) and services (supply) are not more important than the other (Andriotis 2009; Haq 2014; Jauhari & Sanjeev 2010). An example of the interconnection of tourism elements can be demonstrated by a tourist traveling to the tomb of Sufi Ali Hujveri, known by devotees as Daata Sahib, in Lahore (Qureshi 1995). In this case, religion, spirituality, destination qualities, food, and music all play a part in determining the religious tourist's level of satisfaction. Many other examples from diverse faiths illustrate the importance of marketing to the success of religious tourism and to creating memorable and satisfying pilgrimage experiences (Eid 2012; Haq 2013; Ron & Timothy 2019; Štefko, Kiráľová & Mudrík 2015).

The desire or need to find meaning and purpose in life has important business implications, but accepting that religiosity includes a belief in a Supreme Power who controls the entire universe does not fit well with organizational management theory (Coats 2008; Mitroff & Denton 1999; Taylor 1989). A non-religious definition of spirituality describes the phenomenon as an unfolding mystery, harmonious interconnectedness, and inner strength (Pesut 2003). A multi-religious definition explains spirituality as an inner truth that is the focal point of all religions (Haq & Medhekar 2019). Ibn Al-Arabi, the spiritual teacher of the founders of the Ottoman Empire, produced a multi-religious definition of spirituality in the twelfth century:

my heart has become capable of every form: it is the pasture of gazelles and a covenant of Christian monks and a temple of idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba (Makkah) and the tables of the Tora and the book of Quran. I follow the religion of love: whatever way love's camel takes, that is my religion and faith.

(Nicholson 1978, p. 67)

Tourists' levels of satisfaction are connected with their values, beliefs, habits, and cultural norms (Rinschede 1992; Shackley 2002). Tourism research has provided much business insight for tourism marketers, developing both theoretical and applied perspectives (Buhalis 2000; Haq & Jackson 2009; Riege & Perry 2000). Compared with other essential components of culture, religion has molded people's beliefs and life habits. Even individuals who claim to be non-religious, have been influenced by religion. Religion has also been seen as a dominant element in cultural tourism (Coats 2008; Raj & Morpeth 2007; Shackley 2002).

Religion inspires religious tourism and spiritual tourism, both of which are sub-segments of cultural tourism (Haq & Jackson 2009; Norman 2014; Timothy 2021). Spirituality has been defined as the essence of religion and an inspirational quality that even non-religious people seek in their lives (Mitroff & Denton 1999; Smith 1992; Timothy & Olsen 2018). Conceptually, spiritual tourism, religious tourism, and pilgrimage are closely intertwined, since they are among the oldest forms of travel and are all linked to religion, belief systems, and personal improvement. They offer hope to travelers and an experience beyond the self-directed orientation of most other forms of tourism (Raj & Morpeth 2007; Rinschede 1992; Vukonić 1996). The conceptual boundary between spirituality and religion is illustrated by Mitroff (2003), who rejects the notion that religion and spirituality are the same. Some researchers have analyzed the spiritual tourism phenomenon separately. For example, Coats (2008) examines spiritual tourism in the context of eco-conscious New Age tourists in Sedona, Arizona, for whom self-actualization is important.

The lack of clarity about religious and spiritual tourism may be the outcome of scholarly debate based on different theoretical and managerial perspectives. Norman (2014) claims that spiritual and religious tourism reflect the individual's self-discovery and preservation of well-being. Taylor (1989) argues that to specify the location of the self in the social universe requires a central drive for individuality. There are congruencies between different kinds of spiritual tourism and other forms of tourism, including religious tourism, in a range of contexts (Taylor 1989). The similarity of these concepts is also noted by Tilson (2005), who considers religious-spiritual tourism a single term in his article on the Camino de Santiago. Likewise, Jauhari and Sanjeev (2010) note the travel and business opportunities associated with religious, cultural, and spiritual tourism in India, and highlight situations that are both religious and spiritual: holy festivals, sacred sites, and saints' days.

To clarify further, this chapter looks at pilgrimage being described as institutionalized religious tourism, which includes tour packages comprised of different services and offerings (Clingingsmith, Kwaja & Kremer 2008; Collins-Kreiner & Gatrell 2006; Raj & Morpeth 2007; Ron & Timothy 2019). Cohen (1992) polarizes pilgrimage centers into two types: popular and formal. Within popular pilgrimage centers, "the ludic and folksy activities are of greater importance and may even take precedence over the more serious and sublime activities" (Cohen 1992, p. 36). A formal pilgrimage center is one in which "the serious and sublime religious activities are primarily emphasized" and "the pilgrim's principle motive for the journey... is to perform a fundamental religious obligation" (Cohen 1992, p. 36). Based on the preceding discussion, it is important to emphasize that in this chapter, the differences between spiritual tourism, religious tourism and pilgrimage is not emphasized and will be used interchangeably.

Religious tourism, as it sounds, has a religious code-based motivation, though people also travel to religious destinations and visit sacred attractions with a different purpose, such as showing respect, gaining knowledge and understanding, and appreciating culture (Andriotis 2009; Cochrane 2009; Lupu, Brochado & Stoleriu 2019; Rodrigues & McIntosh 2014). Some researchers classify these more recreational travelers as religious tourists (Collins-Kreiner & Gatrell 2006; Cohen 1979; Olsen 2012). These are the people who are attracted to a holy place because of its architecture, artistic beauty, prominence and popularity, or historical value (Cochrane 2009; Egresi & Kara 2018; Haq & Medhekar 2019). Travelers without religious convictions should not be identified as pilgrims, religious tourists, or spiritual tourists. By contrast, religious tourism and formal pilgrimage, with their focus on inspiring faith or fulfilling religious duties, can be seen as spiritual, so they can be regarded as categories of spiritual tourism.

This idea is supported by the research of Clingingsmith et al. (2008), Topik (1999), and Haq (2014), which rejects the old theory that religion and business are adversarial or incompatible. As illustrated earlier, religion and its commercial connections are evidence of the significant economic impact of the Hajj on Makkah, where locals have nicknamed pilgrims their “crops” (Topik 1999). This commercialization of pilgrimage is a form of commodification (Hernandez-Ramdwar 2013; Olsen 2013; Raj & Morpeth 2007; Qurashi 2017; Ron & Timothy 2019), but this discussion is not within the scope of this chapter. Considering that Hajj involves approximately three million people undertaking the annual pilgrimage to Makkah, being selected from a much bigger pool of hopeful applicants, and spending an average of US\$10,000 per head, the pilgrimage’s commercial success must involve some element of marketing (Haq & Jackson 2009). The whole three-day ritual process injects huge sums of capital into the local economy and into the Saudi national economy as the Hajjis purchase travel necessities, transportation, food, accommodation, and ritual guides. They also pay government fees and taxes. The billions of dollars earned each year by the Saudi Arabian government presents Hajj as a combined business activity, social exercise and classic example of pilgrimage, religious tourism, and spiritual tourism (Clingingsmith et al. 2008; Haq & Jackson 2009; Timothy & Iverson 2006).

Religious and spiritual tourism experiences

Research during the 1960s shifted from general human behavior to a “humanistic, existential, and phenomenological perspective”, which covered behavior and consumer experience (Privette 1983, p. 1361). Based on Privette’s (1983) pioneering study, several researchers developed their thoughts on consumption and experience leading to the landmark study by Pine and Gilmore (1999), which declared the beginning of the experience economy. The new focus on the experience economy triggered many studies in tourism, hospitality, and services marketing. Walls, Okumus, Wang and Kwun (2011) presented three research directions: crafting a category of experiences; examining causes of, or clarifying, an experience; comparing relationships between experiences and other concepts. This chapter agrees with other researchers who stress the need to understand experiences as a basis for managing or marketing tourism products and services (Carù & Cova 2003; Cohen 1979; Gnoth 1997; Norman 2014; Walls et al. 2011). Walls et al. (2011) contributed to understanding experiential tourism from four perspectives: ordinary to extraordinary, cognitive to emotive experiences, physical experience and human interactions, and individual characteristics and situational factors.

Ordinary to extraordinary

The first perspective represents the range of experiences from ordinary to extraordinary. Consumer experiences in hospitality and tourism happen outside of the daily routine of home. At the highest level, they are peak or transformative experiences (Cohen 1979; Smith 1992). Carù and Cova (2003) differentiate between ordinary and extraordinary experiences with the latter being the most desired goal of tourists. Ordinary experiences are based on routine events, daily life and regular trips, while extraordinary encounters consist of unexpected outcomes with total immersion or flow experience (Carù & Cova 2003; Norman 2014; Walls et al. 2011). Most tourism marketers today claim that all religious and spiritual tourism delivers extraordinary travel experiences, more so than many other types of tourism.

Cognitive (objective) to emotive (subjective) experiences

This factor signifies that individuals can initiate the process in which an experience may occur. Walls et al. (2011) suggest that an experience can occur by coincidence or it can be self-generated. That the consumer can opt to have the experience or not, implying that everyone is not equally affected by every consumer experience. Tourism marketers must be sharp with their segmentation, as religious or spiritual tourists could be seeking cognitive and emotive experiences. The study by Haq and Jackson (2009) shows that Pakistanis undertaking the Hajj from a Muslim majority country enjoyed the cognitive experience, while Australians traveling from a Muslim minority country found their Hajj experience more emotive. Marketing strategies can be crafted in line with the segmentation based on expected experiences.

Physical experience and human interactions

Travel consumers generally assess their experiences based on physical and human interactions. The physical elements include the tangible part of the experience including the hotel room, the buildings, transportation and food service, while the human interaction entails the intangibles (e.g. spiritual growth and sense of community) and that make the experience more memorable (Walls et al. 2011). Marketing religious and spiritual tourism experiences should consider the physical experience for tourism packaging and pricing. The outcomes measured as tourists' delight and loyalty could be mapped with the human interaction before, during, and at the end of the journey.

Individual characteristics and situational factors

Situational factors and individual features are generally considered to be outside the control of business managers due to the variance in each consumer's individual characteristics and life situation (Carù & Cova 2003). Situational factors in tourism include the purpose of the trip, travel companions, and the nature of the destination. Individual characteristics include, among others, personality type and sensitivity to the environment (Walls et al. 2011). For religious and spiritual tourists, situation factors might include the events, the destination, and timing—for example, attending Christmas Mass in the Vatican and visiting Makkah during Ramadan. The individual characteristics of religious and spiritual tourists will link back with the segmenting challenge depending upon the religious conviction and depth of one's faith, which is almost impossible to measure, and extensive qualitative research is required.

The Tourism Experience Model (TEM) (Gnoth 2003) provides insight into experiences in tourism to identify and study tourists' behaviors. This model may also be useful in guiding destinations toward better market positioning and planning for memorable tourist experiences. Gnoth (2003) presents the model with two axes—activities and consciousness, which are secured by the poles of exploration and recreation, based on role authenticity and existential authenticity. The role authentic person side is described by expectations of social roles, while the existential authentic side is marked by feelings that define the person. Recreation is branded by self-reflexive and self-recreational activities, while exploration indicates learning and development.

The model consists of two axes: consciousness, and activity. Consciousness relates to the style of how tourists receive their destination experience. Following sociological/structuralist

insights, one end of the consciousness-axis relates to the socially constructed worldview that forms the individual person whose authenticity is reflected in socially accepted role performances (Gnoth & Matteucci 2014). Consciousness means gaining experiences as guided by role-expectations. The more role-conforming one is, the more role authentic the person is. The other end of the consciousness dimension relates to the human being and the state of being. Existentialism is defined by Gnoth (1997) as self-discovery by freeing one's self from society and becoming closer to one's own true self. The other axis consists of types of activities that are either recreational or exploratory. Recreational activities are experienced regularly and relate to habits and daily routines, while exploratory activities entail searching for new insights and understandings.

There are several well-recognized tourist experience models that relate to multiple types of spiritual tourist experiences (Norman 2014). These experiences also identify forms of tourism that are not immediately "spiritual" or "religious". Norman (2014) suggests five types of tourism experiences related to religion and spirituality: spiritual tourism as healing, spiritual tourism as experiment, spiritual tourism as quest, spiritual tourism as retreat, and spiritual tourism as collective.

In the first category, healing-based tourism is concerned with practices that improve people's problematic daily life. This may include individuals testing the strength and value of their personal relationships. In the second category, experiment-based experiences involve people trying different options when routine life feels like a problem. This may require an overall review of one's self-awareness. Spiritual tourism as quest is the most relevant form of spiritual experience in which people undertake a quest for personal discovery, wisdom or truth (Smith 1992). The quest also includes the process of discovering a sense of spiritual reality. The retreat category can be understood as an escape from humdrum daily life to appreciate sacred time or ritual renewal. Tourists also connect it with well-being, nature, and spiritual isolation (Cochrane 2009). Spiritual tourism as collective may be the opposite of retreat where the tourist seeks human interaction and intragroup belonging (Collins-Kreiner & Gatrell 2006). This may be more connected with pilgrimage, such as the Catholic faithful walking on the Camino de Santiago, or Muslims visiting Makkah (Raj & Morpeth 2007; Tilson 2005).

Experiential segmentation for religious and spiritual tourism

Norman's (2014) five spiritual tourism experiences can be aligned with the tourism experience model (TEM) of Gnoth (2003) and the four elements of experiential tourism from Walls et al. (2011) to derive a comprehensive classification of religious and spiritual tourism experiences. The classifications can be mapped with a clear and effective relationship marketing strategy. A synthesis and cross-mapping of the three models with various dimensions of experiential tourism and religious and spiritual tourism experiences can lead to sharply narrowed segmentation, as illustrated in Table 24.1.

Further analysis of Table 24.1 implies that Norman's (2014) five types of spiritual tourism experiences can be correlated with the type of authenticity and nature of the experience, which can be further aligned with the four elements of experiential tourism proposed by Walls et al. (2011). The five types of experiences illustrate the layers or segments of religious and spiritual tourists that can be targeted or managed separately or collectively by applying various elements of relationship marketing. The concept, application, and structure of relationship marketing for religious and spiritual tourism in discussed in the following section.

Table 24.1 Religious and spiritual tourism experiences

<i>Spiritual Experience</i>	<i>Type of authenticity</i>	<i>Nature of Experience</i>	<i>Element of experiential tourism</i>
Healing	Role authenticity	Exploratory	Extraordinary—Individual
Experiment	Role authenticity	Exploratory	Individual—Cognitive
Quest	Existential authenticity	Recreational	Individual—Emotive
Retreat	Existential authenticity	Recreational	Individual—Physical experience
Collective	Role authenticity	Exploratory	Cognitive—Human interaction

After Norman (2014), Gnoth (2003) and Walls et al. (2011).

Marketing religious and spiritual tourism experiences

The literature identifies three strategic approaches to tourism marketing: consumer-oriented, competitor-oriented, and trade-oriented (Buhalis 2000; Riege & Perry 2000). The consumer-oriented approach concentrates on individuals or groups of tourists, their behaviors, and attitudes. The competitor-oriented approach accommodates competitive forces that can affect business success. The trade-oriented approach focuses on intermediaries. Riege and Perry (2000) consider basic tourism products and do not focus on applications of special tourism products. Likewise, the role of tourism product orientation has been largely ignored. To cover this weakness, the fourth approach of product-oriented marketing was suggested by several authors (e.g. Buckley 2018; Chen & Tseng 2005; Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008). The tourism product orientation also highlights three vital issues for marketing in tourism: the tourist’s emotional state at the place, prior expectations of the destination, and the tourist’s satisfaction with the destination (Buhalis 2000; Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008; Riege & Perry 2000).

To achieve fit between the proposed marketing strategies and the marketing activities selected to implement each strategy, the discussion of spiritual tourism marketing for specific groups adopted the relationship marketing approach (Buhalis 2000; Gronroos 1997; Wang 2008). The classical framework of the marketing mix (see McCarthy 1964) has been criticized for being too simplistic, unidimensional, and more theoretical than practical (Gronroos 1989; Haq 2014; Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008). Critics have rejected the adoption of the marketing mix concept and suggested a paradigm shift toward relationship marketing that is orientated toward relationships rather than transaction-based marketing.

The literature on tourism marketing follows the paradigm shift from Morrison’s (2002) tourism marketing mix to the application of relationship marketing in tourism (Buhalis 2000; Gronroos 1997; Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008). The marketing mix was judged as a static, rigid, and linear framework, and hence relationship marketing was suggested as a realistic, flexible, and robust alternative. Unlike relationship marketing, the marketing mix approach did not accomplish the essentials of the marketing concept but offered a production-oriented marketing rather than customer-oriented marketing (Gronroos 1989; Wang 2008). Relationship marketing is based on trust, promise fulfillment, exchange, and communication among all partners (Buhalis 2000; Gronroos 1997; Wang 2008). Adopting these essentials of relationship marketing, this chapter suggests marketing religious and spiritual tourism experiences based on product (or service) offered, people involved, and collaboration between all

players. The application of these elements (product, people, and collaboration) for successful relationship marketing of religious and spiritual tourism experiences is discussed below.

The product

The product consists of the destination assets accessible to tourists, including their features and benefits (Morrison 2002). This includes the tangible elements of the sacrosanct place and the enlightening experiences spiritual and religious tourists seek by interacting with those spaces. The spiritual tourism product is not new. It has received considerable research attention and commercial analysis, and with the recent upsurge in spirituality-related businesses, it seems to be on the cusp of a major growth phase (Buckley 2018; Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008). A product-based relationship marketing strategy includes moving toward strategic segmentation; relating product performance to customer needs, modifying the product if necessary; intense distribution; and building efficiencies in production and marketing (Buckley 2018; Wang 2008). The investment in product development and improvement to build trust and loyalty with customers is a key to relationship marketing (Chen & Tseng 2005; Wang 2008).

The people

People play an important role in relationship marketing linked to a service product (Buckley 2018; Gronroos 1997). In spiritual tourism, several people interact with the tourists at various places during the trip, ranging from travel agents to destination guides and religious leaders who may be able to transform transactions into relationships (Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2008). A good example of the “people” at the destination is that at all Sufi shrines in Pakistan promoted as spiritual tourism destinations the visitors get a chance to listen to “*qawwali*” performance, which is “an authentic spiritual song” (Qureshi 1995, p. 1) written by a Sufi praising God and the Prophet Muhammad. However, the *qawwali* has experienced a massive makeover for folk, pop, mixed, and movie themes in India and Pakistan. The performers of this artistic tradition play an important role in relationship building and relationship marketing as they contribute to the sacredness of the place and the rewards of visiting.

The people working to create relationships need to be selected and trained so that they meet tourists’ expectations. The category of “people” in this context runs the entire gamut, including ritual guides, entertainers and artisans, religious advisers and prayer leaders, hospitality providers, and security personnel in some cases. Relationship marketing designed with the interaction between providers and customers, together with discounted pricing of packages to repeat customers, should benefit both the customer and the tourism operator as satisfying experiences are co-created between the destination’s people and the religious or spiritual consumers who visit.

Collaboration

Collaboration drives relationship marketing to build operating efficiencies among various stakeholders involved in the spiritual tourism industry. For collaboration to be successful, all partners on the demand side and supply side must collaborate and benefit (Augustyn & Knowles 2000; Haq 2013; Tilson 2005). The tourism industry typically includes both vertical and horizontal partnerships with both forward and backward integration. Vertical

partnerships and integration include the expansion of the tourism product or service into a related service, for example, a hotel also offering sightseeing tours (Weidenfeld 2018). Horizontal partnerships refer to tourism companies entering into collaboration or integration with related business, for example, a hotel buying or entering a strategic alliance with an airline (Augustyn & Knowles 2000; Weidenfeld 2018).

Horizontal partnerships identify the amount of cooperation with public and private operators and providers of spiritual tourism products and services (Augustyn & Knowles 2000). Vertical partnerships identify the degree of collaboration between operators and various stakeholders, including transport companies, hotels, media channels, insurance companies, destination management, and financial institutions such as banks and credit card companies (Augustyn & Knowles 2000; Chen & Tseng 2005). This chapter suggests that relationship marketing for religious and spiritual tourism needs collaboration in relation to their position on both vertical and horizontal axes.

The depth and width of any collaboration will indicate the quantity and variety of stakeholders. The scope of this chapter does not deliver recommendations for selecting partners, but it does present basic collaboration issues and the criteria that could be considered by tourism marketers. Researchers have proposed certain parameters for establishing successful collaborative efforts in the tourism industry (Augustyn & Knowles 2000; Tilson 2005; Weidenfeld 2018). Adopting the parameters that have been proposed in the literature, it is suggested that collaboration in spiritual tourism requires reciprocal grounds, mutual goals, expert participation, developmental structure, and sustainability.

Conclusion

Recent publications in special interest tourism associated with faith, spirituality, and religion have awarded generous space to discussions on spirituality versus religion. This chapter goes a step further and suggests that spirituality and religion may be near equivalent terms and hence spiritual and religious tourism could be marketed together, especially as most religious people see themselves as spiritual, even if many spiritual people do not necessarily see themselves as religious. Although some people might consider the notions of spiritual travel and marketing to be incompatible, it remains a fact that even the most dedicated pilgrimage destinations undertake significant marketing actions, whether these are overt and visible to consumers or hidden in the backstage reaches of destination managers. Marketing takes many forms and is now considered a necessary tool for creating positive and satisfying experiences for all kinds of tourists, including spiritual tourists and pilgrims.

To achieve holistic spiritual and religious tourism marketing, market segmentation needs to be sharpened where relationship marketing is suggested as the palpable option. Segmenting spiritual and religious tourists based on experiences was carried out by selecting relevant methods from experts such as Gnoth and Matteucci (2014), Norman (2014) and Walls et al. (2011). A cross-examination of their segmentation based on tourist' attitudes and behaviors led this study to design five segments as illustrated in Table 24.1 and Figure 24.1.

With the purpose of crafting an effective relationship marketing strategy, various marketing elements were assessed. The study concludes that products, people, and collaboration are the key elements of the relationship marketing strategy to be mapped with the five specific segments of spiritual and religious tourists. Tourism planners and marketers can consider these five segments of spiritual and religious tourists and check where their own target

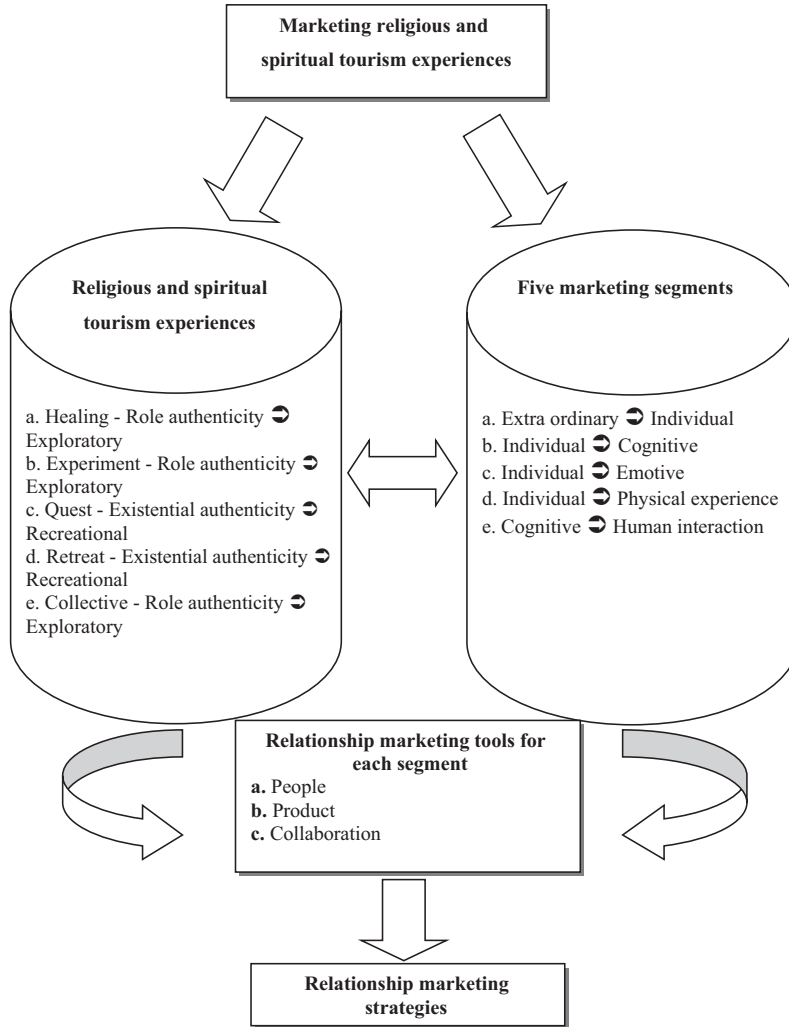


Figure 24.1 Religious and spiritual tourism segments and relationship marketing

customers fit in, based on their attitudes and behaviors. The three elements of relationship marketing could be considered a key focus to build an effective marketing framework. Empirical work is needed to verify the five segments with the tourists and assess relationship marketing with tourism providers.

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