![ISTTE International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators]

Imagining the Future of Travel and Tourism Education

*Annual Conference Proceedings of
Research and Academic Papers
Volume XVIII*

*Las Vegas, Nevada, United States
October 12 –14, 2006*

Clark Hu, Ph.D., Editor

Imagination, Entertainment and Future Opportunities in Tourism Education

ISTTE

International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators

2006 Silver Anniversary Conference

Annual Conference Proceedings of
Research and Academic Papers
Volume XVIII

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Editor

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Preface

The 2006 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) conference theme is: "Imagination, Entertainment and Future Opportunities in Tourism Education". This theme has matched the innovative conference location, Las Vegas, the entertainment center of the world! The production of the Proceedings this year also employed new technology to enhance our readers' experience. Specifically, there has been a new design of the CD-Rom Proceedings that allows more interactions with the readers. This year's Proceedings includes an increasing number of research paper genres have expanded to cover a variety of research issues related to bridging the gap between industry and education needs, emerging issues in travel and tourism education and training, innovative and creative teaching techniques, perspectives on articulation and/or accreditation, teaching for excellence, technological applications in travel and tourism education, travel and tourism education and curriculum, human resources in travel and tourism, impacts on the travel and tourism industry, information communication technology research for travel and tourism, international travel and tourism issues and trends, marketing and sales in travel and tourism, meetings and conventions management, new perspectives of the travel and tourism management, strategic management of travel and tourism services, studies of gaming and entertainment industries, sustainable tourism planning and development, as well as travel and tourism research issues or cases.

The Proceedings contains full papers, poster papers and extended abstracts of working papers. This year, 49 submissions were received across the various categories including 38 in the research and academic paper sections. After a double blind review process, 16 research and academic papers were accepted. This represents approximately 42% acceptance rate for research and academic papers. Of all submissions, 16 full papers appear in this Proceedings and in the conference program. Eleven refereed poster papers and five working papers were invited for presentation at the conference, of those, seven posters and four working papers have been included in the conference program and in the Proceedings.

At the time of going to print, the order of presentation of papers in the Proceedings matches the Conference Program. Any changes to the Program after that date are not reflected in this Proceedings.

I would like to thank all the researchers who participated in the Paper Call Process regardless of the outcome. My sincere thanks are also extended to the reviewers who gave generously of their time; and provided constructive commentaries to the authors. This is a significant contribution to ISTTE as well as to the profession and the disciplines of Tourism and Hospitality. Dr. Michael Sabitoni, President of ISTTE, Dr. Roy Cook, Conference Chair, and members of the ISTTE Board of Directors have continued their support and commentary regarding the research paper stream for which I am grateful. Finally, I wish to note my thanks to Dr. Gayle R. Jennings, Dr. Karin Weber, and Dr. Cathy Hsu along with the conference organizing committee for their support and assistance with the Paper Calls and the production of the Proceedings.

Finally, I would like to thank my Research Assistant, Mr. Pradeep Racherla, for his kind assistance in working with me and burning hundreds of CD-Rom Proceedings with our midnight oil... Without his help, this Proceedings would not be possible! Thanks, Pradeep!!

Clark Hu, Ph.D.
Editor, 2006 Annual ISTTE Conference Proceedings
Research and Academic Papers Committee Chair

GENERAL INFORMATION

The 2006 Annual International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference devotes several academic sessions to the presentation of research and/or academic papers. It is the intent of these sessions to focus on a broad range of topics that are related to education, research, and management in the field of travel and tourism services. ISTTE is an international organization; therefore, submissions from international scholars are highly encouraged. This year's conference title is "*Imagining the Future of Travel and Tourism Education,*" which supports our overall theme: "*Imagination, Entertainment and Future Opportunities in Tourism Education*" that also matches the innovative conference location, Las Vegas, the entertainment center of the world!

CONTRIBUTION AREAS (Contributions are invited in any of the following subject areas or their related areas):

- Bridging the gap between industry and education needs
- Emerging issues in travel and tourism education and training
- Innovative and creative teaching techniques
- Perspectives on articulation and/or accreditation
- Teaching for excellence
- Technological applications in travel and tourism education
- Travel and tourism education and curriculum
- Human resources in travel and tourism
- Impacts on the travel and tourism industry
- Information communication technology research for travel and tourism
- International travel and tourism issues and trends
- Marketing and sales in travel and tourism
- Meetings and conventions management
- New perspectives of the travel and tourism management
- Strategic management of travel and tourism services
- Studies of gaming and entertainment industries
- Sustainable tourism planning and development
- Travel and tourism research issues or cases

TYPES OF SUBMISSIONS
The International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) provides researchers with a choice of four types of research papers:

- **Refereed full papers**
- **Full papers based on refereed extended abstract**
- **Poster papers based on refereed extended abstract**
- **Working papers based on refereed abstract**

TYPES OF PROCEEDINGS PAPERS
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SECTION I: FULL RESEARCH PAPERS

THE REASONS, BENEFITS AND IMPACTS OF WORKING PART TIME WHILST STUDYING: THE CASE OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS AT AN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Part time working has long been a part of the university student experience and a variety of studies have examined the extent, reasons and nature of student part time employment. In return for increasingly necessary financial reward, students provide employers with a flexible and intelligent workforce and those studying hospitality and tourism management also bring with them a range of skills and knowledge employers find important and useful. This paper reports on research that develops an understanding of the pattern of part time working among a cohort of 486 undergraduate students studying hospitality and tourism subjects at a major Australian university. This research identifies that the vast majority (77%) of this cohort of students are involved in some form of part time employment across a range of industries and on average work 16 hours per week. While the main reasons for working were financial, respondents recognised a range of non pecuniary benefits that accrue from their part time employment and consider that their employment does not have a negative effect on their studies. Underpinning this research is the notion that educators are changing their approach to the teaching of practical skills and this paper concludes that students would like more recognition of their employment commitments through the provision of flexible teaching methods, part time contacts and formal credit for their experience.

KEYWORDS: *Hospitality and tourism programs; Part time working; Skills Development; Students.*

INTRODUCTION

Working part time has long been a part of the university student experience. However, various changes that have recently taken place regarding the student funding mechanism have resulted in increasing numbers of students undertaking paid employment during term time (Watts & Pickering, 2000). Although exact numbers of students working part time are difficult to determine with a degree of accuracy, several studies have found that between 50 and 60% of all full time university students currently engage in some form of part time employment (Berkley, 1997; ABS, 2002; Curtis and Williams, 2002; Lashley, 2005) and that this figure is forecast to grow (Curtis and Lucas, 2001).

University students involved in part time employment have been the focus of studies in the UK for a number of years (Lucas and Lammont, 1998; Kelly, 1999; Watts and Pickering, 2000; Curtis and Lucas, 2001). This interest is due mainly to the relatively recent introduction of student loans that took the place of means tested grants which provided, to a large extent, government funding for university fees. The introduction of student loans gave rise to concerns regarding student hardship (Curtis and Williams, 2002) and the negative effects on academic progress of full time students having to engage in part time employment on their studies (Watts and Pickering, 2000).

In Australia, the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was introduced in 1989 which required many students to contribute to their higher education experience. In 2002 some 420,000 students had made the commitment to make a contribution to the cost of their education (ABS, 2005) and in 2003 the average amount owing on individual HECS loans was AU$8,500. While there were some regional differences, the majority of people with a HECS loan owed AU$10,000 or less (ABS, 2005). It might therefore be stated that due to the relative maturity of the HECS system, Australian students are used to contributing to their higher education and that it is normal for such students to graduate possessing a substantial debt that is required to be repaid over a number of years. In addition to contributing to the educational experience, students must also pay rent, buy books and food, pay for transportation and social activities and as a means of coping with this financial burden some 60% of Australian students in higher education were employed on a part time basis in 2003 (ABS, 2005).

It would appear that students tend to work in industries such as retailing, hotels and restaurants where the supply the demand for labour has shown steady growth in Australia (ABS, 2005) and in other western nations (IDS,1999). Employers in these industries need cheap and flexible labour in order to remain viable (Curtis and Lucas, 2001) and students wishing to work part time fulfil this requirement. From the perspective of the student, part time work is often an introduction to the world of work and their experiences assist with both personal and career development. However, there is a strength of feeling that the world of work should be more closely linked with higher education, through both formal periods of supervised work experience or more informally through students part time experiences (Beard, 1995). When discussing the latter, the Dearing Report on Higher Education specifically states that higher education institutions should "identify opportunities to increase the extent to which programmes help students to become familiar with work, and help

them to reflect on such experience" (Dearing, 1997: Chapter 9, Recommendation 18). In Australia, the publication of Nelson's higher education reforms focussed attention on the funding of universities and encouraged both universities and students to view the education process from a more commercial perspective. The underlying thrust behind both of these reports is the requirement for universities and industry to work more closely together as a means of developing a link between students' part time experiences, their educational experience, career guidance, and ultimately, employability (Watts and Pickering, 2000).

It is the purpose of this research to develop a model that presents students working part time with a strategy that allows them to gain maximum benefit from this period of employment. In doing so, this research will determine the extent and type of part time employment amongst a cohort of hospitality and tourism students; to evaluate the reasons for engaging in part time employment and to determine both the advantages and disadvantages of engaging in part time employment whilst studying.

DEMAND FOR, AND SUPPLY OF, STUDENTS

Curtis and Lucas (2001) contend that employers' demand for students centre around their desire to control their employees. This control manifests itself in three ways. Firstly students working part time afford employers an opportunity to control wage costs (Walsh, 1990) due to lower levels of pay (Booth, 1998) and a reduction in employee benefits (McMullen, 1995). Secondly, students provide employers with a highly flexible workforce (Lucas and Ralston, 1996). This flexibility manifests itself in a variety of ways. Firstly employers can increase or decrease hours in line with business demands, or indeed lay off part time workers should business be poor. Secondly, it has been found that employers use part time students to undertake tasks for which they were not originally employed, thus offering an element of functional flexibility (Lucas, 1997). Finally, it has been found that students working part time bring certain qualities to employment that might be lacking in other employees. For example Lamont and Lucas (1999) found that employers perceive students to be intelligent, articulate, good communicators, easy to train and willing to follow instructions.

It therefore might be seen that full time students deciding to work part time provide employers with a variety of advantages over other full and part time employees. It might be suggested that the advantages these employees bring to the workplace is particularly valuable to the service sector in general and the hospitality and tourism industry in particular. The opportunity to closely control employee costs through pay rates and employee levels, coupled with employees that are able to multi task and bring certain qualities to the workplace would appear attractive to many employers.

Consequently the most common source of part time employment for students is found in the general service industries with students being commonly employed in retailing, and hotel and catering establishments (Curtis and Lucas, 2001; Lashley, 2005). Indeed in Australia, the ABS (2005) states that 65% of all students working part time were employed in the retail or hospitality sectors; industries that possess relatively low entry thresholds and the opportunities for unskilled positions (Milman,

1999). It might therefore be suggested that students would be particularly welcomed by the service industry which is famed for high labour costs and extreme fluctuations in demand. In addition, students provide the service industry and particularly the hospitality sector with a ready supply of young employees who assist the industry in portraying a youthful image. It is not surprising therefore recognise a coincidence of needs. On the one hand students wishing to work part time enjoy the opportunities afforded to them by the hospitality and tourism industry, while on the other hand, the industry appreciates the flexibility and other benefits students bring to the workplace.

In Australia there has been a significant increase in the number of full time students who are working part time. In 1990, almost 132,000 full time university students undertook some form of part time work. By 2000, this figure had increased by 85% to over 244,000; a figure that represented almost 58% of all full time students involved in higher education (ABS, 2002). While there are a variety of reasons for this increase, it has been argued that a combination of financial need and the opportunity to gain experience and ultimately enhance career opportunities has prompted students to seek employment during term time in addition to the more traditional vacation employment (Harvey, Geall and Moon 1998; Lucas and Lammont, 1998; Curtis and Lucas, 2001).

The issue of financial necessity has been mentioned elsewhere in this paper and there is a plethora of research that concludes the students' requirement to contribute to the cost of their higher education has required students work part time (Sorensen and Winn, 1993; Ford, Bosworth and Wilson, 1995; Callender and Kempson, 1996; Hesketh, 1996; Curtis and Lucas, 2001, ABS, 2002; Curtis and Williams, 2002; Lashley, 2005). However there are other, perhaps less immediately noticeable reasons for working part time whilst studying. Over twenty years ago Steiberg (1981) found that working while studying provides, quite naturally, students with an indication of the requirements that will be needed to function effectively in one's later career. Specifically, it has been found that students working part time develop team working, communication, customer care and practical skills (Lucas and Lammont, 1998). The development of these skills appear to be more important for students who are studying a vocationally specific program and McKechnie, Hobbs and Lindsay, (1999) considered that such students can directly relate the experiences of working part time which, in turn, enhanced and improved their academic knowledge, academic motivation and employment prospects. It might therefore be suggested that students involved in programs which are vocationally specific and who work part time in the specific industry would, in addition to earning money, experience a range of academic, future career and skill development benefits.

BALANCING EDUCATION AND PART TIME WORK

The issue concerning the impact of part time work on student performance is relatively under researched but the effects of part time working have been viewed from both a positive and negative perspective. Positively, it has been found that students might acquire personal transferable skills, enhanced employability and increased confidence in the world of work (Watts and Pickering, 2000). From a negative perspective, reporting from a relatively small study in the UK, Lindsey and Paton-Saltzberg (1993) found a majority of their sample worked during term time and

concluded that those students who worked part time achieved poorer marks than those that did not. Other identified impacts include missed lectures and tutorials, reduced time for study and fatigue (Leonard, 1995), and the development of a conflict of interest between employment and academic responsibilities (Watts and Pickering, 2000). However, this conflict of interests does not appear to unduly influence the attitude of academic staff to their students and Curtis (2005) found that support for working students is arbitrary and accidental and stated that "(academic) staff were largely unaware of the difficulties students face in juggling their dual roles" (Curtis, 2005:501). Given that part time working by students is commonplace, Jogaratnan and Buchanan (2004) consider that universities have a moral requirement to more effectively understand and manage the stressors experienced by students studying full time and working part time.

HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM EDUCATION

Hospitality and tourism management education has traditionally provided students with a practical element of hands-on experience of operational areas (HEFCE, 1998). This hands-on experience, which provides students with an opportunity to develop skills in the food production and food service areas, is normally undertaken in training kitchen and restaurants, worth academic credit and provided under the guidance of university academic or technical staff. While this element of hospitality and tourism education is still common, Baker, Cattet and Riley (1995:21) opine that "within education, food and beverage practical training has a problem of credibility and cost" The provision of training kitchens and restaurants is an increasingly expensive exercise, both in terms of staff and facilities. The credibility argument centres around the appropriateness or need to develop practical skills as part of a management program taught at university (Ladkin, 2000). Indeed there is a range of literature that would argue for the development of managerial skills, rather than technical or practical skills as part of a degree program (Ladkin, 2000, Raybould and Wilkins, 2005).

These factors have resulted in less emphasis placed on this aspect of hospitality and/or tourism management education and there is evidence that universities are either contracting out the practical element of their program (Baker, et al, 1995), or removing it altogether from their curricula (see for example, the School of Tourism and Leisure Management, The University of Queensland). However, the development of practical skills, while perhaps enjoying less emphasis as part of hospitality and tourism curricula, is still felt to be important and it is generally felt that graduates should have some experience of the world of work, preferably in the hospitality industry upon graduation (Riley, 2005; Raybould and Wilkins, 2005; Ladkin, 2000; Baker, et al 1995).

What seems appropriate is for educators and industry to take the opportunity to make the part time employment opportunity more formal and better controlled and subsequently provide students with personal and practical skills that might be useful in their future careers. Following this line, it would appear that advantages might accrue to the three parties involved in the education of hospitality and/or tourism management graduates. Firstly, it has already been argued that the hospitality industry requires a steady supply of young, cheap, flexible and intelligent employees; one

might assume that students attending programs in this area would be most attractive. For hospitality and tourism students, part time employment in the hospitality industry, in addition to providing reasonably regular work and financial reward, will assist in personal development and the development of contacts that might result in the possibility of brighter employment prospects in the future. Finally, universities who are struggling with the debate regarding the cost or validity of practical skills training might be able to take advantage of the synergy that exists as a means of solving these tensions.

It therefore seems timely to consider that the combination of the number of students seeking part time employment and the various demands placed on higher education institutions to link education with work experience will require universities to more carefully manage their student part time experiences. Indeed it might be argued that great opportunities exist for hospitality and tourism educators to develop a model that provides guidance to both students, regarding how to maximise their part time experience, and employers regarding how they might utilise the skills of such employees.

METHODS

The sample and setting for this research were all undergraduate students enrolled on courses offered by a tourism and hospitality management school at a major Australian university. A questionnaire was developed specifically to investigate the extent of part time employment among the sample and separate questionnaires were devised for students with and without part time jobs. The first section of each questionnaire asked respondents to answer demographic questions concerning age, gender, nationality and ethnicity. This section also asked questions that attempted to determine motivations for current area of study and reasons for choosing their particular program at the university. The second section consisted of a variety of questions regarding employment such as: type of organisation, length of service, job title, nature of duties, level of responsibility and hours worked. The last section contained questions about benefits of working, their likes and dislikes in their part time employment and what they felt might be done to develop the relationship between the parties involved in part time work. Those students without part time jobs were asked about intention to work in the future and subsequently, different questions were asked of this group. The majority of questions required a Yes/No response but also presented respondents with the opportunity to provide qualitative comments as a means of elaboration.

In order to achieve a maximum response, and to answer questions students may have had during the completion of the questionnaire, the questionnaire was administered in the controlled environment of formal class time and under the supervision of the researcher. The controlled nature of the questionnaire administration resulted in a total of 486 useable questionnaires being completed by students studying courses within the tourism and leisure management school. The sample population comprised a majority of students (94%) under 24 years and a majority of females (63%). Of the 486 completed questionnaires, it was determined that 372 (77%) students in this cohort currently had some form of part time employment. While mention shall be made of those students without part time jobs,

students currently working are the focus of this paper and results from this group of students shall be discussed in the following section. Initial results indicated that this cohort of students comprised 43% (160) in their first year of study; 23% (86) in the second year and 34% (126) in the final year of their three year undergraduate degree.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed via SPSS and a range of frequency tables and cross tabulations were generated which subsequently allowed for the development of bar charts which will be presented in the following section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Those students who were currently working part time were initially asked to provide some background to their employment. This research found that this group of students worked, on average 16 hours per week. There existed a great variation in the number of hours worked with 16% of the cohort working less than 10 hours per week and 15% working in excess of 26 hours per week. The results from this research would suggest that the proportion of students who are balancing full time study with some sort of employment is higher than that found in previous studies (for example, Berkley, 1997; ABS, 2002; Curtis and Williams, 2002; Lashley, 2005). In addition, while this paper has concentrated on those students who are currently working part time, it is important to recognise that of the 114 students who indicated that they did not currently have part time employment, 41 stated that they were in between jobs and actively looking for part time employment. This would suggest that of the 486 students who took part in this research, 85% (413) were either in employment or between jobs and actively looking for part time work. Given the relatively substantial average number of hours worked and that the average class contact time for such students is approximately 12 hours per week, it might be stated that part time working is a significant portion of a typical students' weekly activity.

Without further research that analyses students' turnover patterns, comment regarding tenure and the reasons for moving jobs or staying with a particular employer are difficult to articulate. However, when students were then asked to indicate the length of time with their current employer the results appear polarised. Chart 1 below indicates a sizeable proportion of students having either recently started with their current employer or, staying with an employer and perhaps demonstrating an element of commitment, at least through tenure, to their employer.

Chart 1: Length of Tenure with Current Employer
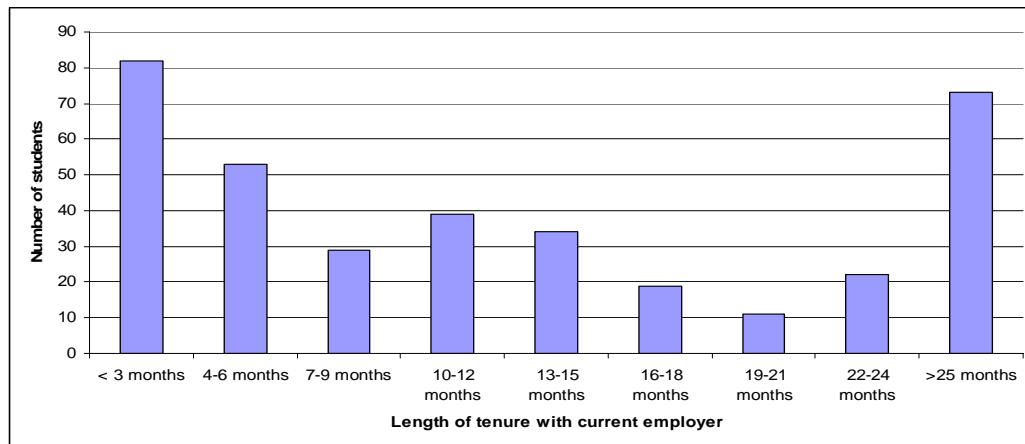
As would be expected from this cohort of students, the most common industry sector in which this group worked was identified in what is broadly seen as the hospitality industry. Some 44% (163) of respondents indicated that they were currently employed in either a bar, a restaurant, a coffee shop or hotel. The second most popular industrial sector for part time work amongst these students was the retail industry with 19% of respondents stating that they were employed in this sector. The remaining students indicated a range of employment opportunities including working as leisure centre assistants, promotions personnel and administrative assistants. These findings are in agreement with recent Australian statistics that indicate 65% of students work in these industries (ABS, 2005). However given this particular cohort, it might have been reasonable to expect a higher proportion of students working in the hospitality industry.

Students were then invited to answer questions on reasons for working and indicate the best and worst aspects of their part time employment. While much of the literature suggests there to be a range of reasons why students work whilst studying, this group of students overwhelmingly work for financial reasons. Only 7% (26) of respondents suggested that their main reason for working was to gain experience or develop practical skills; the remaining 93% (346) of respondents stating financial rewards as their main reason for working. This finding is in agreement with previous studies undertaken overseas (Sorensen and Winn, 1993; Ford, Bosworth and Wilson, 1995; Callender and Kempson, 1996; Hesketh, 1996; Curtis and Lucas, 2001; Curtis and Williams, 2002; Lashley, 2005) and in Australia (ABS, 2002). However, while financial reward was identified as the best aspect of part time employment by 25% (93) of respondents, a range of non pecuniary benefits were raised. Specifically, human interaction was seen as a benefit of part time work with 33% (122) of respondents considered working with colleagues and the public as being the best aspect of their job. In addition, this cohort of students appeared to recognise that working part time provided experience and responsibility while developing technical skills and confidence. Detailed responses to this question are provided in Chart 2, below.

Chart 2: The best aspect of students' part time employment.
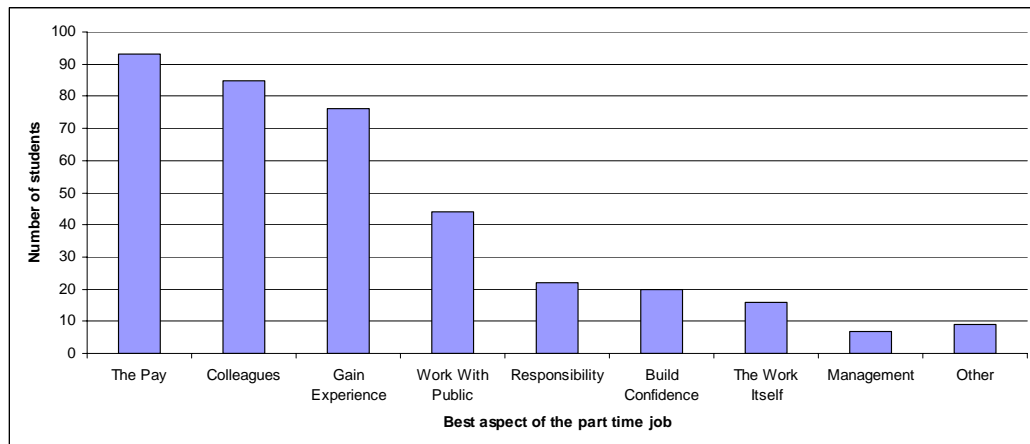
Students were then asked to reflect on the impact their part time employment had on their studies. It would appear that this cohort of students was reasonably sanguine regarding working while studying with only 7% (24) considering that their part time job has a serious negative influence on their studies: a finding that questions previous research that indicated that working students placed more emphasis on their part time job than their studies (Watts and Pickering, 2000), missed lectures, enjoyed reduced study time (Leonard, 1995) and achieved poorer marks than those students who did not work (Lindsey and Paton-Saltzberg, 1993). However, as can be seen from Chart 3 below, students were reasonably realistic regarding the impact of their part time working with the majority considering that their part time job does influence their studies, but not seriously. The remaining 26% (97) of respondents felt that their part time employment did not detract from their studies in any way.

Chart 3: Impact of part time employment on academic studies.
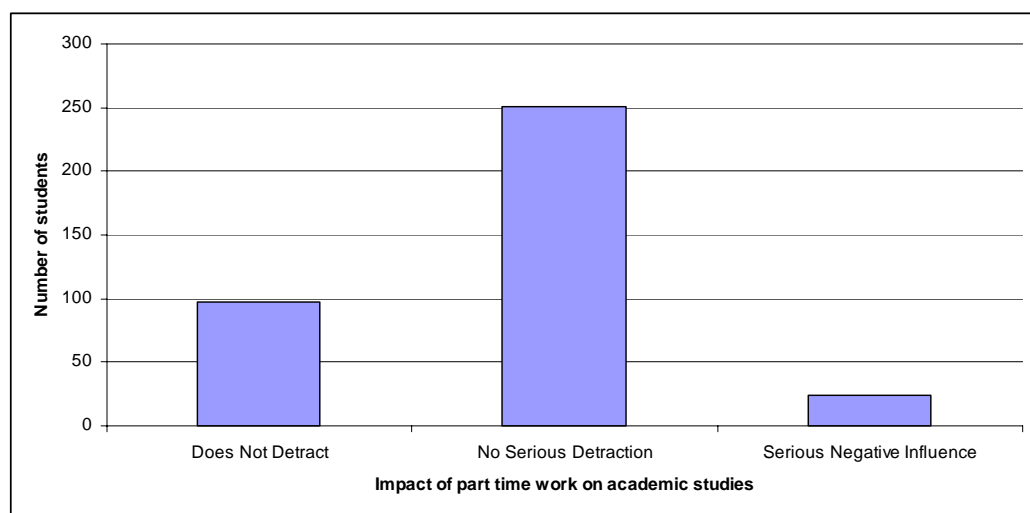
Chart 4: Possible areas of School/University involvement in the student and employer relationship.
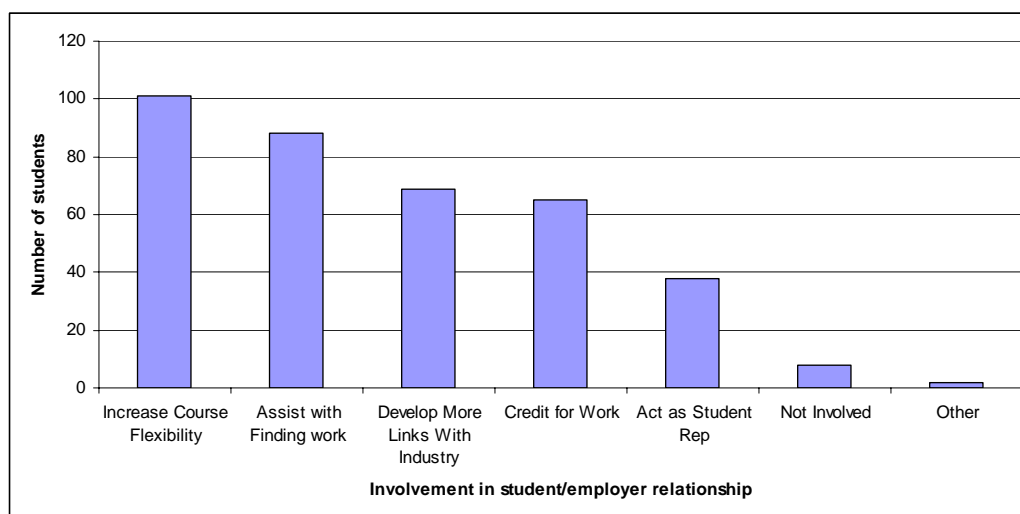
Finally, students were asked how the school and/or university might become more involved in the relationship between the student and the employer. Responses to this question fell into three broad categories. Firstly, the largest number of responses concerned increasing the flexibility of course provision. It would appear that students feel restricted by having only one opportunity to study a subject and would prefer the subject to be available over a variety of times and via a variety of methods. Consequently this would allow students the opportunity to fit study around work commitments as opposed to subjects being provided in a limited manner and students having to fit part time work opportunities around what might be seen as an inflexible subject provision. Secondly, students felt that the school and/or university might do more to provide employment opportunities through the development of more links with industry and consequently offer practical assistance with finding work. Linked closely with this, a minority of students felt that the university might act as a representative on the student's behalf perhaps as an intermediary for sourcing employment or ensuring pay and conditions are fair. Finally, students felt that their time spent in industry should be worth some form of formal recognition and perhaps count as credit toward their final qualification.

CONCLUSION

This paper has attempted to provide an overview of the extent of part time working amongst a cohort of students studying hospitality and tourism management at a major Australian university. These results indicate that the proportion of this cohort of students undertaking part time work whilst studying is significantly higher than the national average as reported by the ABS (2005). Indeed it might be stated that the notion of being involved in part time employment is a normal or usual situation for the overwhelming majority of this cohort of students and that it is common for students to spend more hours per week engaged in part time employment than in class. The concept of engaging in part time employment for financial benefits appears

to hold true for this cohort of students with only a minority of respondents engaging in part time employment for non pecuniary reasons. While this research found that the majority of students considered that their part time employment did not significantly detract from their studies this current situation involving part time employment requires to be understood and acknowledged by academic and administrative staff who might be unaware of the extent and potential influence of their students' working patterns.

Given the need to, and extent of, part time working, it would appear appropriate that a more formal involvement on the part of the educational institution be explored. While effort might be made to provide subjects in a more flexible manner, (for example, by providing a choice of delivery times and methods), it might be argued that for many tourism and hospitality schools, this suggestion would prove costly in both financial and human terms. Clear recommendations are difficult to draw without further research that examines the extent of flexibility required; however, the opportunity to submit assignments electronically and ready access to subject notes would merely require a change in policy without significant cost.

The results of this research would indicate that educators might further recognise part time working in several ways. Firstly given the vocational nature of hospitality and tourism programs, it is not unreasonable for students to have an expectation that the school should have strong links with industry and that the institution might more effectively assist students with locating part time opportunities. Closely linked with this recommendation is the concept of the institution acting on behalf and representing the student. The knowledge that the institution might become involved, perhaps in terms of pay disputes, would provide students with added value and a feeling of security in what is normally a tenuous relationship with their employer.

Finally, it is contended that educators have a great opportunity to formally recognise students' experiences as a valuable element of their overall hospitality and tourism management education. This might be done by recognising the number of hours worked, the type of establishment or the responsibilities associated with the position. In addition and as a means of achieving learning, students wishing credit for part time working might complete a paper that requires reflective consideration of their experiences and perhaps examines an element of the operation (for example communication or information technology) that is applicable regardless of length of placement, industry type or perceived quality of experience. A recognition of part time experiences might provide for a significant benefit to hospitality and tourism educators who find that they are no longer in a position to provide the full gambit of skills development in the food and beverage or front of house areas. The development of a data base of employers offering quality part time opportunities coupled with some form of assessment will, at the very least, provide graduates with important work skills.

This study has found that part time employment is a normal element of full time study in that the majority of students are either engaged in or actively seeking part time employment. Consequently it is argued that educators have a responsibility to recognise two aspects of this situation. Firstly, such recognition will ensure that academic staff develop an understanding of the demands placed on students who are

studying full time and working part time and take this into account when developing curricula, planning classes and designing assessment. Secondly, the advantages of experiencing the world of work could be acknowledged and curricula should be sufficiently flexible to provide students who work part time with credit for their experience. Finally, it has been argued that students expect educators to act as their representative, by sourcing employment opportunities and providing support where needed. Given the increasing cost of higher education, student expectations such as these are not unreasonable. It remains to be seen if universities are willing to positively respond to the realities of student life.

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AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF DESTINATION IMAGE: ROLE OF COUNTRY IMAGE

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ABSTRACT

Country image as a determinant factor of destination image has not been extensively investigated in past research. Through content analysis of U.S. general media and three travel-related media sources about China, current study profiled China's country image and destination image, established the key elements and compared the key elements as projected in various media sources. The findings of the study suggested the different focuses of general media and travel-related media sources, the importance of incorporating country image in destination image positioning, as well as a need of a better communication in media.

KEYWORDS: *China; Country image; Destination image; Image element; Media.*

INTRODUCTION

Country image was defined as the total of all descriptive, inferential and informational beliefs one has about a particular country (Martin & Eroglu, 1993). It is also the picture, the reputation, the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products of a specific country (Roth & Romeo, 1992). This image is created by such variables as representative products, national characteristics, economic and political background, history, and traditions (Roth & Romeo, 1992).

Country image has been found to be important in affecting product perceptions (Quester, Dzever, & Chetty, 2000), product preferences (De Wet, Pothas, & De Wet, 2001), quality assessments (Janda & Rao, 1997), and brand evaluations (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999) and etc. Existing literature can also be found that described its nature and the extent of effects, the circumstances when the effect is more or less pronounced, and the factors moderating the effect (Keillor & Hult, 1999). Product marketing strategies need to take the effects of country image into account depending on whether country image is perceived positively or negatively by the potential market, especially for less developed countries (Janda & Rao, 1997; Martin & Eroglu, 1993).

Destination is a major and unique product in the tourism system. It is the place where tourists stay and enjoy. When a destination is defined as a country in a geographical sense, the images of the destination and the country interact. While significant progress has been made on the subject of destination image in the areas of measurement scale, its role in tourists' decision making process, its components and formation, and as a component of destination branding (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Cai, 2002; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Gartner, 1993), little extant work in tourism literature can be found that conceptually and empirically integrates the country and destination image. The purpose of the current study was to develop an integrated model of destination and country image.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Country – of – Origin (COO)

The study of country image originated from the recognition of the importance of "country – of – origin (COO)" for products evaluation (Beverland & Lindgreen, 2002; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Jaffe & Nebenzahl, 2002; Jo, Nakamoto, & Nelson, 2003; Kleppe, Iversen, & Stensaker, 2002; Paswan & Kulkarni, 2002; Pereira, Hsu, & Kundu, 2005; Roth & Romeo, 1992; Samiee, 1994; Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002). From consumer products' perspective, it denotes the country with which a firm is associated, typically, the home country for a company. It is inherent in some certain brands and has been used as one of the effective branding strategies for years (Samiee, 1994).

Potential international travelers' decision to travel to a particular country destination is also linked to the country image held by that traveler even if they have

never visited it or been exposed to the commercial forms of destination information (Fridgen, 1987; Pearce, 1988). The country's economic, political, social and cultural environment constitutes the image of that country based on which travelers make the decision (Clements & Georgiou, 1998). "The more favorable the perception, the greater the likelihood of choice from among similar alternatives" (Goodrich, 1978). Many countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, South Africa etc., have been making great efforts to create a country brand identity and market their destinations and services as an extension.

Country Image and Destination Image

Prior destination image research has investigated the impact of some specific factors, such as: political stability, negative events or the country's culture and heritage amenity (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999; Clements & Georgiou, 1998; Ehemann, 1978; Roehl, 1990; Tse, Belk, & Zhou, 1989; Yan, 1998). These studies examined the interaction of country image and destination image as well as image's relation with branding and brand identity (Gilmore, 2002; Gnoth, 2002). Several other studies have made the efforts to examine how the country image formed to influence destination image. There were also differences found between country image and destination image in regard with their influence and sources of information.

Gunn (1988)'s study indicated that country image was incorporated in the organic image to have the influence on individual traveler's destination image. Country image has an influence through organic image especially at the early stage of the travel experiences which involve a constant building and modification of image. Echtner and Ritchie (1991) further commented that country image influenced the first phase of the "accumulation of mental images about vacation experiences". It is derived from non-touristic sources and is acquired in the natural course of life, differentiating from the induced component built by marketing efforts of the destination and suppliers Gunn (1972). It was generally acknowledged that the organic image composed of the information developed from "country – of – origin (COO)", in various non-tourism, non-commercial sources, such as the general media (news reports, magazines, books, movies), education, and the opinion of families and friends (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; McLellan & Foushee).

Country and Destination Image Elements and the Measurement

Image was believed to be a multidimensional construct (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999; Gilmore, 2002; Martin & Eroglu, 1993), built by a number of unique characteristics that helped to distinguish one from others (Keillor & Hult, 1999). Current study defined these characteristics as image elements. Ownership of positive elements offers a country or destination the opportunity to use these as a barrier to competitive threat (Gilmore, 2002).

Martin and Eroglu (1993) generalized four key elements to define country image, which included political, economical, technological and social desirability. Gilmore (2002) also considered country image coming in all forms. They may range from

historical and political events to particular individuals to physical structures like buildings and bridges. Keillor and Hult (1999)'s study identified the connection of the elements in the construct. Country image was deemed to be consisted of "Belief structure", "Region or supernational belief", "Cultural homogeneity", "Ethnocentrism", and "National heritage". There were also research efforts introducing country image to specific consumer products or consumer products categories. Consumers were believed to use their understandings of a country's various image elements such as: capability of designing, workship of manufacturing products, innovativeness of using technology and prestige of status (Roth & Romeo, 1992) to build their perceptions of imported products and services.

Destination image elements were also developed in a few previous studies. Beerli and Martín (2004) incorporated nine dimensions in their measurement which included natural resources, general infrastructure, tourist infrastructure, tourist leisure and recreation, culture, history and art, political and economics factors, natural environment, social environment, and atmosphere of the place. Through an eight-step technique, Echtner and Ritchie (1993) generated 35 items that can be placed within three components: common-unique, functional-psychological, attributes-holistic. These approaches have been adopted in several other researches with slight modifications or specifications (Choi, Chan, & Wu, 1999).

Moreover, researchers have become increasingly sensitive to the studies' theoretical and methodological implications. Baloglu and McCleary (1999) argued that image is formed by two major forces: stimulus factors and personal factors. The former stems from the external stimuli, such as physical objects and previous experience. Personal factors, on the other hand, depend on the characteristics (social and psychological) of the perceiver. Martin and Eroglu (1993) further expanded these two forces into three approaches: a direct experience with the place, outside sources of information, and past experience. While fertile studies used variables of personal factors such as travel experience, travel motivations, sociodemographics to examine country and destination image, much less research was conducted in regard with the external stimuli, especially the information in media sources. Moreover, major literature on image elements used scaled personal-factors items that were either grouped by mean scores, or through factor analytic techniques (Roth & Romeo, 1992), and was conducted within the context of general consumer goods. The scales were questioned for bias in production and marketing orientation and with limited compatibility to genetic products and service. There were also questions about the weight given to country of origin in the product evaluation process (Klein, Ettenson, & Morris, 1998; Paswan & Kulkarni, 2002).

General Media

Formation of country or destination image in general media is a complex process (Adoni & Mane, 1984; Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Boulding, 1966). Media information may serve different functions in building country and destination image. Dore and Crouch (2002) said that the majority of destination publicity was incidental. It merely occurs in the natural course of news events being picked up and transmitted by the

general media. It usually has nothing directly to do with tourism but nevertheless impacts tourism. As long as the event says something about the place, the perception that such publicity creates accumulates to form or influence the image that potential visitors develop about that place. Incidental publicity might arise from world events, movies, documentaries, and celebrities who originate from a place, and therefore represent the place in some way. Various factors such as: type, quality, and quantity of information would determine the type of image is likely to develop (Burgess, 1978).

Prior study also found that media content was not objectively discoursed as media receivers expect. In other words, news reports are created by news professionals and presented to news consumers as social knowledge; and "the news not only defines and redefines, but constitutes and reconstitutes ways of doing things – existing process in existing institutions" (Tuckman, 1978). The language that is used conceals a political agenda preferred by the status quo (Glasgow Media Group, 1976, 1980). Several studies about U.S media revealed that the news media as a social institution in a market-oriented economy functioned only to shape the news in a way reflects the prevalent ideology of the dominant Western culture (Van Dijk, 1984, 1988) or favorable to the existing superstructure in American society (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). The newsworthiness of international news in the U.S. media is determined in part by the political and economic significance of event countries to American interests in the world (Shoemaker, Danielian, & Brendlinger, 1991; Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). As a result, it would be very interesting to see what image is presented in general media source and how that information in general media influences the image formation (Fakeye & Crompton, 1991; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989).

OBJECTIVES

The backdrop of this study was the emergence of China as a leading destination of international tourism and the importance of the relationships between China and the United States in both geopolitical and economic terms. The memorandum of understanding recently signed by tourism authorities of the two countries signaled an elevated recognition of tourism in the bi-lateral relationships. One study showed that image of China as a country had changed in accordance with changes in the U.S. foreign policy toward China (Yan, 1998). Founded on theories relating to both concepts, and using China as a case, an integrated model of destination image was presented as in Figure 1. Destination image is formulated by organic and induced image. Country image is playing an important role as an organic image component, which is derived from the general media.
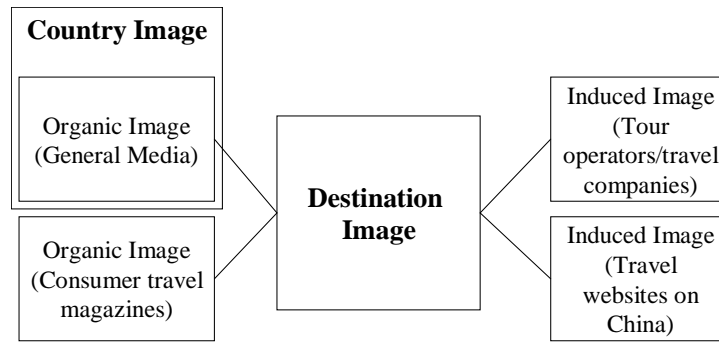
Figure 1. An Integrated Model of Destination Image

The objectives of the current study are:

1. Investigate how China was projected as a country,
2. Investigate how China was projected as a travel destination, and
3. Identify key elements of China's country image and destination image

METHODOLOGY

Data about China's country image and destination image in the U.S. was collected from four sources. The sample of general media article was collected from LexisNexis Academic, an online full-text database, from January 2000 to December 2004. The search term was "China" in the news headline. A total number of 3,438 general media data files were collected.

Other destination image information sources were: consumer travel magazines – another organic image information source, and tour operator/travel company promotion materials and websites for traveling in China – induced image information sources. The data found in these sources also covered the period of 2000-2004. The sample of consumer travel magazines article was gathered from Yahoo Travel Magazine Directory. Articles covered destination guides, editorial articles for the country and the cities, customers' travel diaries or articles about traveling experiences in China. 594 articles were gathered. Tour operator/travel company promotion materials were collected on the website of United States Tour Operators Association (USTOA -- http://www.ustoa.com/). 27 of U.S. tour operators in USTOA had a total of 70 pieces of descriptive text about China. About 30 websites providing information for traveling in China were examined, some of which were among top China-tour operators (http://credit.cats.org.cn/links/) and some of which were referred by authorities in China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). Around 400 articles were collected from this source.

The data were content analyzed with the assistance of Catpac II text analysis software program to investigate how the image of China was projected as a country and as a tourism destination. The analysis consisted of three steps. First, the data files were cleaned in order to identify the unique and meaningful words. The original data files

contained words that did not have specific meanings, words that had various forms or formats, such as in different tenses or had several synonyms, and words that comprised of two or more vocabularies into one that they can not be counted separately. These words were removed or transformed.

Then, Ward's cluster analysis was conducted by Catpac II to identify words that were intensively publicized in four sources. Considering the size of the data files for each source and the comparability of the files, the study used the default number of unique words in Catpac. 25 keywords were generated from each year of five-years' U.S. general media and other three sources of travel-related media.

Not only can Ward's cluster analysis identify the most frequent words that appeared in the media, but also can group the words to represent their semantic relationships. In this study, the frequency and the dendrogram value for each keyword was saved for further analysis. Dendrogram value is calculated from the length of the bar in the dendrogram generated by Catpac. It represents the words semantic relationships, showing the relative importance of the words. Each bar stands for one aggregation stage. The longer the bar, the earlier the words are combined, the stronger the two keywords connect in the sense of neural networks in Catpac (Zull and Landmann, 2004). Dendrogram value can help identify words with low frequency but still have important meanings in the text.

Although Catpac is widely used as a content analysis tool, it also has the limitation in that it does not handle very well files of substantial size. Dendrograms, which are supposed to show how the most frequent unique words cluster into meaningful concepts, look "like a mitten instead of a glove" (Stepchenkova, Chen, & Morrison, 2005; Woelfel, 1998). As a result, keywords summarization technique was conducted afterward by looking the keywords' meanings back in the content.

Finally, keywords were summarized to find out elements of China's country image and destination image. For country image, after removing several keywords that occurred repeatedly over the five years, a final list of 55 unique keywords was identified. A total of 75 keywords of destination image were generated from consumer travel magazines, USTOA and travel websites on China to represent image developed for other aspects of destination image.

FINDINGS

Country Image

The result showed that country image was composed of four key elements: Economy, Politics, Region and City, and Event (Table 1). The element of "Economy" consisted of 15 keywords, including major industries (e.g., business, steel), economic activities (e.g., demand, export, growth, investment, trade), economic stakeholders (e.g., company, WTO) and some economic concerns (e.g., market, permanent, price). More

keywords (17) were included in the "Politics". They can be subcategorized to politicians (Bill Clinton, Bush, Hu, Jiang), political parties (communist, congress, government, military, workers), and politics concerns (human rights, media, policy, power, relations, vote). "Region and City" element included nine keywords, which highlighted several cities in China (Beijing, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Taiwan), as well as several other countries and regions (Asia, Korea, U.S.). The "Event" element contained the keywords that represented various internal and international issues in each year, e.g., bidding Olympic Game 2008 in 2001, SARs outbreak in 2003. Table 1 and Figure 2 also showed the frequency (Freq) and the dendrogram value (Den), indicating the most frequent keywords in each element. The comparison of the two values of each keyword was showed in Figure 2.

Destination Image

Table 2 revealed the most frequent words identified from two induced image sources of travel trade materials and websites, and the organic image source of consumer travel magazines. The keywords of the three sources shared some characteristics and all fell in four elements: Descriptive, Region and City, Society, Economy and Culture, and Attraction. These sources used similar descriptive words, such as ancient, historic, and scenic, which were mostly adjectives describing places or attractions. A number of cities were intensively publicized in all three sources, such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. Keywords in these three sources covered several aspects of China's social, economic, and cultural issues, such as art, life, dynasty, industry. Finally, there was a great proportion of keywords featuring China's attractions and destination facilities. Figure 3 further illustrated these findings.

CONCLUSIONS

Through content analysis, the study identified the key elements of China's country and destination images from U.S. general media and travel-related media sources. The key elements of China's country image were Economy, Politics, Region and City, and Event. The key elements of China's destination image in other media sources were Descriptive, Region and City, Society, Economy and Culture, and Attraction.

Comparing the two sets of image elements, there were more differences than similarities. The most notable similarity lies in the element of "Region and City". Some of the keywords were included in both country and destination image, such as: Beijing, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. However, some other cities appeared only in the destination image part, such as: Xi'an, Guilin, and Tibet. The finding implied that the major regions and cities publicized in U.S. media can be differentiated into two types: two-dimensional cities (country and destination) and singular-dimensional (destination) cities. The former appeared in all four media types, while the latter appeared in the three travel-related media. Cities are important destinations units. Such differentiating patterns suggested that those cities that appeared in both country and destination image enjoyed a higher degree of awareness among the U.S. audience than those that only appear in destination image.

Table 1. Country Image Elements (Sorted by Frequency & Importance)

Economy (15)			Politics (17)			Region sand City (8)			Event (14)		
KW	Freq	Den	KW	Freq	Den	KW	Freq	Den	KW	Freq	Den
Trade	677	16	Government	717	18	United States	1562	22	Labor	407	14
Company	658	14	Congress	552	6	Beijing	726	18	Internet	394	18
Economy	583	17	Bill Clinton	444	20	Taiwan	599	17	Plane	317	18
Permanent	460	22	Vote	422	22	Hong Kong	283	10	SARS	249	23
Market	427	13	Human rights	409	7	Shanghai	211	11	Health	221	20
Price	417	13	Military	361	12	Washington	185	3	Oil	212	6
WTO	372	11	Relations	339	4	Asia	166	4	University	193	11
Business	363	12	Communist	319	8	Korea	164	22	Olympics	187	19
Growth	257	7	Leaders	301	8				Space	175	5
Steel	214	20	Workers	283	14				Furniture	157	22
Demand	198	22	Political	283	11				Students	145	12
Industry	184	8	Policy	265	10				Disease	141	23
Money	173	14	Bush	265	9				Life	141	21
Exports	155	2	Jiang	195	14				Research	134	20
Investment	145	7	Media	182	23						
			Power	174	10						
			Hu	162	13						

Economy

25
20
15
10
5
0
0   100   200   300   400   500   600   700   800

◆ Demand   ◆ Permanent
◆ Steel
◆ Economy
◆ Trade
◆ Money   ◆ Market   ◆ Company
◆ Price
◆ Business
◆ WTO
◆ Industry
◆ Investment Growth
◆ Exports

Politics

25
20
15
10
5
0
0   50   100   150   200   250   300   350   400   450

◆ Disease   ◆ Sars
◆ Furniture
◆ Life
◆ Research   ◆ Health
◆ Olympics
◆ Plane   ◆ Internet
◆ Labor
◆ Students
◆ University
◆ Oil
◆ Space

Region and City

25
20
15
10
5
0
0   200   400   600   800   1000   1200   1400   1600   1800

◆ Korea   ◆ Unitedstates
◆ Beijing
◆ Taiwan
◆ Shanghai
◆ Hongkong
◆ Asia
◆ Washington

Event

25
20
15
10
5
0
0   50   100   150   200   250   300   350   400   450

◆ Disease   ◆ Sars
◆ Furniture
◆ Life
◆ Research   ◆ Health
◆ Olympics
◆ Plane   ◆ Internet
◆ Labor
◆ Students
◆ University
◆ Oil
◆ Space

Figure 2. Frequency and Dendrogram Value for Country Image Elements

More distinctions existed between country image and destination image in that "Economy", "Politics" and "Event" constituted three of the four key elements in country image; however, they had a much less proportion and can only be grouped together as one key element -- "Society, Economy and Culture" -- in destination image. Therefore, country image described China's political, economical and social environment in more details, including more specific words such as trade and company (in "Economy" element); congress and Bill Clinton (in "Politics" element); disease, health and internet (in "Event" element). On the other hand, destination image included keywords that can only profile these aspects generally, such as history, culture, government and industry.

Meanwhile, destination image had two other key elements in addition to "Region and City" and "Society, Economy and Culture", which are "Descriptive" and "Attraction", oriented more towards China as a destination. Several specific keywords, such as ancient, scenic, historic, Beijing, Hong Kong, Xi'an, Guilin, culture, history, and temple, occurred in at least two of the three sources. The consistency of keywords indicated a much higher level of information congruity among three travel-related media sources.

Table 2. Destination Image Elements

USTOA			China TO			Consumer		
KW	Freq	Den	KW	Freq	Den	KW	Freq	Den
Descriptive			*Descriptive*			*Descriptive*		
Ancient	45	25	Ancient	514	23	Traditional	237	16
Historic	25	9	Scenic	270	12	Modern	222	21
Imperial	20	18	Natural	202	10	Ancient	205	14
Scenic	13	19	Historical	202	3	Cultural	161	3
Region and City			Imperial	198	5	*Region and City*		
Beijing	55	25	*Region and City*			Hong Kong	896	24
Xian	32	23	Beijing	244	5	Beijing	839	18
Shanghai	46	22	Xian	236	7	Shanghai	595	8
Hong Kong	17	7	Guilin	197	12	*Society, Economy and Culture*		
Tibet	16	19	*Society, Economy and Culture*			Dynasty	374	7
Guilin	14	12	Dynasty	752	24	Art	303	22
Society, Economy and Culture			History	322	20	Life	204	24
Culture	30	17	Culture	291	10	History	191	20
History	38	20	Economic	228	17	Shopping	189	9
Life	26	5	Industry	216	19	Government	185	11
Experience	10	5	*Attraction*			*Attraction*		
Attraction			Temple	580	18	Temple	430	16
Yangtze	36	14	Emperor	286	21	Museum	335	17
Cruise	33	14	Ming	273	14	Park	228	3
Palace	31	13	Tang	270	16	Tibetan	226	19
Gardens	31	4	Qing	237	13	Market	206	12
Temple	25	10	Park	224	9	Emperor	196	23
Terracotta warriors	19	3	Palace	217	4	Qing	184	23
Great wall	17	16	Peak	209	6	Restaurant	176	10
Forbidden city	17	10	Dragon	196	22	Buddhist	171	6
Three gorges	11	15	Museum	191	15	Japanese	162	5
Emperor	11	8	Pavilion	190	22	Square	156	13

Such similarities and differences discussed above indicated the different focuses of general media and travel-related media sources. The country image presented in general media tended to be nebulous and complex. Since the U.S. media sources predominantly cover the long-standing economic and political aspects of China, no explicit tourism-related issues emerged from the analysis. On the other hand, destination image was likely to be narrower in scope and more task-fulfillment oriented. The keywords revealed several aspects of China's tourism industry which had been extensively promoted. This finding implied that China's DMOs might need to place an emphasis on the communication between various marketing tools, such as newspapers, websites, travel magazines, and TV and etc., to establish a consistent country and destination image. For China to be viewed in the U.S. as a pleasure travel destination, more tourism-related content is needed in the general media.

Figure 3. Frequency and Dendrogram Value for Destination Image Elements

Current study proposed an integrated model of destination image and suggested a distinct role of country image played in destination image (Figure 1). Additional analyses are needed to examine through what process country image influences destination image and how extensive the influence is. Through content analysis, the study identified keywords and key elements with the frequency and dendrogram value. However, the distance between the words was not measured. Words were categorized based on subjective judgment within the context. Therefore, the usage of other content analysis techniques is encouraged in the future study to help refine the results. Future study may also consider other dimensions of the relationship between the keywords and key elements, such as the positive and negative association of the keywords, the durance of the key elements. Some further insights can also be retrieved from the comparison study of the image in the media with the image gained from travelers' experience and perception.

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ACTIVITY-BASED FAMILY RURAL TOURISM IN U.S. RURAL AREA

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ABSTRACT

This research intended to examine family travelers' leisure activity participation patterns and the influence of family composition. Using cluster analysis, the study identified four rural activity groups of family travelers. They are "Gaming enthusiasts", "Wildlife fans", "Cultural explorers" and "Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)". Comparison of the clusters across family socio-demographics and travel patterns revealed significant influence of family structure on rural activity participation behavior. This study extends rural tourism research to one of its major market – the family travelers. The results of this study lend valuable practical implications for rural tourism development.

KEYWORDS: *Activity participation; Family composition; Family travelers; Rural tourism; Travel pattern.*

INTRODUCTION

The past few decades have witnessed a growing interest in rural tourism development from rural communities, destination promoters and policy-makers. The trend should continue because of the greater desire of the Americans in visiting rural communities (Briedenhann & Wickens, 2004; Hegarty & Przezborska, 2005; Wilson, 2001). The growth of rural tourism has been driven in part by the increasing tendency of families vacationing in rural areas. Previous studies on rural tourism indicated that couples and families with children constituted crucial and substantial market segments (Frochot, 2005; Gartner, 2004; Kastenholz, 2004). Moreover, as a result of the society's refocus on traditional family values and stronger desire on the part of families in spending quality time together, family vacation time in rural area is expected to increase in the forms of either short weekend trips or longer touring vacations (Mason, 2003). As families are becoming an important market segment for rural tourism, family travelers in rural settings warrant more research attention.

There has been a wealth of research on both rural tourism and family leisure. In the stream of rural tourism research, a large body of literature has investigated economic and social impacts of rural tourism on rural communities and lifestyle effect on residents (Brown, 2000; Oliver& Jenkins, 2003). Extant research has focused on local residents' attitude towards tourism development (Kastenholz *et al.*, 1999). However, examination of rural travelers has been relatively lacking. In the stream of family leisure research, researchers have consistently reported positive relationships between participation in joint leisure activities and satisfaction with family life (Holman, 1981; Holman & Jacquart, 1988; Miller, 1976; Orthner, 1975; Smith, Snyder, & Monsma, 1988; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). However, family leisure research is still limited, partially due to the traditional emphasis on individual leisure experiences and patterns of behaviors (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). Despite family leisure's unique meanings in tourism research (Mactavish & Schleien, 1998), scholarly work on family travel, particularly in rural settings, is scarce.

In witness of the needs in integrating rural tourism consumption and family research in the context family leisure travel, the primary purpose of this study was to profile the needs of family travelers in rural tourism market so as to provide a better understanding of the relationship between family leisure and rural tourism. Of particular interest was the investigation of rural tourism activities in relation to the social demographic characteristics of family travelers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Rurality and Rural tourism

Many rural communities turn to tourism to cultivate economic growth (Blaine *et al.*, 1993). Rural tourism adds income to farms and other households, provides job alternatives, brings a transfer of ideas from urban to rural areas, provides urban people

with rural living experiences, diversifies the rural economy, and makes the provision of certain infrastructure possible (Oppermann, 1996). Further, rural tourism, promoting small-scale development based on the natural heritage of rural areas, may contribute to the preservation of cultural and natural heritage as well as to the retention of residents in less developed inland areas (Lane, 1994). The importance of rural tourism as a major player in rural economies is evident (Alexander & McKenna, 1998). The rapid growth of rural tourism leads to prolific rural tourism research.

There have been various interpretations of the rurality and rural tourism concept. For example, rurality can be defined as opposed to urban (Frochot, 2005; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997, p13), and it was connected with low population densities and open space, and with small scale settlements, … land use is dominated by farming, forestry and natural areas" (Killion, 2001; Lane, 1994). Rural tourism can be attributed to all types of tourism taking place in rural areas (Davidson, 1992). The differentiating features of rural tourism may include its close association with the quality of the bio-physical environment, a high degree of pluri-activity among hosts, the importance of local culture and traditions, and the fragility of the rural economy in which it takes place (Stabler, 1997). Although a consensual definition of rurality and rural tourism has not yet been found, a great deal of research on rural tourism has already begun to study the various rural activities and its connection with rural travelers. Current study will continue this discussion by segmenting rural activities and associating the segments with various rural travelers' characteristics. Rural tourism activity.

Rural tourism was frequently referred to as specific forms of tourism activities taking place in rural area (Sharpley, 1996). A wide range of tourist activities can be classified as rural tourism, as long as they occur in rural areas, or are functionally rural, rural in scale, traditional in character and controlled by local people (Lane, 1994). The activities included farm-based holidays but also comprised special interest nature holidays and ecotourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, sport and health tourism, hunting and angling, educational travel, arts and heritage tourism, and in some areas of ethnic tourism (Bramwell & Lane, 1994, p.9; Oliver & Jenkins, 2003). Rural tourism goes beyond simply complementing traditional activities such as agriculture, and can act as a catalyst for a whole range of new entrepreneurial activities, partnerships and networks (Oliver and Jenkins, 2003).

Rural tourism can be segmented to include such product components as rural attractions, rural adventure tours, nature-based tours, ecotourism tours, country towns, rural resorts and country-style accommodation, and farm and station holidays, together with festivals, events and agricultural education (*National rural tourism strategy*, 1994, cited by Killion, 2001). It has also been proposed that tourism in rural areas can encompass many activities focused upon different types of resource, often with cultural and natural components. The range of potential activities that may be undertaken in a rural context include: touring; water-based activities; land-based activities; aerial activities; cultural and educational activities; conservation activities; gastronomic activities; health and fitness activities; and 'metaphysical' activities such as pilgrimage and retreats.

Rural Tourism Segments

Diversified rural activities represent major opportunities for rural areas that have turned to tourism as a means of supplementing diminished incomes. However, diversity also presents a major challenge in developing a sufficiently differentiated rural tourism product that will not only attract visitors out of urban settings but will steer them away from competing rural destinations that provide a range of similar product components (Killion, 2001). Although historically rural tourism destinations tend be developed based on singular attribute-specific approach (e.g. fishing, national parks, rafting, etc.) and this approach still dominates today, there has been little research demonstrating conceptual or practical differences between users among these arbitrarily distinguished groups (Gartner, 2004). This is a typical segmentation approach driven by supply or resources. Moreover, the singular attribute-specific approach may no long be sufficient as travelers may not follow this mentality and they may make their activity choices across a multitude of attributes. It is important to recognize that rural tourism strategies need to be established based on a sound understanding of travelers' interests and experiences they want to gain from vacationing in rural areas. After all, tourists' choice criteria and touring behavior dictate the viability of rural tourism product programs. As such, this study proposed an activity-based segmentation approach to better understand the variability of rural tourism product consumption patterns.

There has been some user-based research in rural tourism research. These studies represent a market-oriented approach. Much of the existing research has examined various rural tourist segments from a psychological perspective such as benefit-based segmentation in rural area (Countryside Commission, 1997; Frochot, 2005). These research findings lend to the belief that rural tourists seeking different benefits will choose to participate in varied activities at the destination. Built upon these researches, the current research attempts to further identify market segments based on behavioral tendencies such as activity participation dynamics. These rural activity segments can potentially demonstrate product preference homogeneity and social-demographic homogeneity within groups of visitors who are tied together by their social environment, such as the ease of which one can access or exit the activity without significant money or time costs, as well as heterogeneity between groups. This approach, however, has been generally ignored in rural tourism literature.

Family Tourism

Since family travelers are the selected traveler type for this research, another area of review is related to family tourism. Family leisure is held in high esteem in North American society as an important and essential component of family life (Holman & Epperson, 1984; Larson & Gillman, 1997; Orthner & Mancini, 1990). It is promoted in family magazines, on television programs, and by park and recreation programs as a means of improving family well-being (Mason, 2003). Empirical evidences have demonstrated that family leisure involvement is positively related to satisfaction with

family life (Scholl, McAvoy, & Smith, 1999; Shaw, 1999; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

Family leisure has been studied from multiple perspectives such as those of parent, child, and family as a whole. Among the various family variables that have been utilized by researchers in family science, the current study mainly focus on the role of family structure in influencing the rural activity participation. A family often includes multiple members, beyond the husband and wife unit, such as children. Members of the family tend to influence and are influenced by the joint experiences, inter-relationships, roles, and evolving meanings shared by the family as a whole (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). It has been noted that family studies still rely primarily on data collected from married couples. A parent couple is a primary component in most family systems, but it is not the only component. Family leisure research within a broader family system including children could be meaningful for enriching current knowledge about family leisure (Kang & Hsu, 2004; Mactavish & Schleien, 1998; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001 Zeijl et al., 2000). In addition, other variables such as family life cycle, family lifestyle, family income, parent employment status, and other related family situation factors have showed to influence family leisure preference and behavior. This research attempts to incorporate these variables in explaining the variations of family travelers' visitation patterns in rural areas.

OBJECTIVES

Recognizing that rural visitation patterns, visitor behaviors, and their relationship with travelers' characteristics have largely been overlooked in the existing empirical rural tourism literature and that family leisure travel to the rural area has been a relatively neglected area of research, current study aimed at empirically exploring the characteristics, visitation patterns of the family visitors in a rural area in U.S.A. and identifying unique market segments on the basis of activity participation patterns. More specifically, the study intends to:

1. Examine family vacation activities in a rural area and identify possible rural activity-based family clusters.
2. Examine the various trip characteristics associated with the identified family activity clusters.
3. Compare family socio-demographics across the identified family activity clusters.

METHODOLOGY

The data was collected in a rural community in Southern Indiana. The community offers natural, historical, agricultural and recreational attractions and activities to leisure travelers and groups seeking a rural experience. The selected community is fairly representative of a stereotypical rural destination in the US.

A total of 599 visitors to the community were sampled using the screening question of "In addition to yourself, who else was in your immediate travel group?" All respondents were visiting the area for leisure purpose or business plus leisure purposes and all traveled with either spouse/partner, own kids, and/or grand children. The onsite interview survey questionnaire collected information on family rural travelers including: (1) socio-economic and demographic characteristics such as age, gender, income, education, occupation, family composition; (2) travel characteristics such as party size, length of stay and trip type; and (3) activities engaged during the trip.

Cluster analysis was used to identify sub-groups of the sample who participated in one or more of a collection of 27 rural activities. Depending on the nature of the variables, ANOVA, T-test and Chi-square analyses were used to detect differences among those clusters in terms of socio-demographics and trip characteristics.

RESULTS

Profile of Family Travel in Rural Area

All respondents were 18 years of age or older. 47.2% of the respondents were male, while the remaining 52.8% were female. The majority of the respondents fell into the age brackets of 35-44 years old (23.4%) or 65 years old and over (19.5%). In terms of education, 34.9% of them earned a high school followed by people who had a bachelor's degree (24.9%) (Table 1).

There were a high percentage of repeat visitors. On average, the respondents' families had visited the area for about 17 times. The average expenditure for the current trip was reported at $240. The primary visiting purpose was for pleasure (82%) followed by personal (10%) and business (8%). Most of the families had household income from $50000 to $99999 (37.23%) or from $20000 to $ 49999 (21.2%). The most common family household sizes were two-person household (54.76%), followed by four-people family size (18.36%) and three people household size (3.02%,).

Activity-based Clusters of Family Rural Travelers

Family rural travelers can be grouped into four clusters based on their activity participation pattern. Cluster one (n=301) can be called "Gaming enthusiasts". Gaming was the major activity while this group of families was visiting the area. Besides gaming, they also went golfing and dining in various places quite often.

Table 1 Profile of Family Travel in Rural Area (N=599)

Trip Pattern		Mean
Number of times have visited here		17.47
Average spending		240.51
Purpose of your current visit	**Freq**	**%**
Pleasure	492.00	0.82
Business	45.00	0.08
Personal	62.00	0.10
Family demographic	**Freq**	**%**
Range of household income		
Under $20000	20	3.34
$20000 - $ 49999	127	21.20
$50000 - $99999	223	37.23
$100000 - $149999	78	13.02
$150000 and above	24	4.01
Household size		
1 people	16	2.67
2 people	328	54.76
3 people	78	13.02
4 people	110	18.36
5 people	35	5.84
6 or more than 6 people	24	4.01

Cluster two (n=90) is labeled as "Wildlife fans". This group enjoyed various adventurous activities, such as wildlife viewing, bird-watching, backpacking/hiking, and visiting state or country parks. Since several nationally well-known caves are located in this rural area, a large proportion of the people in this group also toured caves or canoeing (cave country canoe) while staying in the area.

Cluster three (n=42) are the "Casual cultural explorers". These family travelers were engaged in culture related events and attractions, such as local fair, exhibition, museums/art galleries. Further, they also participated in other outdoor activities that require less energy and are relaxing in nature, such as fishing, horse-riding, visiting rural and farming area and taking a nature or science learning trip.

Cluster four (n=118) includes visitors who are in the area mostly for visiting friends and relatives (VFR). A much higher proportion of people in this group came for visiting friends and relatives. People in this group were involved more in family/friends socialization oriented activities, such as taking leisurely walk in downtown area, visiting some historical attractions, shopping for souvenirs, seeing local crafts, and sampling local food/beverages. These activities were pursued mainly in downtown area.

Table 2 Clusters of Rural Family Travel Activity

Activities	Cluster 1 n=301	Cluster 2 n=90	Cluster 3 n=42	Cluster 4 n=118	Total n=551
Wildlife viewing /Bird watching	10.9	45.5	32.7	10.9	5.3
Backpacking/ Hiking	2.2	62.2	33.3	2.2	15.2
Visiting historical sites/landmarks	4.9	23.5	21.6	50.0	42.8
Fishing	25.0	30.0	45.0	0.0	16.3
Touring caves	22.7	39.2	16.0	22.1	10.5
Golfing	77.3	4.5	9.1	9.1	35.6
Canoeing	6.9	48.3	27.6	17.2	2.7
Visiting state or county parks	9.5	39.3	32.1	19.0	9.3
Gaming	78.8	3.4	3.8	14.0	5.3
Visiting friends and relatives	37.8	13.3	18.9	30.0	33.0
Camping	10.3	62.1	20.7	6.9	23.0
Leisure driving/sightseeing in the country	13.3	27.6	19.9	39.3	25.4
Horse-riding	20.0	13.3	53.3	13.3	6.5
Visiting museums/Art galleries	9.8	7.8	47.1	35.3	20.3
Bar/disco/night club	34.5	10.3	24.1	31.0	44.1
Shopping for souvenirs	10.4	15.4	20.9	53.3	16.9
Sampling local food/beverages	18.1	7.9	26.8	47.2	6.0
Seeing local crafts and handiwork	4.3	4.3	27.1	64.3	8.0
Attending local fair/exhibition/festival	13.9	2.8	47.2	36.1	7.8
Dining in fine restaurants	39.3	8.9	22.3	29.5	15.1
Dining in casual restaurants	44.9	11.9	15.2	28.0	8.7
Dining in fast food restaurants or cafeterias	37.6	8.6	30.1	23.7	5.3
Enjoying cultural events	18.2	6.1	42.4	33.3	15.2
Visiting rural/farming area	15.9	11.4	47.7	25.0	42.8
Taking a nature or science learning trip	4.7	39.5	44.2	11.6	16.3
Taking walking tours	7.2	37.3	37.3	18.1	10.5
Wine tasting	14.6	14.6	27.1	43.8	35.6

It appears that clusters one, two and three represented rural special interest groups. They traveled for some specific purposes and participated in activities centered on their interests, such as: gaming (Cluster 1), caving (Cluster 2) or indulging in cultural amenity (Cluster 3). Compared to these clusters, families in cluster four appear to be more driven by social reasons (VFR). However, during the stay, they shared a lot of time with other family members or friends and their activities appear to be socially driven.

Cluster Family Socio-demographic and Travel Trip Characteristics Comparisons

Results of Comparison of family socio-demographic and trip characteristics information across four rural family traveler groups were presented in Table 3 and 4. The results findings indicated significant differences between four clusters in family structure and, from the perspective of trip patterns, choice of accommodation, estimated return time, group size, most of group age categories, length if of stay, length of whole trip, average expenditure and certain aspects of expenditure.

Among the three family related variables examined, which are family structure, family income and household size, family structure was the only factor that seemed to significantly influence the four clusters' activities participation. An explanation for this result is that family structure is associated with parent roles and the travel benefits they are seeking, thus influences the preferable family activities during family travel (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003). In this study, couples get more freedom to do gaming, and showed higher motivation to visit historical sites and friends and relatives. On the contrary, family with child or children would like to go to the wild-life or cultural environment for a natural experience or a learning oriented trip. In the current research context, exploring natural and wildlife environment were the two most popular activities for family with child/children.

In terms of trip characteristics, gaming enthusiasts and VRF groups had higher tendency to stay in hotel while a large proportion of wildlife fans chose to stay in campground. Compared to other clusters, the culture explorers were more likely to stay with relatives. This finding suggested that the prior perceptions about the VFR's tendency to stay with friends and relatives rather than in hotels (Chipkin, 2004) appeared to be not the case with this research. The hospitality industry may consider broaden the customer base and to reach out to the VFR market. As game enthusiasts and VRF travelers were mostly couples, the result also indicated that couples tended to stay in hotel, while family with child or children had wider accommodation choices, such as campground and with relatives.

Although the four clusters did not show significant difference with regard to how likely they would return, they exhibit distinct differences in estimated returning time frame. Game enthusiasts and casual culture explorers are more likely to return within three months, while wildlife fans and VFR travelers tend to come back in a longer time, usually within a year.

Wildlife fans and casual culture explorers had relatively larger group sizes compared to the other two clusters. This is consistent with the fact that these two groups tended to be families bringing more members such as child/children. Further comparison among these four clusters regarding the age category of the individuals in the travel groups showed that wildlife fans have a larger group size with relatively more travel accompanies in age under 12 and 12-24 while the casual culture explorers have comparatively more people from 45-64 years age category.

Casual culture explorers usually stay for the longest time with 1.76 days on average followed by wildlife fans (1.44 days) and VFR groups (1.31 days). Game enthusiasts stay in the area for the shortest time, on average less than one day. Similar patterns also showed in length of overall travel time. VFR group had the longest vacation time (2.93 on average) during the whole trip. These differences could indicate that most of family rural special-interests groups consider the rural area visited as their primary destination and they prefer to stay here and explore this area. Different interests differentiate the length of the stay. In the current study, gamers usually come here just for a day trip while other family rural special-interests groups tends to spend more days for a

larger variety of activities and attractions. The results also show that VFR group spent limited time in rural area but took a long time for the whole trip. This could indicate that they may visit friends and relatives on route to visiting other places. It could also mean what VFR visitors come from further away while the other groups are mostly from close vicinities. As casual culture explorers and wildlife fans were composed mainly couples with children, the result also suggested that family with child or children may stay longer than couples-only families.

Table 3 Comparison of Clusters in of Rural Family Travel Activity by Chi-square

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Family structure***				
Couple	*67.70%*	*34.40%*	*57.10%*	*69.50%*
Under 12 exclusively	*14.70%*	*35.60%*	*23.80%*	*16.10%*
13 -24 exclusively	*10.10%*	*12.20%*	*9.50%*	*7.60%*
With child under 12 and children 13-24	*7.50%*	*17.80%*	*9.50%*	*6.80%*
Household income				
$20000 - $ 49999	27.90%	28.20%	29.40%	21.80%
$50000 - $99999	45.60%	55.10%	38.20%	48.30%
$100000 - $149999	16.90%	10.30%	23.50%	18.40%
$150000 and above	4.40%	5.10%	5.90%	6.90%
Under $20000	5.10%	1.30%	2.90%	4.60%
Main purpose				
Pleasure	79.80%	91.10%	81.00%	82.20%
Business	8.90%	1.10%	7.10%	8.50%
Personal	11.20%	7.80%	11.90%	9.30%
Accommodation***				
Hotel, motel or bed & breakfast	92.80%	47.80%	64.50%	91.10%
With friends	2.40%	1.50%	3.20%	2.50%
With relatives	1.90%	1.50%	9.70%	5.10%
Campground	1.90%	46.30%	19.40%	1.30%
Other	1.00%	3.00%	3.20%	0.00%
How likely to return				
Very likely	63.10%	62.20%	69.00%	61.00%
Likely	23.60%	28.90%	21.40%	26.30%
Not sure	8.10%	4.40%	9.50%	11.00%
Unlikely	3.70%	3.30%	0.00%	1.70%
Very unlikely	1.40%	1.10%	0.00%	0.00%
Estimated returning time***				
Within and including 3 months	44.70%	22.20%	33.30%	28.00%
Within and including 6 months	11.20%	12.20%	16.70%	14.40%
Within and including 1 year	20.50%	35.60%	23.80%	32.20%
More than 1 year	3.20%	7.80%	11.90%	4.20%
Not sure	4.60%	4.40%	2.40%	2.50%

*** P-value significant at 0.001 level

Table 4 Comparison of Clusters in of Rural Family Travel Activity by ANOVA

	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Post Hoc#
Household size	*2.81*	*2.97*	*2.64*	*2.91*	
Group size***	3.12	4.21	3.71	2.96	4, 1, 3, 2
Group member's age					
Under 12***	0.37	1.12	0.76	0.38	1, 4, 3, 2
12-24***	0.33	0.63	0.26	0.20	4, 3, 1, 2
25-44*	0.92	1.44	1.67	0.67	4, 1, 2, 3
45-64*	1.46	2.10	2.24	1.34	4, 1, 2, 3
Older than 65	0.45	0.22	0.52	0.47	
Nights in Harrison County***	0.94	1.44	1.76	1.31	1, 4, 2, 3
Nights away from home in total***	1.59	2.28	2.81	2.93	1, 2, 3, 4
Average spending***	281.83	143.16	211.68	205.13	2, 4, 3, 1
Spending in specific categories					
Hotel (motel,B&B)**	41.38	25.58	41.38	52.12	2, 1, 3, 4
Other types (camps, apartments)***	0.19	9.01	5.12	0.08	4, 1, 3, 2
FB in restaurants and bars	30.04	26.00	37.19	38.17	
FB in convenience stores**	3.64	2.48	4.88	2.65	2, 4, 1, 3
FB in grocery stores/supermarkets**	1.59	4.00	6.11	2.86	1, 4, 2, 3
Beverage from packaged liquor stores**	0.83	0.16	3.44	0.92	2, 1, 4, 3
Antique shopping***	7.38	11.63	24.15	20.86	1, 2, 4, 3
Souvenirs shopping	3.37	4.59	4.82	7.58	
Other shopping	4.77	4.40	3.52	6.87	
Casino gaming***	153.52	32.17	51.08	47.77	2, 4, 3, 1
admission fees, tickets	5.47	9.61	12.50	6.32	
Gasoline	8.23	8.17	11.88	10.45	
Other goods and services	3.35	5.26	3.71	8.10	

#Post hoc test between clusters, from the largest number to the lowest number
1 Cluster one -- Gaming enthusiasts
2 Cluster two -- Wildlife fans
3 Cluster three -- Cultural explorers
4 Cluster four -- Visiting friends and relatives (VFR)
*** P-value significant at 0.001 level
** P-value significant at 0.05 level
* P-value significant at 0.01 level

On average, game enthusiasts spent more than the other clusters. The expenditure patterns are closely associated with the activities they participated. ANOVA test results showed that the four clusters spend differently in accommodation, places to eat, antique shopping, and gaming. Post hoc test revealed that the VFR group spent the most in hotel; casual culture explorers were likely to spend more in dining compared to other clusters. Game enthusiasts were obviously is the group that spent the most on casino gaming. The results also took note of the different expenditure patterns between families with different structure. Couples seemed to spend more for the interest they are looking for during their rural stay, while family with child and children had more responsibility for caring members, and they usually had more daily expenditure.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLIATIONS

This study provided a profile of the family rural travelers in rural area based on their activity participation. Identified segments were further compared by the family socio-demographics and travel patterns to assist with rural tourism marketing and promotion. The major finding of the current study was the identification of four family-rural-traveler clusters which include Game Enthusiasts, Wildlife Fans, Casual Culture Explorers and Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) and the different travel patterns among these four distinct groups. Furthermore, the result revealed that family structure may be one of the vital factors that influence the rural activities participation behavior.

The results of the current study are consistent with prior studies conducted elsewhere, such as studies conducted by Fleischer and Pizam (1997), Sharpley (1996), and Gartner (2004). This research reaffirms that the major market for rural tourism were domestic young families with children living at home, possessing college education and earning above-average incomes; the vacationer's main reason for choosing a rural tourism vacation was to enjoy quality family time, tranquility and closeness to nature that can be found in rural settings. In terms of family rural activities: the rural tourism product may include elements from other regions; tourists in rural areas can be relatively passive and tend to engage mostly in informal and unplanned activities; activities that are expensive to access and time consuming form their own segments. As rural areas are becoming one of the family travel groups' important destinations, these important patterns provide important behavioral information for rural destination marketers.

The study also revealed several rural tourism characteristics that have not been identified in previous studies. First of all, the four activity-based family rural traveler clusters empirically showed the characteristic what MacKay et al. (2002) referred to as special interest tourism. Further investigation revealed some theoretical and practical difference among the clusters. This study shows that the family rural travelers can be generally clustered into special-interests groups and VFR groups. Marketers could use this finding to develop various themes for the special-interests groups while maintaining the downtown amenities and facilities in order to attract more VFR oriented groups. For the current study location, gaming, natural resources and cultural amenities are their important tourism resources. Other cities and rural areas may be able to inventory their local resources and offer themed attractions and activities for their family tourist segment.

In recognizing that demand-side research generally has been ignored in the practice of developing tourism products unless demand can be tied to specific attributes (Gartner, 2004), this study connect the rural activities with the major rural market – family groups. This effort provides a new approach to product development and marketing of rural tourism products. By examining the rural family travelers from a broader family perspective, the findings of this research indicated that, with different family structure, parents may have different travel purposes when traveling with children versus traveling with spouse only. This difference can come from the fact that when families travel, all members' interests and preferences will have to be taken into account.

Family as a leisure travel consumption unit needs to be examined and treated differently from other travel party companionship such as couple only or alone. With the increasing emphasis placed on quality of family life and the growing trend of families using vacation as a vehicle to achieve that goal, these findings may help destination marketing organizations (DMO) pursue its main development goals (Kastenholz et al., 1999) by careful selection of the family target-market and its eventual differentiation in resources.

Further, some of the findings provide empirical support to some of the newly emerged market propositions. One of such was the importance of incorporating VFR market in hospitality and tourism marketing.

While the current study has both theoretical and practical implications for rural development, there is still considerate room for the further study in this area. For example, further study could incorporate benefit and motivational factors to explain the dynamics of activity participations in the rural destinations, especially in light of family travelers. It could also be of interests to examine factors influencing family travelers' rural destination choice process and compare that with the choices of more urban destinations. One interesting variable to investigate could be family living environment. In addition, complex family structure and roles need to be further explored to better understand their influences on family travel behavior. Other variables of interests are family values and life style, health and wellbeing, access to social support, enhancing socioeconomic status. The answers to these issues will further contribute to the literature of rural and family tourism.

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WHICH WAY WE ARE GOING:
GROWTH RATES METRICS OR VALUE METRICS?

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ABSTRACT

Measuring performance of destinations is a complicated yet potentially important issue for many destinations. Current metrics of destination performance based on growth rates do not provide sufficient information about destination competitiveness and sustainability in the global market. The study suggests a more meaningful performance measurement based on value generating processes at the destination level. Partial regression analysis is applied in order to assess the impact of value of the tourist product for each destination. Although educators do not need to know the specifics of the ways of measuring, they should reflect on the role of measurement in advancing our knowledge.

KEYWORDS: *Destination performance; Growth rates; Sustainability; Value generation.*

INTRODUCTION

Understanding value creation and its sustainability is a very relevant step in a destination's assessment about its potential in achieving a competitive advantage. This process involves understanding the underlying economics of what drives consumer benefits (e.g., how the destination serves consumer needs better than potential substitutes) and what drives costs in the making of the product.

Government's involvement is required to address market distortions pervasive in the tourism market as price alone cannot play its expected role of coordination optimally in order to clear markets. The presence of public goods on the one hand, and the condition of asymmetric information between providers and buyers on the other hand, prevent the optimality function (Burgan & Mules, 2001; Gray, 1982; Mak, 2003; Mules & Faulkner, 1996).

These special conditions of structural presence of market distortions and the composition of the resources configuring the tourism goods require the government to intervene in the production and consumption process of the tourism good. The role that the government intervention takes ranges from supervision, promotion, preservation, provision of public goods, to skimming off any rent to benefit the general economy.

This intervention manifests itself with the funding of promotion of the destination, research, training, infrastructure and more recently the support of events in order to support the demand pull of a destination (Chhabra, Sills & Cubbage, 2003; Crompton, Lee & Shuster, 2001; Ryan, 1995). In fact, many governments have established special bodies (corporations and/or CVBs) whose charter is to attract tourists with the potential to generate large economic impacts.

The presence of public money in the production and consumption of the tourist good demands transparency and accountability in the decision-making process. This means that the use of public money needs to be justified to the citizenry and this justification requires the proper type of performance measurement. Throughout the years the most frequently used metrics has been the growth rates metrics. The World Tourism Organization (WTO), the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and CVBs in general have used this type of metrics.

Growth rates metrics contains several shortcomings however (Croes, 2005; Papatheodorou & Song, 2005). They are too general and broad and they conceal more than they reveal in terms of relevant information that is appropriate for decision-making at the CVB level. The purpose of this study is therefore to propose and validate an alternative performance metrics for destinations based on the concept of value. The study uses data of a panel of two destinations (Orlando and Las Vegas) and standard time series methods to answer both questions. It concludes that the productivity metrics is richer in information and implications to support the decision-making at the CVB level. Its main contribution is in explaining cross destinations output differential, which until recently, scant attention has been paid. Although educators do not need to know the specifics of

the ways of measuring, they should reflect on the role of measurement in advancing our knowledge.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Destination performance measurement has been the attention of investigation for the past decade both from academic and practical perspectives (Crouch & Ritchie, 1990). However, no consensus has been reached as to whether there is a comprehensive/better model which can be readily accepted by researchers. The issue is even more complicated by destination level variables such as nature of the destination, product mix of the destination as well as the unit of analysis applied in investigation. As a result, different theoretical frameworks have been adopted to examine the issue.

For example, the resource-based view, which is originated from the strategic management concepts, has been widely used to examine the competitive potential of an industry in a given geographic area (Porter, 1990). Built on this reasoning, Crouch and Ritchie (1999) has attempted to develop frameworks to measure destination competitiveness from a tourism perspective. Other widely used approaches include the traditional accounting-based performance measurement, the balanced scorecard approach (Denton & White, 2000; Kaplan & Norton, 2001) and the benchmarking approach (Wober, 2002). Unfortunately, these approaches are either too general to measure or biased towards a chosen perspective.

For the purpose of this study, value is derived from economic theory. It is defined as the positive difference between the perceived benefit (B) that a consumer can accrue from a product and from the cost of acquiring and producing this product (C). Therefore, anytime that B exceeds C, and the product is purchased by the consumer, economic value is created. This definition incorporates the concept of opportunity costs both in terms of the producer in combining labor, capital and raw materials and the consumer in terms of search cost. This definition is appropriate for decision making at the business level because these decisions require the measurement of opportunity cost (Besanko et al, 2003).

METHODOLOGY AND THE EMPIRICAL MODEL

The methodology of the study consists of three steps. First, the study applies the conventional methodology of growth rates estimation and rank performance accordingly. The growth rate is measured through estimation of equations (1) and (2):

$$(1)\ \text{TARR}_{jt} = \gamma e^{\delta \text{Time}}$$
$$(2)\ \text{TAE}_{jt} = \eta e^{\theta \text{Time}}$$

After taking logs on both sides, equations (1) and (2) can be specified as:

(3) $\log \text{TARR}_{jt} = \gamma + \delta \, \text{Time}$
(4) $\log \text{TRE}_{jt} = \eta + \theta \, \text{Time}$

Where TARR_{jt} and TAE_{jt} are tourist arrivals and tourist receipts for the j region in period t respectively, and δ and θ multiplied by 100 give values of the average annual growth rates.

Second, the study constructs an econometric model for each region which seeks to capture the essential features of tourism spending. A more technical and thorough explanation of the model can be found in Croes (2005). Thus, the reduced-form tourism spending equation can be specified as:

(5) $\text{TSP}_t = f\,(\text{TOUV}_t, \text{INF}_t, \text{ALS}_t, \text{TSP}_{t-1}, \text{TIME}_t, \varepsilon_t)$

Where TSP_t is the total spending level of the visitors in year t, TOUV_t is the visitation level in year t, INF_t is the price variable, ALS_t is the average length of stay of each visitor, TSP_{t-1} is the tastes, preferences and habits of the visitors, TIME_t is a time trend, and ε_t is the disturbance factor. The consumer price index serves as a proxy for the price variable. Finally, the value component is captured by a time trend. Trends capture broad movements in the dependent variable that are not explained by the independent variable in the model.

Equation (5) explains the outcome of increasing spending either as a result of expanding visitation, inflation, average length of stay, tastes and preferences or an improvement in the value of the tourism product, or a combination of all five. High value captured through the time trend is associated with high quality/high expenditures tourist, and potentially higher multipliers, while a low value is associated with low-spending tourist. The latter may potentially hamper sustainability of the product and is also associated with low competitiveness of the destination.

Notwithstanding the study's specification of a multiple regression model, the emphasis in this analysis only focuses on one variable – of the complete set of variables-the effect of value added to the tourism product on the generation of spending. The question to consider here is what computations are involved in obtaining, in isolation, the coefficient of the trend variable in equation (5).

To pursue this objective, the study transformed equation (5) into the following regressions:

(6) $\text{TSP}_t = B_0 + B_1\text{TOUV}_t + B_2\,\text{INF}_t + B_3\,\text{ALS}_t + B_4\,\text{TSP}_{t-1} + \text{TIME} + e_t$

(7) $\text{Log TSP}_t = B_0 + B_1\text{Log TOUV}_t + B_2\,\text{Log INF}_t + B_3\,\text{Log ALS}_t + B_4\,\text{LogTSP}_{t-1} + \text{TIME} + e_t$

The study assumed international receipts are exogenous to each of the independent variables, thereby justifying the use of OLS. The study used partial

correlations from multiple regressions to compute the R-square of the five variables. The value variable is the resultant of the unique explanation of the time trend as a proxy of value, not considering any shared explanation. The variables appear to have an upward trend, and applying OLS, we found a significant positive effect.

Often, detrending helps to eliminate spurious regression results. But as recent econometric literature shows, detrending does not help in case the variables are difference-stationary, i.e., I(1). Therefore, the Augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) unit root tests were carried out to examine the stationarity of all variables. This process enabled the study to rank and compare the performance of destinations under review. Finally, the study compared the results of the two methods and their policy implications.

DATA SOURCES, ESTIMATION AND EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The study included two destinations in the U.S.: Orlando and Las Vegas. These are top destinations both for leisure and convention travel markets and usually regarded as competitors in one or both of the markets in U.S. The data for this study is collected from the selected DMOs representing the destinations and from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The study developed a panel of observations from 1992 to 2004 based on the availability of data for the two destinations.

Initially, the study intended to assess the performance of the selected destinations across time. The time series was been broken down in two time periods: 1992 to 1997 and 1998 to 2004. The observation points unfortunately turned out to be too small to carry out this analysis; therefore this intention was aborted.

STUDY RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Figure 1 captures the performance of Orlando and Las Vegas based on the amount of visitors during 1992 to 2004. There is an increase for both destinations during the time span under review. For example, the amount of visitors to Las Vegas increased from 21.9 million in 1992 to 37.4 million in 2004. This is an increase of 41.4% throughout that period. The figures for Orlando during the time under review were 27.3 million in 1992 and 47.8 million in 2004. This is equivalent to a 43% increase. Figure 1 indicates a close resemblance in the visitation evolution between Las Vegas and Orlando, where Orlando had more visitors, except in 1994 where the two lines coincided.
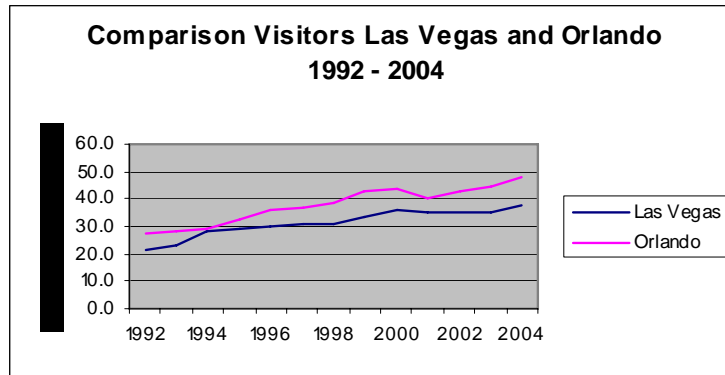
Figure 1. Performance of Orlando and Las Vegas Based on Visitor Numbers

A similar pattern can be discerned with regard to spending: Las Vegas saw an increase in visitors spending from US$14.7 billion in 1992 to US$33.7 billion in 2004 (Figure 2). This is an increase of 56.3% throughout that period. Orlando, on the other hand, had an increase from US$11 billion in 1992 to 28.2 billion in 2004, which is equivalent to an increase of 60.9% during that same time span. Figure 2 depicts the evolution of the visitors spending patterns in both destinations. Again, there is a similar steady upward trend in visitor spending for the two destinations.

The study conducted a more in depth analysis of the available data in order to detect whether the upward trends in visitation and visitor spending at the two destinations are similar only in shape or whether they conceal some underlying realities with potential critical implications for competitiveness and sustainability. To accomplish this task, the study conducted a regression analysis.
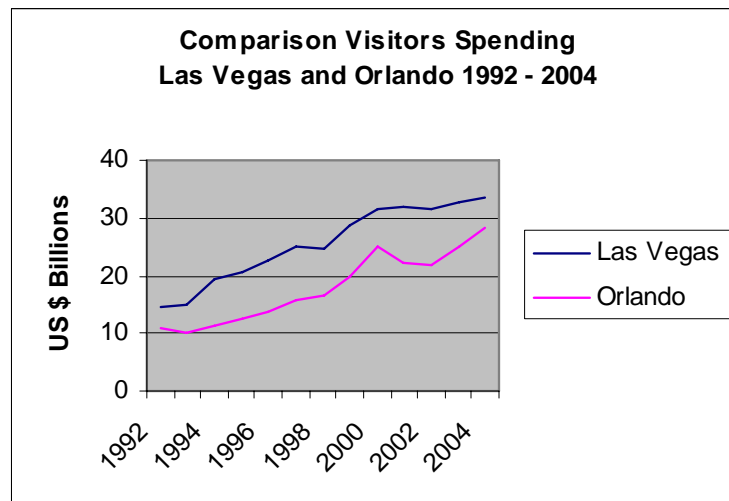
Figure 2. Performance of Orlando and Las Vegas Based on Visitor Spending

Before the study performed the regressions, it engaged in an analysis of the properties of the time series. To prevent spurious results, the time series should be stationary. Therefore, the augmented Dickey-Fuller (ADF) was performed in order to determine whether the time series of the variables had unit roots. The results of the tests indicated the presence of unit root and that the time series became stationary after first difference.

Notwithstanding the above finding, the study decided not to rely on the unit root test and not to apply the regressions at first difference, but instead to keep the level form. The reason for this is that the sample of the study turned out to be extremely small ($n=14$), and therefore it is difficult to reject the null hypothesis of a unit root if the process approximates a unit root. Insisting on a unit root might not only lead to power of the tests, and could lead to erroneous conclusions about the existence of unit root and cointegration vectors (Harvey, 1997). With this cautionary note, the study decided to rely on the theoretical underpinnings of our model instead.

The study proceeded therefore with the estimation equations (3) and (4) by ordinary least squares. The results in Table 1 indicate that Orlando outperformed Las Vegas by a slight margin both in terms of visitation as well as visitor spending. Visitation in Orlando increased by 4.4% annually compared to Las Vegas 4.0% annually during 1992-2004. Similarly, Orlando performed better in terms of visitor spending than Las Vegas, realizing an annual growth of 7% compared to 6.2% of the latter. Both figures indicate a slightly higher performance of Orlando of 10% and 11.4% with regard to visitation and visitor spending respectively.

Table1. Tourism Growth Rates in percentage 1992 – 2004

	Las Vegas	Orlando
Visitors	4	4.4
Spending	6.2	7

*Source: **Authors** estimation based on data from the CVB's of both destinations.*

The next step in the study was to assess whether the results from equations (3) and (4) differ from the suggested model in equation (7). The results from Table 1 are based on nominal values and hence cannot capture tourism's contribution in deflated terms. The study therefore included relevant variables in the production and consumption of the tourist product, such as cost of the product, average length of stay of the visitor, and the size of the tourism sector proxied by government expenditures. The study conducted an estimation of equation 7 in order to distill more specific information about the performance of the selected destinations.

The model turned out to be parsimonious because the covariates provided a high degree of explanation of the variance in tourist expenditures. All the measures of the equation parameters are significant at the 99.9% level of confidence. All the parameters

had the expected correct signs. Autocorrelation, a common concern in time series data, was tested using the Durbin-Watson test statistic. The study detected no autocorrelation at 95% confidence in both destinations.

The results are presented in Table 2. Again, the performance of Orlando compared to Las Vegas is highly consistent with previous results: Orlando outperformed Las Vegas. Unlike the previous findings, the performance of Las Vegas appears to be less robust, indicating some stronger competitive advantage in the case of Orlando. The Orlando product increased its value during the period under review by 56.6% compared to 8.7% of Las Vegas. We can, therefore, derive from this finding that the Orlando product increased its value faster than Las Vegas; indeed, the former increased its value by a factor of 6.5 times faster than the latter.

Table 2 Partial Correlations

Variables	Orlando	Sig.	Las Vegas	Sig.
Visitors	0.77	0.025	0.86	0.005
Stay	0.37	0.356	0.09	0.829
Cost	-0.42	0.092	-0.03	0.024
Value	0.566	0.032	0.087	0.002

The results help explain why Orlando outperformed Las Vegas during the time under review. Table 3 indicates that in the case of Orlando value was the important variable explaining visitor spending. The standard coefficient β was 1.04, followed in sequence by inflation, arrivals and the length of the visitation. Las Vegas, on the other hand, indicates a different sequence in terms of the relevance of the variables in explaining visitors spending. Visitation turned out to be the most important variable with a β of 0.66, followed in sequence by value, duration of visitation, and inflation.

Table 3 β coefficients

Variables	Orlando	Las Vegas
Visitors	0.626	0.603
Stay	0.076	0.015
Cost	-0.827	-0.076
Value	1.041	0.222
R-Square	0.984	0.990
F	(0.000)	(0.000)

Table 3 further indicates that in the case of Orlando value was almost twice as much more important than visitation in the variance of visitor spending. This contrast dramatically with Las Vegas where visitation appears to be three times more relevant

than value in the explanation of visitors spending there. Both the cost of consumption of the tourist product as well as the duration of the stay helped to explain the dramatic difference in competitiveness between Orlando and Las Vegas.

The CPI variable appears stronger in Las Vegas than Orlando in explaining visitors spending; therefore it should have a greater negative impact on the competitiveness of Las Vegas than Orlando. But the average CPI in Las Vegas over the time under review appears slightly higher than in Orlando (164.2 and 159.5 respectively), which equals to a 3% difference. Similarly, the duration of stay is stronger in the case of Las Vegas than Orlando, but due to the fact that its average throughout this time is 8% less than Orlando, its effects on value enhancement is therefore reduced.

There is, however, one issue of concern about Orlando's competitiveness compared to Las Vegas. The study estimated the volatility of visitors spending throughout the period. Volatility is measured by the standard deviation in percentage points of growth receipts (the standard deviation is measured by $s = \sqrt{\sigma_x^2} = \sum_{i=1}^{N} p_i \left[x_i - E(X) \right]^2$). The lower the value of the standard deviation, the more stable are visitor receipts. Las Vegas has the lowest standard deviation compared to Orlando (11.03% compared to 14.9%). Thus, visitors spending in the former increased more steadily compared to Orlando with the latter showing some level of volatility. This should raise some concern about the sustainability of Orlando's product.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study compared two approaches to measure the performance of two destinations, namely Las Vegas and Orlando. These approaches were the conventional growth rates model based on the level of visitation and visitor spending. Higher visitation level and greater visitor spending were attributed to better performance according to this approach. This approach has been widely used by both scholars and practitioners alike.

The second approach was based on a value model embedded in economic theory. Visitor spending is captured by the level and duration of visitation, the cost of making the tourism product (using the CPI as a proxy), preferences and tastes and by a level of value (economic rent) (using a time trend as a proxy). Value in this reasoning is a residual after taking all these variables into account.

The results of both approaches indicate that Orlando consistently outperformed Las Vegas throughout the period of interest. The second approach, however, seems to indicate a faster pace of value enhancement in the case of Orlando. This suggests that the product in Orlando has become more attractive and also more competitive from a consumer and marketing standpoint than Las Vegas.

The second approach may explain why Orlando appears more competitive. Value has a stronger impact in the case of Orlando than Las Vegas in explaining visitor

spending, while the latter indicates the level of visitation as the strongest variable in explaining its visitors spending. This suggests that Orlando is more efficient in both improving the process of product delivery as well as in acquiring customers than Las Vegas.

Finally, the second approach also suggests that Orlando, even though more competitive than Las Vegas during the time under review, should be careful with regard to the sustainability of its product. The results suggest that the danger in sustainability in the case of Orlando does not emanate from the level of visitation and impact on visitors spending, but from the volatility of this spending. The customer base of Orlando seems more sensitive to non-economic factors than that one in Las Vegas. The results appear to suggest that an efficient inter-temporal trade off between asset management and maximization of rents may be an issue in the case of Orlando.

In conclusion, the second approach appears more theory driven, the results are more robust and richer in information and implications for policymakers and business managers at both destinations. The results appear to suggest that a destination based on family seems more competitive than one on gambling and entertainment at least over the time period under review.

The study has its limitations. On the one hand, the number of destinations should increase in order to have a better perspective with regard to the competitiveness and sustainability of product types; on the other hand, the time series should include more observation points in order to facilitate not only the assessment of inter-temporal changes, but also to provide higher power of the tests. In this regard, it is important to conduct a full scale cointegration test in order to make the study more meaningful.

This analysis facilitates the strengthening of the ability to reason more deeply about tourism and its effects on the communities. Developing deeper understanding of the role of measurement and new types of measurement uses will assist the educator in his/her reasoning and sharing of social phenomena to students. It will provide greater opportunities for educators as well to challenge students about existing and new realities.

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THE ROLES OF ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION IN PREDICTING TRAVEL INTENTION

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationships among motivation, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention in the context of mainland Chinese travelers to Hong Kong. Specifically, the roles of motivation and attitude were compared in their influence on travel intention. Data were collected in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou (n = 1,514). SEM results showed that attitude and motivation played similar roles in predicting travel intention. Correlation analysis showed that the two constructs were related; however, the cause and effect relationship between the two constructs was only partially evidenced by a regression analysis.

KEYWORDS: *Motivation; Attitudes; Intention; China; Hong Kong.*

INTRODUCTION

Visitor arrival statistics showed that the total number of travelers from mainland China to Hong Kong increased from 2.7 million in 1998 to 12.5 million in 2005, which accounted for 53.7% of all inbound visitors (Hong Kong Tourism Board [HKTB], 2006a). Mainland visitors to Hong Kong mainly came from Guangdong (35.1%), Beijing (9.9%), and Shanghai (6.4%), which represent the most affluent regions of China and are among the first wave of cities and provinces whose residents are allowed to visit Hong Kong as individual travelers (HKTB, 2006b). Giving the importance of the China outbound market to the overall tourism industry in Hong Kong, it is of great significance to understand the influencing factors of their intention to visit Hong Kong. In addition, as Chinese citizens are allowed to visit more destinations, competition from other destinations in the region, such as Singapore and Thailand, will intensify because of the shear number of potential Chinese visitors and their tremendous spending power. Mainland Chinese visitors to Hong Kong had the highest per capita spending among all visitors from Asia, except Taiwan (HKTB, 2006a).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Travel Motivation

The decision-making process leading to the choice of a travel destination is quite complex. One of the decision-making process models related to travelers' choice of a destination focuses on travel motivation (e.g., Crompton, 1979). Tourist motivation has been a focus of tourism research for several decades. However, as Pearce (1993) argued while there have been many papers in the tourism literature discussing motivation, there are few widely adopted theoretical approaches. The reason behind this phenomenon could be that tourist motivation is a complicated psychological construct, which lacks widely accepted methodology and validated measurement.

In addition, although tourism motivation studies abound; the majority of them were conducted in Western countries using Western population based on Western motivation theories. Very few cases have examined mainland Chinese travelers' motivation. Zhang and Lam (1999) first applied the push and pull model to analyze mainland Chinese visitors' motivation to visit Hong Kong. They concluded that *knowledge*, *prestige*, and *enhancement of human relationship* were the most important push factors, whereas *hi-tech image*, *expenditure*, and *accessibility* were the most significant pull factors. Another tourist motivation study on mainland Chinese travelers, also within the context of visiting Hong Kong, was conducted by Hsu and Lam (2003). Results indicated that sightseeing was the strongest motivation driving mainland Chinese travelers to visit Hong Kong. In addition, visiting the Ocean Park, experiencing different culture, and fulfilling curiosity about Hong Kong were strong motivation factors that were important to potential Chinese visitors.

While these studies contributed to the understanding of mainland Chinese travelers' motivation of visiting Hong Kong, they could be considered exploratory and the instruments were not validated with rigorous procedures. Most tourist motivation studies also examined motivation as a construct by itself, as a market segmentation criterion, or as a predictor of trip satisfaction. However, its relations with other constructs, such as travel intention and attitude towards traveling to a destination, have not been well documented. Ajzen (1991) assumed that intentions captured the motivational factors that influence a behavior and indicate how hard people are willing to try or how much effort they would exert to perform the behavior. This implies that motivation is related to behavioral intention.

A study by Baloglu (1999) demonstrated that visitation intention was determined by interrelated sets of stimuli (information sources), psychological factors (socio-psychological travel motivation), and images (perceptual/cognitive and affective images). In his study, motivation was incorporated into the theoretical framework to act as a predictor of revisit intention. Motivation factors entered into the final path model were *escape/relaxation*, *knowledge*, and *prestige*. Both *escape/relaxation* and *prestige* motivations had negative impacts on visitation intention. However, *knowledge* motivation did not directly influence revisit intention.

Tourist Attitude

Another decision-making process model is the theory of reasoned action (TRA) developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). The theory of reasoned action has often been utilized by researchers to investigate human behavior in the disciplines of marketing and social psychology (e.g., Armitage & Conner, 2001). An individual's intention to perform a specific act, or behavioral intention with respect to a given stimulus object, in a given situation is a function of the individual's attitude towards the behavior and his/her subjective norm (Fishbein, 1967). The second determinant of intention, subjective norm, is defined as the perception of general social pressures to perform or not to perform a particular behavior.

Um and Crompton (1990, 1991) examined the role of attitude in the destination choice process. Based on the three-stage model of destination selection (awareness set—evoked set—final destination selection), they hypothesized that at both evoked set and final selection stages, travel destination choice depends upon attitude towards each destination alternative. Empirical test results suggested that attitude was influential in determining whether a potential destination was selected as part of the evoked set and in selecting a final destination. Works on tourist attitude mostly dealt with relationship between attitude and behavior. However, attitudinal measurements are not suitable for representing the motivation aspect (Bagozzi, 1986).

An extension of the TRA, known as the theory of planned behavior (TPB), was then proposed by Ajzen (1988). TPB (Ajzen 1988, 1991) was designed to predict behaviors not under complete volitional control. TPB postulates that behavior is predicted by an individual's intention to perform the behavior and also by his/her perceived

behavioral control, such as facilitating factors (Triandis, 1977), the context of opportunity (Sarver, 1983), or resources (Liska, 1984). During the travel decision-making process, travelers always face some constraint factors that weigh up in the final decision of whether or not to take the actual trip. The most salient constraint factors may be time and money. Furthermore, travel distance, personal safety, health problem, language, and visa application procedure may also be perceived as constraint factors by various types of travelers. Instead of employing the term *perceived constraint*, some researchers have used other terms, such as "perceived risks" (Christopher, 2002; Moutinho, 1987; Sonmez & Graefe, 1998), "perceived inhibitors" (Um & Crompton, 1992), and "perceived barriers" (Hsu & Lam, 2003), but the underlying meanings are the same or mostly similar. Although perceived constraint is a very important construct in the travel decision-making process, this construct has not been studied extensively by tourism researchers.

Motivation and Attitude

Gnoth (1997) conducted an in-depth conceptual study on tourism motivation, which discussed the relation between motivation and attitude. The study derived a conceptual framework in which attitude was determined by tourism motivation. However, the conceptual model was not empirically verified. Theoretically, motivation is distinguished from motive in that, whereby motive refers to the generic energizer for behavior, motivation actually includes interaction between motive and situation and is cognitive in nature (Gnoth, 1997). Comparatively, attitude is more predisposed to be affective. Ajzen (1988, 1991) assumed that individuals' attitude towards behavior is determined by behavioral beliefs, implying that cognitive motivation may influence affective attitude.

The relationship between travel motivation to a destination and attitude towards the destination has been proposed and discussed; however, empirical support of the relation has been limited. Previous research in tourist motivation seldom focused on the interrelationship between motivation and other related constructs. Very few studies could be located to provide evidence regarding effects of tourist motivation on attitude. Empirical comparison of the roles of motivation and attitude in the formation of behavioral intention to visit a destination was also inadequate. In addition, for both the TRA and TPB, the principle of compatibility must be abided by firmly in order to increase their predictive utility (Ajzen, 1988; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Compatibility applies to the measurement of each component in the model, which must refer to the same action, target, context, and time (Ajzen, 1988; Conner & Sparks, 1996). Most previous tourist attitude studies assessed respondents' attitude towards particular tourism destination(s). However, the attitudinal object of this study was the act of a future visit to a destination, the same as the object of other constructs under study.

Thus, this study examined the relationships among motivation, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention in two separate models (see Figure 1) without directly linking the relationship between motivation and attitude due to a lack of strong theoretical support. Specifically, this study (1) developed and purified a travel motivation measurement scale, (2) compared the roles of motivation and attitude in

predicting intention of visiting Hong Kong, and (3) identified the relationship between travel motivation and attitude.

METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire was developed based on a review of relevant literature and three focus groups held in urban areas of mainland China. Each group consisted of 8-10 participants and lasted for an average of 45 minutes. The purpose of the focus groups was to identify motivation items that could be included in the survey instrument. Items for attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention were adapted from the study by Lam and Hsu (2004). Two pilot studies were conducted to refine the instrument. The initial questionnaire with 38 motivation items were pilot tested with 204 respondents who were surveyed in various cities in China. Revisions of the instrument were made based on results of the reliability and factor analyses. The revised instrument, with 27 motivation items, was further pilot tested. Data were collected from 186 travelers at the Beijing Capital International Airport and white-collar workers in Beijing's business districts. Reliability and factor analyses were again used to further purify the instrument.

The final questionnaire had the following measurements: 20 motivation items, 6 attitude items, 5 perceived behavioral control items, 3 subjective norm items, and 4 intention items. All items employed the same 7-point Likert-type scale where 7 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree. For the motivation items, the following instruction was provided to respondents: "There are 20 statements describing the possible reasons of visiting Hong Kong. Think carefully about each statement, and indicate the degree of your agreement/disagreement by circling the appropriate number following the statement where 7 = strongly agree and 1 = strongly disagree". The statements started with an umbrella question stem: "If you were to visit Hong Kong in the near future, you would visit it because you'd like to…" Attitude was measured with 6 items, which had a common stem: From all your knowledge about Hong Kong, you think the visit would be… Respondents were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on the following descriptors: enjoyable, pleasant, worthwhile, satisfying, fascinating, and rewarding.

Five statements were used to measure perceived behavioral control: (1) "It is not difficult for you to visit Hong Kong in the near future"; (2) "Whether or not to visit Hong Kong in the near future is completely up to you"; (3) "If you wanted to, you could visit Hong Kong in the near future"; (4) "You have complete control over visiting Hong Kong in the near future"; and (5) "It is impossible for you to visit Hong Kong in the near future". Three questions were asked to evaluate subjective norm: "Most people who are important to you think that you should visit Hong Kong in the near future", "The people in your life whose opinions you value would approve of your visiting Hong Kong in the near future", and "Most people who are important to you would visit Hong Kong in the near future". Behavioral intention was measured by four statements: You intend to/plan to/want to/probably will visit Hong Kong in the next 6 months.

Data were collected in three major cities in China (Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou) from individuals who were 16 years and older and had shown an interest in travel. The top three cities were selected because residents in those cities tend to have higher income and therefore higher propensities to travel. A group of interviewers who were college juniors, seniors, and graduate students was hired. Interviewers received training on research methods and were briefed about the design of the questionnaire. Data collection scenarios were role played before interviewers were sent out for field work. A supervisor randomly stopped by the various data collection sites, with approximately 10% of the data collected under supervision. Interviewers stationed at airport terminals, train stations, shopping malls, and outside of travel agencies. Potential respondents were invited to participate. After explaining the purpose of the study, participants were asked to fill out the questionnaire onsite. The effective sample size for Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou was 505, 505, and 504, respectively.

The sample from each city was randomly split into two halves, with the first half used in an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to identify the underlying factors for the motivation construct. The second half of the dataset was used in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of motivation as well as model testing of the roles of attitude and motivation. Items with missing data were deleted from the dataset, with 668 cases retained in the first half and 784 in the second half. SPSS was used for descriptive statistics, reliability, regression, and EFA analyses; and LISREL was used for the CFA and model testing.

RESULTS

Of the respondents, 86.7% had never visited Hong Kong. The gender distribution was 50.1% male and 49.9% female. As shown in Table 1, 73.6% were 19–29 years of age, 76.9% had never been married, over half were college educated, and 41.3% had 1,001–3,000 RMB (US$125–370) as the monthly income.

Purification of the Motivation Measurement

A factor analysis was conducted to extract underlying dimensions and reduce the item pool. A principal component method was used with varimax rotation. Factors with engivalues greater than 1.0 were selected. Items with loadings lower than .40 on all factors, with loadings of .40 or higher on two or more factors, and trivial factors (i.e., factors with only one item having a loading of .40 or higher) were removed one at a time. The factor analysis was re-run on the remaining items after an item was deleted. This process continued until no more items were to be deleted. Of the 20 items, three items had lower than .30 corrected item-to-total correlation and they were removed in the preliminary reliability test. Seventeen items were used in the EFA. Two rounds of factor analysis was run, with a three-factor solution derived (Table 2). Of the 17 items, 16 were retained, explaining 52.96% of the variance. The three factors were labeled as *cultural experience*, *relaxation*, and *novelty*. All factors showed acceptable levels of reliability.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents (n = 1,514)

Characteristic	Percentage	Characteristic	Percentage
Age		Education	
≤ 18	8.1	Junior high school or lower	4.2
19-29	73.6	High school	27.8
30-39	10.3	College	27.4
40-49	4.4	University	35.3
50-59	2.6	Graduate education	5.3
≥ 60	.9	Personal monthly income	
Marital Status		No income	29.2
Never been married	76.9	< 1,000 RMB	9.4
Married	22.1	1,001–2,000 RMB	22.3
Divorced	.5	2,001–3,000 RMB	19.0
Widowed	.2	3,001–4,000 RMB	9.2
		4,001–5,000 RMB	5.2

Results of the EFA were used as a base for the CFA with a sample size of 784. Covariance matrix of the retained items was input into the LISREL program. The factor structure was confirmed with the following fit indices: GFI = 0.93, AGFI = 0.90, Chi-square = 268.78, df = 94, p-value = 0.00000, RMSEA = 0.055. Quality of the final measurement model was then assessed. The *t* value associated with each of the loadings exceeded the critical value of 3.29 for the .001 significance level. Therefore, all indicators were significantly related to their specified construct, verifying the stated relationships between indicators and constructs. All indicators had reliabilities from .17 to .58; and all constructs had composite reliabilities from .39 to .83. In addition, evidence of discriminant validity was established. None of the confidence intervals included the value of 1.00 and such results demonstrated the discriminant validity of the three factors derived from the motivation scale. As a result, the final 16-item scale measuring motivation was validated.

Attitude vs. Motivation Models

Cronbach's alpha statistics were calculated to assess the internal reliabilities of the scales developed for the study. As shown in Table 3, the scales generally proved internally consistent and had acceptable values of alpha (α > .70) ranging from 0.72 to 0.86. The sum mean scores and standard deviations of the scales are also presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis

Factor/Item	Loading	Eigen-value	Variance Explained (%)	Reliability Alpha
Factor 1: Cultural Experience		**3.468**	**21.68**	**.8254**
increase knowledge about other places	.754			
know more about Hong Kong as an example of "One Country, Two Systems"	.718			
experience different cultures	.689			
learn Hong Kong's unique colonial history	.675			
interact with Hong Kong people	.650			
visit some cultural and historical attractions	.610			
experience the melting culture of East meeting West	.496			
enjoy natural and urban landscape in Hong Kong	.419			
Factor 2: Relaxation		**2.828**	**17.68**	**.7608**
enjoy happy time with family	.740			
enjoy happy time with friends who travel together	.725			
have some time for a break from routine life	.684			
relax and rest	.659			
release work pressure	.642			
Factor 3: Novelty		**2.177**	**13.61**	**.7152**
visit a destination where most people think deserves to visit	.833			
fulfill curiosity about Hong Kong	.820			
feel the magnificence of the city's skyscrapers	.568			
Total			**52.96**	

KMO = .868

Bartlett's Test = 3464.780 with significance < .000

Table 3. Quality of Measurement Scales

Construct	Alpha	Sum Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Items
Motivation	.72	15.43	2.72	3
Attitude	.85	33.58	5.25	6
Perceived behavioral control	.78	19.36	6.29	5
Subjective norm	.85	12.78	4.12	3
Intention	.86	17.78	5.64	4

Structural Equation Modeling was run with the three motivation dimensions and items measuring the attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, and intention in two separate models. Results showed that attitude and motivation played similar roles in predicting travel intention (Figure 1), with motivation being a slightly stronger predictor of intention than attitude.

Chi-square = 239.61, df = 123
p-value = 0.0000
RMSEA = 0.037
GFI = 0.95
AGFI = 0.93

Chi-square = 188.66, df = 79
p-value = 0.0000
RMSEA = 0.045
GFI = 0.96
AGFI = 0.93
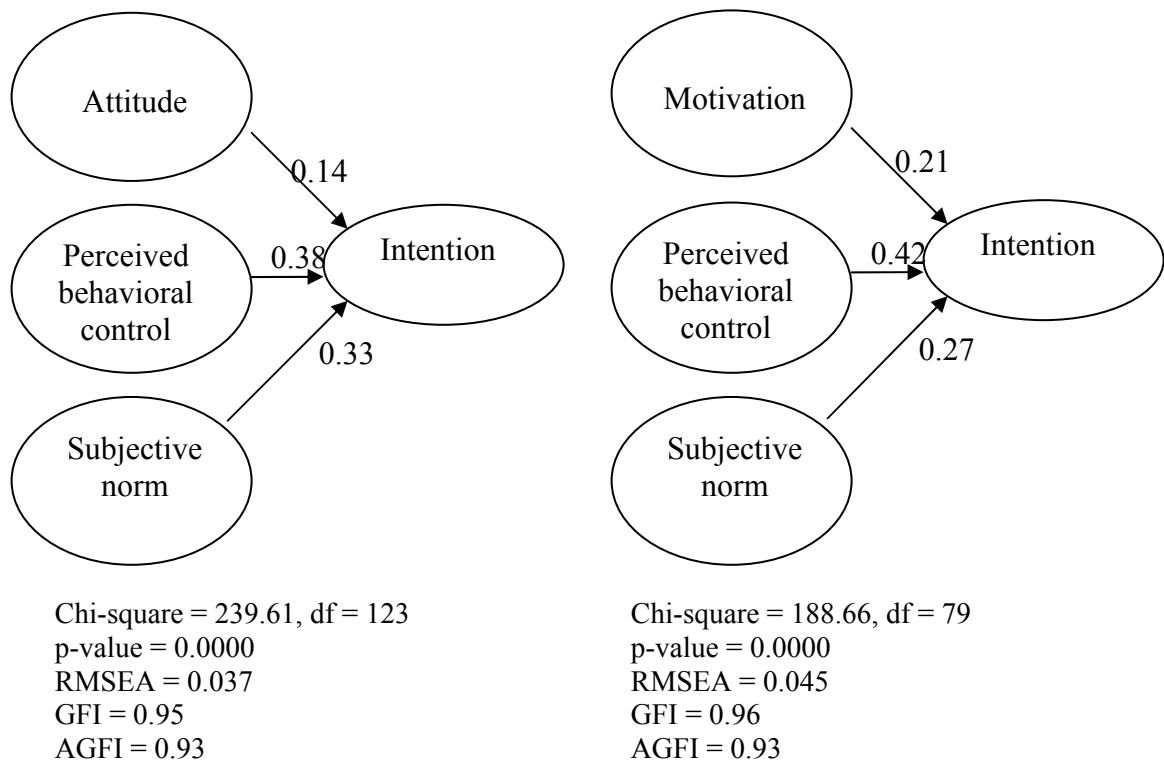
Figure 1. Competing Models of Attitude vs. Motivation

The inclusion of motivation or attitude did not drastically change the role of constraint or subject norm in its ability to predict intention. The constructs of attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subject norm collectively explained 46% of the variance of intention (R^2 = .46); while the constructs of motivation, perceived behavioral

control, and subject norm explained 48% of the variance of intention (R^2 = .48). Based on Cohen's (1988) recommendation, R^2 values of .25 or higher could denote "large" effects. Thus, the exogenous variables in both models had very large collective effects on revisit intention.

Relationship between Motivation and Attitude

The relationship between the motivation and attitude constructs was identified first with a correlation analysis. Table 4 shows the correlations between the three motivation dimensions and attitude. The *novelty* dimension had the strongest correlation with attitude (r=.46), followed by *relaxation* (r=.43). These could be considered as medium level correlations at best.

Table 4. Correlations between Motivation Factors and Attitude

	Attitude	*Cultural experience*	*Relaxation*	*Novelty*
Attitude		.39***	.43***	.46***
Cultural experience			.48***	.59***
Relaxation				.38***
Novelty				

Note: *** p < 0.001

A multiple regression analysis was then conducted to test the explanatory power of *cultural experience*, *relaxation*, and *novelty* on attitude. The three motivation factors were used as independent variables and attitude as the dependent variable. The three motivation factors significantly predicted attitude, with F (3, 717) = 98.43, p < .001 (see Table 5), and explained 29% of the variance (adjusted R^2 = .29). However, *cultural experience* was found insignificant as a predictor, while *relaxation* and *novelty* had similar explanatory powers. Tolerance indices for multicollinearity among the independent variables were substantially higher than the common cutoff threshold of .10 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2002). Reliability coefficients between each pair of independent variables in the model, shown in Table 4, could be labeled as medium correlations. The coefficients ranged from .38 to .59. Therefore, the evidence suggested a lack of multicollinearity among independent variables in the multiple linear regression model.

Table 5. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for Attitude

Independent Variable	B	Beta	T Value	Significance (p value)	Collinearity Tolerance
Constant	3.06		18.36	.000***	
Cultural Experience	.07	.07	1.77	.078	.58
Relaxation	.22	.28	7.70	.000***	.76
Novelty	.21	.31	7.94	.000***	.64

Note: F (3, 717) = 98.43, p < .001, Adjusted R^2 = .29
*** p < 0.001

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study investigated relationships among the various predictors of mainland Chinese' intention of visiting Hong Kong. The motivation measurement was repeatedly tested and revised with two pilot studies, and further purified using EFA and CFA with the data collected from the main study. The final measurement model was used in the structural model to test the role of motivation, along with perceived behavioral control and subjective norm, in determining travel intention. Another structural model used attitude, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norm as exogenous variables and travel intention as the endogenous variable. Results of the two structural models showed that motivation and attitude played similar roles in predicting travel intention. Correlation analysis showed that the two constructs were related; however, regression analysis showed that only two of the three motivation dimensions had an impact on attitude and the overall explanatory power was at 29%. Thus, the causal relationship between motivation and attitude was only partially supported.

Due to a lack of previous empirical evidence and theoretical support, this study tested two independent models, one with motivation and the other with attitude as an exogenous variable. This study provided initial empirical evidence of the relationship between travel motivation and attitude towards the future visit. With the partial relationship between motivation and attitude established, the next step of the data analysis could incorporate both constructs into the same structural model, using attitude as a moderator of the relationship between motivation and travel intention. Thus, the current study built the foundation for future empirical investigations of an expansion of the theory of planned behavior to include travel motivation as an antecedent of attitude.

Results of the study showed that the theory of planned behavior could be applied to the context of this study. Perceived behavioral control was the strongest predictor of travel intention in both the motivation and attitude models. Thus, tourism marketers should not only minimize the actual barriers of traveling to Hong Kong, but maybe more importantly also try to instill a sense of control among potential visitors. Travel visa to Hong Kong is relatively easy to obtain and costs of visiting the city by joining a tour group are relatively low. However, travel expenses, particularly hotels, for individual

travelers are still quite high. Considering the large number of mainland Chinese visitors, tremendous opportunities exist for economy hotels in Hong Kong. Subjective norm was also an important influencing factor in respondents' travel intention, probably due to the collectivism nature of the Chinese culture. Promotional activities should encourage positive word of mouth and take the referent groups into consideration when designing communication messages.

The two motivation factors, *relaxation* and *novelty*, that had significant impacts on travel intention further reinforced the social nature of the visit to Hong Kong. Respondents' future visit to Hong Kong was motivated by their wishes to spend time with family and friends, and relax at the same time. Thus, a family/friends destination image appeared to be a draw for mainland visitors. *Novelty*, being the other determinant of travel intention, again reflected the importance of referent groups, which could raise the curiosity of potential visitors about Hong Kong. The skyscrapers and cityscape, also known as the cement forest in Hong Kong, are another important attraction for respondents, which should be featured in marketing campaigns.

A major limitation of the study was the sample's age distribution. Findings of the study may only be applicable to young respondents who had not visited Hong Kong. The study, however, could be replicated with further data collection from a more representative sample. Nevertheless, data collection is always a challenge in China due to its size, disparity in regional culture and dialect, and consumers' openness to surveyors.

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A KNOWLEDGE-BASED CRISIS MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Crisis management and planning have become one of the most important aspects of tourism and hospitality business today. Natural disasters, accidents and other major or minor crises can disrupt an organization's ability to remain viable and continue providing financial benefits to its owners, customers and other stakeholders. In this context, effectively managing a crisis situation becomes a critical factor that determines the success of a destination. The authors developed a framework that incorporates knowledge management to enhance the effectiveness of crisis management planning. Based on the framework, they propose an information technology-based system that is designed to better support the crisis management preparedness of the tourism and hospitality industries in the Greater Philadelphia region.

KEYWORDS: *Crisis/Disaster management; Hospitality industry; Knowledge-based system; Knowledge management (KM); Tourism industry.*

INTRODUCTION

Crisis management, disaster recovery and organizational continuity have become increasingly critical areas of competence for business managers in every sector (Lee & Harrald, 1999).

> "*A crisis is anything that disrupts an organization's or community's normal operations and potentially damages it's ability to be viable*" says Jeff Capongri, author of "*Crisis Counselor: A step-by-step Guide to Managing Business Crisis* (Jennings, 2006).

Natural disasters, accidents and other major or minor crises can disrupt an organization's ability to remain viable and continue providing financial benefits to its owners, customers and other stakeholders. A flood can destroy the supply and distribution chain of even the best prepared businesses. Service businesses are increasingly becoming vulnerable to electrical, communication and other major infrastructure failures. Industrial disasters such as fires can have major human and environmental impacts, sometimes leading to bankrupting liabilities. In such a scenario, crisis and disaster management capabilities of both the businesses as well as the community should be of such quality that an evolving crisis can be resolved quickly and prevented from spreading. The eventual aim must be to minimize human suffering and economic loss (Srivastava & Mitroff, 1987).

When it comes to the tourism and hospitality industry, crisis management has received much attention in the last decade (Okumus, Altinay & Arasli, 2005), primarily due to major events such as the Asian financial crisis, the foot and mouth disease in UK, and terrorist attacks in many countries such as United states, Egypt and Indonesia etc. Such events have had a tremendous negative impact on the tourism industry in those destinations. Infact, the tourism industry is the first victim of any major crisis or disaster. The reputation of the destination is destroyed in the aftermath of a crisis and takes years to rebuild (Faulkner, 2001). Despite the importance, the topic of crisis management has received limited attention from the tourism and hospitality academia. There have been few researchers in the past who stressed on the importance of crisis and disaster management in the tourism industry. Notable among them was Faulkner (2001), who proposed a crisis management model for the tourism industry. In his paper, Faulkner also mentioned that the world is becoming increasingly disaster prone and no destination is exempt from having a comprehensive crisis management strategy in place. Ritchie (2004) provided a classification various threats and disasters based on the level of intensity and the timeframe available for proper recovery actions. Further, there have been few studies that analyzed specific crises, and their impact on the tourism industry (Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001; Taylor and Sue, 2002; Okumus, Altinay & Arasli, 2005). Collectively, the aforementioned studies have made a strong case for strategic plan and procedures to be in place to mitigate the impact of crises on tourism organizations, and the industry as a whole. As the tourism industry overtime faces many disasters and crises, it is becoming apparent that the interventions have grown in complexity. Effective crisis management involves an intricate and coherent combination of natural and human systems

(Richardson, 1994). Such an increase in number and complexity of responses requires a greater level of focus, resources, co-ordination and managerial accountability from the tourism organizations.

The crises management models proposed in tourism literature as well as other business disciplines have all alluded to the fact that communication of information and knowledge is essential to effective crisis management (Mitroff, 1995; Faulkner, 2001). Knowing what needs to be done and providing this knowledge to the right person, in the right place and at the right time is key to such planning. However, none of these models have incorporated the critical aspects of knowledge management in the context of crisis management and planning. Another important aspect is the proper dissemination of such critical knowledge and the role played by information technology (IT) in improving the cooperation and coordination among the tourism and hospitality organizations. The current study attempts to fill this gap. In this context, the objectives of the study are two fold:

1. To explore the role of knowledge management and knowledge based strategies in enhancing the effectiveness of crisis management and planning.
2. To present a framework for a knowledge-based crises/disaster management system being developed specifically for the tourism and hospitality industry in the greater Philadelphia region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Crisis/Disaster Management

> "*The word crisis comes from the Greek word 'krisis', which means differentiation or decision. In theology, this word describes the separation between salvation and damnation. In medical terminology, it was used to describe a break in development that had before been continuous*" – Glaesser (2003; Pg: 1)

The business world views crisis as a process that negatively influences the development of an organization or community, and endangers it's survival (Schulten, 1998). Although crisis and disaster are used interchangeably in this paper, they are generally seen as different yet related terms. A natural or man made disaster that occurs may develop into a crisis for an organization. However, there is no universally accepted definition of a crisis or disaster nor are there any universally available criteria to define in terms of their consequences, such as casualties or costs of damage (Turner & Pedgeon, 1997; Dennis, 1995). Shaluf, Ahmadun & Said (2003), based on a synthesis of literature provided a glance at the different definitions, types and characteristics of disasters and crises.

Table 1: Disasters and Crisis Comparisons (*Source: Shaluf, Ahmadun & Said, 2003*)

	Disaster	*Crisis*
Terminology	Accidents; catastrophic situations; industrial accidents, etc.	The term crisis varies from one organization to another. Sometimes, it is also referred to as an issue. Examples include business failures, environmental crisis, political crisis, community crisis, etc.
Definition	No universally accepted definition	No universally accepted definition
Measuring criteria	Quantitative, in terms of measuring the loss (both human & property)	Both qualitative & Qualitative, in terms of extent of harm (high-moderate-low); spatial reach of harm (radius around facility); population at risk, etc.
Types	Natural or manmade disasters & Hybrid disasters	Community crisis, non community crisis & corporate crisis.

Despite such difference in perception, there is a common understanding in business literature that both disasters and crises provide situations in which important decision regarding threat and opportunity have to be made. Crisis situations are believed to be 1) highly ambiguous where cause and effects are not predictable, 2) have a low probability of occurrence, nevertheless pose a major threat to the survival of the organization, and 3) offer little or no time for the stakeholders to respond. They require management procedures that must be maintained and management problems that must be coped with under conditions of major emergencies, injuries or even loss of life apart from economic losses (Richardson, 1994).

Crisis Management Models/Strategies

Booth (1993) reviewed the development of crisis management research over three decades till the nineties. He pointed out that most of the researchers in this field have taken an individualistic or case study approach often based on experience. Others have taken a comparative approach, and very few, an empirical approach. From the management literature perspective, there are two different viewpoints regarding crisis management. One set of researchers argue that crises are recurring and not preventable (Perrow, 1984; Gephart, 1984) whereas the others contend that there can be ways and plans through which organizations can prevent or mitigate large crises (Mitroff, 1992; Roberts, 1989). Pearson and Mitroff (1993) classified various types of crisis on a continuum of severe- normal and technical/economic - human/social factors. According to this framework, environmental factors fall in to the severe - technical/economic quadrant whereas operational errors such as product defects and plant breakdowns fall under the normal – human/social quadrant. According to them, four major issues, namely a) types of crisis, b) phases through which the crisis moves, c) systems/ factors that cause or prevent a crisis, and d) the stakeholders involved, should be analyzed as a part of every crisis management strategy. Subsequently, Pearson and Clair (1998) provided a comprehensive definition for crisis management:

"Organizational crisis management is a systematic attempt by an organization and its stakeholders to effectively manage or prevent crisis from occurring, such that key stakeholders believe the success outcomes outweighed the failure outcomes" (Pearson & Clair, 1998; P. 61).

As mentioned earlier, various crisis management models have been proposed, both in tourism as well as other business domains (Fink, 1986; Mitroff *et al*, 1986). Building upon extant research, Faulkner (2001) proposed the first comprehensive model for crisis management in the tourism industry. An important facet of this model is the integration of both the tourism organizations as well as the community into the crisis management process. Since the tourism industry is deeply integrated into the local community, and emergency civic services play a major role while managing an organizational crisis, both the organizations and the community need to play a coordinated role in crisis situations. According to Faulkner, crisis management process for the tourism industry has six important stages:

1. Pre-event phase, where potential crisis can be planned for or prevented.
2. Pro-dormal phase, when it is apparent that a crisis is imminent.
3. Emergency, when the effects of the disaster are felt and actions are necessary to protect people and property.
4. Intermediate, when short term needs of the people have been addressed and restoration activities begin.
5. Long-term phase when the recovery activities have been institutionalized and the organization, its stakeholders and the community returns back to the status before the disaster.
6. Resolution and feedback phase is the final stage where the organizations learn from the crisis and develop processes to update their current knowledge and experience.

At each step, there are numerous actions which the community and the industry take to deal with a crisis situation. Glaesser (2003) summed up these processes into three stages of tourism crisis management, namely 1) crisis precautions, 2) crisis avoidance, and 3) crisis coping. Recognizing the importance of crisis management for the tourism industry, Ritchie (2004) proposed a strategic and holistic approach to crisis and disaster management for the tourism industry. The framework consists of three processes:

a) *Crisis prevention planning*: involves proactive planning and strategy formulation. This process helps organizations take care of prevent and Prodormal stage.
b) *Strategy implementation stage*: the procedures and policies are operationlised. This includes proper communication and control, and resource management and allocation. This process helps deal with the emergency, intermediate and long-term crisis stages.
c) *Resolution, evaluation and feedback process*: involves the recovery process to normality as well as the learning that happens during the entire process.

Further, there have been studies in the last five years that studied specific cases of crisis, such as the impact of the terrorist attacks on the US hotel industry (Stafford, Yu & Armoo, 2002; Taylor & Enz, 2002), the effect of turkey's economic crisis on the local tourism industry (Okumus, Altinay & Arasli, 2005), the UK foot and mouth disease (cite), and the impact of the Katherine floods on the Australian tourism industry (Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001). However, crisis management has received more attention from other business disciplines than tourism. This situation is despite the fact that the tourism industry is the first to get affected in times of any crisis. As an industry involving intense human activity, tourism is highly prone disasters (Glaesser, 2003). High volume of touristic traffic, international as well as domestic, combined with increasing attractiveness of exotic destinations has further heightened the vulnerability of tourists and the industry to any form of crisis (Drabek, 1995). According to Faulkner (2001), one of the reasons for the slower progress in the tourism crisis management research is the lack of theoretical and conceptual frameworks, specific to the tourism industry crisis situations. The current study attempts to fill this particular gap. The authors contend that the tourism crisis management frameworks focus on the root cause of the disasters i.e. 'why' a crisis happens. These frameworks, however, do not explicitly define 'how' a particular crisis happens, and the kind of information and actions needed by the tourism and hospitality organizations to effectively mitigate the effects of the crisis. Scholars and practitioners alike agree on the fact that key to such effective planning is knowing what needs to be done , and providing this knowledge to the right person, at the right place and at the right time. The tourism system is a combination of many organizations, government departments, emergency personnel, media and eventually the tourists themselves. Hence, response to a crisis situation requires coordination and collaboration between these entities such that the interests of all the above stakeholders are taken care of (Granot, 1997).

As the complexity of the crisis situation grows, the interventions become even more complex and multifaceted. Therefore, there needs to be a combination of natural and human systems (Richardson, 1994), and a greater level of focus, resources, coordination and managerial accountability from the tourism industry. In such a scenario, the preliminary requirement for the decision makers is to perceive the problem, gather the relevant information, make the right judgment and have the right plans and procedures in place. Information, hence, becomes a critical resource that translates into supplies, logistics and cooperation among organizations (Nunamaker, Weber 7 Chen, 1989). In reality, however, organizations face variety of challenges during both the planning and recovery stages. How to gather the relevant information in a timely and accurate fashion? How to store, manage and organize this information efficiently so that resources can be accessed and shared? How to disseminate huge amounts of information to the right people without confusion? And eventually, how can this knowledge of past experience be reused to facilitate decision making? In this context, utilization of knowledge management strategies can vastly improve tourism organizations' crises management efforts. Knowledge management (KM) can improve the acquisition and dissemination of critical information. It can not only assist decision makers in doing their jobs efficiently, but also enable organizations to share and reuse different resources effectively. In the

subsequent sections, the authors explore various aspects of knowledge management and the critical role they play in a tourism crisis management context.

Knowledge and Knowledge Management

Over the past decade, researchers and practitioners alike have stressed on the fact that knowledge is the most important resource for a firm to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Grant, 1996; Davenport, 2001). An organization's knowledge is the professional intellect, such as 'know-what' and 'know-how', the experiences, values, beliefs of its members (Nonaka, 1995). Compared to the physical assets, knowledge is the kind of resource that cannot be easily duplicated by competitors, and hence the source of competitive advantage for the organization. As a result of this realization, knowledge management has become a critical issue for majority of the organizations in the business world today. Knowledge management can be defined as the set of systemic and organizational processes incorporated to acquire, manage, and enable proper sharing and dissemination of organizations' knowledge (Alavi and Leidner, 2001).

There is a general agreement within the academia as to the major forms of knowledge that exist within organizations. 'Explicit knowledge,' that can be codified and physically stored in databases. On the other hand, tacit knowledge is highly ethereal (in the form of specific experience/expertise/know-how/intuition) and closely associated with the individual that possesses it. Similarly, other researchers (Wober, 2003) have suggested that every organization needs two forms of knowledge, namely 'procedural' (know-what) and 'declarative' (know-how). Recognizing the social nature of knowledge, researchers (Nonaka, 1995; Alavi & Leidner, 2001; Bose & Sugumaran, 2003) have presented frameworks that essentially consist of four knowledge management processes. Also, these four processes manipulate the different forms of knowledge available to the organizations: 1) Knowledge creation and acquisition, 2) Knowledge storage and retrieval, 3) Knowledge dissemination, and 4) Knowledge application and feedback. All the four processes are complimentary to each other, and occur simultaneously as well as continuously within an organization. However, as Grant (1996) suggested, if knowledge is a critical input in every organizational process, and if efficiency requires that it is stored and managed in specialized forms by every organizational member, then the primary task of the firm should be to integrate these various forms of knowledge. Hence, the driver of knowledge based capability is the integration of the organizational knowledge. Knowledge integration is determined by three major factors, namely a) scope of integration, b) efficiency of integration, and c) the flexibility of integration (Huang & Newell, 2003). The most essential factor is the 'scope of integration' through which organizations determine the level of complexity underlying the integration of the differentiated knowledge existing within and outside the organization. As the need for a sufficient level of knowledge grows, higher will be the coordination within various sources of knowledge. The scope of integration also determines the 'efficiency of integration'. According to Demsetz (1991), common knowledge refers to the current level of knowledge possessed by the organization (and its members), and the people or entities they interact with. For example, to facilitate a discussion regarding development of an emergency management plan for a hotel, it is crucial for the employees to

understand the basic requirements of the plan as well as the procedures of the emergency service providers. At the same time, the emergency service providers need to understand the hotel processes and structures to devise an efficient plan. The success of such a coordinated effort (and ultimately the efficiency of integration) is dependent on high levels of common knowledge. The final factor is the 'degree of integration flexibility', which indicates the flexibility and capacity of the organization to reconfigure the existing forms of knowledge, and acquire new forms of knowledge needed for increased efficiency. As Zack (1999) suggested, innovative and highly successful organizations constantly explore or create new knowledge that gives them an edge over others. These organizations focus on acquiring knowledge, both from the external environment as well as their internal knowledge sources, and create benefits by utilizing it. This holds especially true in the context of planning for and managing crises wherein organizations need to constantly update their existing knowledge to deal with dynamic situations.

Having established the importance of knowledge management and integration, it is essential to explore the different strategies by which tourism organizations can manage their existing knowledge and also acquire new knowledge. While the different knowledge management strategies have been successfully applied to other industries, two factors have to be considered when applying the same to the tourism domain. A tourism destination comprises of a loosely connected system (social, economic and physical infrastructure) with multiple organizations and individuals acting as important nodes. Further, all these actors are deeply integrated within the local community, making it even more complex in terms of achieving coordination (Drabek, 1995). The second aspect is that tourism and travel sector is fundamentally dominated by small and medium sized organizations that operate in a highly distributed environment (world tourism organization, 2001). Due to their size and limited resources, these organizations do not posses all the information and knowledge required to manage any critical situation. In order to overcome such gaps in information and knowledge transfer, existing forms of knowledge management must be adapted or innovative forms of knowledge management must be developed.

Earl (2001) provided a comprehensive classification of various types of knowledge management practices prevalent in the business world today. The three types can be broadly defined as the 'technocratic', 'economic' and 'organizational'. The technocratic knowledge management fundamentally relies on capturing specialist knowledge in information technology (IT) enabled knowledge bases which can accessed whenever needed. It further involves mapping organizational knowledge by creating directories of expertise and experts so that people with the right expertise and experience can be contacted for help. This method of knowledge management ensures that knowledge is not only derived from objective data (databases and codified knowledge) but also from specific experience gained through practice (Hansen, 1999). On the other hand, the economic type of knowledge management is explicitly concerned with protecting and exploiting a firm's knowledge or intellectual assets so as to derive discernible economic benefit out of them. The last major form of knowledge management is the organizational school of thought that promotes the use of networks and communities for the development and sharing of knowledge (Bouncken and Pyo, 2002;

Wagner, 1998). These communities can be both intra- or inter- organizational depending on the need. The fundamental premise of this approach is that knowledge is a specialized expertise or experience that is intrinsically linked to the individual who possesses it, and hence, extremely difficult to be extracted or codified into a physical form. Therefore, the best way to disseminate and exploit this knowledge is to form communities and networks within which individuals will interact, share and utilize a dynamic pool of knowledge. The three types of knowledge management are not mutually exclusive and organizations have to devise multiple knowledge strategies simultaneously.

Knowledge-enabled Crisis Management

The need to apply knowledge management for effectively managing crises situations has been raised in previous literature, although not explicitly. According to Quanterelli (1988), there is often a big gap between what people plan for and what actually happens during a crisis situation. This suggests a need for organizations to define what needs to be known, and acquire this critical knowledge from various sources, both within and outside the organization. Nunamaker *et al* (1989) pointed out that there are many reasons why organizations sometimes make poor decisions, especially during the crisis management phase. Organizations have poor memories and often do not know what to do. Sometimes, they believe they have the required information or knowledge, which in actuality, they never acquired or generated, to make the right decisions. Further, the right knowledge is not available to the decision makers when it is needed. The fact that crisis situations are low frequency and ambiguous means organizations do not get sufficient opportunities to study them, and will have limited knowledge to deal with them. As a result, there exists a certain knowledge gap in organizations in their understanding of how to plan for and respond to the crisis. Intelligent organizations should be able to acquire the right information and use it to implement effective plans during the times of a crisis. Similarly, Darling (1994) argues that organizations need to capitalize on the expertise of various groups and individuals in the organization to effectively plan for a crisis. Another of the major challenges in crisis management is to rapidly find experts who have particular expertise or knowledge (both within and outside the organization), and present this knowledge to the right people in time to facilitate action (Boin & Lagadec, 2000). In such a scenario, organizations need to have the right processes in place to identify, capture and leverage collective knowledge, and enhance their crisis planning and management abilities. Based on the tourism crisis management models proposed by Faulkner (2001) and Ritchie (2004), and integrating the various knowledge management approaches discussed previously, a knowledge based crisis management framework for the tourism domain is depicted in figure 1. The KM framework established in this section is not oriented towards any particular kind of representation or processor. It takes into account, both explicit and tacit knowledge representations, and integrates both the technocratic and organizational schools of knowledge management. The fundamental focus will be on identifying classes of knowledge resources, and basic activities and factors influencing the management of knowledge, and how this knowledge can be efficiently integrated and utilized by tourism organizations at various stages of a crisis situation.
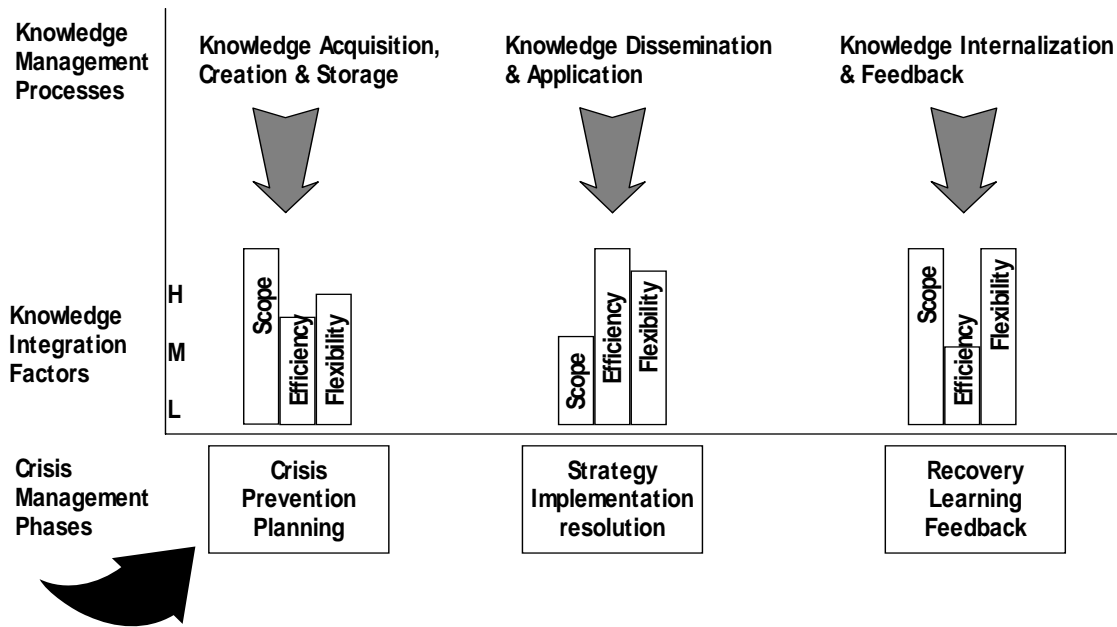
Fig 1: Knowledge Management Processes Supporting Crisis Management.

As can be seen from the framework, knowledge management processes can be applied during all the phases of the crisis. The knowledge acquisition and storage of relevant knowledge is relevant during the pre-event and pro-dormal stages of the crisis when the crisis situation has not yet set in and organizations have the opportunity to plan, and effectively mitigate or reduce the effects of the crisis. Problem recognition through environmental scanning, collecting historical data can provide as much knowledge as possible to the organization during this planning phase (Ritchie, 2004). Since the tourism organizations may not possess all the information necessary to plan comprehensively, it is also important in this phase to identify the relevant people, both inside and outside the organization, who are experts in crises planning to tap their experience, and involve them in the planning process. These activities should be performed dynamically and actively in order to keep the crisis management plans up to date with the changing environment. During these two phases (pre-event & pro-dormal), the knowledge management strategies of the 'systems' and 'cartographic' schools should be actively implemented. This involves capturing and storing the relevant knowledge in central databases which can be easily accessed by organizations. Further, a collective effort should be made to identify relevant experts in this field and create 'yellow pages' of their expertise so that their special expertise can be tapped when needed by the organizations.

Storage and retrieval processes are best applied during the Emergency and intermediate phases of the crisis. Crisis management researchers emphasize on the need to have an efficient communication strategy during the onset of a crisis situation. An analysis of many tourism destination crises indicates that the primary reason for large loss of life or property, and subsequently, the image of the destination was lack of proper communication and coordination between the various entities in the destination. The majority of the stakeholders (including the customers) do not possess the right

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information and hence, act in isolated fashion. This further aggravates the effects of a crisis. In this context, having an efficient knowledge and information distribution systems in place can help organizations manage a crisis situation (Barton, 1994). The 'organizational' school of knowledge management provides relevant strategies during this phase. A destination should have a supporting network in place that could deliver the most relevant knowledge to fulfill the knowledge needs of crisis management teams. This will enable organizations to make timely and critical decisions to deal with the crisis as fast as possible.

The final two stages, albeit, very important in the crisis situations, are the long term recovery and learning phase. The learning and feedback process is effective in these phases. Organizations, once they have dealt with the most critical phases of the crisis, need to take a stock of the knowledge they have acquired during the crisis phase. This knowledge is important to deal with future crisis situations. Hence, organizations should have the right processes in place to capture this experiential knowledge and store them in the knowledge bases for future use. This entire process should be guided by the three major principles of knowledge integration discussed earlier. Prior to any knowledge strategy, organizations should determine the scope of knowledge needed to plan for a crisis situation. The scope will also determine the flexibility with which the tourism organizations manage their internal and external knowledge. Effective, rapid and integrated flow of knowledge, with task based focus on knowledge activities is important to better manage any crisis (Kun & Bray, 2002). However, knowledge is dynamic and situational. Hence, as Ritchie (2004) suggested, organizations should also be flexible enough to continuously evaluate their knowledge needs and modify their strategies based on this dynamic knowledge.

APPLICATION OF 'KNOWRisk'

The hospitality industry is the third largest retail industry in the United States. It is comprised of approximately 30,000 companies, and generates millions of jobs all over the country. When it comes to the Greater Philadelphia region, it has been voted in the top fifteen tourism destinations and in terms of overall revenues for the hospitality industry (Global Insight, 2004). The last few years has also seen a tremendous growth in the number of visitations and overnight stays. In 2003, the region produced $5.9 billion in economic impact. The impact supports 150,000 hospitality jobs, resulting in $4.4 billion payroll and $1.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes (Industry Overview, 2004). With such economic impact and involvement of human resources, hospitality organizations, both big and small, faces tremendous risks in times of a crisis. These can be very small, from employee or customers injuries, to large crisis such as fires or snow storms. Therefore, these organizations should have a proper crisis management plan in place to effectively mitigate the effects of any potential crisis and, avoid loss of life and property. However, a survey of the local industry indicates that there have been few conscious efforts by the industry as well as the governmental agencies to establish such comprehensive crises planning strategies (EMC Tourism Research Report, 2006). Large companies might have the necessary financial and human resources to put their own plans in place, but medium and small organizations face resource crunch in such

situations. In this scenario, the requirement is to develop the right processes and systems that will enable these organizations to acquire the right information/knowledge needed to plan and manage crises. In this context, the authors have developed 'KNOWRisk' an online knowledge based crisis management system for the local tourism and hospitality industry. The primary reasons for developing this system are as follows:

1. Although the importance of information and knowledge during crisis management phase is self evident, the effective management of such knowledge is rendered in practice. The primary challenge in this regard is that critical knowledge is owned and widely distributed across multiple organizations (including the governmental agencies). The system aims at providing the right information so that organizations get a real time and multi-dimensional information to manage a crisis situation.
2. The second aspect is the huge diversity and heterogeneity in the available information sources. Such diversity prevents efficient communication among organizations during a crisis planning or management phase. Hence, the goal of the system is to develop a common platform wherein individuals collaborate and communicate and create a common ground for action. It also supports an environment where organizations learn from each other and pool the necessary resources needed for crises management.

The system is based on the basic knowledge management principles previously discussed in the paper. The system consists of two major components, each designed to support the four knowledge management processes of acquisition, storage, dissemination and feedback.

Knowledge Library

The core of the system is a centralized knowledge library. Crisis management knowledge involves situation awareness, needs assessment, emergency contact information and various forms of analysis conducted during previous crisis situations. The knowledge can be built case wise or source wise. The primary functionality of the knowledge library is to function as a centralized repository of this knowledge. The knowledge repository provides the following functions:

- Maintaining historical and updated information for crises management in the hospitality industry.
- Functioning as a federated resource for creating new knowledge.
- Systematic knowledge regarding proven crisis management strategies employed in the hospitality industry.
- Providing recommendations for the course of action during a crisis situation.

The knowledge base determines the scope of knowledge that is required by the local hospitality industry. It also enables efficient information and knowledge sharing by establishing common set of protocols for the member community. By involving members of the local hospitality industry in determining the scope, acquiring new knowledge and

specifying standard structures, the knowledge base also provides a dynamic environment for new knowledge creation.

Expert Corner

As mentioned earlier, one of the primary problems faced by the organizations during a crisis is to locate the right people who have experience in managing such situations. Crisis planning is a complex process that involves inputs from various disciplines and personnel. Further, new knowledge is created at every step of this planning process, which is accumulated with domain experts over a period of time. These experts are, therefore, in a unique position to create and transfer knowledge since they gain much of their knowledge by working in real crisis situations. The experts also add value to the current knowledge by leveraging past experience to solve problems and provide advice. Hence, the primary function of the expert corner is to provide a platform for the experts to collaborate and interact. The expert corner consists of directories of experts (and agencies) involved in relief and management activities. It also provides online group ware and electronic bulletin boards that enable the collaborative process. The idea is to support the development of online communities of practice wherein experts can closely interact with their peers and learn from each other. These expert interactions also play a critical role in continuously updating the knowledge available in the knowledge repository.

The system functions online with the Internet as the supporting network. With recent advancements in information and communication technology, the Internet has emerged as an efficient, low cost and ubiquitous form of communication. It also provides standard communication protocols and platform independence. This is especially important since medium and small hospitality organizations do not possess sufficient resources to develop their own communication infrastructure. Hence, Internet has been chosen as the supporting communication channel for acquiring, delivering and sharing crisis management knowledge in the case of 'KNOWRisk'.

SUMMARY

Crisis management is an important, but often neglected topic in the tourism and hospitality domain. This is despite the fact that tourism destinations and organizations are extremely vulnerable to crisis and get effected, both in short term and long term. Hence, the need for efficient integration of tourism crisis management knowledge is increasing (Ritchie, 2004). Crisis management requires comprehensive information, well proven knowledge and extensive networking between various agencies/individuals that have experience in managing crisis situations. In this regard, the authors present and discuss a primary knowledge management framework for tourism crisis management. The framework attempts to provide a theoretical justification for the application of multiple knowledge management processes at every phase of crisis management. Further, based on this framework, the development of an online knowledge based system for crisis planning is presented and discussed. This project also serves as a bridge between the

academia and industry, by bringing in the latest in academic research to provide solutions to real problems faced by the industry today.

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DIFFERENCES IN INFORMATION SEARCH FROM A NATIONAL CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Information search plays an important role in travelers' destination evaluations and choices since a tourist destination is an experience product and it is characterized by intangibility and uncertainty at the time of purchase and consumption. The product is generally presented to potential tourists in a vivid expression via various information sources such as brochures, TV commercials, magazine advertisements, etc. Culture determines what forms of communication are acceptable and the nature and the degree of search behavior that individuals consider appropriate. In this study, we investigated the differences in information usage between Taiwan's inbound leisure travelers from a cross-national culture perspective.

KEYWORDS: *Culture; Information search; Leisure travelers; Nationality; Taiwan.*

INTRODUCION

From the traveler's point of view, a tourist destination is an experience product. It is characterized by intangibility and imaginary at the time of purchase and consumption. From the perspective of a destination's marketing division, the product has to be presented to potential tourists in a vivid expression via various information sources such as brochures, TV commercials, magazine advertisements, etc. Indeed, the emergence of a large number and variety of travel destinations has increased the salience of understanding the travelers' information search behavior. In this competitive marketplace, consumer awareness, selection, and choice of tourism and hospitality products depends on the information available to and used by tourists (Jang 2004; Fodness & Murray 1997; McIntosh & Goeldner 1990; Moutinho 1987). Information search plays an important role in travelers' destination evaluations and choices. An understanding of how travelers' information search behavior is important for researchers seeking to recognize how travelers evaluate tourist destination and make decision.

Culture affects individual's thinking and also direct tourists' choice behavior. Culture determined what forms of communication are acceptable and the nature and the degree of search behavior that individuals consider appropriate (Engel & Black & Miniard, 1995). With an increasing notion of globalization, a plenty of literatures have reported culture difference at a nation level (Chen 2000; Money & Crotts 2002; Lo & Cheung & Law, 2004). The role of national culture characteristics on the travelers' information search behavior should be given a noticeable attention by tourism researchers.

The majority of studies on tourists' information search behavior have been carried out in the U.S. and have focused on determining the types of information sources used by tourists and their usage frequencies (Lo & Cheung & Law, 2002). The lack of cross-national tourism research is not only due to a lack of resources, but often a misunderstanding of its value and benefits as well as a degree of ethnocentrism and ignorance concerning cultural differences (Money & Crotts 2003; Dimanche 1994). Few studies have examined the behavior of travelers in other regions, and the present study is designed to fill this gap. As So and Morrison (2004) claimed few research have been conducted to examine the behaviors of travelers in the East Asia region. Therefore, there is definitely a need to lead a research in that area to have a more comprehensive understanding of traveler's behaviors in the East Asia region.

PRIOR RESEARCH ON TOURIST INFORMATION SEARCH

Information can be treated as one of the most or even the most important factor influencing and determining consumer decisions (Maser & Weiermair 1998). As for many other consumer product decisions, information search can be the first step necessary for selecting a vacation destination (Filiatrault & Richie 1980; Fodness & Murray 1998; Jenkins 1978; Perdue 1985; Snepenger & Meged & Snelling & Worral 1990; Gursoy 2003; Gursoy & Umbreit 2004). Travel products are mostly intangible

personal service products, involving personal interactions between customers and service providers (Bieger & Laesser 2004; Lovelock & Wright 1999; Normann 1996; Teare 1992; Hart et. al 1992). They are delivered away from home, often in unknown places, inducing functional, financial, physical, psychological, and social risk (Bieger & Laesser 2004; Lovelock & Wright 1999; Teare 1992). Because consumers have greater difficulty in evaluating service quality before purchase and, therefore, might perceive greater risk in buying intangible-dominant products such as tourist experiences, they adopt different search patterns or strategies to reduce perceived risk (Fodness & Murray 1999; Maser & Weiermair 1998; Engel & Blackwell & Miniard 1995; Goossens 1994). The search of information enables travelers to reduce uncertainty and to enhance the quality of a trip (Bieger & Laesser 2004; Fodness & Murray 1997; Schertler 1994; Teare 1992; Schiffmann 1972). Furthermore, Murray (1991) and Lutz and Reilly (1973) suggested that perceived risk and information search are positively correlated. The risk encountered in a service purchase can be reduced by seeking additional information about the service (Bieger & Laesser 2004; Lutz & Reilly 1973; Hugstard & Taylor 1987). This implies that the greater the perceived risk, especially for service product, the more likely tourists will have a heightened information search effort (Bieger & Laesser 2004). Succinctly put, tourists seek to enhance the quality of their trip by decreasing the level of associated risk and uncertainty through information search.

Whenever travelers realize that they need to make a decision, information search is likely to take place. Information search is one of the multiple procedures in consumers' decision-making process. It is the starting point for potential tourists to gather information in order to cultivate a need for traveling. Fodness and Murray defined tourist information search as a dynamic process wherein individuals use various amounts and types of information sources in response to internal and external contingencies to facilitate travel planning (Fodness & Murray 1999). Information search also defined as "the motivated activation of knowledge stored in memory or acquisition of information from the environment" (Engel et al. 1995). As the definition suggests, information search can be either internal or external. Internal search is based on the retrieval of past experiences and knowledge from memory (Crotts, 1998). External information search contains the collection of information from the environment (Gursory 2003; Lo & Cheung & Law 2002). It initially takes place internally as previous experience and knowledge are used as the basis for making a travel decision (Gursoy & Umbreit 2004; Gursoy & Chen 2000; Vogt & Fesenmaier 1998; Fodness & Murray 1997). Internal sources contain personal experiences, either with the specific destination or with a familiar destination, and the knowledge accumulated via an ongoing search process. (Jang 2004; Gursoy & Umbreit 2004; Vogt & Fesenmaier 1998; Fodness & Murray 1997; Goossens 1994; Schuett 1993; Schul & Crompton 1983). When one's internal search offers enough information regarding a trip decision, an external search may not be needed (Gursoy & Umbreit 2004; Goossens 1994; Schuett 1993; Beatty & Smith 1987). Nevertheless, travelers are likely to use external information search to collect extra information from external sources if the internal information search offers inadequate (Gursoy & Umbreit 2004; Beatty & Smith 1987) or out-of-date information.

For most travel decisions, especially to new destinations, external information search is salient which involves considerable effort, time, and a variety of information sources (Gursoy & Umbreit 2004; Fodness & Murray 1997; Raitz & Dakhil 1989; Schul & Crompton 1983). Beatty and Smith (1987) categorized external travel information sources into four groups: personal (e.g., friends, relatives, colleagues), marketer-dominated (e.g., advertisements and promotions), neutral (e.g., consumer reports or similar neutral publications), and experiential sources through direct contacts with retailer. Tourists need to obtain sufficient external information about their destination, accommodation, transportation, sightseeing and other activities when planning their trips before they can make their final purchase decision (Gursoy & Mccleary 2004; Jang 2004; Lo, Cheung & Law, 2002; Fodness & Murray 1998; Gursoy & Chen 2000; Snepenger, Meged, Snelling & Worrall 1990).

NATIONAL CULTURE AND INFORMATION SEARCH BEHAVIOR

As mentioned previously, information search studies have been done extensively, but most of studies carried out in the U.S. or focused on U.S. travelers' information search behavior. On the other hand, the impact of travelers' information search on other national countries or the role of national culture characteristics on the travelers' information search behavior have not been given much attention by tourism researchers (Gursoy & Umbreit 2004; Money & Crotts 2003; Chen 2000).

Most of the prior research in tourists' information search behavior were done in the U.S. and focused on determining the types of information sources used and their usage frequencies (USTTA, 1984; Uysal et al., 1990; Chen, 2000; Gursoy & Chen, 2000; Money & Crotts, 2003). Chen (2000) attempted to reveal the differences in information usage between Japanese, South Korean, and Australian outbound travelers to the U.S. via in-flight surveys and he found Japanese and Korean leisure travelers relied more on printed materials, while Australian leisure travelers depend more on the tourist office, travel agencies and promotional materials. Gursoy and Chen (2000) examined British, German, and French tourists' external information sources at home to make their travel to the U.S. and revealed that German travelers were likely to use personal computers, and city/state travel departments while British and French leisure travelers were more likely to use tour companies, newspaper and magazines. In Money and Crotts' study (2003), they found Japanese preferred to seek information from travel agency, and German had more preferences to seek information from personal advice.

Besides most studies have been conducted in the US, there were few studies have been carried out to examine travelers' information search behavior on different countries of the world. Gursoy and Umbreit (2004) investigated the influence of national-cultures on the external information search behavior of travelers from European Union (EU) member and investigation was limited to the groups of respondents that took a vacation of four nights or more in duration to another European country. In their study, the results revealed that travelers from France, Greece, Netherlands and Spain were likely to use travel guides and free tourist information leaflets, and travelers from Demark and Finland

were likely to use Internet and other written information sources, while travelers from Austria, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Sweden, and UK were likely to use TV/radio and travel agent for planning their trip. Lo, Cheung, and Law (2004) investigated the Mainland Chinese travelers' information search behavior which showed Chinese travelers were likely to use personal experience, friends/relatives, travel agency/tour company, airlines, and corporate travel department as external information sources.

The role of national cultural characteristics is affecting tourist behavior has been investigated directly and indirectly and tourists of different nationality behave in different way (Pizam & Sussmann 1995). With an increasingly globalized society, a plethora of literature has reported cultural differences at a national level (Chen 2000). "National cultures have a moderating or intervening impact on tourist behavior, if properly controlled and/ or used with other variables, would add significantly to one's understanding of tourist behavior" (Iverson 1997; Pizam & Sussmann 1995). Pizam and Sussmann (1995) suggested using different respondents in different situations, supports these findings, it would be accurate to conclude that tourist behavior is perceived to differ by nationality for future studies.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The current study aims to investigate observable tourists' information search behavior, the perceived level of influence which information sources have affected on the travel decisions and country of residency inclines the usages the information sources.

It was also the researchers' intention to investigate the respondents' pre-trip planning characteristics and the perceived level of influence of the dimensions of information sources used while planning the trip which based on the purpose of travelers' trip and their demographic information. For the purpose of travelers' trip, only leisure travelers were examined in this study since Lo, Cheung, and Law (2002) suggested most business travelers were required to use in-house service while planning their business trip and leisure travelers had used more information sources, business travelers were excluded from examination.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized secondary data from the Annual Visitor Survey for Taiwan for the time period of 1988-2001. Similar to Park, Cheng and O'Leary (2005) travelers (N= 2,135) who reported that their primary trip purpose was sightseeing and who came to Taiwan without joining any tour groups or packages arranged in their country were analyzed.

The survey was administered to visitors departing Taipei's CKS International Airport and Kaohsiung's Hsia Keung International Airport. The purpose of the survey

was to develop a comprehensive understanding of the effects of travel purpose and nationality on information search of inbound travelers.

Following the same methods as Park, Cheng and O'Leary (2005), conjoint effects were prevented by conducting cluster analysis to group the information sources into independent groups. The cluster analysis revealed that the usage of newspaper and TV/Radio were significantly correlated and was grouped into one source (Public Media). Six types of seven information sources were included in the analysis: public media (newspaper and TV/Radio), magazines/books, travel convention, travel agent, Foreign Services, and the Internet. Chi-square test and a One-way ANOVA were performed to determine if there were significant differences in the level of influence of each of the information sources, as perceived by the respondents. Correspondence analysis was also used for further examination of the information use patterns between different countries. Demographic information, including country of residence, gender, age, education level and annual household income, was obtained in the last section.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Most of the travelers (about 58%) were male and the largest group was from Japan (49.6%). They had a variety of occupations, but legislators, government officials, business executives and managers, professionals, and administrative staff were the most well represented groups (around 57.7%). The majority of the respondents were college educated (approximately 80.2%) and had incomes between US $30,000 and $99,999 (approximately 45.1%).

The majority (81.0%) of respondents reported that they used one or more types of information sources. This result confirms the findings of Fodness and Murray's study (1998), which states that travelers do employ more than one source of information when making travel decisions. Regardless of nationality, results revealed that magazines and books (60.4%), the Internet (35.7%), and travel agent (21.3%) were the top three information sources most frequently used by leisure travelers when arranging their visitation to Taiwan. The leisure travelers gave significantly higher value to magazines and books, it is possible that information communicate through the channel is more oriented towards leisure travel.

In terms of the effects of nationality of respondents on information search, significant differences were found among travelers. Chi-square test revealed that there was an association with nationality and the usage of public media (chi-square= 67.443, df=14, p=0.000). Indonesia travelers (50%) relatively used public media much more frequently, while French travelers (7.1%) used relatively much less frequently of this type of information source. Chi-square test revealed that there was an association with nationality and the usage of magazines and books (chi-square=163.264, df=14, p=0.000). Japanese travelers (72.1%) relatively used magazines/ books much more frequently, while Malaysia travelers (30.8%) tended to use magazines/books much less frequently. Chi-square test revealed that there was an association with nationality and the usage of

travel convention (chi-square=58.420, df=14, p=0.000). Japanese travelers tended to use travel convention (1.5%) less frequently as an information source than Malaysia (15.4%). Chi-square test revealed that there was an association with nationality and the usage of travel agent (chi-square= 82.573, df=14, p=0.000). Travel agent was comparatively being used more frequently by Malaysia travelers (53.8%) than travelers from the USA (11.9%). Chi-square test revealed that there was an association with nationality and the usage of Foreign Services (chi-square= 43.296, df=14, p=0.000). Malaysia travelers (23.1%) relatively used the Foreign Services much more frequently, while none of the Indonesia travelers (0%) reported the use of Foreign Services. Chi-square test revealed that there was an association with nationality and the usage of the Internet (chi-square=54.034, df=14, p=0.000). New Zealand and Australian travelers (61.1%) relatively used the Internet more frequently, while Indonesia travelers (23.1%) used the Internet much less frequently.

Overall, Chi-square test revealed that each type of information sources had been used differently by travelers from different countries. Public media had been used most frequently by Indonesia travelers (50.0%). Magazines and books had been used most frequently by Japanese travelers (72.1%). Travel convention had been used most frequently by Malaysia travelers (15.4%). Travel agent had been used most frequently by Malaysia travelers (53.8%). Foreign Services had been used most frequently by Malaysia travelers (23.1%). The Internet had been used most frequently by New Zealand and Australian travelers (61.1%).

One-way ANOVA test showed the number of information source used were influenced by the national culture of the travelers (F=4.859, p=0.000) The post-hoc LSD test further showed that Malaysian travelers had used the most types of information sources (2.08), conversely, German travelers had used the least information sources (1.22). This finding suggested that the respondents' national culture significantly influence their utilization of external information sources.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This analysis of the external information search behavior of Taiwan's leisure inbound travelers indicated that the national culture of travelers is likely to influence their information search behavior. This result is consistent with the findings of previous research which has shown that culture is one of the major influences affecting the way travelers make their trip decisions (Chen 2000; Lo, Cheung & Law 2002; Money & Crotts 2003).

It was revealed that differences between cultures were found related to both the types of information utilized and the number of information sources used. This suggests that tourism industry providers should focus their marketing efforts differently, depending on the cultures they are trying to attract, utilizing the advertising channels that are most likely to attract the desired markets.

Similar to Park, et al. (2005) the contribution of this study is to provide marketers of tourist destination with information on Taiwan's inbound travelers. The current study extended the work of Park, et al. (2005) by examining national (cultural) differences, in information search behavior to allow for more specific, regional marketing efforts. Thus, marketers in Taiwan's tourism industry can tailor marketing strategies to better meet travelers' needs and preferences.

Majority of travelers expressed the utilization of more than one information sources, marketers should distribute their promotion materials to multiple channels depending on which sources are most frequently used by tourists, although, the most frequently used information source may not be the most salient ones due to the unavailability of information on certain distribution channels. Hence, marketers are encouraged to make sure that communications sent via various channels will reach their target markets and be able to affect their travel decisions. Information should be well advertised on magazines and travel guide books or provide more information to travel agent if leisure travelers as the target market. Since Japanese tourists as the target market for Taiwan's inbound tourism, and they primarily use magazines and books as the information source, more efforts should be exerted on these two channels to attract more Japanese tourists' attention.

In understanding which information sources are complements and which are substitutes can help marketing managers design mutually beneficial cooperative marketing strategies and marketing alliances, therefore, marketing budget could be utilized most efficiently at today's competitive environment. Destination marketing organizations need to be sensitive to the information used by travelers from individual country, even although, travelers ultimately determine which country they wish to take a leisure trip, destination markers can exert a powerful influence via various and persuading promotion materials. In order to effectively attract travelers to a destination country, it is essential to understand each individual tourist-generated country's information usage and preference, in which they discriminate and choose a single destination from a larger initial choice pool. Apparently, marketers should recognize the differences among countries in the relative importance of information search behavior as a basis for designing effective marketing literatures and campaign.

LIMITATION

It is imperative to consider the limitations of this research. The data used in current study was obtained from the secondary data, therefore, authors did not have any control on the questions asked, which limited the number and types of external information sources examined. The results of this study stated differences of information search behaviors among travelers from different countries, but did not provide an explanation of why these differences exist.

This study only analyzed six external information sources, however, other information sources also needed to be studied, especially the culture particular external

information sources. For future research, it is recommended to develop the customized survey to encompass various possible information sources, which tailor the significant difference of each country.

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TOURISM STUDENTS' DIFFERENCES IN MENTAL IMAGERY ABILITY: IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality and tourism students increasingly engage with multimedia technologies and expect similar interactions to be supported by learning environments. While hospitality and tourism educators have started to integrate technologies into their teaching, the learning applications they use are often restricted to text posted on Web sites. This paper argues that immersive systems are not only more fun to use but can actually support students with difficulties regarding mental imagery processing. A study was conducted to investigate whether differences in mental imagery ability can be found among tourism and hospitality students and would warrant the design of learning systems to support mental imagery processing. The findings suggest that significant differences in mental imagery processing exist and need to be recognized when designing and evaluating learning applications.

KEYWORDS: *Mental imagery ability; Multimedia learning theory; Cognitive styles; Learning environments.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality education calls for conveying complex and often very abstract concepts to students with a multitude of backgrounds and interests as well as varying levels of experience in the industry. Also, the growing interdependencies of players in the tourism system and the increasing interconnectedness of places, economic systems and societies stress the importance of teaching systems-thinking and of encouraging students to envision a multitude of causes and effects when reflecting on tourism and its impacts. Further, it has been argued that successful workers in the Conceptual Age, which is spurred by globalization and new technologies (Pink, 2005), will have to rely ever more on creativity and imagination. These developments have significant implications for tourism and hospitality education and need to be addressed through the design of learning environments that can effectively support the teaching of such skills.

Tourism and hospitality educators are increasingly conscious of the limitations of traditional methods of instruction (Feinstein & Parks, 2002). New technologies such as cellular phones, MP3 players and ever more sophisticated gaming applications have become widely used among adolescents. Because of its technology-mediated experiences, the new generation of tourism students expects a learning environment as multisensory and stimulating as the outside world and is often bored by old-fashioned text books and low-tech approaches (Jenkins, 2005). Many tourism instructors use the Internet to enhance traditional teaching modes (Bailey & Morais, 2005). Harris (1996) found that the use of multimedia in education, which can highly stimulate the senses and imagery, will result in a higher quality of recall, memory and comprehension. Importantly, combining multimedia technologies with the Web has created new possibilities for the development of instructional materials to convey course content (Juniu, 2006). Accordingly, the Internet has penetrated tourism and hospitality instruction and is widely regarded as an innovative tool for improving student learning achievement.

The effectiveness of technology-based teaching methods cannot be expected to be equal across all students if the systems employ a "one-fits-all" design strategy. Students' interpretation and articulation of instructional materials depend on their cognitive ability and styles (Rasmussen, 1998). If tourism students vary in their cognitive abilities and processing styles, instructional technologies need to effectively address such individual needs in order to provide valuable learning support to a large student population. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore and empirically validate tourism students' individual differences in terms of mental imagery ability, and to derive implications for the design of effective learning environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological theory and research emphasizes cognitive processes and their effects in instruction and learning (Sweller, 1994). Multimedia environments have the

potential to promote meaningful learning by varying both the number of representations provided to students and the degree of student activity (Moreno & Valdez, 2005; Maddux, Johnson & Willis, 2001). According to Mayer (2003: 127), "multimedia learning occurs when students build mental representations from words and pictures that are presented to them". Web-based multimedia learning can be especially efficient since it contains a variety of presentations with respect to delivery channel, presentation mode and sensory modality. It can also foster focused-attention and immersion in learning content through compelling information presentation. The ability of a learning technology to stimulate cognitive absorption is critical in determining its perceived usefulness and ultimately influences students' intentions to use online learning tools (Saadé and Bahli, 2005).

Cognitive Styles

Cognitive style refers to a person's typical mode of perceiving, thinking, remembering or problem solving (Allport, 1937). Learning styles deal specifically with processing styles in the context of learning, however the terms are often used interchangeably. Claxton and Ralston (1978) define learning style as the student's consistent way of responding to and using stimuli in a learning environment. Kocinski (1984) describes learning styles as not only the preferred way to learn but also the way in which an individual learns best. Learning characteristics and styles vary for each individual student (Honey and Mumford, 1986). Messick (1976) identified as many as 19 different cognitive styles and Smith (1984) provides an inventory of 17 different learning styles. Thus, it can be assumed that students learn differently, process and represent knowledge in different ways, and prefer to use different types of resources. Also, some students learn more effectively when instruction is adapted to the way they learn (Rasmussen, 1998).

Differences in cognitive processing styles have also been identified as important factors to consider in the design of technologies, and specifically Web sites. Rosen and Purinton (2004) conceptualize interfaces as cognitive landscapes and stress that users have individual preferences for specific types of online environments. These preferences for interfaces stem from differences in perceptions and preferences for certain types of information. Thus, cognitive styles can be defined as the preferred way to interact with information systems (Biocca et al., 2001). Cognitive styles affect information gathering, evaluation, and selection processes in interactions with information systems (Grabler & Zins, 2002). Rumetshofer, Pühretmair and Wöß (2003) and Rosen and Purinton (2004) argue that information presentation needs to match the cognitive style of the system user in order to be effectively processed and encourage positive use experiences. Similarly, Zins (2003) concluded that adaptation of information system interfaces to a user's cognitive style is crucial for improving the quality of the human-computer interaction.

Mental Imagery Processing

The issue of learning style or cognitive style can be extended to include individual differences in mental imagery processing. Mental imagery is defined as "a mental event involving visualization of a concept or relationship" (Lutz & Lutz, 1978: 611) and it is

also identified by MacInnis (1987) as a process by which sensory information is represented in working memory. According to Burns, Biswas and Babin (1993), mental imagery is voluntary and stimulated by instructions from an external source or even oneself. Mental imagery processing is considered to be "high elaboration" processing (MacInnis and Price, 1987) and, consequently, is believed to lead to greater communication effectiveness (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). According to Sadoski (1998), the mental imagery that we experience while learning, either spontaneously or induced by instruction, is known to have powerful effects on comprehension, memory and appreciation for context.

The majority of mental imagery studies have addressed individual differences in imagery ability, imagery content, and processing style. Differences in imagery ability are important to consider in teaching as they can significantly influence a range of cognitive functions such as learning, memory, perception, and problem solving (Ernest, 1977). Imagery ability is related to the vividness and controllability of individuals' imagery (MacInnis and Price, 1987). Individuals differ in their tendency to engage in vivid imagery and their propensity to use imagery in anticipating the future, in solving problems, and in fantasizing (MacInnis and Price, 1990). Differences also occur due to preferences for either visual or verbal processing (Childers, Houston and Heckler, 1985).

Aspects and Measurement of Mental Imagery Ability

Imagery Vividness. Mental Imagery vividness relates to the clarity of the mental images evoked by an individual (Childers et al., 1985) or the liveliness and similarity to the actual percept (Marks, 1973). It has been identified as a major dimension of imagery (Babin & Burns, 1998). There are two scales which have been widely used in order to measure individual differences in imagery vividness (MacInnis, 1987). The first scale is the Betts' Questionnaire upon Mental Imagery (QMI), which assesses imagery vividness in each of seven sensory modalities including visual, auditory, cutaneous, kinesthetic, gustatory, olfactory and organic. Five questions in each modality examine the imagery vividness. It was initially developed as a 150 item questionnaire (Betts, 1909) but the scale was later modified to a 35 item questionnaire by Sheehan (1967). The second scale, which has is referred to as Marks Vividness of Visual Imagery Questionnaire (VVIQ) (Marks, 1973), has been widely used in imagery research as well, but has recently been questioned regarding its validity (McKelvie, 1995).

Imagery Control. "Imagery control refers to the extent to which one can manipulate, transform, and hold images in mind at will" (MacInnis, 1987: 90). According to Childers et al. (1985), imagery control can be defined as the individual's ability to self-generate a mental image or to perform certain manipulations, such as mental rotation. Gordon's test of Visual Imagery Control (VIC) (Gordon, 1949) is a commonly utilized measure of imagery control. It has been developed as a 12 item questionnaire assessing individual's abilities to control images.

Imagery Processing Style. Besides the scales of vividness and imagery control designed to assess individual differences in abilities to imagine, several measures have also been

proposed to assess differences in individual's preferences and propensities for using memory (MacInnis, 1987). Paivo (1971) and Richardson (1978) define imagery processing style as individuals' tendencies and preferences for processing information visually or verbally. It was demonstrated by Childers et al. (1985) that individual differences exist in terms of willingness to habitually engage in visually- versus verbally-oriented processing. A measure to assess processing style was originally developed by Richardson (1977). It consists of a 15 item questionnaire called the Visualizer/Verbalizer Questionnaire (VVQ) and aims at differentiating verbalizers from visualizers. However, because of the deficiencies inherent in the VVQ, Childers et al. (1985) designed a new measure of processing style, which is named the Style of Processing Questionnaire (SOP). MacInnis (1987) describes the SOP as a 22 item questionnaire which includes substantially modified items in comparison to the VVQ and which more adequately assesses the processing preference dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

A total of 160 undergraduate students enrolled in tourism courses at a University in the United States were invited to participate in the study for partial course credit. The recruitment effort resulted in 96 usable responses, representing an effective response rate of 60 percent. Of the respondents, 47 percent were male and 53 percent were female. Students were presented with a paper-based questionnaire that asked them to respond to questions that measured individual differences in mental imagery ability regarding 1) vividness; 2) controllability; and, 3) processing style.

First, vividness was measured using the Randomized Short Betts Questionnaire upon Mental Imagery (QMI) comprising 35 questions (White, Ashton, & Law, 1978). It assesses imagery vividness in terms of seven sensory modalities. For example, subjects were asked to rate the visual clarity of seeing the colour and shine of silverware (visual modality), the smell of roast beef (olfactory modality), the feeling of fur (cutaneous modality), the muscular feeling of running upstairs (kinaesthetic), the sound of a car horn (auditory modality) and the sensation of drowsiness (organic modality). Using a seven point response scale, respondents were asked to indicate from (1) No image present at all - you only "know" that you are thinking of the object, to (7) Perfectly clear and as vivid as the actual experience.

Second, Gordon's test of Visual Imagery Control (VIC) (Gordon, 1949) containing a 12 item scale was utilized for this study to measure individuals' abilities to control their images. More specifically, the VIC items required respondents to indicate their ability to manipulate a mental image on a rating scale ranging from (1) I can't imagine at all, to (7) I can imagine clearly, depending on their success in performing various modifications on a mental image of an automobile. For example, respondents were asked to imagine a car standing on the road in front of a house. Then, they were asked to imagine the car in a different color. Next, they were asked to imagine the same car lying upside down.

Third, the questionnaire included a series of items measuring imagery processing style. The study adapted the Style of Processing Questionnaire (SOP) developed by Childers et al. (1985) consisting of 22 items (11 items for the verbalizer and 11 items for the visualizer style). Respondents were required to answer using a 4 point true-false response format with a scale ranging from (1) always true, to (4) always false. Statements to be assessed included: "I enjoy doing work that requires the use of words", "I like to daydream", and "I generally prefer to use a diagram rather than a written set of instructions".

Additive scales were constructed for each of the three mental imagery ability aspects and evaluated in terms of their reliability. Descriptive analyses were used to investigate individual differences in the scores for these scales. Analysis of Variance was used to determine whether individual differences were driven by gender.

FINDINGS

Cronbach's Alpha for the 35 item QMI scale was 0.92, which is consistent with earlier findings (Richardson, 1994). Richardson (1994) reviewed studies that investigated the internal consistency of the Short Betts QMI scale and found reports for Alpha ranging from 0.91 to 0.94. The reliability of the VIC control scale was also high with a Cronbach Alpha score of 0.92. Previous studies adapting the VIC scale reported a range in Alpha between 0.72 and 0.95. Thus, the result of this study is highly consistent with these earlier reports. The Cronbach Alpha score for the SOP scale was only 0.47. Reviews of previous studies reported a range in Alpha between 0.52 and 0.57 (Richardson, 1994), indicating that the reliability of the scale in this study is even lower than in prior studies. Because this is a verbalizer/visualizer scale addressing two modes of information processing, it is possible that internal consistency might be influenced by scale multidimensionality (Childers et el., 1985). Therefore the two dimensions (visual processing and verbal processing) were assessed separately. As a result of this examination, the Alpha for the verbal processing scale was 0.24, while the Alpha for the visual processing scale was found to be 0.55. Accordingly, it was decided to disregard the verbal processing items and adapt only the 11 visual processing items for the purpose of this study.

Individual Differences in Mental Imagery Processing

Descriptive analyses of the scale items indicate that there are substantial individual differences in mental imagery ability among the tourism students included in the sample (see Tables 1-3). All items are normally distributed and show a wide range of values. More specifically, the standard deviations from the mean value are considerable for the vividness and the controllability items as well as for the style of processing items.

The mean values of the controllability scale items (Table 1) indicate that simple visualizations such as seeing a car and imagining it to be of color can be performed by most students. To the contrary, complex manipulations such as seeing a car fall or seeing

it dismantled appears to require more enhanced mental imagery ability and creates problems for some students while other students still report high control over the imagery.

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the Controllability Items

VIC (12 Items)	M	SD
Can you see a car standing on the road in front of a house?	6.23	1.100
Can you see it in a color?	6.01	1.235
Can you now see it in a different color?	5.69	1.400
Can you now see the same car lying upside down?	5.29	1.414
Can you now see the same car back on its four wheels again?	5.82	1.223
Can you see the car running along the road?	5.75	1.314
Can you see it climb up a very steep hill?	5.76	1.238
Can you see it climb over the top?	5.66	1.272
Can you see it get out of control and crash through a house?	5.29	1.514
Can you now see the same car running along the road with a handsome couple inside?	5.11	1.329
Can you see the car cross a bridge and fall over the side into the stream below?	5.08	1.526
Can you see the car all old and dismantled in a car cemetery?	4.81	1.682

Note: M=Item Mean; SD=Standard Deviation

Table 2 indicates that students had on average the most vivid imagery for the organic modality, but individual differences were also the greatest for this modality, followed by individual differences in the vividness of imagery related to sounds. Interestingly, vividness and controllability are significantly correlated (Pearson correlation coefficient =.410; p=.00), suggesting that students who lack vivid imagery also experience low controllability.

The visual processing style items indicate that the largest standard deviations occurred for "I like to doodle" and for the item that refers to visual memory of persons (Table 3). The standard deviations cannot be directly compared to the other two mental imagery ability aspects as the measurement was different (4-point scale instead of 7-point scale).

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for the Vividness Items

Short Betts QMI (35 Items)	M	SD
Feeling the warmth of tepid bath	4.17	1.519
Seeing, for a relative or friend, the different color worn in some familiar clothes	3.69	1.669
The sensation of fatigue	5.39	1.282
Smelling an ill-ventilated room	4.84	1.482
Seeing, for a relative or friend, the characteristic poses of head, attitudes of body, etc.	4.21	1.479
Tasting granulated (white) sugar	4.78	1.654
Performing the act of running upstairs	5.61	1.363
The sensation of a sore throat	5.44	1.288
Hearing an ambulance siren	5.69	1.155
The sensation of drowsiness	5.42	1.412
Feeling sand	5.30	1.346
Seeing, for a relative or friend, the exact contour of face, head, shoulders, and body	4.68	1.573
Feeling linen	4.40	1.539
Tasting jelly	4.42	1.560
Hearing the sound of hands clapping in applause	5.58	1.301
Tasting salt	5.10	1.302
Smelling the scent of a rose	4.63	1.460
Hearing the mewing of a cat	4.94	1.450
Smelling fresh paint	4.71	1.464
Seeing, for a relative or friend, the precise carriage, length of step, etc., in walking	3.40	1.566
Hearing the sound of a car horn	5.00	1.361
Performing the act of springing across a gutter	3.86	1.574
Feeling the prick of a pin	4.36	1.452
Smelling cooking cabbage	3.22	1.772
Performing the act of drawing a circle on paper	5.73	1.395
Smelling roast beef	4.23	1.566
Performing the act of reaching up to a high shelf	5.02	1.458
Tasting oranges	5.10	1.504
The sensation of hunger	5.68	1.318
Performing the act of kicking something out of the way	5.03	1.269
Hearing the sound of children singing	4.31	1.545
Tasting your favorite soup	4.31	1.551
Feeling fur	4.86	1.484
Seeing the color and shine of silverware	4.67	1.696
The sensation of repletion, as from a full meal	4.59	1.720

Note: M=Item Mean; SD=Standard Deviation

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for the Processing Style Items

SOP-Visualization Items (11 Items)	M	SD
There are some special times in my life that I like to relive by mentally "picturing" just how everything looked	1.92	.679
When I am trying to learn something new, I'd rather watch demonstration than read how to do it	1.49	.666
I like to picture how I could fix up my apartment or a room if I could buy anything I wanted	1.57	.764
I like to daydream	1.59	.705
I generally prefer to use a diagram rather than a written set of instructions	1.80	.749
I like to "doodle"	2.05	.875
I find it helps to think in terms of mental pictures when doing many things	1.66	.630
After I meet someone for the first time, I can usually remember what they look like, but not much about them	2.18	.768
When I have forgotten something I frequently try to form a mental "picture" to remember	1.69	.654
I seldom daydream (R)	3.27	.732
My thinking often consists of mental "pictures" or images	1.83	.610

Note: M=Item Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; R=Reverse coded

Table 4 shows that about half of the students are able to have highly vivid imagery whereas the rest experiences less vivid imagery. Similarly, the controllability ability is overall rather high (mean = 5.58 on a 7-point scale); however, about half of the students score below this mean. The style of processing scale results suggest that visual versus verbal processing preferences are equally divided among students in the sample.

Table 4. Overall Means and Distribution for the Three Mental Imagery Ability Scales

Scale	Scale Mean	Scale Median	% of students above mean	% of students below mean
Short Betts QMI	4.81	4.74	51.7%	48.3%
VIC	5.58	5.67	49.5%	50.5%
SOP	1.91	1.95	50.0%	50.0%

Note: N=89 for QMI; N=95 for VIC; N=94 for SOP

Gender Differences in Mental Imagery Processing

Additional analyses were conducted to test whether differences in mental imagery ability were driven by gender differences. Male respondents reported somewhat lower

vividness but higher controllability and a smaller preference for visual processing (Table 5). However, the ANOVA results show that gender differences were only significant for the visual processing scale, with female students being more likely to have a visual processing style (F=5.109; p=.03).

Table 5. Gender Differences in Mental Imagery Ability

Scale	Means		ANOVA Results	
	Male	Female	F	Sig.
Short Betts QMI	4.72	4.89	1.098	.298
VIC	5.66	5.50	0.742	.391
SOP	1.98	1.85	5.109	.026

Note: N=89 for QMI; N=95 for VIC; N=94 for SOP

IMPLICATIONS FOR DESIGNING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The results suggest that tourism students differ considerably in their mental imagery abilities. These differences need to be reflected in learning applications for tourism and hospitality courses. Whereas some students can effectively process text and can have vivid and complex mental imagery, the findings indicate that others need the help of technology to effectively envision tourism and hospitality related concepts. For instance, object interactivity can greatly foster mental imagery, especially for those who are less able to self-generate it (Schlosser, 2003). Interactivity is especially important for students who have difficulties in controlling mental imagery and manipulating objects in their mind. The interactivity of a learning environment can be increased through virtual tours instead of static pictures, interactive equations that allow students to change parameters and see changes immediately, games that require specific actions from students, etc. Simulation games appear to be the ultimate application of the interactivity principle to learning environments. Despite their widespread use in other disciplines, simulation games are still rarely implemented in tourism and hospitality education settings.

Stories have also been identified as an effective means of encouraging mental imagery (Brewer, 1988). Stories can convey great quantities of information, especially of experiential nature, in a format that users can quickly and easily assimilate (Gershon & Page, 2001). Based on narrative theory, including stories rather than descriptive texts or organizing content through means of a story can greatly support those students who would otherwise have difficulty in making mental connections. While most tourism and hospitality educators recognize the power of stories and use them in their oral teaching, narrative principles have yet to be successfully implemented in learning applications.

The findings of this study support multimedia learning theory (Mayer & Moreno, 2002) in that they prove that many students are not able to self-generate vivid imagery

and need multimedia content to encourage imagination. Including sound, visualizations, opportunities to use one's motor skills, and rich descriptions of other sensory experiences will create immersive and engaging learning experiences for students with less vivid imagery. Immersion has been identified as an important antecedent of optimal experiences in the interaction with Web sites (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). The same principles apply to learning applications.

Given the findings of this study, offering a multitude of ways in which content is represented and can be engaged with appears to be paramount for a system whose aim it is to encourage effective learning in tourism and hospitality students with different processing abilities and preferences. Personalization is a concept that has been recognized as a highly persuasive strategy for consumer applications (Ansari & Mela, 2003; Fogg, 2003). It has yet to be implemented in electronic learning environments. Providing students with options, for instance, to see a video, hear a podcast or read a text will allow them to choose the content that best fits their information processing and learning style.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Whereas emerging technologies have significantly impacted the tourism and hospitality industries, tourism and hospitality education has yet to fully integrate new technologies into its courses. Given the complexity of the tourism system (Mill & Morrison, 1985) and the experiential nature of the tourism product (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), it is crucial to foster mental imagery so that students can envision interrelationships and imagine implications and outcomes of different planning or marketing strategies. The study findings call for an integration of multimedia content such as podcasts as well as interactive games, stories and simulations in tourism courses to support those tourism students who are low in mental imagery ability.

Further, learning applications can only be successful if they address the specific needs of their users, in this case tourism and hospitality students. It is argued that mental imagery ability should be taken into account when evaluating the effectiveness of learning environments, whether they involve course Web sites or specific teaching strategies such as simulations. The effectiveness of addressing mental imagery ability differences through the design and content of learning applications will of course have to be constantly evaluated and improved as new technologies and new insights regarding individual learning differences become available. However, mental imagery ability is only one aspect that can influence the successful assimilation of learning content. Other student characteristics such as need for cognition (Cohen, 1957) or experience with technology (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2003) as well as attitudes toward technology (Bruce, 1997) might also be important factors to be recognized when designing learning environments. Future research is needed to identify those factors that have the greatest impact on student learning.

With the dwindling cost of technology and the increasing ease of use of learning applications it will become ever more possible for tourism and hospitality educators to offer interactive and immersive systems that contain content which can be personalized to a student's processing ability and preference. Yet, finding effective ways to translate concepts into solutions tailored to individuals' styles is ultimately dependent on the instructor's creativity, deep understanding of the material, and insight into students' needs and preferences. In addition, interaction between educators and professionals will be crucial for providing not only financial support but also content to populate rich learning environments. While other industries have recognized the importance of being actively involved in the design of effective learning environments, the tourism and hospitality industries are still rather focused on on-the-job training instead of investing in the education of future industry leaders with cognitive abilities beyond the memorization of manuals.

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EXAMINING THE INTERPLAY OF COHESION AND VACATION ACTIVITIES IN FAMILY TRAVEL CONTEXT

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ABSTRACT

This study intended to explore vacation activity patterns in terms of family functioning and cohesion style and provide insightful implications for developing the quality family vacation programs and improving the satisfactions of family travelers. The study results suggested that there were different types of family travelers with respect to their needs for cohesion and activities- "bonded and energetic"; "attached and enthusiastic"; "sociable and static"; "unattached and self-directed" family travelers-, and accordingly family is an important unit of individuals who seek experiences together during their vacation travel. Further, this study provides evidence for supporting the role of family functioning in travel context and the recognition of vacation activities as a valuable contributor to family cohesion.

INTRODUCTION

With the continuous trends of changing family structure and family demographics, family life continues to be important to Americans and family vacation is seen as an important builder of family well-being (Chesworth, 2003; Hill, 2000). According to a recent vacation survey conducted by expedia.com (2005), when Americans go on vacationing, it is all about the family: Almost a third (31 percent) of Americans say that they spend most of their vacation time traveling with their immediate family. Despite the downturns of economics, family travel market had grown up to average about 20 % since 2001 according to ASTA's 2004 Family Travel Survey (Travel weekly, 2005) and family vacations are turning into a lucrative niche for many travel businesses with an affinity toward this specialized market.

Amidst the literature for vacation experience, however, family travel has not received much attention from tourism researchers. Past literature on family travel has largely confined to the topic area of decision making (Seaton & Tagg, 1995). While the practicality of this focus from marketing perspective is apparent, it is also important to explore the impact of family vacation experience in order to improve the vacation contents of and thereby satisfaction level of the family travelers. Many travelers have witnessed the bonding experiences through quality family time outside daily routine (Sutherland & Deutsch 1997; Loomis, 2002), and shared leisure experiences are often deemed as an important means of developing cohesive, healthy relationships between family members (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). Yet we know little or nothing about what activities are frequently pursued by family vacationers and what vacation activities are perceived more beneficial to develop healthier family relationship. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to examine what types of vacation activities facilitate family bonding and interaction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Family as a consumption unit

White and Klein (1996) contended that understanding of family behavior is best when viewing the whole, for not only do family dynamics have a major influence on an individual's behavior, but a change in an individual will also affect every other member of a family system. Despite the family scientists' acknowledgement of family as a unit of analysis in terms of behavioral outcomes, research on family in marketing so far has only focused on decision outcomes (who makes the final decision) and to a much lesser degree on decision process (how they arrive at the decision outcome). Given that the family is not a simple sum of two or more individuals, the theories of behavior and personality at the individual levels, which are mostly applied in general marketing research, do not necessarily facilitate an explanation of behavior observed in families (Commuri & Gentry, 2000). Similarly, most studies in tourism and hospitality marketing area have assessed family behavior and needs based on theories and methodologies that are individual

consumption based and rarely attempted to understand family travel behavior as a whole (Park & Lehto, 2005).

In the discipline of marketing, although sporadic and not consistent, there have been attempts to present family as the purchasing unit and thus the meaningful unit for analyses of comparing the consumption behaviors and purchasing patterns by factors such as income level (Kaplan, 1938), family life cycle (Cox, 1975), the roles of working women in a household (Green & Cunningham, 1970; Strober & Weinberg, 1977) and other variables. However, family consumption research have been focused on a narrow set of issues (Commuri & Gentry, 2000; Rindfleisch, Burroughs & Denton, 1997), efforts are yet to be found to suggest the robust and comprehensive parameters of family consumer behavior from multi-dimensional perspectives. To better comprehend the intricacy of family consumption and their behavioral tendency, it is of great importance to examine the family as the unit of analysis and concern with it as a meaningful whole (Commuri & Gentry, 2000).

Family as a system and the theory of family functioning

Orthner and Mancini (1991) indicated that the family system theory offers potentially useful insights into relationships between leisure and family variables. It has evolved from being the unifying framework of the family therapy movement to emerge as perhaps one of the better known and most widely utilized paradigms for family study in the social and behavioral science (Broderick, 1993). The theory holds that families are comprised of multiple members that work as defined, interconnected systems which are goal directed, self-correcting, dynamic, and both affect and are affected by their environment (White & Klein, 2002). Family systems tend to seek a dynamic state of homeostasis by continually interacting both within themselves and with their ever-changing environment. Families are therefore self-regulatory and utilize different mechanisms to adapt to change and maintain stability which are "both seen as essential elements in family functioning" (Broderick, 1993). The principle of entropy suggests that a system must continually receive new information and energy as it functions or it will eventually cease to exist. Therefore, family systems have the need to experience and adapt to new situations and challenges while maintaining a certain level of closeness and structure, in order to function and progress. Family system theory assumes that understanding of family behavior is best when viewing the whole, for not only do family dynamics have a major influence on an individual's behavior, but a change in an individual will also affect every other member of a family system (White & Klein, 2002).

There have been a number of models developed based on a family systems framework. One of the most widely used is Olson's (2003) Circumplex Model of Marital and Family System. Beyond the basic characteristics of the systems framework, Olson's (2003) model suggests that family closeness or emotional bonding among family members (family cohesion) and the ability to be flexible, adapt and change (family adaptability) are the primary dimensions of family functioning. The necessary balance of these two dimensions is said to be facilitated through effective family communication. It

has been argued that all three dimensions are facilitated by or are related directly to aspects of family leisure involvement (Zabriskie & McCormic, 2001).

Circumplex model is a classification system that enables graphical representation of different family types on two-dimensional map with horizontal axis of cohesion and vertical axis of adaptability. Each dimension has four levels describing the degrees of cohesion and adaptability, so that the Circumplex model has 16 compartments with each representing different family functioning type. The mid-range of compartments - flexibly connected, flexibly cohesive, structurally connected, and structurally cohesive – are considered as healthy, while the other marginal compartments are considered not balanced and not healthy (Olson et al, 1989; Olson, 2003). A self-report instrument called the FACES (Family Adaptability and Cohesion Evaluation Scales) was designed to adequately assess the three major dimensions of the Circumplex Model and other related concepts by Olson and colleagues (1981, cited from Olson, 1989).

Impact of family time on family cohesion

In the contemporary U. S. society, family is still considered to be the fundamental unit and quality family time has become ever more important as the hurried life pace puts stresses upon many families. "Family time" as a subject has drawn much research attention in family and leisure studies (Daly 1996, cited from Harrington, 2001). According to Kelly (1977), the family is the most popular group with which to spend non-work time and most leisure activities important to adults are of family orientation. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) maintained that, owing to their social nature, leisure and travel activities are most often experienced in some type of group settings and family unit is the single most important leisure group in western societies (Kelly, 1977; Roberts, 1970).

In leisure studies, there are a handful of studies, although still limited, examining the relationship between family recreation and aspects of family functioning such as cohesiveness and bonding (Orthner & Mancini, 1991; West & Merriam, 1970). Researchers have theorized that the shared leisure activity establishes and maintains boundaries in the family system (Orthner & Mancini, 1991; Marks, 1989), promotes collective interests and enhances communications among family members. All of these are salient factors for family cohesion.

Family vacation activity

Since its inception of family leisure and recreation study tradition, a number of researchers have examined various leisure and recreation activities in family settings (Hawkins & Walters, 1952; Orthner & Mancini, 1991; West & Merriam, 1970; Wylie, 1952). While early studies were primarily interested in the quantity and type of leisure activity engaged in by family members, the interest shifted and expanded to the influences of leisure activities on family interaction, adjustments, cohesiveness and strengths, and the changes of leisure patterns by the life cycle and other circumstantial factors. With increased research, standardized scales and inventories of leisure activities were developed and tested in much of the studies. Despite of these serious efforts to

increase comparability and rigor of the discipline, a great deal of variability in defining categories of leisure activity and types of leisure patterns was found in the literature (Hawks, 1991). In the meantime, the positive association between family cohesiveness and outdoor recreation activity, camping or family vacation was consistently reported from a handful of family leisure research (Gustafson, 1986; Ragheb, 1975; Stinnett et. al., 1982; West & Merriam, 1970).

Despite the acknowledgment from researchers about the benefits of vacationing together on healthy family life, virtually no empirical research is found to examine how and why these types of activity are positively associated with family well-being. The tourism and travel literature have a lack of studies examining family vacation activities. Further, vacation activity types are investigated only in terms of individual preferences and satisfaction. So far, no tourism study has examined vacation activity patterns in favor of the family as a whole nor is there empirical investigation of the dynamics of family functioning, strength and family vacation activities. Understanding of how families benefit from family vacation experiences and which types of vacation activities are preferred by different families, can facilitate appropriate provision of family vacation products. As such, this study intended to explore vacation activity patterns in terms of family functioning and cohesion style and provide insightful implications for developing the quality family vacation programs and improving the satisfactions of family travelers.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

Accordingly, the objectives of this study were to:

(a) explore the dimensionality of vacation activity participation of family as a unit,
(b) explore dimensions of family cohesion in the family vacation setting,
(c) explore the interplay between family vacation activity patterns and family cohesiveness.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

Family travelers were targeted for the purpose of this study. The family traveler database of one of the largest travel clubs based in the mid-west region of the US was used. The travelers were requested to fill in a self-administered survey at the conclusion of their family vacation. The survey timeframe was between March and July 2005 when most family vacations occurred. A total of 314 questionnaires were distributed and 265 (84.4%) valid questionnaires were obtained.

Measures

The survey instrument used in this study was composed of three main sections: demographic and travel information, the scale of family function and leisure travel (FFLT), which was adopted from FACES II (Olson et al., 1992), and the family vacation activities. The original FACES II contains 16 items. After modification to fit into the travel context, 19 statement items were used for assessing family cohesion. Seven concepts were included in the cohesion construct: emotional bonding, family boundaries, coalitions, time, space, decision-making, and interests and recreation. Family vacation activities include 34 items, which assessed the frequency of activities that family members engage in together while traveling. Both cohesion construct and family vacation activities were measured by a five-point Likert type scale (1 = almost never, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = frequently, and 5 = almost always).

Statistical Procedures and Analyses

Data were analyzed using the SPSS 12.0 for Windows. Descriptive statistics were first used to profile the characteristics of the sampled family travelers. Then, principle components analyses with varimax rotation were computed to identify the factors underlying the cohesion and family vacation activity constructs. A factor was to be retained if it carried an eigenvalue greater than one and each item's factor loading was higher than 0.40 and not cross loaded on more than one factor. Reliability tests which yielded Cronbach alpha values were performed on all factors to test their respective internal consistency.

At the next stage, cluster analyses were performed on the resulting factors to identify groups of family travelers who responded similarly to the cohesion and activity dimensions. A two-stage cluster procedure was adopted in this study. In the first step, hierarchical cluster analyses with average linkage method were used to detect the number of clusters. At the second step, the number of clusters determined in the preliminary analysis was used in K-means clustering. Exploratory factor analysis instead of confirmatory factor analysis was conducted on the 16 cohesion statements due to the consideration that these statements have not been used in the leisure travel context prior to this research. To further validate the groupings resulting from the cluster analyses, discriminant analyses were performed on the cluster memberships. One-way ANOVA analyses with Dunnett's T3 tests were employed to differentiate group differences in terms of travelers' characteristics, cohesion, and family vacation activity patterns.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Profile of Travelers

Characteristics of travelers are presented in Table 1. The majority of respondents were female (65.3%), married (70.6%), Caucasian (94.0%), and above 45 years of age (57.8%). More than half of respondents (67.2%) had an educational level above a bachelor's degree and over a third of them (39.2%) held professional positions. In

addition, about 36 percent of respondents reported their annual household income was above US$200, 000.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Family Travelers (N = 265)

Variables	Percentage	Variables	Percentage	Variables	Percentage
Gender		*Annual household income*		*Occupation*	
Male	34.7	Under $40,000	3.4	Manager	11.7
Female	65.3	$40,000 – $59,999	4.5	Professional	39.2
		$60,000 – $79,999	8.7	Sales	3.0
Age		$80,000 – $99,999	6.8	Farming	0.8
18 – 24	15.8	$100,000 – $119,999	9.4	Homemaker	10.6
25 – 34	3.8	$120,000 – $139,999	6.4	Retired	3.0
35 – 44	22.6	$140,000 – $159,999	4.9	Student	15.8
45 – 54	44.2	$160,000 – $179,999	3.4	Self-employed	9.4
55 and above	13.6	$180,000 – $199,999	4.9	Manufacturing	0.8
		Above $200,000	36.2	Other	5.7
Marital status					
Single	19.6	*Education*		*Ethnic origin*	
Married	70.6	High school graduate	24.2	Caucasian	94.0
Divorced	4.8	Associate degree	4.8	African-American	1.1
Separated	0.4	Bachelor degree	33.2	Asian	1.9
Widowed	2.3	Master degree	20.0	Hispanic	0.8
Other	2.3	Doctorate	14.0	Other	2.2
		Other	3.8		

Family Cohesion

Cohesion Pattern

The evaluative rankings of family cohesion items in relation to family vacation are presented in Table 2. According to the results, the top five important items of cohesion are all related to the emotional bonding concept. More specifically, traveling with family appears to be perceived as quality time well spent (M = 4.58), strengthening family ties (M = 4.52) and contributing to the connectedness of family members (M = 4.49). In other words, respondents believed that leisure travel could enhance or sustain their relationships between family members.

Table 2. Top Importance Rankings of Family Cohesion Items

Rank	Items	Mean	SD
1	Traveling with family members is quality time well spent	4.58	0.71
2	Family members are supportive of each other during leisure trips	4.52	0.72
3	Family members feel very close to each other while traveling together	4.49	0.75
4	Our family travel together well	4.45	0.71
5	While traveling together, it makes the family tie stronger	4.44	0.79

Factors of Family Cohesion

Regarding factors of the cohesion construct, 16 items were retained (Table 3). These 16 items yielded three factors, which explained about 56% of variance. By examining the measurement items under each factor, these three factors were labeled as: "emotional bonding (∂ = .89)," "family boundaries (∂ = .78)," and "coalitions and decision making (∂ = .68)" respectively. Comparing the resulting three factors with the theoretical concepts of cohesion, items of the family boundaries factor were completely consistent with the findings of Olson et al. (1983). However, two originally separated concepts with respect to emotional bonding and time were merged into one factor, emotional bonding. Moreover, while coalition and decision-making were two different concepts according to Olson et al. (1983), they emerged as one factor in this study as "coalitions and decision-making". Results showed that the total internal consistency of the cohesion construct was acceptable at 0.80.

Table 3. Factors of Cohesion

Cohesion	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's α	Mean
Factor 1:Emotional bonding		6.24	29.40	.89	
While traveling together, it makes the family tie stronger	.81				4.44
Our family travels together well	.76				4.45
Family members feel close to each other while traveling together	.74				4.49
While traveling, family members share interest and experiences with each other	.73				4.31
Traveling with family members is quality time well spent	.69				4.58
Family members are supportive of each other during leisure trips	.63				4.52
While traveling together, family members respect each other's personal time and space	.62				3.98
Tension within my family is more relaxed while traveling together	.61				3.57
Traveling together as a family makes us close to each other	.58				4.24
Factor 2:Coalitions and decision-making		1.46	14.15	.68	
While traveling, family members pair up rather than do things as a total family.	-.75				2.35
While traveling together, my family enjoys participating in the same activities	.64				3.94
In our family, everyone goes his/her own way when it comes to leisure travel	-.59				1.94
While traveling, family members go along with	.58				4.14

Cohesion	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's α	Mean
what the family decides to do					
When planning a trip, family members consult other family members on personal decisions	.49				3.83
Factor 3:Family boundaries		1.22	12.20	.78	
It is easier to plan a trip with people outside the family than with my family members.	.81				1.87
It is easier to travel with people outside the family than with my family members.	.84				2.00
Total variance explained			55.75		

Family Vacation Activities

Popular Vacation Activities

In the present study, vacation activities were measured by the frequency of participation for the entire family, ranging from "almost never (1)" to "almost always(5)". This five-point Likert scale can capture more variances than a binary scale (yes or no). Also, since the questions of this study were related to what family travelers usually do rather than a specific vacation, the frequency assessment can assist researchers to gain a better understanding of family travelers' generic behavior pattern. Results showed that the 10 most popular vacation activities consumed by family as a unit were (Table 4): swimming ($M = 4.02$), dining in a fine restaurant ($M = 3.93$), enjoy local specialties ($M = 3.87$), dining in an inexpensive restaurant ($M = 3.64$), shopping clothing ($M = 3.42$), enjoy nightlife and entertainment ($M = 2.97$), visiting a historical site ($M = 2.95$), sightseeing in a big city ($M = 2.92$), shopping arts and crafts ($M = 2.82$), and visiting friends and relatives ($M = 2.73$).

Table 4. Top 10 Vacation Activities Participated in by Family as a Unit

Rank	Items	Mean	SD
1	Swimming or other water sports	4.02	1.04
2	Dining in a fine restaurant	3.93	1.06
3	Enjoy local specialties and delicacies	3.87	1.09
4	Dining in an inexpensive restaurant	3.64	1.06
5	Shopping clothing, shoes, and jewelry	3.42	1.21
6	Enjoy nightlife and entertainment	2.97	1.20
7	Visiting a historical site	2.95	1.10
8	Sightseeing in a big city	2.92	1.17
9	Shopping arts and crafts	2.82	1.34
10	Visiting friends and relatives	2.73	1.28

Factors of Family Vacation Activity

Regarding the dimensionality of family vacation activity, 31 items resulted in nine factors, which explained about 61% of variances. These nine factors were labeled: "*City based sightseeing* (∂ = .81)," "shopping (∂ = .76)," "*Dining and nightlife* (∂ = .64)," "*Adventurous pursuits* (∂ = .72)," "visiting friends and relatives (∂ = .48)," "skilled-based sport (∂ = .49)," "theme park (∂ = .36)," "volunteering and sightseeing rural area (∂ = .36)," and "farm-based activity (∂ = .45)."

Items of appreciating activities are physically passive but mentally enriching to some extent. Items of eating and nightlife are related to life enjoyment, and those activities are common and popular in family vacation. With respect to energy demanding activities, most of them require a high energy expenditure; for example, climbing, hunting, and river-rafting. Activities related to visiting friends and relatives are attending musicals or concerts and sport events. Those activities seem to allow every family member to be involved in at the same time. Skill-based sports, such as golf and winter sports, may only fit for those who are physically health and have a specialized sport skill. Theme park related activities are fun and excited oriented. Volunteering and sightseeing in rural area appear to be a unique type of activity. Perhaps, it is because many volunteering leisure activities are more likely to take place in some rural areas. Farm-based activities are about visiting farms and farmer markets.

Table 5. Factors of Family Vacation Activity Items

Family Activity	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's α	Mean
Factor 1:City based sightseeing		5.66	18.25	.81	2.59
Visiting a museum	.77				
Visiting a historical site	.77				
Visiting a zoo	.76				
Visiting a natural site	.61				
Sightseeing in a big city	.51				
Attending a festival	.49				
Factor 2: Shopping		2.97	9.58	.76	2.13
Shopping antique	.76				
Shopping books	.75				
Shopping toys	.73				
Shopping arts and crafts	.63				
Factor 3:Dining & Nightlife		2.03	6.55	.64	3.55
Dining in a fine restaurant	.75				
Enjoy local specialties and delicacies	.69				
Enjoy nightlife and entertainment	.68				
Shopping clothing	.59				
Factor 4: Adventurous pursuits		1.81	5.87	.72	1.82
Hiking/Backpacking/Climbing	.61				

Family Activity	Factor loading	Eigenvalue	Variance explained (%)	Cronbach's α	Mean
Camping	.57				
Viewing wildlife	.56				
Fishing/Hunting	.50				
River-rafting	.48				
Factor 5:Visiting friends and relatives		1.64	5.30	.48	2.70
Visiting friends and relatives	.62				
Swimming or other water sports	-.58				
Attending a musical and concert	.52				
Attending a sport event	.47				
Factor 6: Skill-based sports		1.35	4.37	.49	2.03
Golf/Tennis	.79				
Winter sports	.71				
Factor 7:Theme park		1.18	3.79	.36	1.96
Visiting a theme park	.83				
Horse-riding	.53				
Factor 8:Volunteering and sightseeing in rural area		1.15		.36	1.91
Volunteering	.78				
Sightseeing a rural area	.48				
Factor 9: Farm-based activity		1.01	3.27	.45	1.50
Visiting a farmer market	.79				
Visiting a farm	.54				
Total variance explained			60.71		

The Interplay of Cohesion and Family Vacation Activity Patterns

Four distinctive groups regarding cohesion and family vacation activity patterns were identified by the two-stage cluster analyses and supported by follow-up discriminant analyses (Table 6). Cluster 1 was labeled as "bonded and energetic," cluster 2 was labeled as "attached and enthusiastic", cluster 3 was labeled as "unattached and self-directed," and cluster 4 was labeled "sociable but static." Three canonical discriminant functions were calculated. Function 1: Wilk's Lamada = .070, Chi-square = 682.48, df = 36, *p*-value = .000; Function 2: Wilk's Lamada = .195, Chi-square = 418.230, df = 22, *p-value* = .000; Function 3: Wilk's Lamada = .454, Chi-square = 202.159, df = 10, *p-value* = .000. The classification matrices of respondents indicated that 97.4% of 265 cases were correctly classified. Based on the four identified groups of family travelers, group differences in demographic variables, traveling partners, cohesion, family vacation activity patterns were performed using one-way ANOVA with Dunnett's T3 tests (Table 6).

Results showed that the "bonded and energetic" group of family travelers was concerned with family members bonding with each other during family vacations.

They placed the highest value on family bonding and communication. Consensuses of family members were important to this group, and decisions of family vacation activities should be group oriented and agreed upon. The "bonded and energetic" family travelers were highly participatory in diverse activities, such as appreciating, eating and nightlife, skill-based sports, and theme park related activities. This group of family travelers was more likely to be married and middle-age adults, and they frequently traveled with their spouses and young children under 12 years old.

The "attached and enthusiastic" group of family travelers was attached to their family members. Once in a while, they also traveled with outside family members, such as friends. They were more commonly involved in some volunteering activities and appreciating activities during family vacations, but not skill-based sports. According to the findings, the "bonded and energetic" group seems to be fun-oriented in their choices of activities, while the choices of activities of the "attached and enthusiastic" group tend to belong to a more "serious leisure" type. In addition, the "attached and enthusiastic" family travelers were more likely to be married and middle-age adults. However, unlike the "bonded and energetic" group, they did not show the tendency to travel with young children, but they sometimes traveled with their older children.

With regard to the "unattached and self-directed" group of family travelers, they tended to be single young adults. They did not show high need for emotional bonding and coalition with their family members, although they were more likely to travel with their siblings. Compared with other groups, the "unattached and self-directed" group pursued skill-based sports and theme park related activities, which may not require every family member's involvement. In other words, they did not perceive their interests and preferences coincide with their parents. They seem to seek some spaces for themselves and to explore and express their own needs in family vacation.

The "sociable but static" group seemed to be close to family members and also to their friends. However, they appeared to be "static" in the sense that they generally had low level of activity participation with the exception of "eating and nightlife entertainment". Although they chose not to do much of activities in a family vacation, they placed relatively high value on emotional bonding and coalitions. The "sociable but static" family travelers may just want to spend time with each other and enjoy life with good food and wine. Interestingly, more than half of the "social but static" family travelers (52%) did not have children, though most of them were married ($n = 64\%$). It seems that this group of family travelers was likely to be young couples who may aim at developing a closer relationship through a vacation.

Table 6. Means and One-Way ANOVA Tests among Four Clusters

	Means				F-value	Sig.	Dunnett's T3 tests
	Cluster I (n = 111)	Cluster II (n = 18)	Cluster III (n = 63)	Cluster VI (n = 73)			
Emotional bonding	4.63	4.57	3.58	4.33	80.45	.000	1, 2 > 4 > 3
Coalitions and decision-making	3.28	3.36	2.98	3.41	16.69	.000	1, 2, 4 > 3
Family boundaries	1.21	2.03	2.43	2.57	45.91	.000	3, 4 > 2 > 1
City based sightseeing	2.79	3.32	2.44	2.28	10.49	.000	1, 2 > 3, 4
Shopping	2.18	2.63	2.07	1.98	2.42	.067	
Dining and nightlife	3.76	3.81	3.07	3.59	10.72	.000	1, 2, 4 > 3
Adventurous pursuits	1.88	1.74	1.77	1.80	0.42	.740	
Visiting friends and relatives	2.77	2.67	2.74	2.57	1.32	.268	
Skill-based sport	2.21	1.67	2.33	1.57	8.47	.000	1> 4; 3 > 2, 4
Theme park	2.06	2.00	2.24	1.56	9.45	.000	1, 3 > 4
Volunteering and sightseeing in rural area	1.86	3.60	1.78	1.73	38.23	.000	2 > 1, 3, 4
Farm-based activity	1.49	1.69	1.49	1.49	0.43	.732	
Travel with spouse	4.77	4.47	4.15	4.26	4.54	.004	1 > 3
Travel with children under 5 years old	3.12	1.00	2.11	2.00	2.80	.048	1 > 2
Travel with children 5-12 years old	3.98	3.14	3.33	2.53	3.85	.012	1 > 4
Travel with children 13-17 years old	4.09	3.91	3.40	3.71	1.48	.224	
Travel with sibling	2.05	2.00	3.15	2.50	4.32	.006	3 > 1
Travel with parents	2.20	2.17	3.02	2.93	3.63	.014	

CONCLUSIONS

This study attempted to investigate the interplay of cohesion and vacation activities in family travel context. Results yielded four major types of family travelers with respect to their needs for cohesion and activities. The "bonded and energetic" travelers are highly family centered. They are concerned with entire family members' preferences and needs while traveling together. The group of "attached and enthusiastic" travelers not only considers their personal or family desires, but also cares for other people by engaging in some altruistic activities such as volunteering. The "sociable and static" family travelers also demonstrate that emotional bonding is important to them. They enjoy couple-oriented activities such as dining and nighlife. However, their activity interests were rather narrow and they tend to be physically inactive. Rather than family oriented, the "unattached and self-directed" group is individual oriented. They are more focused on their own favorites when travel with their family members. This group of travelers tends to be younger adults and single.

Accordingly, this study provides evidence for supporting the role of family functioning in travel context and the recognition of vacation activities as a valuable contributor to family cohesion. Knowledge about how family vacation contributes to family cohesiveness could lend insights for family policy makers who are charged with the mission of improving family well-being. Further, family has been identified as the most important consumption unit (Assael, 1998). When considering family vacations, it must be kept in mind that family is a unit of individuals who seek experiences together (Gram, 2005). Family visitors are increasingly being targeted and welcomed in many visitor attractions and destinations (Sterry, 2004). Diverse needs exhibited by family travelers imply the knowledge of how families function while on vacation is critical to industry practitioners. Understanding the choices made by the traveling families about sets of activities can help generating more potential family vacationers through tailored market planning and destination promotional strategies.

The sample included only families with financial resources and interests in taking leisure trips and therefore represents only a selective group of American household. Selected activities used in this study may not capture all possible activities in family travel. A further exploration of types of family vacation activities is needed. In addition, this study was cross-sectional and evaluative rather than longitudinal or observational; the direction of the relationship between family bonds and vacation activities could be questioned (Holman & Jacquart, 1988). Future study should be designed using longitudinal approaches or qualitative techniques to map out their causal relationships. It will help hospitality and tourism industries to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs of family travelers and provide appropriate family travel experiences.

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AN EXAMINATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DESTINATION IMAGE, TRAVEL MOTIVATION AND LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

Using Structural Equation Modeling, this study empirically tested a theoretical model that depicts the relationship between destination image, travel motivation, and destination loyalty in a rural tourism context. Two image dimensions and three motivation dimensions were identified by Exploratory Factor Analysis. Correlation was detected through Structural Equation Modeling between motivation and image, and between affective image and destination loyalty. Theoretical contribution and practical implications were discussed. Future studies were also suggested.

KEYWORDS: *Destination image; Travel motivation; Destination loyalty; Rural tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

It has been well recognized that tourism destinations must be conceived as brands due to the changes in tourism sectors, competition among tourism products and services, as well as the changes in tourists' expectations and habits (Beerli & Martin, 2004b). From this perspective, brand image is an essential component of the success of tourist destinations because of two reasons. First is the nature of tourism industry. Tourism product and service is typically intangible and the tourists could only rely on the "subject feel" of the destination rather than "the fact" to make their travel decision (Ahmed, 1991; Mill & Morrison, 2002). A destination with strong, positive, discriminatory, and recognizable images has more probability of being chosen by the tourists (Goodrich, 1978; Hunt, 1975; Pearce, 1982; Ross, 1993; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). The second reason is that the formation of image is a constant process (Gunn, 1989) and tourists' perceived post-visit-image could also influence their intention to revisit and to recommend the place to others (Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Chon, 1990; Court & Lupton, 1997; Joppe, Martin, & Waalen, 2001).

Tourism studies on destination image are abundant and can be traced back to the early 1970s when image was first examined as a factor in state tourism development (Hunt, 1975). Previous studies covered a wide variety of aspects of image in tourism. However, those previous studies have largely focused on the static structure of image and the examination was isolated from other psychological and behavioral stages in a tourist decision process of destination selection (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

To address this problem, the relationship between image and pre-purchase factors, such as sociopsychological motivation (*e.g.*, Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004a), as well as the post-purchase factors, such as loyalty (*e.g.*, Cai, Wu, & Bai, 2004) was empirically investigated. Significant relationship between loyalty and affective/attitudinal image, between motivation and affective component of destination image was delineated. However, the cognitive image was ignored "because of the lack of support from the literature" (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999: 890). This study was therefore designed to fill up this gap by taking cognitive image into consideration in investigating the effect of image in a dynamic setting of tourists' decision making process.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Destination Image

Destination image was defined as the expression of all knowledge, impressions, prejudices and emotional thoughts an individual or group has of a particular object or

place (Lawson & Baud-Bovy, 1977). It has been widely accepted that image is formed by the reasoned and the emotional interpretation of the consumer and as the consequence of two closely interrelated components, the perceptive/cognitive evaluation and the affective appraisals (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Moutinho, 1987; Walmsley & Young, 1998). Perceptual or cognitive evaluation refers to beliefs and knowledge about an object whereas affective refers to feelings about it (Baloglu & Brinberg, 1997; Gartner, 1993; Holbrook, 1978; Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993; Ward & Russel, 1981; Zimmer & Golden, 1988). A common agreement among diverse researchers is that cognitive component is an antecedent of the affective evaluation (Anand, Holbrook, & Stephens, 1988; Gartner, 1993; Holbrook, 1978; Lynch, 1960; Reibstein, Lovelock, & Dobson, 1980; Russel & Pratt, 1980; Stern & Krakover, 1993). People's evaluative response stems from their knowledge of the objects (Anand, Holbrook, & Stephens, 1988; Holbrook, 1978; Russel & Pratt, 1980; Stern & Krakover, 1993). Therefore the affective responses are formed as a function of the cognitive ones. This suggests that although a distinction is made between the two dimensions, they are also interrelated (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). Based on the discussion above, the first hypothesis for this study was:

> *Hypothesis 1: perceptual/cognitive evaluations significantly influence affective evaluations of a tourism destination*

Destination Image and Travel Motivation

Image forming is a constant process which could be influenced by the source and type of information, the sociodemographic characteristics of tourists, prior knowledge, and travel motivation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004a; Stern & Krakover, 1993). Among all those factors probably travel motivation is the most critical one because motivation is accepted as the central concept in understanding tourism behavior and the destination choice process (Crompton, 1979). The image of a destination is highly related to tourists' benefits sought (motivation). Motivation determine the image of a destination before and after the visitation (Mill & Morrison, 2002). In the destination choice process, images are formed in relation to the motivations in a conscious or unconscious way (Moutinho, 1987). The understanding of the relationship between motivation and destination image could enhance both image and motivation theory (Pearce, 1995).

Tourism motivation is conceptualized as a dynamic process of internal psychological factors (needs and wants) that generate a state of tension or disequilibrium within individuals (Crompton & McKay, 1997). These inner needs and the resulting disequilibrium lead to actions designed to restore equilibrium through satisfying needs (Crompton, 1979). Three taxonomic frameworks have been proposed to delineate and

order individual motives into categories. They are Maslow's need hierarchy, Iso-Ahola's escape-seeking dichotomy, and the notion of push-pull factors (Crompton & McKay, 1997). Among those three alternatives, Maslow's need hierarchy is "perhaps the most popular theory of motivation used by leisure authors" (Iso-Aloha, 1980:233). Maslow classified human needs into five categories which in ascending order from the most fundamental physical needs of survival to psychological needs of safety, belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Based on those five categories, tourism scholars added another needs of intellectual which refer to the pursuit of knowledge/novelty and/or the appreciation of nature/beauty (Mill & Morrison, 2002).

The relationship between travel motivation and image was investigated by Baloglu and McCleary in 1999 by empirically testing an image formation model. The model described the influential factors of image formation, among which motivation was a critical one. A relationship was found between only one of the five motivation factors, escape, and the affective image of the destination. Based on the findings from Baloglu and McCleary's study, Beerli and Martin did a similar one in 2004 to examine the factors influencing post-visit destination images. An image formation model was suggested. Among other findings, the motivation of relaxation and knowledge was found to be a significant predictor of first-time visitors' affective evaluation of the destination. While for repeaters, only the knowledge was found to be significantly related to the affective image. However, the relationship between motivation factors and the cognitive component of image was not examined in extant studies "due to the lack of support from literature" (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999: 890). To broaden and strengthen the previous study results, the following hypothesis was developed:

Hypothesis2: Tourists with different travel motivation factors may perceive differently on affective image

Lazarus (1991) proposed a cognitive-motivational-relational theory which acknowledged the transactional relationship between environmental variables and a person's emotional response in relation to their goals and context. Individual's goal and their response to the environment is interrelated in that the latter is a function of the individual's latent disposition or character to achieve certain goal (Lazarus, 1991). In tourism context, individual's goal-seeking could be viewed as his or her needs to seek out environments that are consonant with his or her motives, or attempts to remove him or herself from harmful environments, as depicted in Iso-Ahola's seeking-escaping theory. While with respect to the response to the environment, many findings in environmental psychology supported that it contains the appraisal of both the affective quality (affective image) and the physical features (cognitive image) of the environment. Grounded in this theory, it was hypothesized that:

Hypothesis3: Tourists with different travel motivation factors perceive differently on cognitive image

Image and Loyalty

Repeated purchases or recommendations to other people are most usually referred to as consumer loyalty in the marketing literature. Similarly, travel destinations can be considered as products, and tourists may revisit or recommend travel destinations to other potential tourists such as friends or relatives. However, the study of the usefulness of the concept of loyalty and its applications to tourism products or services has been limited, even though loyalty has been thought of as one of the major driving forces in the competitive market (Dimanche & Havitz, 1994). In the last decade, tourism or leisure researchers have incorporated the concept of consumer loyalty into tourism products, destinations, or leisure/recreation activities. Generally, loyalty has been measured in three ways, the behavioral approach, the attitudinal approach, and the composite approach (Jacoby & Chesnut, 1978). Loyalty could be influenced by many factors including satisfaction, perceived image of destination and motivation.

Cai, Wu, and Bai (2004) empirically examined the relationship between behavioral dimension of loyalty and perceived destination image. A strong positive association was found between the attitudinal/affective component of image and loyalty, which was delineated by the frequency of repeat visitation. However, the authors mentioned in their conclusion part that the situational factors may alter the study results. Therefore the fourth and fifth hypotheses were developed to test the validity of the result in a different setting.

Hypothesis4: The perceived cognitive image significantly influences loyalty.

Hypothesis5: The perceived affective image significantly influences loyalty.

With respect to the relationship between motivation and loyalty, Yoon and Uysal (2005) proposed a model which described the association between motivation, satisfaction, and loyalty. A mediating effect was found in that motivation influences tourists' loyalty through their satisfaction toward the destination. In addition to this, a causal relationship was also revealed between push motivation and loyalty. Their effort in examining the relationship between those three constructs was the first attempt in tourism literature and the findings were preliminary as mentioned in the conclusion part (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore the sixth hypothesis was developed as a supplement to the previous hypotheses to test the relationship between loyalty and motivation in a different setting. Figure 1 below shows the theoretical framework of the study.

Hypothesis6: The travel motivation significantly influences loyalty.
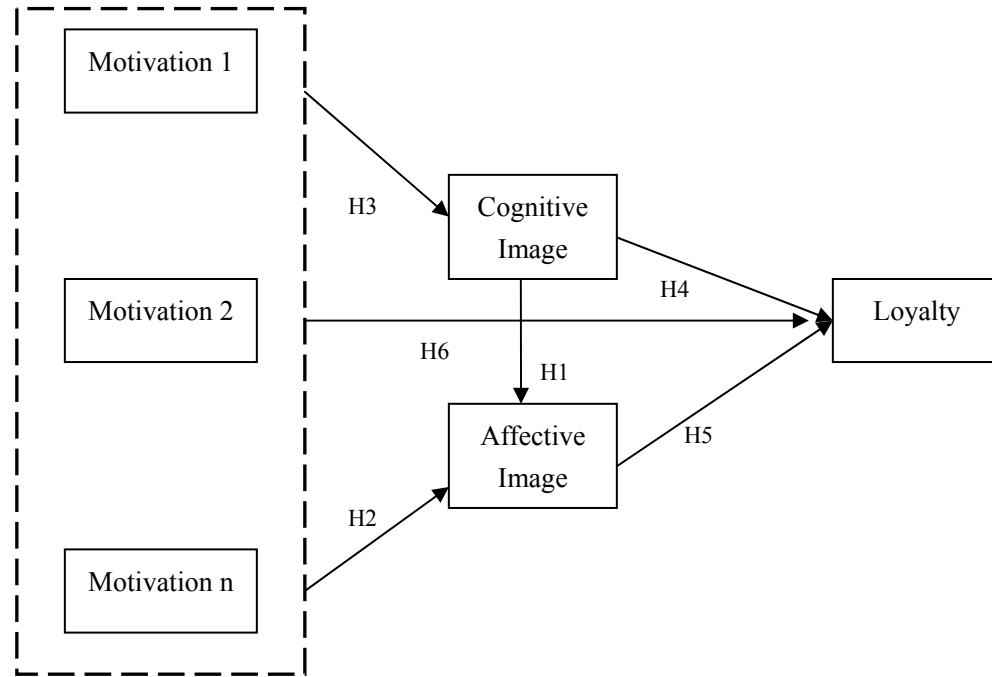
Figure 1 Conceptual Model

METHODOLOGY

The data used in this study was drawn from a visitor profile study conducted for the Convention and Visitor Bureau in a Midwest county in the USA. Respondents were visitors from outside that county. The data was collected through personal interviews at a variety of interview sites including hotels, motels and all the major attraction sites in the county during four different trips between May 2004 and May 2005. Each of the four fieldtrips corresponds to four seasons and encompassed an equal number of weekdays and weekend days. A total of 926 questionnaires were collected. After eliminating some uncompleted ones, 882 were kept, which consisted of 48.8% males and 51.2% females.

The survey questions included respondents' perception of the county, their travel motivation, their travel behavior pattern such as length of stay and expenditure, their trip characteristics such as source of information and activities participated in, as well as their demographic and socioeconomic characteristics.

The questions that measured respondents' perceived image, their travel motivation, and their loyalty were used in this study. For the measurement of image, the respondents were asked how they perceived on each of the 11 statements as an accurate description of

the county as a travel destination on a 1-10 scale with 10 being the most accurate. For the operationalization of travel motivation, the respondents were asked how important each of the 12 statements were to them when they plan their trip on a 1-10 scale with 10 being the most important. The loyalty variable was measured on the behavioral dimension by a single item of intention to revisit on a 1-5 scale with 1 being very likely and 5 being very unlikely.

A progressive procedure of statistical analysis was carried out. After preliminary analysis which provided baseline descriptive statistics to examine the normality of the data, a principle component analysis with varimas rotation was conducted to identify the underlying factors of image and travel motivation. To control the number of factors extracted, a minimum eigenvalue of one was used. Items exhibiting low factor loadings (<.40), high cross-loadings (>.40), or low communalities (<.50) were candidates for deletion (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). In order to verify the reliability of the variables generated by principal component analysis, a Cronbach's alpha reliability test was conducted

Structural Equation Modeling was used to test the hypotheses. Prior to testing the SEM model, a confirmative factor analysis was conducted in order to establish confidence in the measurement model, which specifies the posited relations of the observed variables to the underlying constructs. The maximum likelihood method (Anderson & Gerbing, 1998) of estimation was employed to test the model. This test was necessary because the confirmatory measurement model should be evaluated and re-specified before the measurement and the structural equation models are examined simultaneously (Anderson & Gerbing, 1998). Thus each construct was analyzed separately. In the last stage a SEM model was developed to test the six hypotheses in Figure 1.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The results of the descriptive analysis revealed that the skewness and the kurtosis of the variables used in this study were within an acceptable range. Therefore the assumption of normality was not violated. Table 1 and 2 below showed the results of the exploratory factor analysis. The derived factors from EFA were treated as exogenous constructs in the SEM model of this study.

As shown in Table 1, two image factors were identified and they were labeled as cognitive image and affective image respectively. Five items had factor loadings higher than 0.40 on cognitive image. However, the last item (*Is a scenic, clean and beautiful destination*) had a high cross-loading on both factors, therefore was deleted for the

following analysis. The rest of the five items loaded on the construct of affective image. However, the statement of *offers a mixture of attractions unique in* had a high cross-loading on cognitive image also, therefore was deleted. The total variance explained was 59.3% and the Cronbach Alpha was 0.896.

Table 1 Factors Extracted for Image

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance
Cognitive Image		3.526	32.056%
Has rich history and heritage	0.740		
Provides a unique shopping experience	0.757		
Offers a variety of outdoor recreation activities	0.756		
There are exciting entertainment opportunities	0.665		
There are colorful events and festivals	0.722		
Is a scenic, clean and beautiful destination	0.564		
Affective Image		2.998	27.255%
Is ideal for a fun day trip	0.619		
Is a good place for family weekends	0.725		
Is a good place for a couples getaway	0.814		
Is my type of destination	0.789		
Offers a mixture of attractions unique in	0.577		

Notes: total explained variance = 59.311%

KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.924

Bartlett's test of sphericity (p < 0.000)

Cronbach alpha coefficient of 12 perceived value = 0.896

As revealed in Table 2, three motivational factors were identified. The three factors were labeled in consistent with the motivations identified in Maslow's hierarchy of needs model as intellectual, belonging, and escape. Four items had factor loadings higher than 0.40 on intellectual. Another four factors loaded on the construct of escape and the rest four were loaded on belonging. The total variance explained was 58.4% and the Cronbach Alpha was 0.843.

The results of the test of measurement model were shown in Table 3. All the indices displayed an acceptable level of fit except for the dimension of intellectual. It had a high CMIN/DF and RMSEA. But the CFI and NFI were in an acceptable level therefore it was kept for the following analysis. Additionally, all of the indicators of the t-value associated with each of the completely standardized loading exceeded the critical value (2.58) at p<0.01 significance level. Based on the results, a total of nine indicators of

image and 12 indicators of motivation were remained.

Table 2 Factors Extracted for Motivation

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Explained Variance
Intellectual		2.721	22.676%
Increase my knowledge about places, people and things	0.687		
Learn about the history and heritage of the area	0.778		
Appreciate the nature	0.770		
Experience different culture and ways of life	0.771		
Escape		2.249	18.741%
Having fun, being entertained	0.622		
Escape from a routine life	0.763		
Experience adventure and excitement	0.739		
Rest, relax and recuperate	0.592		
Belonging		2.033	16.942%
Visit friends and relatives	0.756		
Variety of things to see and do for the whole family	0.651		
Spend quality time with the family away from home	0.710		
Spend quality time with children/grandchildren	0.553		

Notes: total explained variance = 58.360%

KMO measure of sampling adequacy = 0.829

Bartlett's test of sphericity (p < 0.000)

Cronbach alpha coefficient of 12 perceived value = 0.843

Table 3 Goodness-of-Fit Measures for the Measurement Model (N=882)

Factors	Chi-Square	DF	p	CMIN/DF	CFI	NFI	RMSEA
Image							
Cognitive Image	42.194	5	0.000	8.439	0.976	0.973	0.092
Affective Image	7.925	2	0.019	3.963	0.994	0.993	0.058
Motivation							
Escape	0.803	2	0.669	0.401	0.999	0.999	0.000
Belonging	8.108	2	0.017	4.054	0.990	0.986	0.059
Intellectual	100.997	2	0.000	50.499	0.919	0.918	0.237

With confidence established in the proposed measurement model of this study, a structural equation model was developed to test the hypothesized model in Figure 1. The Chi-Square was 1364.899 with a degree of freedom of 198. However, since Chi-Square is heavily influenced by the sample size (Bollen & Long, 1993), it was necessary to check all the other model fit statistics. According to the results in AMOS, the CMIN/DF was 6.893, CFI was 0.823, NFI was 0.900, and RMSEA was 0.082, therefore the model was accepted.

Given that both the measurement model and structural model were within an acceptable level from AMOS, the final results were employed in examining the path relationships among the constructs. With the maximum likelihood estimation method the completely standardized coefficients were evaluated. The results were shown in Table 4 and Figure 2.

Table 4 Path Analysis

	Beta	t-value	P value	Hypothesis	Results
CI → AI	0.524	12.070	<0.001	H1	Accepted
I → AI	-0.002	-0.082	NS	H3	Partially accepted
I → CI	0.332	8.604	<0.001	H2	Accepted
I → Loyalty	0.026	1.362	NS	H6	Rejected
E → AI	0.3	5.986	<0.001	H3	Partially accepted
E → CI	-0.137	-1.981	<0.05	H2	Accepted
E → Loyalty	-0.062	-1.639	NS	H6	Rejected
B → AI	0.069	2.464	<0.001	H3	Partially accepted
B → CI	0.099	2.288	<0.05	H2	Accepted
B → Loyalty	0.017	0.796	NS	H6	Rejected
AI → Loyalty	-0.190	-3.878	<0.001	H5	Accepted
CI → Loyalty	0.046	1.299	NS	H4	Rejected

Notes: CI: cognitive image; AI: affective image; I: intellectual motivation; E: escape motivation; B: belonging motivation

To test the first hypothesis, the relationship between the cognitive image and affective image was explored. It was found that cognitive image significantly influenced affective image at a 0.001 significance level with t-value = 12.070. Therefore, the first hypothesis was supported.

As shown in Figure 2, it was found that the motivation of escape was significantly related with the affective image at a 0.001 significance level (t-value = 5.986) while the

motivation of belonging was related at a 0.05 significance level (t-value = 0.014). The intellectual motives were not significantly related to the affective image with t-value = -0.082. Therefore hypothesis 2 was partially supported. As for the relationship between the cognitive image and travel motivation, only the influence of the intellectual motives was at a 0.001 level (t-value = 8.6704), while other two motivations of belonging and escape were related to the cognitive image at a 0.05 significance level (t-value = 2.288 for Belonging, and t-value = -1.981 for Escape). Therefore hypothesis 3 was supported.

With respect to visitors' loyalty to the destination, it was found that only the visitors' perceived affective image was highly related to their loyalty at 0.001 significance level with t-value = -3.878, while no significant relationship was found between loyalty and motivation, and between loyalty and cognitive image. Therefore hypothesis 5 was accepted; and hypotheses 4 and 6 were rejected.
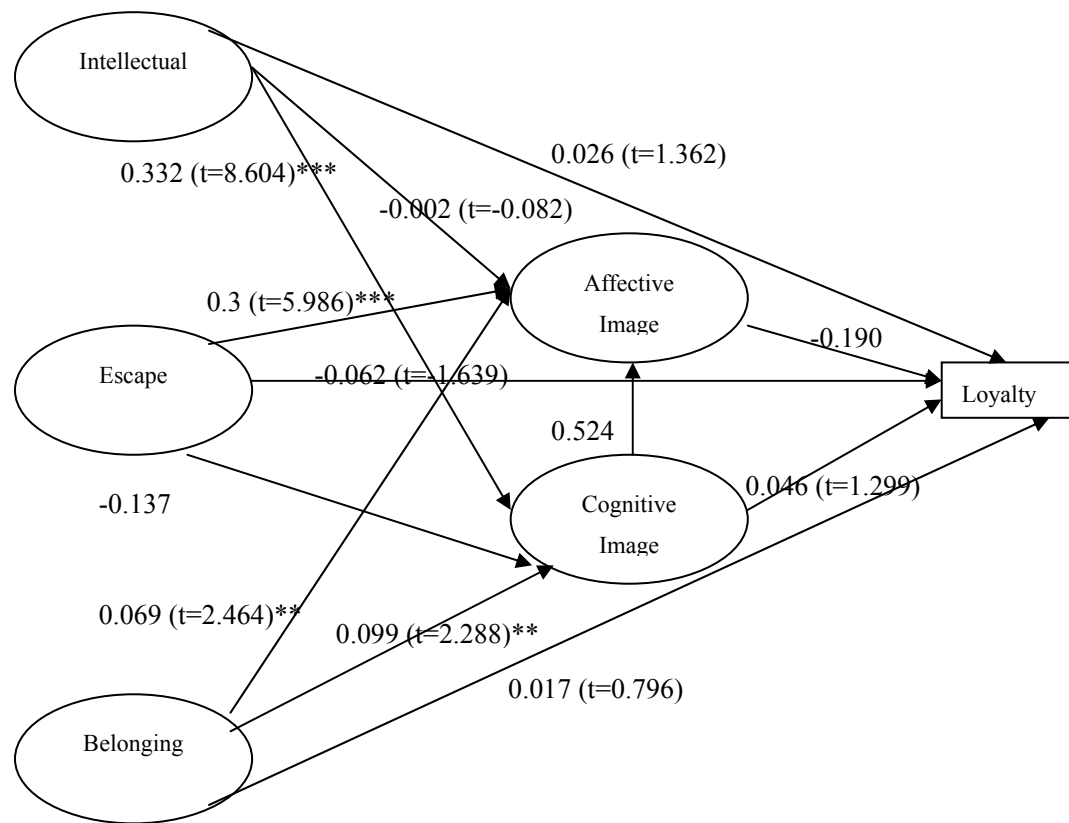

Figure 2 Path Analysis

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Based on the theoretical framework developed from previous literature, this study examined the relationship among three travel motivation factors, two dimensions of destination image, and destination loyalty. Six hypotheses were developed and tested using Structural Equation Modeling. The results supported previous studies in that cognitive image had a strong effect on the affective image. Two of the three motivational factors were found to be significant predictors of affective image while all three motivation factors were significantly associated with cognitive evaluations. An interesting finding from the study was that the higher level needs had a stronger relationship with cognitive dimension of image than the lower level needs (intellectual > belonging > escape). While this relationship was reversed between the motivation and affective image, as the lower level needs had a stronger relationship than the higher level needs (escape > belonging > intellectual). With respect to loyalty, the study results were consistent with previous study conducted by Cai, Wu, and Bai (2005) in that the affective image was found to be significantly related to loyalty. However, it was found that there was no significant relationship between motivation and loyalty, which was contrary to the previous findings of Yoon and Uysal (2005).

This study has both theoretical and practical contributions. Practically, the findings from this study should be helpful for rural destination organizations to develop effective and efficient marketing programs. The significant motivators could be addressed and emphasized into the communications to improve the perceived image and to enhance destination loyalty. Theoretically, the study developed and tested a conceptual model consisted of destination image, travel motivation, and loyalty. Its uniqueness was that it examined the relationship between cognitive image and travel motivation based on the cognitive-motivational-relational theory proposed by Lazarus (1991). This association has long been ignored in previous literatures in tourism. The relationship between motivation and loyalty found in previous study was not validated in this study. This may be due to two reasons. The first is the context within which the study was carried out. Yoon and Uysal's study was conducted in Cyprus, which is a beach destination with historical and archeological attractions. While the sample for current study was collected in rural tourism settings. Presumably visitors to those two different types of destination may pursue different needs/wants. The second reason could be the operationalization of the construct of loyalty. In Yoon and Uysal's study, the loyalty was measured by two behavioral variables and one attitudinal variable, while in the current study the loyalty was measured by a single behavioral variable of the intention to revisit.

The second reason leads to the limitation of the study. For future works, multiple measurements of destination loyalty that incorporate both the behavioral and attitudinal aspects should be used to test the relationship between loyalty and motivation in rural

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tourism settings. Another limitation was the generalization of the association between cognitive image and motivation. This relationship was tested in a specific setting – rural tourism in Midwest in the USA. A replication of the study in other settings that have different destination attributes may help to test the validity of the study results.

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THE ROLE OF CONSUMER EXPERIENCE IN DEVELOPING A BRAND DIFFERENTIATION IN THE THEME PARK AND THE ATTRACTION INDUSTRY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY FROM CENTRAL FLORIDA

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ABSTRACT

Limited research was conducted on the process of brand development, brand equity, and brand differentiation in the theme park and attraction industry. The research was conducted under the assumption that the importance attached to various theme park visiting experiences guide consumers' choice. Interviews were conducted with local residents, domestic, and international tourists over a period of eight weeks to explore how consumers establish a brand value that is a standard on which they rely on to estimate the value of their visiting experience to a theme park.

KEYWORDS: Consumer experience; Brand differentiation; Theme park; Attraction industry; Central Florida.

INTRODUCTION

Product branding refers to establishing a well-known name for a given product or service, especially when the particular product or service and its attributes are highly recognizable and easily recalled by consumers. The basic concept of branding is to establish a standard on which consumers may rely to estimate its value. Branding is also a powerful tool that influences repeat purchases (Yip, 2004).

The concept of brand equity has emerged as one of the most critical areas for marketing management in the 1990s. Brand names provide equity and a point of differentiation from competitors (Murphy, 1990). Despite strong interest in the subject, limited empirical research was conducted on how brand value is created and what its precise effects are (Cobb-Walgren et al, 1995).

Most of the research on brand equity tended to focus on either financial data (Simon and Sullivan, 1993) or consumer-related perceptions like Perceived value, brand dominance ratio or intangible (Kamakura and Russell, 1993). According to Morton (1994), each person's quality definition is a unique mix of characteristics. He suggested that a consumer can be designated as an Intellect, Conformist, Popularity Seeker, Pragmatist, Active, Relief Seeker, or Sentimental on the basis of his or her dominant quality model (Morton, 1994).

In the tourism and travel industry, branding has emerged as a potent source of differentiation. A tourism brand can be defined as a distinguishing name (e.g. Hilton, Carnival, and Delta Airlines) or a symbol (e.g. Mickey Mouse, McDonald's Golden Arches) intended to identify the products or services of the provider, and to differentiate them from competitors. Very few studies investigated brand equity in the tourism and travel industry. Cobb-Walgren et al (1995), for example, compared the equities of Holiday Inn and Howard Johnson hotels using the perceptual components of Aaker's (1991) definition of brand equity.

BRANDING IN THE THEME PARK INDUSTRY

In the wake of the popularity and expansion of the global theme park industry, an abundance of brands gained a presence in the marketplace in an attempt to build a sense of identity. Out of ten major global brands (Zoltak, 2006), the top leading brand in terms of customers served is Walt Disney Attractions with 13 global parks that hosted 106 million visitors in 2005. Other large brands include Six Flags Theme Parks (31 parks) and Universal Studios Recreation (5 parks) that hosted in 2005 35.1 million and 26 million visitors, respectively. Other brands that emerged in the past few decades include Anheuser Busch Theme Parks (9 parks), Cedar Fairs Ltd (13 parks), The Tussauds Group (5 parks), Paramount Parks (5 parks), Palace Entertainment (37 parks and Family Entertainment Centers) (Zoltak, 2006).

Limited research was conducted on the process of brand development, brand equity, and brand differentiation in the theme park and attraction industry. Since consumers tend to apply a personal, overall quality model to most brand decisions (Morton, 1994), it is necessary to explore the variables that differentiate one brand from another in the theme park and attraction industry, especially for those brands that operate in the same geographical area.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The goal of this study was to explore how consumers establish a brand value that is a standard on which they rely on to estimate the value of their visiting experience to a theme park. The research was conducted under the assumption that the importance attached to various theme park visiting experiences guide consumers' choice.

Understanding how consumers attach difference level of importance to various theme park brands would help marketers identify their strongest and weakest perceived-quality segments and tailor their advertising, promotion, and distribution strategies accordingly (Morton, 1994).

METHODOLOGY

The brand value was measured by asking theme park visitors to report the level of importance of various activities and experiences while visiting theme parks. These included: Theme park facility offerings, value for money, entertainment, food, market appeal, merchandise, staff, and park's overall operation. Other variables in the questionnaire included the respondents' favorite theme park, visitation patterns to theme parks, likelihood to visit a theme park in the next twelve months, preferred visiting season, and six demographic characteristics.

Interviews were conducted with local residents, domestic, and international tourists over a period of eight weeks. Of the 490 subjects that were asked to participate in the study, a usable sample of 379 interviews was completed to yield a response rate of 77.3%.

FINDINGS

General Profile of the Respondents

The respondents represented an array of age groups with a median age group of 19-25 years old. About two-thirds of the respondents were single (65%) and the rest were married (35%). The majority of the respondents were Central Florida residents (58.7%) and the remainders were out-of-state and international tourists (41.3%).

Level of Importance of Experiences While Visiting Theme Parks

Respondents were asked to evaluate the perceived importance of 41 variables that described experiences and activities while visiting theme parks. The level of importance was measured on a 1 to 5 scale, where "1" represented "not important at all," and "5" represented "very important." The findings revealed that the most important features were perceived to be: Ride safety (mean=4.79), cleanliness of the park or attraction (mean=4.70), quality of rides or attractions (mean=4.69), friendly and courteous staff (mean=4.64), and staff's knowledge about the park's features (mean=4.59). Less important features were: Availability of parades (Mean=2.99), availability of street performers (mean=3.05), level of educational experience (mean=3.11), number of shopping facilities (mean=3.22), and variety of food (mean=3.23).

Favorite Central Florida Theme Park

The respondents' most favorable theme parks were: Universal's Islands of Adventure (30.6%), Disney's Magic Kingdom (19.5%), Disney's EPCOT Center (10.6%), and Busch Gardens (8.4%). Other favorite parks were Universal Studios (7.9%), Sea World (4.7%), Disney's Animal Kingdom (4.5%), and Disney's MGM Studios (4.2%).

The Role of Consumer Experience in Developing a Brand Differentiation

This study explored the role of importance attached by consumers to various theme parks visiting experiences and their impact on brand differentiation. The importance of consumers' visiting experiences was compared between consumers who indicated that their favorite brand was any of the four Walt Disney World parks versus consumers who indicated that their most favorite brand was any of the two Universal Studios parks.

A comparison between these two groups revealed that annual visits of theme parks by Disney fans was significantly higher (mean=5.34 times per year) than Universal fans (mean=3.70 visits per year). Disney and Universal fans also differed in their marital status; a higher proportion of married respondents were between the Disney fans (23.9%) compared to the Universal fans (12.0%).

A t-test was conducted to see if there were any statistically significant differences between Disney versus Universal fans with regard to the importance attached to their visiting experience. Table 1 summarizes the statistically significant differences between the two theme park brands. The findings revealed Disney and Universal fans attributed different levels of importance to 20 out of 41 experience features while visiting the two theme park brands. It is clear that consumers who prefer the Universal brand attributed higher level of importance to the number of attractions in the park and number of thrill rides in the park. On the other hand, Disney brand fans attributed higher importance levels to the park's layout, creativity exhibited in the park, an opportunity to escape from everyday life, and a variety of entertainment, food operations, market appeal food, merchandise, and park's operations features offered in the park. Please note that Disney

and Universal fans did not exhibit statistically significant importance to many other features like quality of rides or attractions, level of theming of the park's attractions and rides or value for money for food purchased.

Table 1: Comparison between Disney and Universal's Theme Park Experiences as Perceived by Visitors

	Disney		Universal		Sig
	Mean	**Std Dev**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	
Theme Park & Attraction Facilities					
Overall number of attractions in the park	4.27	.829	**4.46**	.739	.044
Number of thrill rides in the park	3.54	1.206	**4.43**	.868	.000
Layout of the park	**4.23**	.870	3.90	.934	.001
Creativity exhibited in the park or attraction	**4.46**	.761	4.15	.889	.001
Opportunity to escape from everyday life	**4.41**	.887	4.01	1.140	.001
Entertainment					
Variety of entertainment options (shows parades, music)	**4.20**	.911	3.55	1.100	.000
Number of entertainment options offered to guests	**4.12**	.909	3.58	1.048	.000
Quality of entertainment and shows	**4.49**	.830	3.96	1.043	.000
Appropriate display of show and entertainment times locations	**4.12**	.934	3.70	1.112	.000
Availability of parades	**3.39**	1.284	2.80	1.126	.000
Availability of street performers	**3.34**	1.271	2.86	1.138	.001
Availability of fireworks	**4.03**	1.082	3.46	1.178	.000
Food Operations					
Variety of food	**3.61**	1.142	3.00	1.097	.000
Number of sit-down restaurants	**3.67**	1.005	3.36	1.044	.009
Market Appeal					
Rides or activities that appeal to families	**3.99**	1.073	3.58	1.162	.002
Level of educational experience	**3.31**	1.228	2.85	1.123	.001
Merchandise					
Number of shopping facilities	**3.52**	1.060	3.07	1.160	.000
Variety of shopping options (stores, outside vendors)	**3.54**	1.056	3.12	1.206	.001
Variety of merchandise	**3.74**	1.077	3.20	1.217	.000
Park Operations					
Availability of activities for all weather conditions	**4.29**	.869	4.09	.871	.044

CONCLUSIONS

Since the opening of Disneyland in 1955, new competing brands have developed in the global marketplace. Many of these brands have struggled to build a sense of identity, and their future remains questionable. The findings revealed that Disney and Universal were perceived by consumers as two different brands. For many years, Disney's brand has captured people's imaginations and hearts for decades with its appeal to the kid in everyone, while Universal Studios has attempted to create an "exciting" brand through thrill rides and chilling events. This was confirmed in this empirical study.

Like in other industries (Rusell, 2000), branding of the two major theme park companies has emerged as a potent source of differentiation, and even as a sustainable competitive advantage for each of these companies. Decision makers in the theme park industry should develop branding strategies that are based on guest experiences and not exclusively on socio-demographic characteristics.

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PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF TRAVELERS' PERCEPTIONS OF HOTEL RESERVATIONS ON THE INTERNET

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ABSTRACT

This study explored travelers' perceptions of hotel reservations on the Internet. As hotel distribution transferred to the Internet, it became more transparent and the rates available to travelers have been lowered. As a result, consumers became more empowered, as their main driver for purchase decisions has shifted from the hotel experience to the room rate. Using content analysis, the study concluded that, to adopted for room reservations, hotel and intermediary Web sites should provide travelers with the lowest rate, be easy to use, reinforce the brand, and be secure.

KEYWORDS: *Content analysis; Electronic distribution; Hotel Web sites; Third-party Web sites.*

INTRODUCTION

The travel industry is becoming one of the largest electronic commerce domains, accounting for approximately one third of the total number of transactions (Toulantas, 2003). Perceived as a fast-growing opportunity, the Internet has been regarded by many travel organizations as an innovative and competitive marketing tool in providing travelers with travel-related information and online transaction opportunities (Doolin, Burgess, & Cooper, 2002). Most hotel companies have adopted electronic distribution and, today, they use a variety of distribution channels to distribute their inventory. Hotel electronic distribution involves a combination of global distribution systems, switch companies, retailers, and online travel agencies or portals. Obviously, the most advantageous electronic distribution channel is one that ends with the hotel chain's Web site, as it incurs the minimum distribution cost.

For hotels, selling rooms via third-party Web sites by using the merchant business model often means deep discounting, resulting in price erosion among distribution channels. Channels involving third-party Web sites have a tendency to be more costly for hotel chains, diminishing the efficiency of distribution, but providing more convenience for consumers. Despite hotels' efforts to encourage travelers to make reservations on hotel-owned Web sites, third-party companies have become more powerful in terms of Internet readiness and advertising power. However, regardless of the number and type of third-party companies used in any distribution channel, travelers are only exposed to the last link of the chain, without being provided additional information about the number of participants in the channel. As not all channels represent a good match for the organizations, it is important to rely on the channels that best match the organizational goals (O'Connor & Frew, 2003). However, from a traveler's perspective, all they need for a reservation is the resources available on the last link of the distribution channel – the traveler-oriented Web site.

Today, travelers have at their disposal a plethora of travel information. For example, a simple search for the sequence "hotel rooms" returned 201 million hits. As online distribution became more transparent, consumers became more knowledgeable about how products and services are available. As a result, they developed new perceptions about what a "cheap" rate or a "good" booking experience should be. The overabundance of offerings, discounts and deals, and the easiness of finding the lowest rate online with only a few number of clicks contributed to this shift in consumer tastes. However, regardless of the type of Web site being situated at the extremity of any electronic distribution channel, there are two essential types of traveler-oriented Web sites: hotel-owned and third-party Web sites.

Although the main goal of these two types of Web sites is relatively similar, that is, to encourage travelers to make reservations on their Web site, their business models might be substantially different. To encourage purchasing, hotel Web sites have employed their online strategies to enhance their brand images in travelers' minds. Thus, the focus is to attract and retain travelers who are convinced of the performance/quality of the hotel stay experience. This typically results in travelers' willing to pay a higher rate than on other Web sites in exchange for a trusted experience. In addition, the hotel Web sites try to capitalize on online trust. Due to the threats to security online and diminishing trust of consumers on the Internet, hotel

companies project the idea that trust in the brand/hotel experience can automatically portray on the Web site.

Third-party Web sites rely, for the most part, on a different business model, a *merchant model*. In this model, intermediaries can purchase room inventories at lower rate from multiple hotels and mark up to customers. This results in high profits for the intermediaries but potentially low profits for the hotels because the latter receive a low, prenegotiated rate (Bowers & Freitag, 2003). These Web sites, in particular, attempt to capitalize on travelers' perceptions of the best rate available and the convenience of comparing rates from multiple properties within a destination. Moreover, third-party Web sites rely on providing travelers with an opportunity to compare room deals, while exposing them to advertising from multiple brands. The key is to offer a multitude of alternatives from which one can choose the most convenient travel arrangement. Moreover, as only a few number of third-party Web sites have strong brands, online trust becomes an issue. Thus, travelers' unfamiliarity with most of the third-party Web sites can have impact on their perceptions of security and trust online.

In this context, it is essential to investigate the extent to which travelers view their reservation experiences differently across two types of online reservation channels: hotel-owned and third-party Web sites. Thus, the purpose of this preliminary study is to explore travelers' experiences in using one type of Web site versus the other. Building on an extensive content analysis, this study had specific objectives as follows:

- To investigate what makes travelers return to make reservations on hotel-owned Web sites or third-party Web sites.
- To gain better insight into the key factors affecting travelers' experiences with online reservations, and,
- To formulate a set of directions for the industry based on consumers' comments.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The popularity of the Internet and its related information technologies has been a preferred topic in literature as both researchers and industry practitioners believed that the Internet would change the nature of businesses, markets, and the economy in a profound way (Biswas & Krishnan, 2004). In an early study, Weiner and Brown (1995) predicted potential societal changes like demographic shifts, the need of saving time, and proliferation of product information and their impact on the acceptance of the Internet as a new marketspace. Later, particular attention has been paid to Web site characteristics and optimization (Jeong & Lambert, 2001; Morrison & Harrison, 1998), Web users' socio-demographic profiles (Tierney, 2000; Weber & Roehl, 1999), and use of Internet for travel arrangements (Chung & Law, 2003), and impact of the Internet on marketing (Biswas & Krishnan, 2004). In the hospitality industry, one of the greatest transformations incurred by the Internet has been the switch from traditional to electronic distribution of hotel rooms.

Electronic distribution has several notable advantages over the traditional distribution (Hoffman & Novak, 1996). First, the Internet emerged as an opportunity for hotels to sell and advertise online and use a cheaper distribution system. Second, the traditional functions performed by most participants in the traditional distribution channels have been transformed under the electronic distribution channels to adapt to the newer and more dynamic environment. Third, a new group of companies, represented by the technology firms, became integrated in the distribution channel, and finally, the Internet has created an opportunity for hotels to reduce their mass advertising and concentrate on customized marketing messages (Lau, Lee, Lam, & Ho, 2001).

Although hotels perceive electronic distribution as superior to traditional distribution, the contemporary distribution channels still face weaknesses, such as conflict among channel members (Lau, et al., 2001). Given these weaknesses, Lau et al. proposed an ideal marketing plan based on cost minimization, maximization of marketing effectiveness, and tight control of the channel by establishing direct channels to targeted potential travelers with customized messages. Based on the industry's strong effort to implement the marketing plan, Travel Industry Association of America (2004) identified that the customized-message method appeared to be one of most effective techniques in the electronic distribution channel. As seen, both hotel and third-party companies use a variety of tools to encourage travelers to use their Web sites for reservations. However, despite these efforts, the perceptions of what travelers experience when using Web sites for reservations are not completely understood.

A popular way to understand travelers is through feedback. Thus, traveler comments have always been a valuable source of insight for the hospitality industry. Recording comments is an old and effective practice in which the management of hospitality organization can receive valuable consumer input (Wisner & Corney, 1997). Both mainstream and hospitality-related business literature praises the value of traveler involvement, in that it leads to increased quality (Lockwood, 1994; Yasin & Zimmer, 1995). In this study, travelers' comments about their reservation experiences will be analyzed through content analysis to extend suggestions and recommendations for hotel and third-party companies.

Content analysis is a family of methodologies used to determine patterns in communication. Gibbs (2004) argues that there are two separate branches of content analysis: (1) a qualitative approach, in which the analysis focuses on keywords, phrases, and symbols, and emphasizes semantics, an (2) a quantitative approach, in which states that the importance of certain words, themes, or ideas can be measured by the frequency with which they appear. The qualitative approach has been viewed inductive, non-statistical, and exploratory, whereas the qualitative approach has been viewed as rather deductive, inferential, and confirmatory (Popping, 2000). However, purely qualitative or quantitative methods have been subject to criticism. Most criticism emanated from the extensive reliance upon quantitative methods. Furthermore, these methods have been criticized for their over-reliance on simple counting (Smythe, 1954), and consequently, hybrid methods incorporating both qualitative and quantitative methods have been proposed. While, today, it is hard to completely separate the two methods, most recent studies using content analysis used both methodologies (Gibbs, 2004).

METHODOLOGY

An online field survey was conducted with undergraduate and graduate students from a large U.S. university. The sample frame has been split randomly into two sections. The respondents in each section were required to visit exclusively hotel-owned (generating the "*hotel subsample*") or third-party Web sites (generating the "*third-party subsample*"). The respondents were asked to visit one of the Web sites to make a room reservation for an upcoming vacation. Five hotel Web sites have been chosen for this experiment, based on their rankings by the parent company's number of rooms, such as Best Western, Holiday Inn, Comfort Inn, Marriott, and Sheraton (MKG Consulting, 2005). Five third-party Web sites have been selected based on their popularity: Expedia, Travelocity, Orbitz, Hotwire, and Hotels (Melvin, 2005).

The questionnaire included a section about the Internet behavior of respondents (e.g., their Internet experience, the amount of time spent on the Internet daily, the number of reservations completed in the past year, and whether or not they have visited the Web sites before). In addition, a series of questions about the respondents' demographic information has been included. Two open-ended questions were given to respondents to find their overall perceptions of this reservation process: (1) to what extent would they revisit the Web site?, and (2) overall, how was their reservation experience? To analyze respondents' comments with respect to their reservation experience, content analysis was conducted (Berelson, 1952).

The methodology for the content analysis has been built on the methodology employed by Johnston and Swensson (2003) in their study of various double-bind themes in the social sciences. In this current study, a substantial number of travelers' comments have been used to extract text units, which were consequently analyzed to reveal trends (Stemler, 2001). Each text unit was coded for the presence of a category (i.e., convenience, ease of use, security). The coding categories have been derived from a Q-sorting technique (Stephenson, 1953) using comments about reservation experiences from Web sites that were not included in the analysis (i.e., tripadvisor.com). Q-sort has been used in hospitality as a preliminary analysis in scale development (Ekinci & Riley, 1999). The next phase of content analysis included a classification of the text units into piles reflecting their similarity and differences according to the categories. The number of occurrences has been used as a measure of the importance of that respective text unit/category, based on the general assumption that the more times a unit occurs, the more important it is perceived by travelers.

RESULTS

Of 11,387 students contacted, 914 participated in this study, resulting in a response rate of 8 percent. A number of 465 usable responses for the hotel subsample and 449 for the third-party subsample have been collected. As Table 1 illustrates, the sample consisted predominantly of females (68 percent), between 19 and 21 years old (58 percent). An interesting result was found with respect to travelers' familiarity with Web sites. Thus, while approximately three quarters of them seemed to have visited third-party Web sites, only around a quarter had visited hotel Web sites prior to this study. The travelers were asked a few questions about their Internet experience with

online reservations as well as about their general online behavior. A relatively large majority (65 percent) used the Internet for less than five hours a day.

Table 1. Demographic profile of travelers

Characteristic	Categories	Hotel Web site (%)	Third-party Web site (%)
Gender	Male	32.9	33.2
	Female	67.1	66.8
Age	18 or younger	4.1	6.0
	19-21	58.3	57.2
	22-25	29.2	26.1
	26 or older	8.4	10.7
Internet experience	Limited	44.5	47.4
	Moderate	45.4	43.4
	Extensive	10.1	9.2
Time spent on the Internet daily	1-4 hours	65.8	63.5
	5-10 hours	24.7	27.8
	11 or more	9.5	8.7
Previously visited the Web site	Yes	27.1	78.6
	No	72.9	21.4
Reservation made in the past year	1-5	95.3	94.9
	6-10	3.9	4.0
	11 or more	0.9	1.1

Due to a relatively low response rate, this study tested non-response bias of the sample by comparing all measurement items between the first and the last 50 respondents and no significant differences were observed. In this study, students were used for three reasons: (1) this study focuses on Web site usage, in which a student sample could provide useful information due to their familiarity with the Internet, (2) students are very likely to be intensive Internet reservation makers in the future, and (3) by using students, the computer literacy variance is expected to be small (Chung & Tan, 2004; Oh, 2000).

When asked about what would make them return to the visited Web site, in both subsamples, the travelers commented largely about three critical issues: (1) the economic terms of the deal (i.e., cheap rates, discounts, special promotions), (2) convenience (i.e., ease of use of the Web site), and (3) the hotel stay experience (i.e., experience with the service, membership in rewards programs) (Table 2).

In the hotel subsample, the economic value was the primary reason why travelers would come back to the Web site for more reservations, followed by convenience, and the overall hotel stay experience. In terms of the economic value of the reservation experience, most travelers indicated that they look for cheap deals and discounts. Words like "discounts" or "price" illustrated that in general, travelers, especially students, are extremely sensitive to price and they would be attracted to the Web sites if discounts were provided. Other words describing the economic value of this experience were also recorded: "deal" (23 occurrences)", "cheap" (16 occurrences), "promotional" (10 occurrences) and "free" (7 occurrences).

Table 2. Summary of travelers' comments about returning to the Web sites

Categories	Units	Hotel subsample	Third-party subsample
Economic value	Discounts	36 (11.0)	27 (8.1)
	Price	27 (8.2)	51 (15.2)
	Deals	23 (7.0)	28 (7.8)
	Specials	22 (6.7)	11 (3.3)
	Good	17 (5.2)	26 (8.4)
	Cheap	16 (4.9)	17 (5.1)
	Promotions	10 (3.0)	7 (2.1)
	Rate comparisons	8 (2.4)	18 (5.4)
	Free	7 (2.1)	2 (0.6)
	Incentives	3 (0.9)	3 (0.9)
		169 (51.5)	190 (56.7)
Convenience	Ease of use	71 (21.6)	92 (27.5)
	Informative	15 (4.6)	14 (4.2)
	Accessible	5 (1.5)	3 (0.9)
		91 (27.7)	109 (32.6)
Hotel experience	Hotel experience	42 (13.4)	19 (5.7)
	Rewards	9 (2.7)	3 (0.9)
	Brand	5 (1.5)	2 (0.6)
	Membership	2 (0.6)	3 (0.9)
		60 (18.2)	27 (8.1)
Security		3 (0.9)	2 (0.6)
Other		5 (1.5)	7 (2.1)
TOTAL OCCURRENCES		328 (100.0)	335 (100.0)

In the third-party subsample, the largest number of occurrences within the economic value category was indicated by the word "price" (51 occurrences), followed by "deals" (28 occurrences) and "discounts" (27 occurrences). This indicates that the travelers visiting third-party Web sites might have different expectations than those visiting hotel Web sites, in that, on third-party Web sites, price plays a relatively more important role in the decision-making process.

In the hotel subsample, a total of 169 occurrences (51 percent) reflected the economic value of the experience as a catalyst for repeat purchases, whereas, in the third-party subsample, a number of 190 occurrences (56.7 percent) indicated that the respondents would revisit these Web sites if the deal had a good economic value.

An interesting trend in the hotel subsample was that, despite visiting hotel-owned Web sites, respondents suggested that they would revisit the Web sites only if they were provided with an opportunity to compare rates, similar to the third-party Web sites. In the hotel subsample, there have been 8 occurrences (2 percent) in which rate comparison has been cited as a reason to return. Not surprisingly, almost a higher number of comments about the opportunity to compare rates have been identified in the third-party subsample (18 occurrences accounting for 5 percent).

The second most cited reason to revisit the hotel Web sites was convenience, accounting for a total of 91 (28 percent) and 109 (33 percent) occurrences in the hotel and third-party subsamples respectively. Within these categories, the sequence "ease to use" occurred 71 times (22%) in the hotel subsample, and 92 (28%) in the third-

party subsample. In addition, both hotel and third-party Web sites have been found relatively equally informative and accessible.

As expected, the hotel stay experience played a role in influencing the intentions to return in the hotel subsample. Thus, a total of 60 occurrences (18 percent) of words like "hotel experience", "rewards", "brand", or "membership" indicated that travelers were somewhat influenced by the brand name to visit these Web sites. A smaller effect, however, was observed with respect to the third-party Web sites, where a total number of 27 occurrences (8 percent) indicated that respondents would be influenced by the overall hotel experience, including the rewards/loyalty programs. Another trend was that many respondents would associate the Web sites with the actual hotel services. Thus, 42 occurrences (13 percent) in the hotel subsample indicated that the respondents would revisit the Web site if the actual hotel stay experience was satisfactory.

Security appeared to be an issue with respect to online reservations. However, despite both hotel and third-party enhancements in online security, a small number of comments indicated that these Web sites would not be visited for fear of fraud or due to problems in the flow of reservation information back to the hotels.

Despite the number of occurrences of the text units within the respondents' comments about their overall reservation experiences was smaller (140 for the hotel subsample and 110 for the third-party subsample), these comments were more detailed than those about the reasons to return to the Web site (Table 3). The same methodology has been employed to explore respondents' comments about their overall reservation experience. However, due to the more extensive nature of their comments, a more detailed analysis, including a thorough qualitative assessment, has been performed. In addition, three units have been dropped as they had no occurrence in either sample ("promotions", "incentives", and "free").

In the hotel subsample, the units reflecting the convenience of the reservation experience had the highest frequency (57 occurrences), followed by the economic value (51 occurrences), and hotel stay experience (10 occurrences). The unit "ease of use" occurred 44 times, accounting for 36.4 percent of the total occurrences. However, in the third-party subsample, the largest number of occurrences has been recorded by the economic value category (52 occurrences), followed by convenience (36 occurrences) and the hotel stay experience (9 occurrences).

As shown in Table 3, the largest number of comments addressed ease of use of these Web sites. In the hotel subsample, there have been 44 occurrences (31 percent) that stated that the overall reservation experience was pleasant due to ease of use of the Web sites. Examples of respondents' comments included "*The website was easy to use and met all the needs for this kind of task*" and "*I have never made an online hotel reservation so I was not experienced at all. After looking at all these Web sites I realized how easy and fast it would be to make an online reservation. In the future I would seriously consider going online to make a reservation*". In the third-party subsample, there were 29 occurrences (26 percent) about ease of use of these Web sites. Examples included "*It was easy and simple to use*", "*I normally use Orbitz for hotel reservations and find it is relatively easy to use*", and "*Expedia was very straightforward and easy to use*".

Table 3. Summary of travelers' comments about their reservation experiences

Categories	Units	Hotel subsample	Third-party subsample
Economic value	Discounts	2 (1.4)	3 (2.7)
	Price	17 (12.1)	15 (13.6)
	Deals	9 (6.4)	6 (5.5)
	Specials	5 (3.6)	2 (1.8)
	Good	12 (8.6)	10 (9.1)
	Cheap	2 (1.4)	4 (3.6)
	Rate comparisons	4 (2.9)	12 (10.9)
		51 (36.4)	52 (47.2)
Convenience	Ease of use	44 (31.4)	29 (26.4)
	Informative	13 (9.3)	7 (6.4)
		57 (40.7)	36 (32.8)
Hotel experience	Hotel experience	5 (3.6)	6 (5.5)
	Rewards	3 (2.1)	0 (0.0)
	Brand	1 (0.7)	1 (0.9)
	Membership	1 (0.7)	2 (1.8)
		10 (7.1)	9 (8.1)
Security		10 (7.1)	3 (2.72)
Other		12 (8.6)	10 (9.1)
TOTAL OCCURRENCES		140 (100.0)	110 (100.0)

Price was another widely cited reason for which respondents enjoyed making reservations on the Internet. There have been 17 occurrences (12 percent) in the hotel subsample and 15 occurrences (14 percent) in the third-party sample. For example, a traveler from the hotel subsample commented: "*The site was very well organized. I appreciated that they gave a percent number for each of the match options as well as price (both important aspects of hotel registration that can affect my choice*", while a traveler from the third-party subsample concluded: "*I often use websites like this to shop around for the best price*".

Despite the small number of occurrences, some travelers commented extensively about rate comparisons. The hotel Web sites did not allow for rate comparisons, and yet, the travelers indicated that they would like to be able to compare rates across hotel properties, even on hotel-owned Web sites. For example, respondents commented: "*I like to use multi-hotel Web sites for bookings to compare rates, Expedia, Orbitz, etc.*" and "*I prefer to use travel Web sites like: Travelocity, Expedia, or any of the other sites dedicated for that reason*". On the third-party Web sites, the respondents seemed to have enjoyed the possibility of comparing rates: "*These sites are great for making reservations, and it's nice being able to select from so many to get the best deal at even the same hotel*".

The hotel experience has been cited often, in the hotel subsample (10 occurrences), but more surprisingly in the third-party subsample (9 occurrences), as a strong reason to use the Web site for reservations. Some travelers even discussed their loyalty to the hotel brands: "*Web site is O.K. but it is the brand (Marriott) that makes me to decide to use their hotel*" while others manifested interest in always returning to third-party Web sites: "*Expedia is a great site that gives you an opportunity to take*

your time and really look into the hotels available such as: looking at pictures and reading details".

Another interesting issue raised by some of the travelers was security online. In both subsamples, the number of comments related to security or reservation confirmation issues has been approximately the same (10 occurrences in the hotel subsample but only 3 comments in the third-party subsample). Although it seems that the hotel Web sites are much more secure today than in the early Internet days, travelers still have concerns. One of the most frequent reasons for fear was fraud: "*I do not feel safe purchasing anything over the Internet. Too many problems with fraud and stealing can occur. I would much rather talk to someone over the phone*" and "*I would love to use Internet to make the hotel reservation, if I trust the hotel and give out my credit number. I don't like to make the reservation online because I don't trust them with my credit card and other personal information*". Unfortunately, these security concerns impeded them to materialize any transaction online, but fortunately, these travelers search for travel information online and then use a traditional distribution channel to make the reservation. Thus, although the cheapest distribution channel – the Web site – is not use as a transactional tool, it still can be efficient in providing enough information to the traveler and persuading him/her to make a purchase decision.

In the third-party subsample, however, it seemed that besides security, another problem existed: the fear that the reservation information would not accurately go back to the hotel. For example, "*I work at a hotel and see the problems of making reservations over the Internet so I probably will not make reservations over the Internet. I will most likely call the hotel DIRECTLY*". Indeed, despite the industry efforts to increase online security, a number of travelers indicated that they were afraid of engaging in a transaction online. This result is consistent with what was found in the hotel subsample.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study's purpose was to explore travelers' experiences in using one type of Web site versus the other. Based on the comments from both subsamples, it was found that in general, travelers regarded both hotel and third-party Web sites as useful tools for their travel arrangements. Minor differences between the travelers' perceptions of one type of Web site versus the other might still exist. However, travelers from both subsamples indicated relatively similar perceptions of these two types of Web sites.

One important result was that, regardless of the type of Web site, the economic value (i.e., a good deal) prevails. To capitalize on such preferences, both hotel and third-party Web sites should state clearly that the deals offered are the best and that it would take substantial effort to search for and locate a better deal. As suggested by the analysis, travelers care more about a good rate than about a hotel stay experience. Generally, they trust the Internet's ability to allow them to find better deals than by using other channels (i.e., travel agents, call centers). Thus, a way to take advantage of the economic value of the deal is to promote cheap travel arrangements by labeling them as "specials", "deal" or even simply "discounts". This

way, the persuasive effect on the travelers can be higher, and consequently, the number of purchases can increase.

Another direction is to emphasize the price as the central element of the whole Web site experience. Thus, travelers, already price sensitive, could become even more sensitive to the price rather than to other elements of the Web site experience and a purchase decision will be more likely to occur. In addition, as travelers believe the price they see is the lowest, companies can promote even lower performing products by using suggestive words such as "deal", "discount", or "special".

Another important result was that travelers enjoyed comparing rates across multiple properties at the destination. Even in the hotel subsample, where no comparisons were possible, the travelers indicated their interest in comparing rates. This result seems to suggest that today's young travelers feel the need to be in control of their reservation experiences. In addition, most travelers' reasons to return to hotel-owned Web sites were related to the possibility of comparing rates. Thus, capitalizing on travelers' interest in comparing rates, the third-party Web sites can extend in this direction. Thus, the fact that the rate comparison was a feature that was requested in both subsamples indicated that (1) travelers are rate-sensitive and they would opt for the best deal online without much regard of the brand, and (2) they want to make more informed decisions, having consulted a variety of rates before making their final purchase decision.

The travelers indicated that they would return if the sites were easy to use. Nevertheless, it can be a goal of any company to create easy to use Web site, in an attempt to minimize travelers' efforts while maximizing their satisfaction. However, both hotel and third-party companies could increase travelers' perceptions of ease of use and encourage further visitation of their Web sites by stating clearly that the Web sites are extremely easy to use. This can be achieved by including third-party endorsements or customer testimonials. In addition, to increase the perceptions of ease of use, hotel and third-party companies could provide travelers with better navigational tools, interactive features, and fun applications.

Despite a lower perceived importance in travelers' minds, the hotel experience (i.e., brand, loyalty program) could be a factor to enhance their usage of both types of Web sites. Thus, one direction of development for hotels is to create highly memorable experiences and make travelers purchase the brand repeatedly, regardless of the type of consumer-oriented Web site. Another direction for both hotels and third-party companies is to capitalize on their brand images. As seen from both subsamples, brands such as Marriott or Expedia are appreciated by the consumers and can be used as triggers for room purchase decisions.

Surprisingly, security was found as a concern, for both hotel-owned and third-party Web sites. Thus, one direction for hotels is to promote information search online but the use of the direct calls to the hotel. From this perspective, hotel companies can gain competitive advantages, in that travelers with security concerns may call the hotel directly to make a reservation. Such practices from the hotel industry would also address another set of traveler concerns, regarding inaccuracy in communication within the distribution channel.

This study provides the industry decision makers with a number of directions, by addressing travelers' needs in electronic distribution. Thus, both hotels and third-party companies should focus on promoting that regardless of the type of Web site, the travelers' experiences online have a high economic value, while the benefits of this experience can be enjoyed easily and secure. Therefore, companies with an online presence should focus on building Web sites that provide good deals, are user-friendly, and lead to memorable hotel experiences. In addition, designers enhance their security features, such as privacy policy statements, third party security ratings, or consumer testimonials.

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THE CROSS-CULTURAL EXPLORATION OF TRIP SOUVENIRS CONSUMPTION PATTERNS

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ABSTRACT

People consume and collect souvenirs regardless of the cultural groups they belong to. This study attempted to construct meaningful typological subcategories of trip souvenirs as defined by tourists, in order to explore how souvenirs are perceived, classified, and collected by tourists in relation with tourists' destination consumption behavior. Further, research conducted from the tourists perspective by differing cultures is necessary to understand tourists' own perception and consumer behavior through meaningful groupings and categories created by tourists. Cultural domain analysis methodology of free listing technique and pile-sorts methods are used to compare two different nationality groups of tourists. A cognitive map using multidimensional scaling (MDS) is developed to compare and to provide further insights into the two tourist groups' perception and consumption patterns.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer behavior; Cross-culture; Cultural domain; Shopping; Souvenir*

INTRODUCTION

People are collectors of souvenirs regardless of the cultural groups they belong to. The revenues generated from tourist shopping are acknowledged as a significant income source and impact for destination communities. Therefore, viewing souvenirs as consumption of special places and time has long been noted as a topic which deserves detailed exploration and elaboration as an under-researched area (Gordon 1986; Littrell 1990; Goss 2004; Swanson 2004; Swanson and Horridge 2004). Noting that tourists consciously seek unique products to take home and their concerns about place logos, value, size, and product attributes, Getz (1993) addresses a need for research to explore tourists' perceptions and preference for types of goods and to test the general assumption that arts and craft, country goods and souvenirs are preferred. A few researchers also speculate that the chosen style of tourism, its motivation, and the destination choice may be associated with the types of preferred souvenirs desired by tourists (Graburn 1989; Littrell, Baizerman et al. 1994; Baker, Kleine et al. 2003).

While the importance and the function of souvenirs that hold strong symbolic value have been dealt with (Gordon 1986; Wallendorf and Arnould 1988; Littrell 1990; Littrell, Baizerman et al. 1994; Timothy and Butler 1995; Wang 2000; Goss 2004; Timothy 2005), souvenirs have never been explored as meaningful groupings and dimensions defined by tourists. Pysarchik (1989) challenges tourism retailers to develop merchandise provisions that reflect the image promoted by the tourist site, meet tourists desires, and maintain a competitive advantage. Tourism retailers usually operate small businesses and face a variety of challenges in planning for sustained performance in their communities. As such, they have little research information to draw upon in defining tourists' demand for souvenirs (Littrell, Baizerman et al. 1994). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore how souvenirs are conceptually perceived, organized, and consumed by people as a cultural domain, and to better understand people's souvenir merchandise consumption patterns, motivations, and the consumption of destination places represented in the goods. Further, the patterns and similarities or differences observed between the tourist groups will help understand the perception toward souvenirs and consumption behaviors of tourists of different cultural and nationality backgrounds.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition and symbolic function of tourists goods

Tourists come home with something as a tangible reminder or a proof of their special moments and experiences, or something for gifts to people they remember back home, or in cases, as re-entry fees required by cultures at large (Gordon 1986; Graburn 1989; Swanson and Horridge 2004). These souvenir objects travelers bring back home carry cherished trip memories. Souvenir is defined as "a token of remembrance, usually an object of some value bestowed and which reminds one of some person, place, or event." (Goss 2004) Generally, a souvenir from memorable vacations or special trips tends to serve as a concretizing symbol of favorable biographic events important to

people. They are displayed, worn, or used by people and, often, function as conversational cues for telling other people of their trip stories and about the places they visited. Moreover, in cases, souvenir items that belong to a person or given to other people are skillfully used to represent the person's identity to both to oneself and to other people (Wang 2000; Ateljevic and Doorne 2003). Consequently, souvenirs are intentionally chosen and retained to act as tangible markers of retrospective memories or as evidences (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988).

Tourists shop for a wide variety of consumer goods as souvenirs, including local crafts and arts, clothing, memorable items and gifts, and the range of goods purchased by tourists is broadening including collectibles, antiques and other generic household goods. Nevertheless, there is no empirical research to explore how people might conceptually perceive and distinguish souvenirs. Therefore, researchers have expressed the need toward the exploration of souvenirs for its grouping dimension, especially using a "meaningful measure" and methods (Gordon 1986; Swanson 2004; Swanson and Horridge 2004). The significance of the research lies in that the patterns, similarities, and differences observed from the groupings will help understand people's perception and behaviors toward tourist merchandise consumption by culture and the consumption pattern of destination places represented by the products.

Motivations and preferences for tourists' souvenir consumption and the meanings they attach to the goods might vary among people of different cultures, as symbolic association with goods is culturally grounded and coded accordingly (McCracken 1986; Wang 2000). In this light, souvenirs consist a cultural domain, for which people in the same culture have certain shared ground or agreement on the concept (Bernard 2000). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to explore how souvenirs conceptually perceived, organized, and consumed by people as a cultural domain to better understand people's souvenir merchandise consumption patterns, motivations, and the consumption of places represented in the goods.

Dimensions of Souvenirs

Souvenir products are universally associated with tourism as commercially produced and purchased objects as a trip reminder. Meanwhile, in many destinations such as the American southwest region, pottery, weaving and jewelry are often hand-made objects. Knowledge that a cultural souvenir is locally hand-made is often an important ingredient in establishing authenticity and is also acknowledged as an important factor for tourists in making a purchase decision (Swanson 2004). Gordon (1986) notes that souvenirs all function as signs, and that the array of possible souvenirs are so vast that it might be very useful to construct typological subcategories. Accordingly, she provides a classification of souvenirs into five types:(1) pictorial images, such as the postcard and books; (2) 'piece-of-the-rock' souvenirs, which is usually a part of natural materials or objects; (3) symbolic shorthand souvenirs, usually manufactured rather than natural objects; (4) markers such as T-shirts printed with words relating to the destination; and (5) local product souvenirs such as indigenous foods, liquor, identifiable local clothing, and local crafts. This typology of available souvenir items has been useful and used in the

studies that have followed in the area of tourist consumption of objects, with the five categories of goods being employed to different kinds of souvenirs (Littrell 1990; Littrell, Baizerman et al. 1994; Wang 2000; Swanson 2004; Swanson and Horridge 2004; Swanson and Horridge 2006). However, as previously stated in this paper, research conducted from the tourists perspective and the exploration by differing cultures is necessary to understand tourists' own perception and consumer behavior through meaningful groupings and categories created by tourists.

Therefore, understanding how souvenirs are meaningfully perceived, classified, and collected by tourists through investigating the groupings defined by tourists will be helpful in understanding tourists' consumption behavior, and it will also help tourism producers and retailers to determine the desirable product offerings and mix that would satisfy tourists. For instance, possible outcome groupings could be commercial vs. non-commercial souvenir groupings, destination representation item groupings that are associated with a particular place or culture vs. generic household goods, or grouping of collection items with individuals' value or other meaningfulness dimensions. These dimensions will provide insight into better understanding tourists' perception, meaning, and pattern of souvenir consumption behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Cultural domain analysis is a set of structured interviewing methods used in social psychology and cognitive anthropology to study how people in a same cultural group think about certain conceptual and material domains, which is lists of things that belong together (Bernard 2000). Therefore, people in different cultures may interpret physical reality differently, and as a subject of cultural domain, it is speculated that souvenirs will be perceived and interpreted differently by people in different cultures. For the purpose of this study, as cultural domain analysis methodology, anthropological methods of free listing technique and pile-sorts methods are employed.

The data collection and analysis is conducted in two separate phases. The strength of these two methods as a productive research instrument for fieldworking social researchers is also recognized as fun to use and also informants find them fun to respond to (Bernard, 2000). In the first phase of the research, free-listing, informants from the two country groups of U.S. and Korea were contacted eliciting lists of trip souvenir items. Free-listing consists of asking informants to list as many items as they can think of in a particular domain (Goicolea 2001).The informants were asked to "list all the items you can recall as trip souvenirs you buy when on a trip." For the second phase of this study, 40 items obtained and selected from the free-listing data were developed through pile-sorts for the two groups of tourists contacted at three different tourist attractions in Texas, through May to June, 2006. For the pile sort phase, the researchers will ask informants for explanations of the groupings after each informant finishes the sorting, then a short interview was conducted. These dimensions will be developed into a cognitive map using multidimensional scaling (MDS) to provide further insights into the two tourist groups' perception, mapping, and consumption patterns.

DATA ANALYSIS

The records were used to develop a matrix showing the number of items that the two cards were placed together. The more times two cards were placed together in the same pile, the stronger is the conceptual relationship between the items. Using SPSS statistical method of multidimensional scaling (MDS), the frequency of each item is computed to develop a cognitive map of similarities by presenting the matrices according to spatial distances. The more related two items are in the participants' minds, the more times these will be grouped together in the same pile. In the cognitive map this is reflected in shorter distances between the items. Multidimensional scaling attempts to find the structure in a set of distance measures between objects or cases. This is accompanied by assigning observations to specific locations in a conceptual space such that the distances between points, and the advantage of using MDS stems from its ability to determine the dimensions along which a set of stimuli are perceived to vary without large numbers of participants.

Table 1. The Comparison of Top 25 Souvenir Items Preferred by the Two Country Groups

	US (46)	Frequency	Korea (50)	Frequency
1	T-shirts	35	T-shirts	33
2	Postcards	25	magnets	31
3	Jewelry	20	Key chain	25
4	Key chain	18	cosmetics (perfumes)	23
5	glass ware	16	cap, hat	22
6	Clothes	14	postcards	18
7	art works,crafts	13	Clothes	16
8	books (magazine)	13	local specialty food (coffee bean)	16
9	cap, hat	13	spoon	15
10	food (liquor,drinks, candy)	11	Jewelry	14
11	magnets	9	mug (coffee)	14
12	local specialty food (coffee bean)	8	Frame	12
13	mug (coffee)	8	toy (including local)	11
14	piece of nature (seashells,rocks, sand,flower,wood,)	8	bag (general, tote)	9
15	toy (including local)	8	dolls	9
16	CD	6	local specialty products	9
17	liquor (exotic, general)	6	Bell	8
18	map (brochures, guide)	6	liquor (exotic, general)	8
19	Figurines and ornaments	5	art works and crafts	7
20	pins	5	Figurines and ornaments	7
21	sunglasses	5	towel (beach)	7
22	frame	4	plates (saucer, tray)	6
23	local specialty products	4	sunglasses	6
24	photo	4	Watch	6
25	pictures, paintings	4	cigarlette/ lighter	5
	Total	268		337

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the preliminary free-listing phase of this study, data were collected from 65 informants of 38 American and 27 Korean nationality groups. The data consisted 61.5% of female and 38.5% male respondents, with ages ranging from 20 to 57. The average number of items listed was 7.9 for Americans and 9.7 for Koreans, respectively. The total frequency of all items listed by each groups was 274 and 255, respectively; the free-list came up with 73 individual tourist souvenir items. The preliminary list of top 25 items identified by the two country groups is shown in Table 1. The comparison of the preferences is represented in Figure 1.

Further discussions and implications will be provided from the second phase of this study. From the results, understanding how souvenirs are meaningfully perceived, classified, and collected by tourists through investigating the groupings defined by tourists will help our understanding of tourists' consumption behavior. From the second phase, the expected possible outcome groupings could be commercial vs. non-commercial souvenir groupings, destination representation item groupings that are associated with a particular place or culture vs. generic household goods, or grouping of collection items with individuals' value or other meaningful dimensions. Also, any similarity or dissimilarity patterns observed between the two cultural groups will provide further insights into better understanding of cultures, with practical implications to better cater towards tourists of various cultural backgrounds.
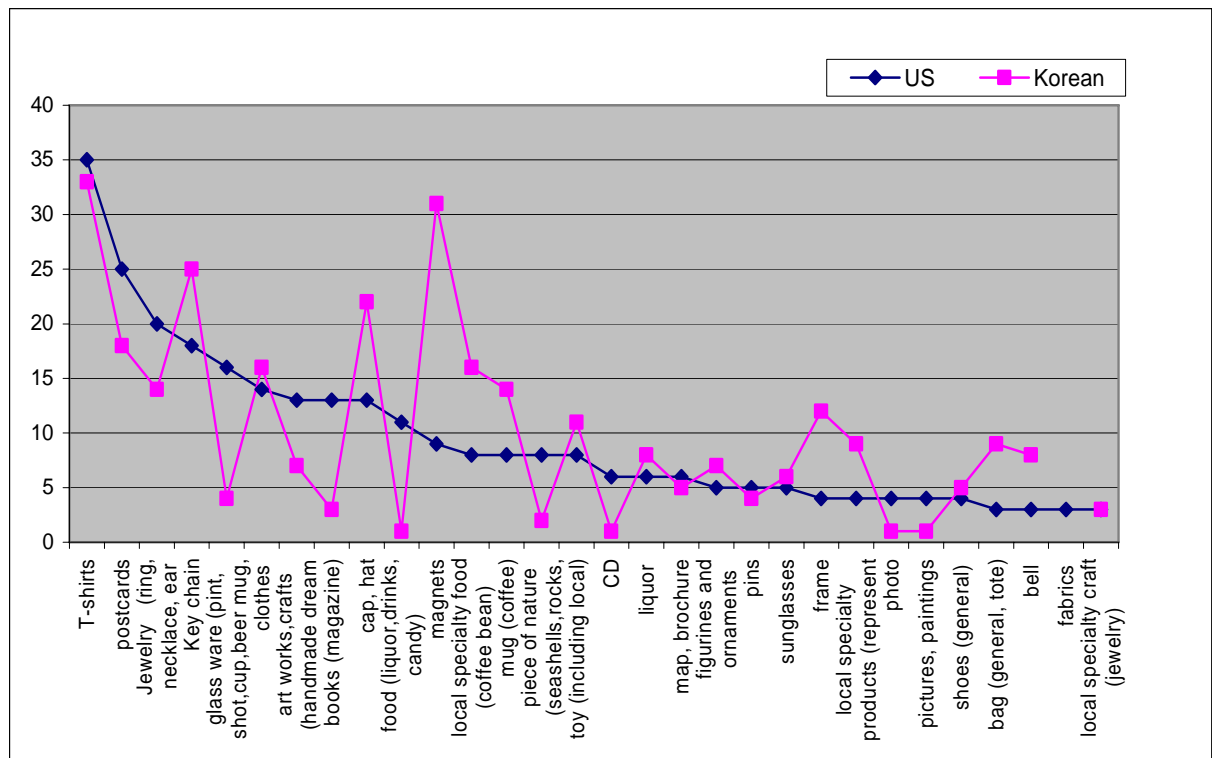

Figure 1. The Comparison of Souvenir Items sought by the Two Country Groups

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EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON TEACHING STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT COURSES IN TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a research project that empirically investigated teaching of strategic management (SM) courses in tourism and hospitality (T&H) schools. Further to carrying out an extensive literature review, a survey was designed and data was collected from academics teaching SM in T&H schools. Interestingly, no significant differences were found between undergraduate and graduate SM courses in terms of course objectives, contents, and teaching methods. Overall, the research findings indicate that the traditional top-down planning school is still very dominant in teaching SM courses. Lectures and case study analysis seem to be main teaching methods used when delivering SM at both levels. Given the trends and developments in the business environment as well as in the SM field, the findings raise questions about the appropriateness of objectives, content, and teaching methods of SM courses in T&H schools. The paper provides a number of conclusions and recommendations for practice and future research.

KEYWORDS: *Education; Hospitality; Management; Strategy; Teaching; Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

Many undergraduate and graduate programs in tourism and hospitality (T&H) include a capstone course which may be called business policy, strategy analysis, strategic management, or corporate strategy. Strategic management (SM) will be used in this paper for all these terms. This capstone course is essential in developing highly competent and competitive future managers and leaders in our field. This course can integrate knowledge gained in various previous courses into a managerial perspective; prepare students to analyze complex business situations from a holistic perspective; evaluate an organization's competitive position, develop decision making and problem solving skills; propose organizational changes; and provide a set of managerial attitudes, skills, and knowledge (Macfarlane and Perkins, 1999; Thomas, 1998). In today's dynamic business environment not only do senior managers need such type of knowledge and skills; but also frontline employees and middle managers need them so they can contribute to their organizations' survival and success.

Starting from the mid 1970s, numerous studies have been carried out on what should be taught in SM courses and how they should be taught. These studies often discuss and refer to closely interrelated areas such as course objectives, prerequisites, course contents, focused firms, and teaching methods (see Alexander et al, 1986; Boyd and Summers, 1983; Eldredge and Galloway, 1983; Guth, 1982; Hegarty, 1976; Wolfe and Roge, 1997). In terms of teaching SM in T&H schools, several studies do exist but they are either conceptual (Okumus and Wong, 2004; Okumus and Wong, 2005) or focus on using business simulation games when teaching the subject (Kendall and Harrington, 2003; Martin and McEvoy, 2003; Russell and Russell, 1996). In short, there is an essential need for empirical research studies in this area. Given this gap in the field, an empirical research project has been undertaken and this paper aims to report the findings of this empirical study.

First, a critical review of the relevant literature is provided. Second, the research methodology followed for the study is explained. Then, the empirical findings are presented and discussed. Finally, a number of conclusions emerged from this study are stated, and recommendations for practice and future research are proposed. This is one of the first empirical papers on this area in the T&H field. It is therefore hoped that the research findings contribute to the field, and some of the key issues raised by Edgar and Taylor (1996), Okumus (2002), Okumus and Wong (2005), Olsen (2004) and Olsen and Roper (1998) can be further discussed and evaluated in the light of the conclusions of this study.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

Differences may exist between academic institutions in offering SM courses. As stated by Bongiorno (1993), SM can be offered singularly as a compulsory course, whereas some institutions may offer more than one SM courses. As to when such subjects are introduced, Eldredge and Galloway (1983) found in their survey of 198

deans of business schools in the US that 96.5 % of undergraduate SM courses were taught at the senior level. Similar suggestions have been made in previous studies that the SM should be taught towards the end of a degree program (Guth, 1982; Thomas, 1998). This is because students are often expected to study a number of prerequisites such as economics, statistics, operations management, marketing, human resources, accounting, and finance.

Several course objectives are referred to in previous studies (Alexander et al., 1986; Betts, 1978; Boyd and Summers, 1983; Guth, 1982; Hegarty, 1976; Okumus and Wong, 2005; Thomas, 1998; Wolfe, 1997). These include helping students integrate previously learned concepts on functional disciplines, understand the big picture of managing organizations, acquire students with a working knowledge of SM concepts, develop and apply decision making skills and gain teamwork and communication skills.

Previous studies have provided findings and discussions about which topics should be covered in SM courses. For example, Hegarty (1976) collected data via a survey from 130 professors in US business schools and found that differences existed in the objectives and content of this course with college professors focusing more on formulating and planning strategy than on its implementation. Boyd and Summers (1982) collected empirical data on this area from 75 firms in the US via a questionnaire. Their research findings indicated different content areas for SM courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. For undergraduate SM courses the three most important areas included setting objectives, integrating functional activities, and evaluating results. In the graduate level SM courses, the three most important concepts were integrating functional activities, guiding towards goals, and examining the role of top management's value system in decision-making.

Boyd and Summers (1983) later extended their study by collecting data from 57 professors from US-based business schools. The findings of this second study were very similar to their earlier study and also to the findings of Hegarty (1976). In another study, Alexander et al. (1986) found that concepts mostly covered in SM courses in US-based business schools were internal analysis; external analysis; strategic alternatives, goals and objectives of the firm; and determining a firm's business.

In their studies, Guth (1982), Keys (1997), Knotts and Keys, (1997), and Summer et al. (1990) identify several teaching areas which include defining strategy, mission, and objectives; carrying out external analysis, internal analysis and selection of strategies; and finally, strategy implementation and evaluation. Many SM textbooks are structured around the above key areas (David, 2000; Johnson, Scholes and Whittington, 2004; Lynch, 2000; Thompson and Strickland, 2003; Wheelen and Hunger, 2003). For example, Wolfe and Roge (1997) carried out a content analysis of seven leading strategy textbooks of US origin. Their analysis revealed 15 major areas. Hence, they found that strategic analysis and strategic choices received more attention in these texts than strategy implementation and evaluation.

There have been ongoing criticisms about the fact that traditional management education focuses on rational and linear models which often have limited use in real and complex business environments (Mintzberg, 2004). Responding to these criticisms, the focus in SM has now moved from linear and rational views towards behavioral and non-linear areas such as strategy implementation, the resource-based view, knowledge management, the formation of new ventures, cross-cultural issues, learning organizations, conflict management, and the complexity view (Drew, 1999; Hitt, Gimeno, and Hoskisson, 1998; Kesner, 2001; Pettigrew et al., 2002; Whitehill, 1996; Wilson, 1998). Reflecting this trend, it is recommended that the above areas should be included in the SM course contents (Okumus and Wong, 2005).

There are a number of teaching and learning methods available which include lecturing, the use of case studies, simulation games, company projects, problem-based learning, role-playing exercises, guest speakers, videos, article-critiquing assignments and Web-based education (for in-depth discussions see: Alexander et al. 1986; Eldredge and Galloway, 1983; Jennings, 1996; 2002; Kesner, 2001; Thomas, 1998; Okumus and Wong, 2004; Wolfe, 1997). The case method has received more attention and support than other teaching methods (Jennings, 1996; Jennings, 2002; Kesner, 2001; Summer et al., 1990). It is perhaps because this method meets the main objectives of teaching SM including providing the big picture to students, integrating functional areas, putting theory into practice, and developing interpersonal and teamwork skills. However, each method has its advantages and limitations; therefore a combination of different teaching methods should be employed to maintain the effectiveness of SM courses (Kesner, 2001; Thomas, 1998).

Despite these convergences and developments in teaching methods, there has been ongoing criticism with the heavy use of lectures, business cases and simulation games in teaching SM. For example, Mockler (1994) claims that SM is often taught as a theory to be understood and observed rather than performed. According to Betts (1978), contrary to the business cases given to students, in real business life managers are not always presented with a readily defined problem. In line with the above criticisms Mintzberg and his colleagues have been critical of traditional management education (see Mintzberg, 1994; Mintzberg, Ahlstrand and Lampel, 1998; Mintzberg and Gosling, 2002). They claim that management education relies on heavily written case studies or simulation games which may fail to reflect the real business life.

With reference to textbooks and academic journals, many alternatives are available in the generic SM field. On the other hand, there is no specific devoted SM journal in the T&H field. In terms of textbooks, there are only a few in our field; but they tend to apply the traditional planning view to the T&H industry. In other words, finding an appropriate textbook to be used and recommended when teaching SM has been a continuous disappointment for faculty members teaching SM in T&H schools (Okumus and Wong, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

In order to collect empirical data from academics who teach SM in T&H schools it was decided to design a survey believing that this technique would allow a large amount of relevant data to be collected from a sizable population in a highly economical way; and the findings could be expressed in numerical terms (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2003; Schutt, 2003). The questionnaire was designed based on a critical review of the relevant literature on teaching this course (Alexander et al, 1986; Betts, 1978; Boyd and Summers, 1982; 1983; Eldredge and Galloway, 1983; Hegarty, 1976; Guth, 1982; Knotts and Keys, 1997; Okumus and Wong, 2004; Okumus and Wong, 2005; Thomas, 1998; Wolfe and Roge, 1997). It consisted of five main sections. The first section included questions relevant to titles of strategy courses and the required prerequisites. The next section included Likert scale questions on course objectives, course contents; and on which T&H firms SM courses mainly focus. The fourth section had questions on teaching methods. The final section had background questions about the instructors.

Several academics and research students were asked to fill in the initial survey for further feedback and clarification. Based on the critical and constructive feedback received, the questionnaire was revised and finalized. Finally, as data was going to be collected globally, it was decided to administer this survey via the online system believing that it would save time and resources for both the researchers and participants.

No definitive list of tourism and hotel schools/programs worldwide could be found. Therefore, several strategies were followed in order to reach those academics teaching and researching SM in the T&H field. First, the strategy literature in the T&H was reviewed (Olsen and Roper, 1998; Tse and Olsen, 1999; Okumus, 2004) and academics who published papers on SM were identified and then contacted via e-mail asking for their participation in the research. Second, Web pages of T&H schools were searched worldwide; and academics who teach SM courses were identified and contacted. Third, with the permission of the conference organizers, an e-mail was sent to participants of 2nd APacCHRIE Conference, 2004 Annual Asia Pacific Tourism Association Conference and 2004 ISTTE conference.

In addition, e-mails were also sent to tourism e-mail groups such as Strategic Management in Tourism e-mail Forum (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SM-tourism), Trinet-L (trinet-l@hawaii.edu) and, ATLAS (list@atlas-euro.org) informing its members of the research project and asking for participation of appropriate teaching faculty in the project. In such e-mail communications it was kindly requested the receiver of the e-mail to forward the message to appropriate faculty in their institutions if s/he is not teaching the course. In these e-mails, it was promised that when disseminating the research findings, the names of institutions and the academic staff would be kept anonymous. The intention was to reach as many academics as possible worldwide who teach SM.

The data collection process continued from January 2004 to the end of December 2004. Overall, the online survey received around 450 hits but notably only 124

respondents participated in the online study. However, 28 of the completed questionnaires were omitted from the analysis as they were incomplete. Of the 86 questionnaires included in the analysis, 39 (45%) of them were filled in by academics who were teaching SM only at the undergraduate level and 16 of them (19%) were completed by academics who were teaching SM only at the graduate level. The remaining 31 questionnaires (36%) were filled in by academics who were teaching SM both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. In total, there were 70 completed questionnaires for the undergraduate level and 47 completed questionnaires for the graduate level. The research results are presented below.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 displays findings about the background of academics who participated in the study. In terms of country of origin, 86 academics from 24 countries participated in the research project. These respondents were grouped under five geographical areas. The highest participation in the online survey was from Europe (39.5 %) and North America (23.2 %). Strategic management is taught by a majority of male (72.1 %) academics. In terms of age, faculty in the age group of 30 to 39 years (45.3 %) and 40-49 years (24.4 %) had the highest percentages.

Concerning academic positions, mostly assistant professors (48.8 %) and associate professors (27.9 %) teach SM courses. Most of the participating academics in the study (76.8 %) completed their doctoral degrees. A high majority of the participants (90.6 %) had over four years of university level teaching experience. However, on the other hand, in terms of industry experience almost 53.5 % of the respondents had less then 4 years of work experience and similarly 38 % of them had no managerial experience in the T&H industry. Similarly, it was found that most of the participants had either no consultancy experience (27 %) or very limited (1-2 projects) consultancy experiences (46 %). Relative to publications, almost 30 % of the participants did not have any publications related to the SM field and those who did publish; their publications were usually related to strategic planning and environmental scanning. This finding confirms several previous studies on hospitality research by Okumus (2004) and Olsen and Roper (1999).

According to the research findings, SM is taught at the undergraduate level mainly in the final year of degree programs. This is consistent with the findings of several previous studies (Eldredge and Galloway, 1983; Guth, 1982; Thomas, 1998). In line with Bongiorno (1993) SM is offered both as a compulsory or an elective course, and again, some institutions offer more than one SM course.

Table 1. Demographic Information about the Respondents

	n.		*%*	
Region				
Europe	34		39.5	
North America	20		23.2	
Far East	15		17.4	
Australia & New Zealand	11		12.8	
Middle East & Africa	6		6.9	
Total	86		100	
Gender				
Female	24		27.9	
Male	62		72.1	
Total	86		100	
Age				
Between 20-29	4		4.7	
Between 30-39	39		45.3	
Between 40-49	21		24.4	
Between 50-59	20		23.3	
60 or above	2		2.3	
Total	86		100	
Position				
Professor	14		16.3	
Associate Professor/ Senior Lecturer	24		27.9	
Assistant Professor/ Lecturer	42		48.8	
Other	5		7.0	
Total	86		100	
Highest Education Level Attained				
Bachelor Degree	2		2.3	
Masters Degree	18		20.9	
Doctoral Degree	66		76.8	
Total	86		100	
Teaching Experience				
1 to 3 years	8		9.3	
4 to 9 years	34		39.5	
10 years or above	44		51.1	
Total	86		100	

Work Experience			Managerial Experience	
	n.	%	n.	%
No experience	10	11.6	33	38.3
1 to 3 years	36	41.9	27	31.4
4 to 9 years	22	25.6	18	20.9
10 years or above	18	20.9	6	7.0
Total	86	100	86	100

For example, at the undergraduate level, 66 % of the respondents stated that their institutions offer only one compulsory SM course; whereas 16 % of the respondents reported that SM is offered as an elective course. Another 10 % of the respondents stated that their schools offer two compulsory SM courses and the remaining 4 % noted that they offer two SM courses but one is compulsory and the other one is elective. At the graduate level, 50 % the respondents stated they offer only one compulsory SM course, 10 % of the respondents stated that they offer only one SM course which is elective. Another 12 % of the respondents stated they offer two compulsory SM courses and the remaining respondents (8 %) noted that they offer two SM courses but one is compulsory and the other one is elective.

The research results suggest that Strategic Management is the main title adapted for the strategy courses both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. This finding is also in-line with SM education in the generic management field (Thomas, 1998). At the undergraduate level, more than half of the strategy courses (53 %) were called Strategic Management. Strategic Planning (14 %), Advance Hotel Management (12 %), Tourism Policy (11 %), Business Strategy (8 %) and Leadership (5 %) were found to be the other titles used. At the graduate level, 59 % of courses were called Strategic Management. Tourism Policy (19 %), Strategic Planning (12%), Services Management (6%), Business Policy (5%), and numerous others (9%) were the remaining given titles.

At the graduate level, more than half of the programs do not require any prerequisites prior to studying SM; whereas this ratio is 27 % at the undergraduate level. In programs which require prerequisites, it appears that both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, marketing, accounting and finance, operation management, economics and human resource management are the main prerequisites. This is consistent with suggestions and discussions provided by Guth (1982), Okumus and Wong (2005) and Thomas (1998). In terms of class sizes, at the undergraduate level, 44 % of the respondents reported that their class size is from 26 to 50 students and 19 % stated that their class size is less than 25 students. At the graduate level, two-thirds of the respondents reported that their class size is less than 25 students and 15 % stated that their class size is between 26-50 students.

Table 2 presents the research findings concerning course objectives. The mean scores for objectives for the graduate level SM courses were found to be higher than the undergraduate level SM courses in most items. However, except for one item, providing up-to-date knowledge in the SM field, the results do not reveal significant differences among the importance of objectives between the undergraduate and graduate level SM courses.

Table 3 presents the findings reflecting which concepts and models are mainly covered in SM courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Similar to the above findings, the mean scores of most SM concepts in the graduate level courses were found to be higher than the undergraduate level SM courses. However, between the undergraduate and graduate SM courses, the t test results indicated differences only in five areas out of 26 areas.

Table 2. Objectives of SM Courses at the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels

	Mean Score		Mean diff.	t Value	df	t-test (sig.)
	Under.	Grad.				
Apply SM into practice	4.21	4.43	0.22	-1.49	112	0.14
Understand the big picture of managing T&H firms	4.19	4.40	0.21	-1.20	113	0.23
Better analyse the external and internal environments	4.11	4.40	0.29	-1.62	113	0.11
Integrate previously learned concepts into a single perspective	4.31	4.29	0.02	0.15	113	0.88
Provide up-to-date knowledge in the strategic management field	3.60	4.13	0.53	-2.99	112	0.00*
Recommend methods for strategy implementation and evaluation	3.71	3.98	0.27	-1.43	113	0.16
Identify and plan for the required strategic changes	3.66	3.93	0.27	-1.46	112	0.15
Learn and have experience with working in groups	3.66	3.73	0.07	-0.36	113	0.72
Improve communication skills	3.60	3.70	0.10	-0.56	112	0.58

Scale: 1 "not at all' and 5 "a very great extent
* Significant difference at p =.05

Overall, internal analysis, competitive advantage, corporate strategy, globalization, defining key strategy terms, and PEST analysis receive more attention in the graduate level SM courses. At the undergraduate level, defining key strategy terms, PEST analysis, internal analysis, competitive advantage, and industry structure analysis receive greater attention than other areas. These research findings clearly indicate that academics in T&H schools particularly focus on strategic analysis and formulation compared to strategy implementation and evaluation. In other words, the planning school seems to dominate the content of SM courses. This finding is indeed very similar to the findings of several previous studies undertaken in business schools (Alexander et al. 1986; Boyd and Summers, 1982; Boyd and Summers, 1983; Guth, 1982; Hegarty, 1976; Keys, 1997; Wolfe and Roge, 1997). However, this finding is also disappointing, since there have been ongoing criticisms about the fact that the tools and techniques proposed by this traditional planning school have shortcomings and limited use in complex and dynamic business environments (Mintzberg, 2004).

Table 3. Contents of SM Courses at the Undergraduate and Graduate Levels

	Mean Score		Mean diff.	t Value	df	t-test (sig.)
	Under.	Grad.				
Internal analysis	4.04	4.41	0.38	-2.21	112	0.03*
Competitive advantage	3.84	4.30	0.46	-2.66	113	0.01*
Defining SM and strategy	4.03	4.11	0.08	-0.45	114	0.65
Vision, mission and objectives	4.07	4.07	0.00	0.04	114	0.97
PEST analysis	4.07	4.07	0.00	0.03	112	0.98
Internationalization/Globalization	3.41	4.07	0.66	-3.34	113	0.00*
Corporate strategy/options	3.43	4.04	0.61	-3.35	113	0.00*
Industry structure analysis	3.77	3.93	0.16	-0.81	112	0.42
Porter's generic business strategies	3.43	3.75	0.32	-1.56	112	0.12
Resource allocation	3.42	3.65	0.23	-1.18	111	0.24
Entrepreneurship	3.21	3.61	0.40	-1.86	114	0.07
Leadership	3.47	3.59	0.12	-0.60	114	0.55
Strategy evaluation and feedback	3.29	3.59	0.30	-1.59	114	0.11
Measuring performance	3.28	3.59	0.31	-1.64	110	0.10
Organizational culture	3.36	3.58	0.22	-1.08	112	0.28
Organizational structure	3.41	3.57	0.16	-0.77	114	0.44
Human resource issues	3.30	3.57	0.27	-1.20	113	0.23
Value chain analysis	3.14	3.51	0.37	-1.67	113	0.10
Formal long-range planning	3.09	3.37	0.28	-1.44	114	0.15
Managing change	2.96	3.36	0.40	-1.18	113	0.07
Corporate social responsibility	3.04	3.30	0.26	-1.18	114	0.24
Scenario planning	2.91	3.29	0.38	-1.81	113	0.07
Different schools of thought	2.62	3.21	0.59	-2.40	110	0.02*
Resource-based view	2.74	3.20	0.46	-1.79	112	0.08
Knowledge-based view	2.64	3.07	0.43	-1.81	109	0.07
BCG's growth share matrix	2.78	3.00	0.22	-1.11	102	0.27

Scale: 1 "not at all" and 5 "to a very great extent"
* Significant difference at p =.05

The results show that academics focus more on large and international companies when teaching SM courses (see Table 4). The mean scores for the type of tourism and hospitality firms were higher for the graduate level SM courses. However, the t-test

results revealed significant differences only in one item, hotels. Academics participated in this study focus on hotel firms more in undergraduate SM courses than graduate level instructors.

Table 4. Types of Tourism and Hospitality Firms Focused in SM Courses

	Mean Score		Mean dif.	*t* Value	df	t-test (sig.)
	Under.	Grad.				
International/global	3.67	3.89	0.22	-1.02	111	0.31
Large companies	3.77	3.86	0.09	-0.39	106	0.70
Hotels	4.13	3.57	0.54	2.21	81	0.03*
Food & beverage companies	3.32	3.09	0.23	0.95	111	0.34
Small & medium sized	3.12	3.09	0.03	0.12	111	0.91
Travel companies	2.88	2.93	0.05	-0.20	109	0.84
Non-profit organizations	2.43	2.64	0.21	-0.91	110	0.36
Cruise lines & entertainment	2.48	2.58	0.10	-0.54	106	0.59

Scale: with 1 "not at all" and 5 "to a very great extent"
* Significant difference at p =.05

The respondents were asked about the percentage of time they devote to certain teaching & learning methods when they deliver SM courses. At the undergraduate level, the top three teaching methods were lecturing (37 %), case study analysis (20 %) and seminars & tutorials (18 %). At the graduate level, the top three teaching methods were again the same: lectures (29 %), case analysis (24 %), and seminars & tutorials (16 %). There did not seem to be much difference between the undergraduate and graduate levels in terms of time devoted to the most often used teaching and learning methods. These findings, particularly on lecturing and case studies, are very similar to the previous research studies (Jennings, 1996; Jennings, 2002; Kesner, 2001; Summer et al., 1990). The heavy reliance of lecture and case studies when teaching SM courses is not often recommended (Mockler, 1994; Mintzberg and Gosling, 2002); since they fail to reflect real business issues and challenges and do not often help students to develop problem solving and people skills.

Respondents were further asked about the perceived effectiveness of certain teaching methods when teaching SM. As presented in Table 5, a different picture emerged from the research findings. The case study method is still perceived as the most effective method in delivering SM course. However, the respondents perceived company projects, seminars, consultancy projects prepared by students and reading assignments as also very effective teaching methods. Similar to the above findings, the mean scores were higher at the graduate level in all items except for lecturing. However, the t-test results did not indicate significant differences between the undergraduate and graduate levels in

teaching methods except for consultancy work. The respondents may believe that undergraduate students have less knowledge and skills in preparing consultancy projects compared to graduate students.

Table 5. Effectiveness of Various Teaching Methods When Teaching SM

	Mean Score		Mean Diff	t Value	df	t-test (sig.)
	Under.	Grad.				
Case study discussions	4.03	4.36	0.33	-1.82	111	0.71
Company projects	3.61	4.00	0.39	-1.81	84	0.07
Consultancy projects by students	3.04	3.86	0.82	-3.46	83	0.00*
Seminars	3.76	3.78	0.02	-0.13	97	0.90
Reading assignments	3.43	3.74	0.31	-1.81	112	0.07
Guest speakers	3.55	3.69	0.14	-0.72	107	0.48
Lecturing	3.74	3.68	0.06	0.33	114	0.74
Business simulation games	3.02	3.23	0.21	-0.87	91	0.39
Video	2.98	3.00	0.02	-0.09	106	0.93
On-line education	2.85	2.89	0.04	-0.17	86	0.86

Scale, with 1 = "Very ineffective" to 5 = "Very effective".
* Significant difference at p =.05

In terms of textbooks, among the 10 textbook listed, Olsen et al (1998) and Lewis (1998) were found to be the most often used texts by the respondents. However, their overall mean scores for both undergraduate and graduate levels were relatively low. For example, on a five point likert scale (1: not at all - 5 to a very great extent) the former book's mean score was 2.82 and the latter ones was 2.55 for the undergraduate level. The mean scores for these texts for the graduate level were also very similar. On the other hand, among nine generic SM textbooks listed in the survey, Thompson and Strickland (2003) and Johnson and Scholes (2002) had the highest mean scores. The former had a mean score of 3.16 for the undergraduate level and 3.40 for the graduate level. The latter had 2.94 and 3.40 for undergraduate and graduate SM courses, respectively. The t-test results did not indicate any differences between the undergraduate and graduate level SM courses in terms of using contextualized SM texts and generic SM textbooks. The emerging issue from the above finding is that there is still a need for a contextualized SM text in the T&H field.

Concerning journals used in SM courses, the respondents seemed to use articles mostly from Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly (CHRQ) and International Journal of Hospitality Management (IJHM). The mean scores for CHRQ were 3.28 and 3.49 and for IJHM were 2.94 and 3.55, for undergraduate and graduate SM

courses, respectively. In terms of generic journals, the respondents found to use articles mainly from Harvard Business Review (HBR) and Strategic Management Journal (SMJ). The mean scores for HBR were 3.13 and 3.82, and for SMJ were 2.79 and 3.82 for undergraduate and graduate SM courses respectively.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study results and their discussion above, a number of conclusions can be drawn from this study. First, SM is found to be the most preferred title for strategy subjects at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. This is in-line with trends in the generic field. Second, the findings indicate that the contents of SM courses in tourism and hospitality schools do not really reflect recent and advanced developments in the generic SM field. Given the developments in the generic field and also in the business environment, objectives and contents of SM courses need to focus more on the areas of strategy implementation, knowledge management, conflict management, management of international hospitality organizations, and corporate social responsibility.

Third, academics heavily rely on lecture and case study teaching methods. Although these methods have certain advantages, other teaching and learning methods should also be incorporated in teaching SM courses. Fourth, in terms of course objectives, course contents and teaching methods, there are important similarities between undergraduate and graduate level SM courses. Certainly, graduate level SM courses should be differentiated more from undergraduate ones in terms of aiming toward higher learning levels (analysis, synthesis and evaluation), advance and current topics, and flexible teaching methods.

To conclude, given the recent developments in the generic strategy field and considering the expectations of the industry from degree and graduate programs in T&H schools, it is essential for administrators and academics in these institutions to question the appropriateness of the objectives, course content and teaching methods of SM courses. It is also hoped that this study stimulates further research studies not only on teaching SM but also other areas such as marketing, finance, human resources, and information technology. Future studies on these areas can certainly help T&H schools to improve teaching and learning practices so that future managers and leaders in this industry are better prepared.

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A CASE STUDY OF A RESORT DESTINATION'S RISE AND FALL AND RISE IN LINE WITH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

Rotorua was New Zealand's first tourism destination, rising to prominence a hundred years ago on the back of the central government's vision for a South Pacific spa to rival those of Europe. Government resources were used to develop and support Rotorua's infrastructure and tourism industry, like no other in the British Commonwealth, for the best part of the 20th century. However, by the 1980s Rotorua's tourism industry was in a crisis that was largely self-inflicted. The paper provides an historical summary of key events leading to the crisis, and subsequent efforts to regain destination competitiveness through a public-private partnership. Written from the perspective of the CEO of the destination's inaugural regional tourism organisation charged with co-ordinating the recovery, the case highlights how one destination's success as a destination has risen, fallen and risen in line with government intervention.

KEYWORDS: *Government intervention; Tourism crisis; Regional tourism organisation; History; Destination competitiveness; Public-private partnership.*

INTRODUCTION

The primary role of any destination marketing organisation (DMO) is to foster market competitiveness. Since achieving competitiveness is now a major challenge for most destinations (WTTC, 2001), this is as much an issue of significance to individual businesses as it is to DMOs. The success of individual businesses is to a large extent reliant on the competitiveness of that destination (Pike, 2004), particularly in places affected by disasters and crises.

Many DMOs at national and local levels started life as government departments. Although there has been a shift in structure towards limited liability companies, trusts and public-private partnerships (PPO), most funding remains from government. Many outside the tourism industry have questioned why taxes should be used in destination marketing to 'subsidise tourism businesses'. A political implication of this has been witnessed in the USA, where lack of Congress support for a national tourism office is a result of a strong political lobby arguing this would represent 'corporate welfare' (Gatty & Blalock, 1997). Without government intervention, particularly in the form of financial resources, most DMOs would not exist in their current form. Government withdrawal of funding in Colorado, Maine and California in recent years (see Doering 1979, Donnelly & Vaske 1997) provides indications of how destination marketing activities can be curtailed through a drop in budget that cannot be reimbursed through corporate sponsorship or membership levies. For example, Colorado slipped from 3rd to 17th in terms of traveller recognition of state destinations, and pleasure travellers decreased by up to 10% in the short term.

In 2003 the governor of California proposed the state tourism office be closed again as a cost saving measure when the state faced a $35 billion shortfall (*Inbound*, 13 January 2003, p. 1). The withdrawal of government funding can lead to a crisis. In 2006 for example, Tourism Waikato, one of New Zealand's regional tourism organisations (RTO), had its budget unexpectedly cut in half by the local government (see Coventry, 2006, p.1). Tourism Waikato's CEO was cited as stating: "It's a very gut wrenching situation. Marketing of the whole Waikato will be suspended until funding regenerates".

Increasing attention in the tourism literature is being devoted to destination disaster management. This has been particularly evident in the new millennium; a time when the competitiveness of many destinations has been significantly tested by a diverse range of exogenous events involving terrorism, acts of God, and threats of pandemics. In the case of such 'wildcard events', described by Hall (2005) as being low probability but high impact, the destination's recovery will depend on the level of preparedness. Hall rightly argued there exists a tendency in tourism to assume the unthinkable will not happen. This may imply a view that the future will continue to evolve as per the past, and in this paper it is argued management's unpreparedness for a different future can lead to a crisis.

A crisis is a self-inflicted situation caused by inept management practises or an inability to adapt to a changing environment (Faulkner, 1999). A disaster on the other

hand is a sudden catastrophic event over which the DMO has little or no control. In the emerging literature on destination disaster management, there have been a number of very useful cases about DMO responses to a wide range of disasters such as cyclones (Faulkner & Vikulov, 2001), Foot and Mouth disease (Frisby, 2002), bush fires (Christine, 1995), travel advisories (Beirman 2003), war (Mansfield, 1999), violence (Leslie, 1999) and terrorism (Hopper, 2002). Destinations in decline have also been mentioned in the literature, including Hamm (Buckley & Witt, 1985), Majorca (Morgan, 1991), Canada (Go, 1987), Bermuda (Conlin, 1995), and Amsterdam (Dahles, 1998). However, relatively little has been reported about attempts by a destination to recover from a management crisis. This paper documents a crisis that emerged through the inability to adapt to a changing environment. A historical perspective elucidating the context of the crisis is followed by a reflexive narrative of recovery efforts from the perspective of the inaugural RTO's CEO appointed to coordinate marketing aspects of the recovery. In this regard the paper joins other practitioner reflections on practical DMO challenges (see for example Curtis 2001, Frisby 2002).

The destination of interest is Rotorua, which was New Zealand's first tourism resort area. Singled out by the country's government in the late 1800s as a future 'Sanatorium of the earth', the area became a beneficiary of levels of support only dreamed of by other New Zealand regions. The New Zealand government built infrastructure, accommodation, spas, tourist attractions and transport, handled the majority of all domestic and overseas promotion, and even operated the local visitor information centre for 90 years. However, Rotorua's star status within the New Zealand tourism industry, which the destination had enjoyed for the best part of a century, declined to such a point that by the late 1980s the local tourism industry was considered to be in a state of crisis.

ROTORUA – SANITORIUM OF THE EARTH!

Rotorua has a short-recorded history by international standards. The township was officially created in 1880, through the British Crown's 'Fenton Agreement' with the Maori owners. The first non-indigenous visitors were traders (see Cowan, 1935) and missionaries (see Tapsell, 1972) during the 1830s. The first tourist was thought to be naturalist John Bidwell, in 1839, who later published the book *Rambles in New Zealand* (Stafford, 1977). While Rotorua did not officially exist as a town, the primary motivation for the early visitation was to experience the Pink and White Terraces on the shores of nearby Lake Rotomahana. These were impressive silica terraces formed from mineral deposits in the geothermal heated water. An attraction for visitors was the opportunity to bath in the natural recesses of the terraces. There were few other tourist attractions in New Zealand at this time (Reggett, 1972).

The systematic colonisation of New Zealand began in the 1840s (Cushman, 1990), and the first settlement of Europeans at Rotorua occurred in 1856 (Tapsell, 1972). By this time, the potential of Rotorua's geothermal waters was attracting attention. In 1859 the Auckland Provincial Government commissioned Austrian Geologist Dr

Ferdinand Von Hochstetter to document the 'Natural Characteristics of the Thermal Area' in southern Auckland (Reggett 1972, Tapsell 1972). While Von Hochstetter's ensuing report is credited with generating much interest in the region, it was the 1870 visit of the Duke of Edinburgh and accompanying media that stimulated the first real growth of tourist traffic (Steele, 1980). The Duke's visit is said to have established Rotorua in the wealthy social circles of America and Europe (Reggett, 1972), and a part of the 'grand tour' of the colonies (Savage, 1986):

> *The great literary figures and painters visited them and recorded their experiences in their writings, or on film, or canvas. It is impossible to say now, how many people came to the area simply because it appealed to their vanity to be able to say that they had been to the same place as the Duke of Edinburgh, or Mark Twain* (Reggett, 1972, p. 65).

It has been said no one who ever visited the Pink and White terraces possessed the words to adequately describe their beauty (Stafford, 2000). Disaster struck in 1886 when Mount Tarawera erupted, destroying three Maori villages and obliterating the terraces. While this was a devastating blow for tourism, Rotorua's annual visitor arrivals were higher than pre-eruption levels within two years (Reggett, 1972). Part of the continued interest in Rotorua was the eruption aftermath and new volcanic craters, which remain attractions today and further evidence of Ahmed's (1991) suggestion of a dark side to tourism marketing. Following the eruption, increased interest was directed towards the therapeutic values of the remaining geothermal features (Stafford, 1986). Central government planned to develop Rotorua as "a hot water mineral spa on much the same lines as the famous European and English spas such as Vichy, Carlsbad, Bath and Harrogate" (Savage, 1980, p. 5).

Brown's (1985) analysis of the evolution of 19th century British resort development, noted the medical profession was responsible for much of the initial resort development impetus in that country. In New Zealand it was English balneologist, Dr Wohlmann, who in 1902, following a tour of European spas, convinced the New Zealand government of the value of the sanatorium concept (Stafford, 1988). Wohlmann on his role in the selection of Rotorua (Herbert, 1921, p. vii):

> *For such shortcomings as the New Zealand spas may posses…the author must bear, at any rate in part, the blame. He was appointed in 1902 as Government Balneologist to advise in the development of the health resorts of New Zealand… The wealth of material was so great, the choice so large, that it was a matter of extreme difficulty to choose a policy. Rightly or wrongly, the line he advised was to develop one spa, Rotorua, thoroughly, rather than attempt, with limited means, to develop half a hundred; and so the visitor may rest assured that at Rotorua, at any rate, he will find the balneological amenities to which he is accustomed nearer home.*

The attempt to make Rotorua the great spa of the southern hemisphere floundered in the depression years and World War Two (Rockel, 1980a), and by the 1950s the government had dispensed with the Rotorua sanatorium concept (Stafford, 1988). Rotorua District Council (RDC) (1992) attributed failure to a number of factors, including: long distance from markets, lengthy travel times, slow internal travel options within New Zealand, high plant maintenance costs in the acidic environment, too few people using the facilities, and a relatively strong medical (Sanatorium) focus that fell from vogue in the 1920s as modern medicinal practices expanded.

RELIANCE ON GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

No other town in New Zealand has a more complex legislative history than Rotorua (Rockel, 1980b). Although a town board was formed in 1880, the government's Minister of Lands made all important decisions. Under the Rotorua Town Bill of 1907, the town was to be managed by the tourist department, with Central government funding almost everything: "No other town in the country enjoyed such support from public funds" (Stafford, 1986, p. 36). It has been claimed Rotorua was the only town in the British Empire to have been completely controlled by central government (Braynart, 1980). Rotorua did not have an independent council, devoid of government representatives, until 1950 (Stafford 1988, Tapsell 1972). For over a century, the government assumed wide-ranging responsibilities in Rotorua, including the development and maintenance of: airports, drainage, water supply, roads, parks and gardens, railways, hotels, spas, electricity, visitor information, lake launches, and geothermal attractions.

New Zealand's establishment of a national tourism office (NTO) in 1901 was the first of its kind in the world (Steele, 1980), as was the development of a government operated visitor information network (VIN) (Coventry, 2001). The first VIN office was built in Rotorua in 1903. The NTO and VIN were the most important elements in the promotion of Rotorua during 20th century. For example, early NTO advertising in the UK urged travellers to visit Rotorua, the 'Sanatorium of the Earth!' (anon, 1903, p. viii). Local residents have had high expectations of the government's responsibilities in Rotorua, epitomised in this 1930s newspaper editorial flaying the Government for inefficiency in overseas promotion of Rotorua: "Rotorua citizens will not readily forget the gross neglect that this resort suffered under the previous minister" (Steele, 1980, p.5).

Rotorua's increasingly forced independence from the 1950s coincided with a steady decline in destination image. Signs of Rotorua's impending demise started during the 1960s. One particularly high profile incident occurred in 1965, when the president of the Travel Agents Association of New Zealand described Rotorua as the most squalid place in the country (Steele, 1980). Council had not helped the cause with the development of the town's rubbish tip on the lake foreshore, adjacent to the central business district, and the release of sewerage into Lake Rotorua after only partial treatment. Little wonder an overseas scientist gained national media coverage when he labelled the lake an 'unflushed toilet' in the 1970s. In 1978, two hundred people

attending a tourism conference reached consensus that Rotorua was losing its 'oomph' against other centres (Stafford, 1988).

A significant private sector response to the image problems in the 1970s was the formation of the Rotorua Promotion Society (RPS), which was to be funded by member subscriptions. After a decade of funding uncertainty the organisation succeeded in gaining an RDC grant of $65,000 per annum for three years. In return RDC imposed considerable responsibilities: overseas and domestic promotion, organisation of an annual Christmas carnival, a seven-day a week accommodation booking service, a show ticketing service, promotion of Rotorua as a conference centre, and general visitor enquiries.

The 1980s were a challenging decade for the New Zealand tourism industry in general, due to changing travel patterns. For example, from 1983 to 1988 domestic person nights decreased from 61.4 million to 53.1 million (NZTP, 1989/2), while international visitor arrivals doubled (Pearce 1990). Changes in international arrivals led to a greater diversification of the market. Prior to this, tourism in New Zealand had mostly focused on "passive sightseeing of a range of natural scenic resources" (Cushman, 1990, p. 13). The significant shift away from coach touring towards self-drive holidays opened up more destinations to travellers and shifted distribution control away from a small group of inbound tour operators, from which Rotorua relied on for a significant level of patronage. The change in travel patterns and decline in Rotorua's image led the RPS to commission a consultancy to provide situation analysis of Rotorua at this time. Key points were (PA Hotels and Tourism, 1987):

- Rotorua did not communicate itself well
- Local and national media were biased in their negative publicity
- Rotorua was developing into a town that was not particularly attractive
- Rotorua was stagnant, even going backwards, and living on its reputation
- The Mayor and councillors were not seen to be supporting tourism
- Poor destination marketing relative to other communities
- Rotorua needed professional help

Denial of the image problems remained strong in the mid-1980s among some civic leaders, perhaps best encapsulated in a quote by Mayor John Keaney: "It is in the interests of other centres to carry out a vendetta against Rotorua to put tourists off coming here" (Rotorua Daily Post, 13/8/86). Keaney was commenting on reports in the *Dominion* newspaper under the heading 'Death of a Tourist town', and related television news. At this time Rotorua's image problems were compounded by a number of significant issues, including:

- The third highest unemployment in New Zealand, at 13% (Stafford, 1988).
- National media coverage of scientific claims that Rotorua's famous geysers were dying Hindley (1989).
- The national recession brought Rotorua commercial property development to a standstill (Stafford, 1988).

- High rent from out of town landlords forced retail closures, leading to an abundance of empty shops in the central business district.
- A run down central business district due to a lack of council investment.

CRISIS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The year 1988 proved a watershed in Rotorua's destination life cycle. Frustrated by a lack of funding, industry in-fighting, and inability to reposition the tarnished image, the RPS board resigned en mass and abdicated its RDC agreement. Finally acknowledging a crisis, RDC sought comment from the public, with the majority of submissions recommending RDC needed to take control of tourism promotion. Council agreed to the establishment of a Promotion and Marketing Co-ordinator position, to which I was appointed in January 1989:

In response to Rotorua's serious economic crisis in the late 1980s, the Rotorua District Council initiated a series of strategic changes...to employ somebody 'solely' responsible for the tourism and business development of Rotorua (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2000, p. 28).

Although "the intensity of the moment during a crisis is clearly not the time to commence such planning" (Litvin & Alderson, 2003), this was the reality in Rotorua. The sense of crisis permeated discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, with no semblance of any recovery plan. As noted by Hall (1999), the need for coordination is felt most when there is a lack of it. One of the most obvious problems noted during my initial meetings with industry groups was the disparate nature of the tourism community. While the tourism industry might acknowledge the need for increased co-operation, implementation may often be problematic. There were strong feelings, vented angrily on occasions, that RPS promotions had only promoted the larger businesses, referred to as 'fat cats'. These larger operators explained to me that since they contributed the majority of funding, it was only fair to expect more promotional exposure. This is in keeping with Hall's suggestion to temper expectations of collaborative tourism planning due to the narrow focus of, and dominance by, the larger corporate entities, to the detriment of other community stakeholders. Suspicion reigned, and what was needed was an impartial marketing organisation. As an RDC employee, my initial priorities were to gain the trust of small businesses and to develop a cooperative approach towards destination promotion. The expectation of RDC senior management and elected officials was that the council investment should be seen as seeding funding for the development of a cooperative private-public fighting fund. A pooling of industry recourses would be required to increase the marketing budget, create a bigger bang in the marketplace, and demonstrate to council industry's commitment to new philosophy of 'cooperating to compete'. Importantly, the establishment of credibility with the industry was required, with early successes and demonstrated impartiality critical to maintain enthusiasm for the long term.

RECOVERY EFFORTS

The main aims of the recovery were to restore local community pride and tourism awareness, improve the tarnished image in key markets, and to stimulate new business investment in the district. Space prohibits a detailed discussion of the promotional activities. However, key early initiatives included:

- A destination-wide open day of tourism attractions. All tourism attractions provided free admission for local residents for a day. The initiative stimulated an ongoing admission structure for locals by attractions.
- Stronger links with the NTO by organising group sales missions to key offshore markets based around NTO participation at trade and consumer travel events.
- Alliances with other RTOs such as 'Top Half NZ', which linked Rotorua, Auckland and Northland in promotions targeting the Australian market.
- Joint newspaper advertising in the domestic market where each operator was able to obtain equal size exposure, with the proceeds subsidising the accompanying advertorial space.
- A printed destination visitor's guide, which instead of being contracted out to a publisher, was produced by the office. The incentive for advertisers was that the brochure would be used in all domestic and offshore promotions and used to service visitor enquires. This resulted in an annual surplus enabling a $100,000+ domestic television advertising campaign each year. This was tangible evidence of industry contributions to the RDC budget.
- The establishment of a commercial accommodation monitor to provide performance measures by which RDC could determine some sort of return on investment. It is difficult to quantify Rotorua's rise and fall and rise in terms of visitor statistics, since there were no reliable data for the Rotorua region prior to this. Since 1990, businesses and RDC have enjoyed month by month data, completed by the majority of accommodation houses. The monitor would later become a model for a nationwide commercial accommodation monitor used by all New Zealand RTOs.

Turning around a negative image does not occur overnight. With the benefit of hindsight, Wahab, Crampon and Rothfield's (1976, p. 92) reflections on negative tourism images were certainly appropriate in Rotorua's case: "It is easy to downgrade a product or allow it to deteriorate; but it is the devil's own work to upgrade a low-image product". It would be an understatement to suggest the task of repositioning Rotorua was recognised as representing a significant challenge. One senior airline official commented at the time: "If you can turn Rotorua around you will be able to write your own ticket!" Even though significant efforts had been made since 1989, Rotorua's negative image was still so serious in 1992 it had become a concern to national tourism interests, with the NTO undertaking an analysis of the local tourism industry and infrastructure:

> *The study is being carried out in the context of industry concern that*
> *Rotorua as one of New Zealand's major tourism hubs could be in decline*

and unless rejuvenated could lose its focus as a major tourism destination, either as part of the traditional touring circuit or as a regional tourism hub. Taupo has been suggested as a potential challenger to Rotorua's position as the central North Island main tourism hub (NZTB, 1992, p. 2).

With the increasing funding support of RDC, due to increasing industry cooperation, the sole position evolved into an RTO, Tourism Rotorua. Remaining responsible to RDC, the mission statement for the RTO clearly indicates the rationale for the council's ongoing tourism funding: *To enhance the economic base of Rotorua by the vigorous marketing of the district as a tourism destination* (www.rotoruanz.com). The RTO is a public-private partnership (PPO). The majority of funding is provided by the RDC, who also employ all RTO staff. For governance purposes the CEO reports directly to RDC. However, staff also work with an industry advisory board to develop marketing plans. Additionally, a series of portfolio groups was established to focus on key strategic issues. Portfolio group members are elected by industry to work with RTO staff.

In 1996, after seven years with Tourism Rotorua, I resigned from the RTO position to join academia. By this time the organisation comprised a marketing office with six staff and a budget of $1 million, a visitor centre with 11 staff and turnover in excess of $3 million, and the redeveloped Rotorua Convention Centre. Later in 1996, Tourism Rotorua released the district's first strategic plan for tourism. By 2005 the RTO budget had increased to $1.6 million.

In addition to the marketing activities, RDC's commitment to enhancing Rotorua's competitiveness has included a combination of infrastructure investments, including:

- A $30 million beautification of the central shopping district and lakefront, and redevelopment of the Government Gardens and Bathhouse
- Development of a new visitor information centre, Convention Centre and exhibition centre
- Commissioning of market feasibility studies that ultimately led to new private sector hotel developments

It is clear the council-led tourism initiatives since 1988 have been successful in improving the destination's image among trade and consumers. For example, by 1997 Tourism Rotorua became the first RTO to achieve a 'distinction' at the New Zealand Tourism Awards for winning the 'Best RTO' award on three occasions. The district has also been a recipient of New Zealand's beautiful city award in 1999, 2000 and 2002. In 2005 Air New Zealand announced plans to name one of its Boeing 747 aircraft 'Rotorua', and the district's starring role in the NTO's formative years was acknowledged when Tourism New Zealand staged it's 2001 centennial celebrations in Rotorua. In the first data from the NZ Regional Visitor Monitor (June, 2006), a new survey of international and domestic visitors managed by the Ministry of Tourism and Tourism New Zealand, 88% of respondents were interested in returning to Rotorua, and 78% indicated they

would recommend the destination to friends (Marshall, 2006). The national benchmarks were 85% and 69% respectively.

CONCLUSION

In the emerging literature on destination disaster management, there has been little written on management crises. Since there is a clear difference between what constitutes a disaster and what is a crisis (see Faulkner, 1999), the purpose of this paper has been to provide a cautionary tale of how one resort destination struggled through a self inflicted management crisis. Hall (2005) has suggested in tourism there exists a tendency to assume the unthinkable will not happen. This implies the future will continue to evolve as per the past, and it is suggested here that management's unpreparedness for a different future can lead to a crisis. While a management crisis can evolve over a much longer period than a sudden disastrous event, historical analyses are rare in the tourism literature. The investigation of aspects of Rotorua's tourism history provides an enhanced understanding of the evolution of New Zealand's first holiday destination, adding to the recent efforts of Ateljevic (1998), Ateljevic and Doorne (2000), Horn, Fairweather and Simmons (2000), and Pike (2003).

There have been three phases in Rotorua's competitiveness as a tourism destination. From the 1880s until at least the 1950s, Rotorua was managed by central government, with an unparalleled level of infrastructure development and destination promotion. A gradual withdrawal of government resources saw Rotorua neglect both destination promotion and city beautification between the 1950s and the 1980s; a period when Rotorua's destination image declined to such a point that local government, the public, tourism operators and travel trade intermediaries acknowledged that at crisis point had been reached. The period since 1988 has seen a gradual turnaround in destination competitiveness as a result of RDC's increased commitment to destination marketing, product development and cityscape rejuvenation. Rotorua did not seriously engage in destination marketing, at a level commensurate with economic value of tourism to the district, until the 1990s. RDC's philosophical and financial commitment led to a new spirit of cooperation among the private sector and between industry and local government. The turnaround has been such that few visitors to Rotorua today would be aware of the negative images of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This is a resort destination where tourism has been the dominant industry for over a century, and yet local tourism businesses were not able to organise an effective collaborative approach to destination marketing without local government intervention. Russell and Faulkner's (1999) analysis of the development of the Australian Gold Coast suggested while destinations do evolve through the life cycle in a similar pattern, the instigators of change could be quite different. While entrepreneurs have driven the Gold Coast's progress, in Rotorua, it has been the initiatives of central and local government that have shaped the destination's competitiveness most significantly.

The case of Rotorua is an example of Buhalis and Cooper's (1998) suggestion that one of the factors contributing to the decline of traditional destinations has been the past mistakes of planners, local government and businesses who failed to improve the

infrastructure and superstructure. In fairness however, the origins of tourism destination planning have only began relatively recently, starting in Europe during the 1960s (Mill & Morrison, 1986). Nevertheless, it is posited Rotorua's tourism stakeholders were the architects of the destination's demise, through an inability to adapt to a changing environment. An over-reliance on government resources contributed to a culture of 'marketing dependence', and a perspective that visitors would always flock to the area because it was the responsibility of central government to make this happen. DMOs must be prepared for a future of 'continuous discontinuous' change. This should be based on the view that while it is impossible to predict the exact nature of a future wildcard event, it is entirely feasible to expect that one will occur…one day. The literature already provides DMOs with a guide to preparing disaster recovery action (for a summary see Pike, 2004). What is also required is more research into the nature of management crises and what measures can be implemented to avoid problems that might retrospectively be labelled self-inflicted.

From the Rotorua experience I learnt first hand that tourism operators, who are in the main 'rugged individuals', are happy to be led during a crisis, but demand increasing involvement when progress is being made and the budget is increasing. The more operators are involved in destination marketing planning, the more they must be empowered in decision-making. However, the more they are empowered the more bureaucratic the process, and the slower decision-making becomes. This can in turn be a source of frustration for entrepreneurial RTO staff and the 'rugged individuals' alike. No matter how hard you might try, it is never possible to please all tourism operators all of the time! What is critical in establishing credibility for a fledgling DMO are early successes, and an obsession with ethical standards such as an impartial and holistic approach by staff.

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INDUSTRY IN THE CLASSROOM:
CHANGE THE TEACHER, CHANGE THE TEACHER TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings from an evaluative case study of the implementation of a Leisure and Tourism 14-19 teacher training programme in England. 2002 saw Tourism and Leisure enter the main stream school curriculum, at a time when vocational education is increasingly being recognised as having parity of esteem with traditional academic subjects. This first level of formal leisure and tourism studies is crucial to perceptions of the industry and the development of industry aware school leavers. Previously, Qualified Teacher Status was only available within the canon of traditional subjects. However, in 2005, Liverpool John Moores University offered a teacher training programme for Tourism graduates. The aim of this paper is to review this process by identifying the successes and barriers encountered. Evaluation of the programme has shown it to be successful in dismissing concerns about allowing vocational graduates to become teachers and in raising the status of the subject.

INTRODUCTION

The paper critically examines issues related to the teaching of Leisure and Tourism to pupils between the age of 14-16 in secondary schools in England and the initial training of teachers for this curriculum area. Traditionally, Leisure and Tourism was only offered in the post-compulsory sector, where the curriculum comprised of vocational and academic education. This mixed offer of courses was not available to pupils in secondary schools where the curriculum was heavily biased towards the traditional academic subjects.

In 2002, Leisure and Tourism was added to the mainstream school curriculum for the first time and an initial teacher training programme was introduced to encourage vocational graduates to deliver this subject to secondary pupils in England.

The key factors under examination are:

a) the success of the programme against the concerns raised by the teaching quality assurance body for England, the Office of Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Teacher Development Agency (TDA)
b) the impact of vocational trainee teachers, as opposed to academic, on the status of the subject within the school curriculum and how it is perceived in the educational setting.

From these two discussion points conclusions will be drawn with regard to how the subject of Leisure and Tourism and related industries are perceived in the educational world and how this will affect students' career choices.

THE NATIONAL BACKGROUND TO THIS INNOVATIVE INITIATIVE

In England, the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) provides the main entry route to teaching in the state secondary schools compulsory sector, which caters for pupils aged 11-16. Previously this teaching qualification was only available to graduates of mainstream curriculum subjects, such as English, Mathematics or History. However, in 2002, a change in entry qualifications has allowed graduates in vocational subjects access to the profession of teaching within the schools sector for the first time. This paper argues that the status of qualified teacher (QTS) affirms the acceptance of the subject of Leisure and Tourism beyond its teaching role. A further assertion is that the new teacher training programme has adopted teaching and learning techniques commonly associated with the post-compulsory sector, where vocational teaching has flourished and developed since the 1980s.

In England, the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) is the main qualification for assessing attainment at the end of compulsory schooling, allowing entry to post-compulsory education and/or employment. The introduction of vocational subjects, such as Leisure and Tourism, in the main stream school curriculum has only

been possible through the 2002 innovation, i.e. the introduction of vocational GCSEs (Donovan 2005). These qualifications together with the subjects in which they can be attained, this paper purports, play a critical role in shaping students', teachers' and employers' perceptions of the status of Leisure and Tourism and its corresponding industries. By allocating Leisure and Tourism a place alongside the traditional academic subjects of the main stream school curriculum, it is hoped that the perceived supremacy of academic over vocational subjects will be removed.

This paper begins by outlining the establishment of Leisure and Tourism as a subject that warrants equal status alongside other subjects that have traditionally been included in the mainstream school curriculum in England. There follows a contextualisation of vocational teaching developments and an examination of pertinent issues related to parity of esteem concerning vocational and academic subjects. Finally, we will review the teacher training programme in Leisure and Tourism offered at Liverpool John Moores University and evaluate its success against concerns identified by Ofsted (2004) and the TDA (2004).

TOURISM AS AN ACADEMIC STUDY

The development of Leisure and Tourism as an academic subject can be traced through the UK Higher Education (HE) curriculum for the last 30 years, and for the last 20 years 'as a distinct area of study' (Airey 2005:13) at undergraduate level. The merits of the acceptance of tourism as an academic subject are detailed by Airey and Tribe (2005) in *An International Handbook of Tourism Education* recording the pre-existing perception of the subject:

> '...tourism degrees are sometimes bundled (particularly by opportunist politicians) into a category of deep disdain under the heading Mickey Mouse Degrees. But ...new courses have often struggled for due recognition in the academy which is inherently conservative and traditional' (Airey and Tribe 2005:3)

Airey (2005:22) recounts that the Council for National Academic Awards (CNAA) reported in 1993 that 'tourism as a subject of study […] had *come of age*' by the early 1990s. Yet, it has taken a further 12 years for the Leisure and Tourism to appear on the schools national curriculum as a distinct subject. The subject's inclusion in mainstream compulsory education is, in part, due to the industry's increase in economic value rather than its academic standing. This brings into scrutiny the purpose of tourism education, which has been at the heart of Airey and Tribes work (2005), with Tribe (2005:30) suggesting 'a more philosophical approach is needed to consider the underlying aims, values and meanings in tourism education'. This would address Cooper and Westlake's (1989:70) claim that tourism lacks the 'antecedents of a mature field'. It is recognised that the early tourism education degrees were based in the vocational domain. But, as Airey points out, one of the big changes over the last decade or so has been the rapid development of the knowledge base (2005:21). Although he warns against

pure vocationalism, he suggests that as an *interdisciplinary* subject, 'tourism is in a position to offer much more than precise vocationalism. It can give depth and breadth of knowledge and insight as well as vocational relevance…' (2005:22).

The validity and academic standing of leisure and tourism degrees in England have been endorsed by educational quality inspectors, such as the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) Her Majesty's Inspectorate (1992), according to whom degrees are 'well designed programmes which are vocationally relevant, provide a good balance of theory and practice and offer the students adequate academic challenge' (cited in Airey 2005:19).

There is an acceptance of the subject in Higher Education, which could be enhanced further and secure its future, if more high achieving secondary pupils opted to study the subject from age 14. The catalyst for change in the main stream school curriculum may have been mainly economic vocational concerns, as discussed later, but this must not detract from the argument that the content of the GCSE and Advanced Level (A' Level) curriculum contains sufficient breadth and depth for pupils to develop an academic interest. This, however, is still in need of development. By acknowledging that 'progression into [HE] tourism education and its fit with feeder layers in educational systems is unchartered', Tribe (2005:36) addresses this shortfall.

The debate concerning the status of the subject as an academic discipline has been explored extensively by Tribe (1997; 2002) and Stuart (2002) among others. Leiper (2000) highlights its similarity to the discussion about the industry in that 'the debate about whether or not a discipline of tourism studies exists is similar to debates about whether or not the industry exists' (2000: 7). This absence of clear, definable boundaries of the industry and *tourism education* has contributed to the subject's lack of definition within the school curriculum, an important factor when establishing a distinct academic route into Tourism and Leisure. This is particularly important for tourism, rather than its co-partner leisure, which has acceptability through Physical Education teaching as have other vocational (or applied) subjects, such as Art and Information Communication Technology (ICT), which have been present in the curriculum in a previous guise. In contrast to Leisure and Tourism each of these subjects have differing, but well established and commonly agreed boundaries. The problems arising from blurred boundaries are discussed at length by Jeffries (2001) and Jefferson and Lickorish (1991), to name but a few.

The inability to define the industry is reflected in the way in which business sectors and lead bodies are related. Since 2001, each business sector has been placed under the direction of one of twenty-five lead bodies, which oversee training and skills development and are in the process of auditing and mobilising training needs for their own areas. However, there are anomalies, which create problems for stakeholders addressing issues within the Leisure and Tourism industry. For example, the UK Sector Skills Lead Body, People 1st, has identified fourteen different sectors. Yet, the museum sector comes under a different lead body.

It is this paper's proposition that the inclusion of Leisure and Tourism in the mainstream schools curriculum and the introduction of initial training for vocational teachers in higher education has been a step-change. For, a subject taught by *mainstream subject teachers* signifies its acceptability not only within the education sector, but also within the wider community and society as a whole. It may thus be considered one of the last pieces in a jigsaw of acceptability for Leisure and Tourism, which has emerged through a number of initiatives (1980s vocational qualifications develop in post-compulsory education; 1999 the first national tourism strategy 'Tomorrow's Tourism' DCMS; 1990s general acceptance in Higher Education (CNAA); 2002 GCSE in compulsory mainstream curriculum; 2002 subject teachers trained). In the light of these developments the entry of the subject to the mainstream school curriculum is not only a defining moment for tourism education but a real coming of age.

TOURISM'S STATUS IN INDUSTRY

People 1st, the national lead body for Hospitality, Leisure, Travel and Tourism sectors, has endeavoured to show the economic value of the industry, claiming employment in the region of nine million people across the UK, with £135 billion turnover, representing 180,000 establishments in the UK, with an economic value comparative in size and worth to the UK construction industry (People 1st 2004). However, the leisure and tourism industry in the UK is fraught with problems of recruitment, retention and quality of personnel. People 1st (2006) have recorded: 30% turnover amongst staff; fewer than 17% of managers qualified; 27,900 employers reporting hard to fill vacancies; 70% of posts recruited to replace existing staff. Baum (1995) writes that labour markets can differ from culture to culture and discusses the nature of the tourism and hospitality labour markets, including the concept of a weak labour market which can be found in the UK. He acknowledges that in the UK recruitment issues are compounded by inherited prejudices of status and image against working in service industries. This has translated into similar prejudices over studying the subject. It is not unreasonable for the industry stakeholders, including the UK Government, to look towards the education sector for responses to these problems.

Earlier, this paper explained that the main entry qualification to post-compulsory education and work in England is the GCSE taken (normally) at age 16. This set of GCSE qualifications also facilitates access to many A' Level courses and thus influences young people in their decisions regarding their short, medium and long term career choices and options. The choices of which GCSE subjects to study are made at age 14. If a subject is not offered at GCSE or if young people do not select the subject, for whatever reasons, possible entry to that industry by school leavers or continued study of that subject at higher level is limited. It is readily accepted in the UK that the study of vocational subjects is lower in status than that of academic subjects (Hodgson and Spours 2003; Donovan 2005). Research undertaken by Springboard UK (2000) established that young people are heavily influenced in their choices of career by parental and teacher perceptions of the industry. Furthermore, views of the public could be said to be similar to those of academia in that they are 'inherently conservative and traditional' (Tribe and

Airey 2005:3). It is therefore likely that the absence of the subject within the curriculum has resulted in a lack of real understanding of the industry by young people, their parents and teachers. This was set to change in 2002 by the inclusion of Leisure and Tourism GCSE into the national schools mainstream curriculum.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

Since the 1980s, the teaching of Leisure and Tourism has flourished in the post-compulsory sector, mainly as a craft or skills-based curriculum within well established training programmes for catering, hospitality, travel agency and tour operations qualifications. These were complemented by business orientated qualifications 'driven by the Manpower Services Commission and the Employment Department rather than the Department of Education and Science' (Hodgson and Spours 2003:11). A range of broader pre-vocational qualifications gained in popularity in the 1980s, which allowed the development of innovative teaching. However, extensive growth occurred within the context of the 'era of new vocationalism' (ibid). A formalisation of the myriad of vocational qualifications took place with the establishment of the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in 1986; in response to '…a strong call from a mixture of academics and politicians for a more applied and vocationally relevant curriculum for all learners' (ibid). This saw vocational qualifications redrafted into work-related competence based qualifications at differing levels, the so-called National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) introduced in the late 1980s and 1990s. This process confirmed the development of a dual-track qualifications system, consisting of a distinctly vocational route and traditional academic study, which had the impact of reinforcing the divide between vocationalism and academic study. It manifested itself in the type of institutions which offered vocational training within the post-compulsory or further education (FE) sector rather than schools where the curriculum reflected a strong bias towards traditional, academic subjects.

The middle ground of a hybrid qualification, the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) came about following the publication of the White Paper *Education and Training for 21st Century* (DES/ED/WO) in 1991. According to Hodgson and Spours it 'took some design features of NVQs, but was aimed at 16-19 year olds in full time education, many of whom could not or did not want to take A' Levels' (2005:14). For example, unlike NVQ, GNVQ programmes were concerned with an industry, i.e. Tourism and Leisure, rather than a specific job, i.e. Hotel Reception. The National Qualifications Framework, introduced in 1991, placed all qualifications within one framework, incorporating levels ranging from GCSEs to degrees as well as accommodating vocational and academic programmes. This inclusive approach indicated parity of types of qualification and allowed for legitimate comparisons (Spours 2000). It was therefore no surprise that GNVQs were embraced vigorously by the post-compulsory FE sector.

Hodgson and Spours comment that this period of vocational education in the FE sector is recognised as, 'a period of intense local innovation and curriculum development

[…] the most experimental period for curriculum and qualifications redevelopment of the last twenty-five years' (2005:12). This is of significant relevance to the development of the initial teacher training programme under review, particularly as the teaching of vocational subjects in this context is distinct from other contexts.

> '*The use of work-related materials, direct experience and examples on programmes are central to vocational courses…This type of staff approach, which brings other working environments closer to learners, is very different in nature*' (Donovan 2005:46)

This paper argues that the teaching styles and strategies developed in the context of GNVQs (and their subsequent manifestations, the Advanced Vocational Certificate of Education (ACVE)), mainly in the post compulsory sector and in a small minority of schools, has allowed the development of a different type of teacher - a teacher who employs a set of teaching strategies not utilised in school teaching and, previously, not encompassed within English teacher training.

With vocational education firmly based in the post-compulsory sector an already existing divide was reinforced in the English education system by the introduction of these new qualifications. The reality for the majority of students in England was that high achievers remained in schools and their extensions, '6th Form Colleges', to obtain academic qualifications, whilst 'lower achievers' attended FE Colleges. Inevitably, this reinforced the link between low achievement and vocational education, which still exists.

The academic/vocational divide came under review in a variety of critical reports and commentaries on NVQs and GNVQs (Beaumont 1995; Capey 1996; Hyland 1994; Smithers 1993). Eventually, Sir Ron Dearing produced a report in 1996, entitled *Dearing Review of Qualifications 16-19-year-olds*, which among many other recommendations suggested parity of esteem between vocational and academic qualifications and, when embraced by the new Labour Government of 1997, made the first reference to 14-19 curriculum. This opened the possibility of vocational education entering the mainstream school curriculum. The Government's White Paper, *Schools: Achieving Success* (DfES 2001) and the subsequent Green Paper, *14-19 Education: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards* (DfES 2002) 'both marked the official recognition of the 14-19 phase' (Hodgson and Spours 2005:20), which has as a central tenet an all encompassing academic and vocational curriculum. In recent years, the issue of parity between academic and vocational have repeatedly received government backing from Education Ministers Estelle Morris (2002) and David Millerband (2004). However, the major impact from the White Paper of 2001 was the entry of new vocational qualifications to the mainstream school curriculum, suggesting the merging of the teaching phases of compulsory (age 4-16) and post-compulsory education (age16+) into a *14-19 curriculum*, a new phenomenon in English education. The idea of the new phase of teaching has now been firmly established through the report from the *Working Group on 14-19 Reform* (DfES 2003), followed by the 2005 White Paper *14-19 Education and Skills*.

GCSE TOURISM ENTERS MAINSTEAM SCHOOLS CURRICULUM

Some schools embraced the chance to offer vocational GCSEs, mobilising existing teaching staff to deliver the new programmes. However, the teachers already in schools were not vocational experts, unless by chance of a previous occupation. They were teachers of Geography, Modern Languages, Physical Education or other subjects, who had space on their timetable, and were in possession of a teaching qualification for secondary schools. Unsurprisingly, the delivery of vocational subjects was poor.

Ofsted, the English teaching quality assurance body, undertook two reviews of the newly implemented vocational GCSE programmes in schools entitled *Developing New Vocational Pathways: Interim and Final Report on the introduction of new GCSEs* (2003; 2004). Both reports criticised a number of aspects of the teaching of vocational education in schools. The Interim Report expressed concern in relation to the strategic implementation, namely 'the perception among several schools that the new GCSEs should be targeted at low-attaining pupils is disappointing. Achieving parity of esteem is likely to prove elusive if this perception persists.' (Ofsted 2003:7). This report also highlighted the issue that the teachers in schools were experiencing difficulty with unfamiliar forms of vocational assessment:

> '*Many teachers are unsure about assessment requirements and lack confidence in benchmarking pupils' portfolio work. There is insufficient training in and guidance on assessment*' (Ofsted 2003:5).

The final report in 2004 gave a clear indication of areas of improvement in delivering vocational education in schools:

- 'The need to train new teachers who are qualified and experienced in vocational subjects;' (2004:6)
- 'Often there are few practical opportunities to visit vocational settings or engage in simulation and role play, so that knowledge of customer care is poor and there is very little understanding.' (2004:9)

Of Leisure and Tourism GCSE the report notes that:

- 'Courses were taken by small numbers of mainly low attaining pupils…Frequently, the teachers, parents and the pupils see the subject as more suitable for non-academic pupils, and fewer higher attainers take it up. Standards of achievement and teacher expectation range from average to low.' (2004:19)
- 'The quality of teaching and learning varies greatly from school to school but is weaker overall than in other new GCSE subjects: in over half of the lessons it is unsatisfactory or poor. The majority of teachers have little or no experience of teaching leisure and tourism.' (2004:20)
- 'Teaching methods in many schools are not appropriate to a vocational course or the ability range of the pupils….Teacher's basic insecurity in vocational aspects also results in the limited use of role play and simulation.' (2004:21)

- 'Most teachers lack first hand and up-to-date experience of the leisure and tourism industries and cannot provide practical examples to enliven teaching, or good, relevant resources. Additionally, they often have few links, if any, with local employers or organisations that can support practical work- related experiences. In the majority of schools, leisure and tourism is being taught as an academic subject with over-reliance placed on secondary sources such as textbooks. The practical and vocational elements are weak'. (2004:20)

Schools who adopted Tourism and Leisure GSCE when it became available in 2002 later stopped offering the subject, when results did not appear to be giving an advantage in qualification league tables, a prime concern in secondary education in England. The criticism does not seem to be abating. Smithers (2005) highlights that 'countless numbers of proficient students were steering clear of vocational courses' and 'numerous teachers still regard vocational courses as second rate and countless pupils get the same idea'. This inevitably raises the issue of pupil voice and the opportunity of making informed decisions. In addition the recognition by Ofsted, that the teaching of all vocational subjects was below that of traditional subjects, reinforced the need to train vocational qualified teachers.

In England, teacher training in the post-compulsory sector was voluntary until the early 2000s. Primarily, people entered the post compulsory sector with skills acquired in industry, not necessarily at degree level, and who honed their teaching abilities through alternative teacher training programmes which complemented their industrial knowledge. For the Leisure and Tourism industry this meant that the subject was firmly based in the vocational area and taught by industry knowledgeable people, but not school qualified teachers. Teacher training for the compulsory school sector, on the other hand, has been regulated since the 1970s for a limited number of subjects, adding entry by degree qualification in the late 1990s.

In 2002, the Teacher Development Agency (TDA) allowed an expansion of school teacher training to vocational subjects including Leisure and Tourism in 2002. These new programmes were encouraged to be innovative and experimental. However, the introduction of the National Curriculum in 1980s imposed a limitation on the number of subjects to be taught within schools in England, which compounded the narrowness of the mainstream curriculum and related teacher training programmes, consequently proving a disadvantage when vocational education entered the school curriculum (Hodgson and Spours 2005).

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) Centre for Secondary and Vocational Teacher Training embraced the challenge of the vocational/applied teacher training. The first subject to be offered was Applied Art in 2003, followed by Applied ICT in 2004 and Leisure and Tourism and Engineering in 2005. The earlier subjects drew on existing teacher training staff, whilst the same approach was not possible with Leisure and Tourism, as there were no subject specific teacher trainers in this curriculum area, a legacy of the subject never having been taught as part of the mainstream school curriculum in England. It is at this point that real innovation had to take place.

The managers at LJMU accepted that a different approach needed to be adopted to teacher training in this subject area, namely that of using subject specialists with post-compulsory teaching experience rather than trainers who were qualified school teachers. This was simplified for the University, as the Centre for Tourism, Consumer and Food Studies sat alongside the Centre for Secondary and Vocational Education within the Faculty of Education, Community and Leisure. It also contained an experienced post-compulsory tourism lecturer. The need for teacher training had been acknowledged in previous years by the tourism staff, as this Centre had provided support for local teachers to meet the demands placed upon them by the recent changes in the school curriculum. This support had meant participating in a regional project, entitled Merseyside Aim Higher, with the aim of encouraging and raising achievement among school pupils. This involved the Leisure and Tourism Syndicate offering *Master Classes* in Tourism Studies and facilitated access to Undergraduate modules along with developing a bespoke tourism education web site with dedicated materials to enhance the school teachers' subject knowledge.

The *LJMU PGCE Leisure and Tourism (14-19 Curriculum)* programme commenced in September 2005. It was set within an established framework of teacher training at the University, but drew on the expertise of university tourism staff plus an experienced qualified practising school teacher who in developing the vocational curriculum had worked extensively with the Specialist Schools Trust, a body which had been proactive in developing vocational education in schools, incorporating tourism as part of the business enterprise stream.

The Leisure and Tourism teacher training programme had entry requirements of a relevant degree and industrial experience. The target cohort of 11 was exceeded as the programme attracted people from industry who previously had been excluded from teacher training due to the status of their degree subject within the Initial Teacher training (ITT) quality framework. The programme at the point of review was implemented for one academic year, having been inspected by Ofsted twice during that year.

METHODOLGY

The process of evaluating the programme can be described as 'an intensive examination of a single case' (Bryman 2001:51), giving depth of knowledge of a complex environment which has many layers of influence and impact both within education and the Leisure and Tourism industry. A case study approach was selected, as it can be 'used to allow a fine tuned exploration of complex sets of interrelationships' (Edwards and Talbot 1994:44). A mix of methods was deemed appropriate to generate the research evidence. The primary means of establishing a picture of the intervention under scrutiny was by way of qualitative analysis, taking account of the differing realities of the participants, i.e. the trainees and the stakeholders in the degree programme, who represented the industry, government, University, schools and subject mentors (the teachers supporting the trainees within each school).

With the aim of enhancing the validity of findings resulting from the evaluation of the first year of the PGCE programme, triangulation by method and perspectives was employed. As stated by Descombe, it can provide 'social researchers with a means for assessing the quality of data by coming at the same data from different angle' (2002:104). The data generated by this study comprised of biometric cohort data and qualitative questionnaire responses from subject mentors and trainees. Further support was provided by means of content analysis of official documents and reports by Ofsted and the TDA, which was based on the belief that 'text is held to be evidence of past realities or future plans' (Cortazzi 2002:112). The sources of data represented both official and practitioner perspectives against which the teaching programme's successes and failings could be judged. In view of the innovative nature of the programme it was essential that the voices of those involved in its implementation were considered by taking into account 'the political, economic and social context' (Dey 1993:32) within which they were located.

The evaluation was developed in three stages:

1. Content analysis of discussion documents and government reports (Ofsted;TDA), to form a metric against which data can be evaluated
2. Analysis of cohort data
3. Qualitative questionnaire responses from teacher trainees and subject mentors

Participation in this study was voluntary and based on informed consent. All participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality of data. The programme cohort consisted of 15 trainee teachers, who were placed in 15 schools and 10 post-compulsory colleges over one year. Each trainee experienced at least 2 school and 1 post-compulsory setting. The duration of the programme was from September 2005 to July 2006. Questionnaires were completed in July 2006, either at the schools or whilst visiting the University, which resulted in an excellent response rate by subject mentors (66%) and teacher trainees (100%). The questionnaires completed by the schools sector only were used to establish an overview of the ethos of vocational teaching within the schools by capturing data on:

- The type of learners selecting tourism as an area of study
- How the schools encouraged adoption of vocational subjects
- The vocational expertise of current teaching staff
- The extent to which the teacher training programme had benefited the delivery of the subject within the school

The evaluation required the establishment of criteria against which to assess the success of this innovative curriculum programme. This was achieved through interrogation of the concerns and issues raised by the TDA (2004) and Ofsted (2003 and 2004), all of which will have to be addressed by the university:

- **Trainees' employment prospects on completion of the course**

Will there be jobs available in view of the fact that some schools had withdrawn from delivery of the GSCE and others had not adopted the subject?

- **Quality and composition of University teaching teams**
  Will non-qualified teachers be allowed in teams? Will experts be brought in to teach specific activities?
- **Maintaining the quality of the subject mentor training workforce**
- **Developing extra subject knowledge**
  What are trainees' needs in terms of additional subject knowledge?
- **Barriers to change**
  This refers to both schools' and parents' perceptions and acceptance of the vocational curriculum.
- **Development of teacher trainees' key skills**
  What key skills do trainees need to develop in view of themselves being a product of the system that attracted lower ability students?
- **Change of the teaching role**
  Prepare trainees for teaching across compulsory and post-compulsory phases, in different establishments and different teacher training systems.
  (TDA 2004)

Further concerns were generated by the Ofsted reports (2003 & 2004) on the teaching of the subjects once introduced into the schools curriculum:

- Will trainees have opportunities to teach across the full age and ability range, including high ability programmes?
- Teaching and learning – will trainees have opportunities to develop an appropriate range of teaching and assessment strategies?
- Will trainees learn good practice in the schools and colleges?
- Will trainees have access to good resources both 'for' and about 'teaching' vocational subject?

FINDINGS

Table 1. Cohort Analysis

Gender Male: 7	*Gender: Female: 8*	*Average age: 26*	*Age range: 22-44*
First Degree subject on entry	***Occupation immediately before entry***	***Additional subject taught in schools by trainees***	***Languages Spoken***
Business Studies	Less than 50% student	ICT	Shona (African dialect)
History	Heritage Attraction Management	Sport	Italian
Hospitality Management	Destination Development	French	Spanish
Hotel and Tourism Management	Tour Operations	Spanish	Gaelic
Hotel and Catering Management	Hotel Management	Geography	French
Geography with Leisure	Outdoor Pursuits Instructor	Pastoral, Social, Cultural Studies	German
Leisure Sports Management	Youth Worker	Business	
Leisure and Tourism		Outdoor Pursuits	
Leisure Management			
Sport and Leisure			
Tourism Management			

Notes: Each column is independent; table does not correlate across columns

Additional findings:
- One student entered with a Masters Level Degree in Management
- GCSE English and Mathematics grades were comparable to other subject cohorts

- The trainee teachers had primarily been through vocational education, themselves, 9 have GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism, 6 A' Levels (or overseas equivalent) qualifications.
- The trainees had a great many additional industrial skills e.g. specialist ICT knowledge, experience of marketing, operational management, human resource management and staff training.

Table 2. The Subject Mentors Questionnaire data

Question	Yes	No
Are existing teaching staff experienced in the Leisure and Tourism industry?	4	6
Did the teacher training course enhance the schools provision?	9	1
Does the school encourage all pupils to consider vocational courses at age 14?	7	2
Does the teaching schedule allow integration of vocational subjects with traditional subjects?	4	
Does the teaching schedule offer vocational subjects as a separate curriculum?	8	
Does the teaching schedule offer a package of vocational choices?	1	
There is no scheduling difference between vocational and traditional pathways	1	

Notes: Some schools offered more than one qualification

Additional finding:

A number of the subject mentors added notes to indicate that although the pupils of all levels were offered the opportunity to take vocational qualifications, the high achievers tended not to select the subjects.

Table 3. Average Ability of Pupils studying Leisure and Tourism

Question	High Achievers	Middle Achievers	Low Achievers
What is the average ability of learners taking Tourism and Leisure in compulsory education (14-16)	0	9	4

Notes: grouping used standard school attainment ranges

Additional findings:

Within the subject mentor questionnaire, the opportunity was given to express if the trainees teachers had enhanced the school provision. A variety of answers were given. The responses below are indicative:

- 'W*ith specific industrial/vocational knowledge and contacts …student/school benefited tremendously'*
- '*Trainee had a mass of experience in industry plus resources which kept the interest and motivation of the students'*
- '*Relevant recent experience gives new input and enthusiasm in the subject'*

The mentors acknowledged both the difference in teaching style and the increase in status for the subject within the school environment, as the following quotes showed:

- '*Up to date knowledge, real skills from the world of work, helped raise the profile'* [of the subject in the school]
- '*…up-to-date working knowledge of vocational elements, different approach to course'*

The trainees expressed in their questionnaires their enjoyment of the FE sector and their surprise at how professionally both the curriculum and teaching appeared. They experienced difficulty in adapting to the differing styles of teaching within the University from the two aspects of the course, the Education Studies and the Vocational Studies. All trainee teachers successfully completed the course. Of the 12 trainee teachers that wished to immediately enter the teaching profession, 11 obtained full-time teaching posts either before or within 2 weeks of the course ending. The majority of trainees were employed by schools participating in their training. Part-time work was obtained by the final trainee. Other schools in the area contacted the University seeking trainees.

CONCLUSION

The TDA and Ofsted concerns listed previously fell broadly into three areas:
1. The ability of the University to provide quality teacher training in the subject
2. The calibre of the trainees
3. The quality of the school provision and support.

When considering the University provision the TDA had highlighted the absence of school teacher trainers within the Universities with subject expertise. Ofsted's report of the LJMU programme following two inspection visits in the first year gave positive feedback, confirming that the management of the programme within the Centre for Secondary and Vocation Education was very good and stating that 'the team of vocational tutors works well to secure clear differentiation from existing secondary subject provision' (Ofsted 2006:1). This meets the clear need for vocational rather than teacher training expertise. Indeed, 'Leisure and Tourism draws upon the substantial vocational knowledge base and experience available within the faculty, including its resources, undergraduate courses, links with the Further Education sector and industry, and the extensive vocational expertise of the staff' (Ofsted 2006:1). The decision of the University management to use non-school qualified teaching staff within the subject area of Leisure and Tourism is an endorsement of its parity of esteem with other traditional programmes offered within the faculty.

This major departure from the norm for Qualified Teacher Status programmes had caused considerable concern to some other teacher trainers within the University. However, the pilot year established a recognition and acceptance of *alternative* expertise for members outside of the teacher training team, and consequently, the University has benefited from a collaboration of expertise which would not have happened without the introduction of vocational teacher training.

Ofsted agreed that the much needed representation of industry has taken place within the teacher training programme. The trainees entered the programme with a rich background from industry which, when combined with the close relationship the Centre for Tourism, Consumer and Food Studies had with industry, resulted in enhanced benefits to the course. This was clearly recognised by Ofsted when they state in their report:

> *'... leisure and tourism courses have significant and relevant industrial and commercial experience which is exploited successfully during the training year' and 'mature trainees identify the value that is placed on their business/industrial experience when applying for vocational courses'.* (Ofsted 2006:2)

University provision has proved successful countering all TDA (2004) concerns. The changing nature of the teaching role has also been under scrutiny, which showed that the teaching across compulsory and post-compulsory phases has not been an issue for the trainees, who enjoyed the experience. Subsequently, three of them chose to complete their teaching practice in the FE sector.

The experience of the teaching team represented both phases and thus provided valuable and relevant insights, which helped linking the two areas without experiencing major problems. The absence of developed subject mentoring in FE was countered by close supervision of the placements for the 5 weeks duration, facilitated by the Tourism team through existing collaborations. The trainees and wider teacher training community expressed surprise at the professional working practices in the FE sector, compared with schools, which, again, is indicative of inherent traditional values held against the sector.

The vocational teacher training provided by the Tourism and Leisure programme was based upon the experience of the vocational teacher trainers, who by their background had been involved in the innovative vocational developments of the 1980s and 1990s. The trainees found the contrast between this approach and the more formal Education Studies approach within their programme difficult to deal with. Much emphasis was placed within the tourism teacher training on the learning styles of the pupils undertaking the Leisure and Tourism courses, drawing on research concerned with student learning style preferences in higher education programmes, (Lashley 1999, 2001; Lashley and Shaw 2002; Lashley and Lee Ross 2003). Similar to the findings of the LJMU project the research confirmed that, in the main, students studying Leisure and Tourism are "Activist Learners" (Honey and Mumford 1986). Therefore, in contrast to other initial teacher training programmes within the faculty, teaching and learning

strategies employed focused on methods particularly appropriate for this type of learner. The trainee teachers commented upon their own learning styles mirroring those of the pupils with a focus on kinaesthetic approaches.

A second area of concern was the calibre of the trainees entering the programme, which proved not to differ from other teacher training programmes within LJMU. Their GCSE English and Mathematics results were comparable with trainees from the other, non-vocational subject programmes. Initial audits of both the trainees' language skills and subject knowledge allowed teacher training staff to develop the programme to meet the individual and subject specific needs of the trainees they would be teaching. Concerns about placements in both education sectors (compulsory and post-compulsory), the support of their second subjects and subsequent job opportunities were unfounded. The number of schools and colleges able to offer a good quality teaching experience with an appropriate range and variety of teaching experiences exceeded demand in the first year, as has the number of trainees gaining employment. All trainees who expressed a wish to enter employment immediately, have secured posts both across the North West of England and further afield, with many being employed by partnership schools.

Another major concern was that trainee teachers would be unable to experience teaching a full ability range, if pupils taking the qualifications are limited to middle to low achievers as the evidence of this study has indicated. All the schools involved in this study failed to attract high achievers to their courses. Furthermore, Ofsted found 'trainees have opportunities to teach applied GCSE and AVCE courses across the full age and ability range' (Ofsted 2006:4). However, this issue was addressed successfully by providing trainees with opportunities to teach alternative subjects, such as Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), which is compulsory for all pupils. This strategy also enabled them to gain the prescribed numbers of hours during teaching practice. Ofsted (2006:6) commented favourably on this arrangement, describing it as a 'sensible decision given the likelihood that they will not be able to exclusively specialise in Leisure and Tourism in the first teaching posts'.

The final concern for both Ofsted and the TDA was the quality of school experience the trainees would receive. Would the schools provide a good environment for learning, when so many had been criticised for poor teaching and lack of good resources. It was decided that the University would use a *spirit of support* with the schools, which included the organisation of shared events, such as training days based in industry locations for both subject mentors and trainees to increase their industry knowledge. Outside agencies that provide teaching materials welcomed the chance to address larger groups of teachers when invited to speak to both trainees and subject mentors. This has generated a climate of collaboration within which sharing of materials is encouraged and a network of Leisure and Tourism teachers has been developed, which has been welcomed by all parties involved. Taking cognisance of the inherent issue of relevant subject knowledge, those mentors who had not previously worked with trainees and therefore lacked confidence were given extra support in developing their observation and assessment skills. This was highly appreciated and their quotes, included earlier, endorse the benefit they derived from of the support provided for them by the University.

Initial teacher training aside, a larger debate is currently taking place in England, which centres on issues related to assessment and qualifications. One of the central questions asked is whether the A' Level as the 'gold standard' should be maintained and whether there is a need for a broader curriculum within schools. The *Tomlinson Report on 14-19 Curriculum and Qualifications Reform* (2004) and the Government's subsequent response, the White Paper: *14-19 Learning and Skills* (DfES 2005), have been at the heart of the national debate about the future of English education. For example, the Nuffield Review (2005:7) laments the lack of impact of the White Paper on participation rates and attainment targets as a result of not addressing the historical and systemic problems of English education and training.

The status of subjects such as Leisure and Tourism within schools will be crucial to the construction of a strong vocational route. According to Jones (2004:47) 'the whole system still needs to tackle head-on the cultural issue of vocational education being seen to be 'just for low achievers'. This critical evaluation accepts that one successful initiative cannot change the inherent perception problems of the industry within English society. However this paper would argue that unless the subject is present within the mainstream curriculum the status quo will remain.

The step change is not just offering a new subject and qualification within the mainstream school curriculum, but is also training appropriately qualified teachers. It is highly likely that the perceptions of parents and pupils will be influenced by teachers who can defend a position of authoritative knowledge in relation to the subjects they teach. We therefore contend that the value of the status of qualified teacher does provide an acceptance of the subject of Leisure and Tourism beyond its teaching role. Supporting evidence for this position can be found in the subject mentors' comments presented in this paper. However, more conclusive evidence will remain limited until higher achieving pupils choose to study the subject and (we hope) enter the industry. It is our belief that this programme has gone some way to removing some of the prejudices traditionally held in relation to vocational education.

Stuart (2002) has found that for 'tourism' academics, where tourism education has been challenged and become established, a 'community' was playing a critical role. In this sense Becher (1994:24 cited by Stuart 2002:10) suggests that 'being a member of a disciplinary community involves a sense of identity and personal commitment', which comes from having studied and/or worked in the discipline. Although only in its infancy, this programme has left a legacy, which consists not solely of one cohort of trained Leisure and Tourism teachers, but of an established 'community' of tourism teachers, who have a sense of identity to both their teaching and the industry with every intention of taking the subject, and its related industry, forward.

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LUXURY HOTEL BRANDING THROUGH EVENT SPONSORSHIP - A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes a conceptual model of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) for luxury hotels through event sponsor. Such model intends to help managers to understand how brand communities help to develop brand loyalty, attachment and engagement as elements within brand resonance can help brand managers choose event sponsorship as a method to strengthen equity and customer relationships in the luxury hotel segment.

KEYWORDS: *Customer-based brand equity (CBBE); Luxury hotels; Brand loyalty; Brand communities.*

INTRODUCTION

As luxury consumers develop more demanding expectations and as more aspects of the luxury hotel industry become expected benefits rather than distinguishing perks, brand managers must find unique ways to fortify brand equity while forging long-term relationships with clients. Understanding how brand communities help to develop brand loyalty, attachment and engagement as elements within brand resonance can help brand managers choose event sponsorship as a method to strengthen equity and customer relationships in the luxury hotel segment. This study proposes a conceptual model of customer-based brand equity (CBBE) for luxury hotels through event sponsor. Such model intends to help managers to understand how branding concepts can work together to achieve these goals. The conceptual model is illustrated as follows.
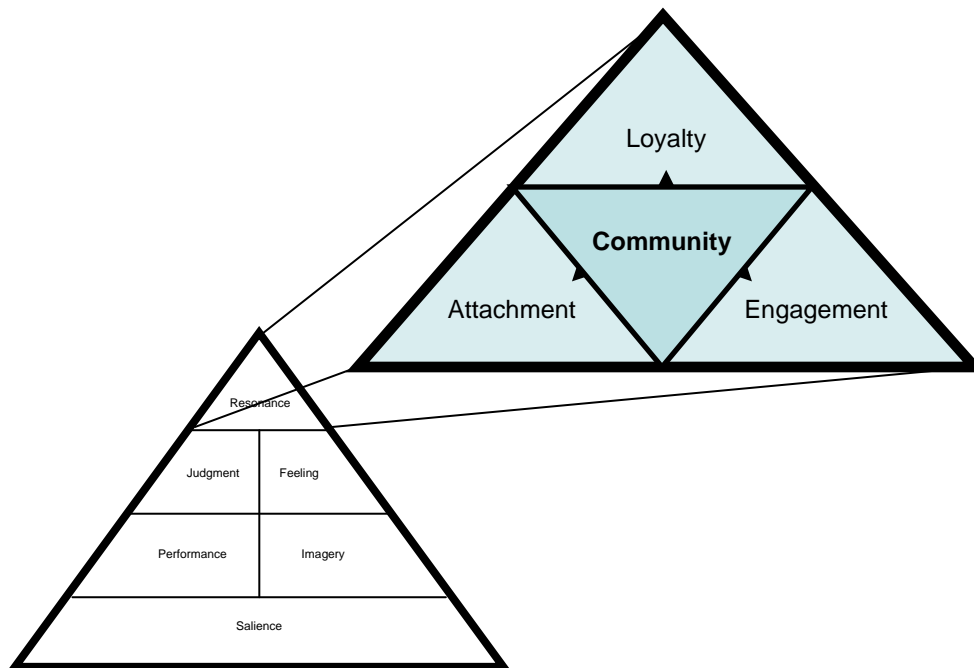
Figure 1. A conceptual model of customer-based brand equity (CBBE)

Throughout the world, companies continue to strive for increased value, profits, market share and customer satisfaction (Thompson & Stegemann, 2005) and to "generate goodwill for the brand over time" (Quester & Farrelly, 1998, p. 539), and luxury hotel companies are no exception. Within the luxury hotel segment, Go, Choi and Chan (1996) stated that "brands are particularly important in establishing differentiation of hotel products. As hotel corporations attempt to capture global market share they must create brand equity by capitalizing on established reputations and carrying over the positive image of brand names from country to country" (pp. 61-62).

To better understand the role of event sponsorship in CBBE, it is important to understand how companies currently view and use event sponsorship. Scholars have identified the following as some of the most common reasons that companies utilize event sponsorship (Keller, 2003, pp. 317-318; Walliser, 2003; Tripodi, 2001; O'Hagan & Harvey, 2000; Gwinner & Eaton, 1999; Gwinner, 1997):

- To increase brand awareness
- To create, revamp, or reinforce consumer perceptions of key brand image associations
- To enhance corporate image dimensions
- To create experiences
- To evoke feelings
- To entertain key clients or reward key employees
- To permit merchandising or promotional opportunities

Event sponsorship has steadily grown in importance in the marketing mix, advancing to a more strategic function from merely a tactic (Fahy, Farrelly, and Quester, 2004). Fahy, Farrelly, and Quester (2004) stated that the advantages of event sponsorship include the element of exclusivity between the sponsor and the event and the likelihood of a long-term relationship between the sponsor organization and the event organization. However, neither of these advantages considers the consumer, which is the most important element in CBBE. What is notable about the competitive advantages they discussed is that the possibility of a long-term relationship could also apply to the relationship between the sponsor organization and the consumer. Thus, it would make sense that sponsoring an event could help a company with its more long-term strategic goal of building brand equity.

Because Keller's (2003) resonance stage is the final one in CBBE, it reasons that luxury hotels utilizing sponsorship for resonance purposes would be beyond the brand awareness phase. Most important to luxury hotels in the resonance phase of CBBE are the people involved with and the experiences created by the sponsored event because the experience can help to create a bond or community for the people involved (which can include consumers and employees). Some luxury hotels have begun to foray into luxury event sponsorship. However, not all luxury hotels seem to realize the potential for event sponsorship.

As the literature review suggests, luxury hotels must find a way to create and maintain brand equity. Event sponsorship, when planned and executed effectively, has the potential to create the needed differentiation for luxury hotels and their customers. However, when considering brand equity, luxury hotel brand managers must consider what level of Keller's pyramid the brand has reached. For established luxury hotels, these brands have most likely reached the resonance stage with the majority of their customers. This model addresses how luxury hotels can achieve and maintain brand equity through event sponsorship by building up one of the elements that are central to brand resonance.

Within the luxury hotel segment, it is posited that brand community 1) is the most important of the four components of brand resonance (the top of Keller's CBBE pyramid) and 2) is attainable through event sponsorship. Community drives consumer loyalty, attachment, and engagement, as the model below, an extension of Keller's model, illustrates. Each element of resonance is discussed here as it functions in brand management (both from scholarly and professional perspective) and as it relates to the centrality of brand community.

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EXPLORING PERSONAL BRANDING IN THE LODGING INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Branding has been an important issue in the lodging business. There are many ways that marketers can choose to shape brand associations for a customer. The strategy of naming a company or product brand after a person has been termed personified branding or personal branding. The purpose of this paper was to explore the topic of branding a lodging company with its owner or leader's name. Interviews were conducted for a luxurious brand in Las Vegas. Results indicate that respondents were able to make a connection between the brand and the person's name. While they all had high expectations of the facilities, their purchase decisions did not seem to be influenced by the person's name. Also, the brand's management team was found to be more supportive of the personal branding approach. Implications and future research were also discussed.

KEYWORDS: *Branding; Lodging; Personal branding.*

INTRODUCTION

Consumers use memory networks that include information beyond the basic product category or attributes to evaluate products' consistency and quality, and they use brands as reference in doing so (McEnally & Chernatony, 1999). Brands are especially important in influencing purchase decision behavior when consumers have uncertainty about product features or benefits, or when they perceive high risks in purchasing due to intangibility of the product (Brady, Bourdeau & Heskel, 2005; Erdem, Swait & Louviere, 2002). As a result, brands play a major role in service industries where product attributes are often not highly visible at the time when purchase decisions are made. In the lodging industry, purchase and consumption often occur with significant time lag between each other. Under such conditions, consumers are all the more likely to rely on associations to help them remember their experiences with a brand or to help them form consideration sets and decision rules (Erdem et al, 2002).

There are many ways that marketers can choose to shape brand associations for a customer, such as by linking it to another person, place, or thing (Keller, 2005). The strategy of naming a company or product brand after a person has been termed personified branding or personal branding (Benezra & Gilbert, 2002; "When the CEO is Brand," 2004). There are many prominent examples of this in the hospitality industry, including but not limited to companies such as The Walt Disney Company, Marriott International, Inc., and Hilton Hospitality, Inc. Some companies that have brands named after their leaders have outlived the people behind the brand. Others have perished over time since the exit of their leaders from the company. There are certainly risks associated with naming a company after a person. As such, this raises the question of why any company should brand itself after the name of its leader at all. Specifically in the lodging industry, the questions that may be raised include what the reasons behind such a branding strategy are, and how this may affect the company in its marketing objectives and strategies. The importance of the topic of personal branding stems from the dilemma of the benefits provided by this strategy as well as risks associated with reputation and credibility's effects on brand associations, purchase intentions, and consequently firms' market performance. While a well-respected person's name may help a firm quickly and successfully launch a new product, the downfall of the person in question may also lead to a steep tumble in a firm's performance. To date, marketing literature has mainly focused on the establishment of brand equity and criteria for creating a successful brand. But there is a literature gap on the effects that branding a company after a leader has on the behavior of consumers and on the marketing activities of the firm. A review of literature will provide insight on how consumers associate with brands, and a basis for how they may associate with personal brands, forming opportunities for further research in this topic.

The purpose of this paper is to introduce and explore the topic of branding a lodging company with its owner or leader's name, and also to address the implications that such a branding strategy may have for management decisions, subsequently building premises for future academic research opportunities. The specific research questions of the study are formulated as follows:

1. How do hotel consumers associate with a personal brand?
2. How does a personal brand affect hotel customers' purchase intentions and decisions?
3. How does using the name of a company leader as the hotel brand affect that company's marketing decisions and strategies?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Associations

Brand associations are the connections that consumers make with a brand in their minds, and may include product attributes, a celebrity spokesperson or a particular symbol (D.A. Aaker, 1996a). Keller (2001) observed that customers use a four step approach in associating with brands. They want to know who the brand is, what the brand is, what they feel about the brand, and how they want to be connected to the brand.

Brand image, in the context of the lodging industry, can be described as the perception of a brand formed by the brand's associations held in a guest's memory (Cai & Hobson, 2004). Cai and Hobson suggest that strength and consistency in associations are required for a strong brand image to exist. Hoteliers need to differentiate their services on more than market segmentation, pricing and product features, which encourage only rational responses from consumers and are therefore not long-term focused. Customers associate with a hotel brand not only rationally, but also emotionally. Therefore, a differentiation strategy that hotels might use to yield long term success would be to build emotional bonds and nurture long-term relationships (Cai & Hobson, 2004). Egan (1992) found that emotional associations are crucial to a brand's identity and often form the foundation for consumers' purchase decisions and loyalty to a brand, as the associations help consumers remember their experiences with the brand. A brand should therefore convey an image that customers can identify with. This is especially the case of new brands or new products with attributes of which customers have little knowledge. On such occasion, consumers tend to prefer meaningful brand names, and the halo effect of this meaningful brand is likely to carry over to the customer's evaluation of product attributes (Kohli, Harich & Leuthesser, 2003).

Since making purchases is one way that consumers express themselves, one way that companies can create meaning is by creating congruence between the brand personality and the consumers' self-concept. Consumers may purchase certain brands to connect to reference groups to which they belong or wish to belong, or they may use brands as symbols to achieve self-esteem and to express individuality (Escalas & Bettman, 2005). This is because consumers aim to express themselves in brand choices. In other words, many purchases made by consumers, especially in service markets, are directly influenced by the self-image that the individual has, and the image of the product or the seller (Onkvisit & Shaw, 1989).

Brand associations can be formed directly from a customer's experiences, and also from contact with the brand through advertising or some other source of information, such as word of mouth (Keller, 2001). D.A. Aaker (1996b) found that the association component of brand equity often involves image dimensions that are unique to a product class or to the brand. Two of the brand perspectives around which measurements of association can be structured are brand-as-organization, i.e. organizational associations, and brand-as-person, i.e. brand personality. In the preceding, we further explore these two measurements of associations.

Brand Personality and Personal Branding

According to J.L. Aaker (1997), people attach themselves to brands in much the same way as they attach themselves to other people, and the personality factor provides a critical and long-term differentiation dimension that helps to simplify the consumer's decision-making process. In support of this, O'Cass and Grace (2003) found that feelings, brand name, brand personality, brand and self-image, as well as the image of a typical user are all dimensions that have at least some meaning to consumers in choosing a service.

Brand personality is defined by Tan (2004) as the set of human characteristics associated with a brand. Similarly, J.L. Aaker's (1997) definition of brand personality is "the set of human characteristics or traits that consumers attribute to a brand". Tan found that personality is inherent in brands as much as it is inherent in human beings. Freling and Forbes (2005) found that stimulus material that has information about a product's physical attributes and its brand personality is associated with higher brand attitudes and purchase intentions. A strong brand personality can lead to more favorable, unique, strong and congruent brand associations (Freling & Forbes, 2005). Consequently, companies can use brand name and price for example, as indicators of brand personality in situations where other product related information is limited or missing (Tan, 2004).

Other studies have also lightly touched on the brand associations that arise out of linking it with a certain individual. According to Keller (2005), marketers can make associations to their brand by linking it to another person, place or thing. Companies can choose to employ a highly respected spokesperson as part of its advertising and media driven strategies to present compelling arguments about why the company is the best choice (Lafferty, Goldsmith, & Newell, 2002). Ohanian (1990) found that the dimensions of a celebrity endorser's credibility, along with other consumer related factors, can be used as potential predictors of attitudes towards a product and intentions to purchase that product. But other than using endorsers, many entrepreneurs have branded their company and products after themselves and have built empires out of it, which although is much cheaper than hiring celebrity endorsers, is also dependent on the leader or CEO's reputation in terms of personality and resume (Benezra & Gilbert, 2002). This is the notion of personal branding, a form of brand personification in which the company leader is the brand ("When the CEO is Brand," 2004).

Why it makes sense to name a brand after a person may be related to the finding by Keller (2005) that when consumers can identify the brand with another entity, they may infer that the brand shares associations with that entity even if the two are not directly related to each other. It is also easier for consumers to relate to a company when they can identify the person at the top, and when they perceive the company to have people instead of things (Ingram, 1988). The fashion industry is one which serves as a prime example of how personal branding has been widely and successfully used to create emotional connections with consumers. Abercrombie & Fitch, Tommy Hilfiger, Ralph Lauren, Chanel and Louis Vuitton are examples of international brands that have developed identities that help these companies carry their fashion signature farther and expanding the expression of the personality of the identity to be more flexible and less dictated on their products alone (Gobé, 2001).

Benezra and Gilbert (2002) define Brand Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) as those who have come to personify their companies' trademarks, whether through family ties, a strong personality, or high visibility. CEOs have the ability to embed a brand image to stay for years to come when they have a strong leadership style and are able to clearly communicate their corporate vision (Benezra & Gilbert, 2002). Marriott for example, has attached its name to a range of lodging products, building on the brand's meaning over the past decade (Muller, 1998). Since customers tend to associate with brands emotionally (Cai & Hobson, 2004) and partly base their purchasing decisions on such associations, it is imperative for firms to leverage their identity and leadership. Rindova, Pollock and Hayward (2006) compared how stakeholders relate to a firm's identity and leadership to how people relate to celebrities. The researchers identified providing information on a firm's identity and leadership as a contribution to the construction of "firm celebrity." Such information facilitates identification with the firm and generates positive emotional responses.

When managed carefully, brand personification can benefit because of consumers' desire to belong to a community ("When the CEO is Brand," 2004). On the other hand, problems are likely to arise when a personal branded company does not have adequate preparation in crisis management ("When CEO is Brand", 2004). Much of the leader's success depends on his or her personality or career history (Benezra & Gilbert, 2002). According to Benezra and Gilbert, when a highly visible CEO makes a poor decision or fails completely, he or she is likely to bring the company down also. A more recent example is Martha Stewart, whose stock trade of ImClone with insider information led to her guilty conviction on March 5, 2004, and a jail term of five months, followed by five months of home term. At the time, the news substantially lowered her credibility, causing the company value to drop substantially. Since a personal brand is closely tied to the person whom it is named after and subsequently also tied to that person's personality, there is room for further research into whether or not the utilization of a personal brand creates the need for tighter control on marketing and public relations efforts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The concept of naming a company after a living person remains mostly unexplored by academic researchers, and this is moreover so in the lodging industry, in which the topic has been untouched. As one of the most important Las Vegas tourism industry figures Steve Wynn brands a relatively new casino and resort property after himself, it would be worthy to investigate the effects that this strategy and the marketing efforts that support this strategy may have on customers' brand perceptions, product quality perceptions and purchase intentions. The case study on Wynn Las Vegas is composed of qualitative data gathering, with the primary objective being to explore the topic of branding a company with the name of its leader and to instigate further inquiry. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allowed us to obtain a better understanding from consumers liberally and directly, instead of with direction of theories, laws and concepts (O'Cass & Grace, 2003). Three groups of subjects were interviewed for an exploration of the topic from different angles. The first group was customers of Wynn Las Vegas, the second was non-customers, and the third group was management of Wynn Las Vegas. Semi-structured interviewing was chosen as the method for the study. According to Low and Lamb (2000), measuring brand associations on a consumer by consumer basis using a depth interview technique to elicit an unbiased picture of a consumer's associations for a brand is more complete than using quantitative methods. Subjects were identified on Las Vegas Boulevard, between the property of Wynn Las Vegas and Fashion Show Mall on a weekend day in March 2006, and were given two complimentary lunch buffet tickets as incentive for their participation. The subjects were made aware that the study was for educational purposes. The personal interviews were then conducted in either the food court at Fashion Show Mall, or in the casino bar in Wynn Las Vegas. The responses were recorded and notes were taken during the interview also. The recordings were then transcribed.

The interviews were semi-structured in format with fixed questions and probing questions in between. Adopted from O'Cass and Grace's (2003) study, questions that subjects were asked include what they knew about the brand name 'Wynn', how they knew about it, how they felt about it and whether they liked or disliked the brand. To explore whether or not knowing who the company leader is influences purchase intentions (Ingram, 1988), and whether or not corporate image and reputation also influence attitudes and purchase intentions (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Erdem & Swait, 2004; Erdem et al., 2002; Ohanian, 1990; Yoon, Guffey, & Kijewski, 1993), subjects were asked what they knew about the person Steve Wynn and about their feelings towards Steve Wynn. They were then asked questions regarding their expectations of Wynn Las Vegas, why they had such expectations, and in the case of customers who stayed at the property, how their actual visit matched their expectations. Non-customers were asked questions regarding their future visit intentions rather than stay experience. Two key informants of upper management of Wynn Las Vegas were chosen as subjects of semi-structured personal interviews to address the third research question. Interviews took place in an office setting. Notes were taken, and the conversations were recorded and transcribed also.

Transcribed responses of the interviews were compared with the literature review to identify parallelisms and differences between the current study and existing literature on consumers' attitudes and behavior towards personal brands in the lodging industry. Similarly, responses from interviews with management were compared with literature. In reporting and analyzing the results, topics or issues that the respondents brought up but were neglected in the literature were highlighted to provide premises for further research opportunities in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With regards to awareness and knowledge of the brand Wynn, all respondents identified word of mouth through friends and family in conversations on traveling to Las Vegas as their source of having first heard of the word Wynn. Customer-1 also did have exposure to the name through the media, including from a television advertisement on the launch of the property at the time of opening, and television coverage on parties that take place on the property. Customer-2 on the other hand, had not seen anything from the media on Wynn, but also acknowledged that she did not pay a lot of attention to media. Non-customer-2 stated that while he had originally heard the name through friends, he also came across advertisements on the internet in his search for Las Vegas hotels.

Although questions regarding the brand and those regarding the person Wynn were separated into two parts of the interviews, respondents of the study were quick to make a connection between the two through the early stages of the interview. When asked what they knew about the brand, Customer-1 immediately began to talk about his knowledge of who Steve Wynn was and referred to the brand as 'he'. Customer-1 also stated that he "likes how it's just his name." Customer-2 liked the logo for Wynn, as it was a signature of a person, and that "it's interesting how he named it after himself." Such findings are consistent with J.L. Aaker's (1997) findings that people attach themselves to brands in much the same way they attach themselves to other people. When asked what he thought about the brand Wynn, one statement that Customer-1 made in his response was "I am always about new hotels." This connection of the brand with self is consistent with Sirgy and Su (2002) that travelers base their purchasing decisions on how they see the destination and accommodation choices fit in with how they like to see themselves and how they would like others to see themselves. Similarly, it also agrees with O'Cass and Grace's (2003) findings that feelings and self-image are part of the dimensions that at least have some meaning to consumers in choosing a service. Interestingly, the non-customer subjects of the study were more knowledgeable of Stephen Wynn as an individual than were customers. On the other hand, Non-customer-2 indicated that he only began to search for more information on Steve Wynn after he had heard of the brand name Wynn. This suggests that even though a consumer may not know the person behind the name, he or she may have the curiosity to identify with the person behind a personal brand. As such, it agrees with findings from J.L. Aaker (1997), Ingram (1988), and Lafferty et al. (2002) that people attach themselves to brands with a person behind it, and it may therefore serve as an opportunity for a company to leverage

the name a CEO with a strong leadership style to embed a brand image that can last in the long run (Benezra & Gilbert, 2002).

Another interesting finding was the tendency of both customers and non-customers to provide fictitious information or false statements on who Steve Wynn was, or on projects that he had worked on in the past for the Las Vegas tourism industry. Customer-1 stated that he knew Steve Wynn "owns a lot of hotels around the world," and that the Las Vegas one is the "newest and the best." Non-customer-1 acknowledged that she did not know much about the person, but thought that he might be a "good architect". This suggests that although knowledge of facts regarding the person behind the personal brand may not have an influence on these customers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions, the perceived positive or negative associations of the person's reputation nonetheless does, at least for the respondents of this study, and that when consumers can identify the brand with another entity, they may infer that the brand shares associations with that entity even if the two are not directly related to each other (Keller, 2005). The findings are also consistent with Ingram's (1998) findings that having an identifiable leader at the top rather than just objects allows consumers to relate to that brand.

Both customers and non-customers had high expectations of the property's facilities. Despite the fact that the non-customer respondents had not actually visited the property, they had had high expectations of the property's facilities and amenities. Customer-1, despite having stated that he had "read somewhere that (Wynn) was involved with the mob," made only positive associations with the brand also. Some of the vocabulary that respondents used to make associations with the brand included 'high-status', 'rich', 'new', and 'luxury'. Customer-1 had heard that Wynn Las Vegas was the "ultra luxury hotel," and had high expectations for the place. Similarly, Customer-2 stated that she had high expectations of the hotel prior to visitation, due to the positive word of mouth that she had heard from her friends. Non-customer-2's expectations were based on Bellagio as a benchmark. He stated that he expected Wynn Las Vegas to be "as good as or better than Bellagio." He was aware that Bellagio was a project developed by Steve Wynn, and stated that "not until you are proud of something would you want it to bear your own name." Specifically, Non-customer-2 expected spaciousness, a lot of details, well-trained staff, and "the best" restaurants, shops and tables in casinos. Another expectation that Non-customer-2 highlighted was having gourmet chefs and bringing in well-known restaurants. These findings agree with Keller (1997) that a brand symbolizes customers' perceptions of services and products. The results support past studies that indicate customers associate with the brand Wynn and base their evaluation of product attributes based on their perceptions of meaning in and credibility of the name Wynn, as well what they know about the CEO (Erdem & Swait, 2004; Kohli et al., 2003). Similarly, the findings agree with Onkvisit and Shaw's (1989) research findings that customers' experiences with one hotel brand may influence the quality perception of that particular brand and also all the other brands owned by the same company. Finally, the responses are also congruent with Freling and Forbes' (2005) findings that a strong brand personality leads to strong brand associations.

With regards to customers' purchase intentions and decision criteria, both subject groups did not mention brand as a deciding or influential factor in their intention to make the final purchase decision. Customer-1 indicated that price was not the deciding factor in his choice of staying at the Wynn. Instead, he stated rooms, casino and food as being important factors. Customer-2 was not a decision maker in her visit during this study. However, she had stated that Wynn would be part of her future consideration set, even if in another destination other than Las Vegas, because her previous expectations were fulfilled by this particular Wynn. Non-customer-1 indicated that price was a major decision factor in her choice of hotel. Non-customer-2 identified both quality, price, and purpose of trip as criteria in his purchase decision. It appears that these consumers did not view their decisions in their lodging purchase decisions were based on the brand or their emotions for the brand, and were instead, based on the more tangible elements as mentioned. Such results are inadequate for us to draw conclusions as to whether or not there is consistency with literature findings of the study that customers tend to base part of their purchase decisions on their emotional associations (Cai & Hobson, 2004). The theory is neither proven to be true or untrue with the current subjects. An explanation for the inconclusiveness of this theory is that it may be difficult for people to articulate their emotions and to connect them with their actions. As well, there may be bias in their responses due to the fact that they already made a purchase decision on their trip to Las Vegas at the time of the interviews. On the other hand, previous studies' findings do indicate that more than just emotions, there are a multitude of factors that customers take into consideration when making a purchase decision (Brady et al., 2005; Keller, 2001). Consequently we cannot attribute purchase intentions entirely to emotions towards brands either, although part of their purchasing decision may nonetheless be based on the brand.

In addressing how using the name of a company leader as hotel brand affect that company's marketing decisions and strategies, the interview with Manager-1 indicated that the name Wynn was a name that was chosen as it allowed people to "personify" it, and that according to those that live in Las Vegas or the others that come to Las Vegas often, Steve Wynn played the largest role in redefining Las Vegas. Both Manager-1 and Manager-2 attributed Steve Wynn's role in redefining Las Vegas, his completion of previous resort projects, and Manager-1 also attributed his principle of "putting yourself in the customer's shoes" to Wynn Las Vegas' ability to successfully reach out to its audience. Management's point of view therefore, is in support of J.L. Aaker's (1997) theory that people attach to brands in much the same way as they attach to other people, and therefore they could employ a respected spokesperson as part of its advertising and media driven strategies (Lafferty et al., 2002). On the other hand, responses from our customer and non-customer respondents indicated that they were actually less knowledgeable about the person Steve Wynn than management's perceptions.

According to Manager-1, the goal of the brand Wynn was to connect with customers on an emotional and deep level. Thus even the logo, which had the font of a handwritten signature, was created to personify the name. From a marketing perspective, Manager-1 indicated that the goal of the signature was to have a logo that customers could associate with as being "larger than life," and that was "giving it essence." In terms of public relations activities, Manager-2 indicated that from that perspective, there

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is the need for the resort to identify quality versus quantity of publications, and that the company does not think that "all media is good media." These responses show that management at Wynn Las Vegas agrees with Egan (1992) that emotional associations are crucial to a brand's identity. The responses also support Onkvisit and Shaw's (1998) study in that Wynn Las Vegas was likely to attempt to form a mental fix of their products in customers' minds as part of their marketing strategy in personal branding.

Another finding was that because the resort was branded after the CEO, the marketing and public relations strategies for the company were unique, presenting both opportunities and challenges. In terms of opportunities, Manager-1 stated that the brand was helpful in the launch of the property especially towards the meetings and conventions market, because this was a market segment that was familiar with the name Steve Wynn. This is consistent with the findings provided by Yoon et al. (1993) that corporate reputation influences consumers' expectations and hence also their purchase intentions in the business service industries.

CONCLUSION

This paper's aim was to introduce and explore the topic of personal branding within the lodging industry through a case study of Wynn Las Vegas. The findings of past literature and the current study indicate that consumers in the lodging industry associate with a personal brand uniquely, in the sense that they connect it with the person whose name is the brand. Although the perceptions of who that person is may be inaccurate, the perceptions may nonetheless be associated with similar categories or quality of hotels, at least within the scope of this study. A personal brand may also provoke a consumer to research on the person behind the name when that consumer is unaware of or has little information on the individual. The implication for management of a personal branded hotel is that it must carefully control the media outlets and the messages about the leader that such consumers are exposed to. However, the dilemma is that it is often difficult for management to control media outlets, especially when the personal brand is derived from the owner or CEO, whose personality, reputation as an individual, style of communications through the media, and most importantly, whose personal goals, cannot be controlled. The challenge to managers of a personal branded lodging company therefore, is to ensure there is alignment all of these elements in its business activities. This suggests that there may be the need for better guiding principles regarding degree of empowerment from the leader of a personal branded company to managers, to foster a transparent and effective brand managing environment.

Whether or not purchase intentions are affected by personal brands remain inconclusive. Although subjects of the current study showed at least some unique associations with personal brands, they also indicated that their purchase decisions were based more on tangible elements, such as price, room features, facilities, service quality, and purpose of stay. On the other hand, past research has indicated that customers base their purchase decisions both on tangible as well as intangible cues. Therefore, further research is required in this regard.

Since researchers have found in the past that customers have the tendency to associate with brands emotionally, future research could elicit customers' brand associations with techniques that are able to gather information on a more in-depth level. As well, studies may be conducted on a larger scale, and may focus on the magnitude of difference that a personal brand creates for customers in terms of their awareness, associations, and purchase intentions. Especially in the area of purchase intentions, future research may address whether or not a personal brand provokes emotions that may alter consumers' degree of reliance on tangible cues to help them make their purchase decisions. Since different consumers have different price points and consideration factors in choosing a hotel, hypothetical situations may be created to compare consumers' purchase intentions of different brand names within the same competitive set. Significance of difference may also be found for the results of such studies through statistical analysis.

From the company's perspective, further research may be conducted to examine whether or not using the CEO's name as a brand creates circumstances where he or she personally takes tighter control of managing the property and how this may affect the way managers make and implement business decisions. A research question that could be addressed is whether or not there are conflicts between the CEO's personal goals and management's goals when a personal brand is used. Interviews with management of Wynn Las Vegas indicated that the purchase intentions by the meetings and conventions market segment of the property were closely linked to their recognition of Steve Wynn's strong reputation. Since the current study was mainly conducted on the leisure segment of Las Vegas, it is suggested that future research investigate further into the meetings and conventions segment, perhaps drawing differences between the effects of a personal brand on the leisure market segment and the group business market segment.

Geographically, future research may also look at personal branding from a geographical perspective, both nationally and internationally. Useful insight may include how consumers' awareness and perceptions of a personal brand differ depending on their geographic origin. This is an especially important topic for further research in the gaming and resort industry, as operators tap into Asian markets such as Macau and Singapore in the upcoming years.

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CONCEPTUALIZING AND EVALUATING THE FUNCTIONS OF DESTINATION MARKETING SYSTEMS

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ABSTRACT

This research attempts to propose a conceptual framework in relation to the functions of destination marketing systems (DMS). In addition, efforts are also made to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the functions of the DMS. It is proposed that a DMS should be composed of four interrelated components: virtual information space (VIS), virtual communication space (VCS), virtual transaction space (VTS), and virtual relationship space (VRS). The analysis of the applications in the four components of DMS seems to suggest that destination marketing systems are still in the preliminary stages of development, showing a hierarchical progression of usage and sophistication. The effectiveness analysis of the applications in the four components has also raised issues of serious concern. Suggestions and implications are provided and discussed.

KEYWORDS: *Destination marketing system; Internet marketing; Tourism marketing.*

INTRODUCTION

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs) such as convention and visitors bureaus (CVBs) have increasingly realized that Internet marketing is becoming an inseparable, oftentimes a determining part of their overall marketing endeavor (Buhalis 2003; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006; Yuan & Fesenmaier 2000). As information is the life-blood of the travel industry, effective use of destination marketing systems is pivotal for not only marketing and promoting the destination but also creating competitive advantage for the destination (Poon 1993; Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002; Sheldon 1993). The key to successful destination marketing efforts depends primarily upon the application and integration of provision of destination information, communication mechanisms, e-commerce deployment, and customer relationship building. As a matter of fact, few American CVBs have developed advanced Internet marketing systems due to their insufficient understanding of the new Internet paradigm as well as their limited ability to integrate new technology (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006; Yuan, Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003).

Though relevant research efforts have been made in this area such as evaluation of destination web sites (Rachman & Buchanan, 1999; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006; Wober, 2003), on-line marketing and destination systems (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002; Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002; Sheldon, 1993), and Convention and Visitor Bureaus in regard to Internet marketing (Feng et al., 2003; Fesenmaier et al., 1992; Yuan, Gretzel & Fesenmaier, 2003), little research currently exists that identifies and examines the various components and functions of destination marketing systems. This research attempts to propose a conceptual framework in relation to the functions of destination marketing systems (DMS). In addition, efforts are also made to evaluate the effectiveness of each of the functions of the DMS. The objectives of the research are achieved by taking Web-based marketing systems of convention and visitors bureaus in the United Sates as the focus of investigation.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

A review of the related literature reveals that different terms have been used to describe the key function/purpose of destination marketing systems, such as communication, information, marketing, transactions, and customer relationship management, though anecdotally. These observations have also been partially supported by Ritchie and Ritchie's (2002) argument that the deployment of DMS encompasses not only the informational aspects of a destination's products, but also the marketing and communication components. Based on the multi-faceted tasks of CVBs, it is argued in this study that a successful DMS depends on the integrative application of four components as its major function: (1) timely and accurate representation and provision of destination information; (2) effective and constant communication with consumers; (3) reliable and seamless electronic transaction deployment; and, (4) effective and lasting relationship building mechanisms (Figure 1). Since online destination marketing systems are virtual spaces for CVBs to conduct various marketing activities, the four functions of

DMS identified above are accordingly termed as: (1) virtual information space (VIS); (2) virtual communication space (VCS); virtual transaction space (VTS); and, (4) virtual relationship space (VRS). It is also argued that the relationships between the four functions are dynamic rather than static, and each of the components demonstrates a hierarchical level of technology sophistication which implies that the effective implementation of a higher level application has to be built on the successful deployment of its lower level of application(s).
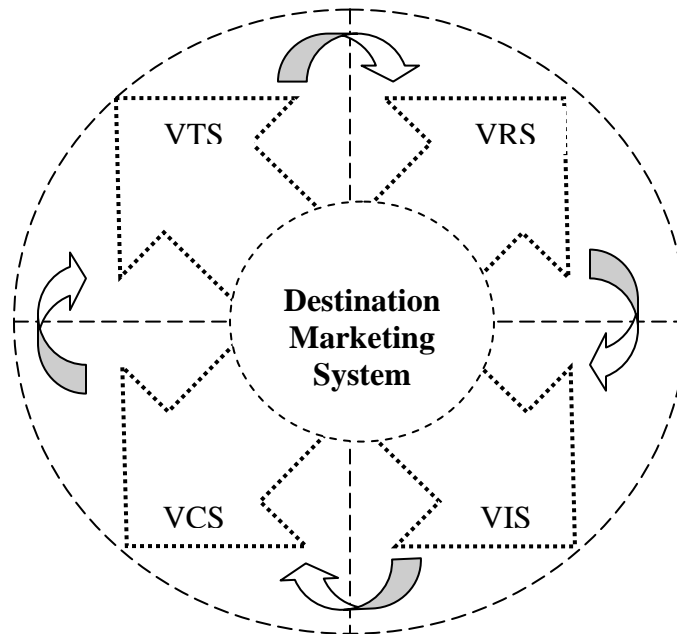
Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of Destination Marketing System

Virtual Information Space (VIS)

Most people visiting CVBs' websites are looking for information, but the information need varies significantly from individual to individual (Feng *et al.,* 2003). Internet users fall into two categories, surfers and shoppers: the former using the Internet for recreation, the latter for a directed purpose (Abramson & Hollingshead, 1999). While surfers may enjoy general information about a destination, shoppers want more detailed information about hotels, restaurants, attractions, transportation, car rentals and travel agents (Bender 1997; Born, Furr, & Susskind, 1998). This brings rise to the function of the Internet for travel decision making purposes. The diversity of information in the travel industry and the increasingly discerning consumers mean that the quality and efficiency of information provision is becoming a differentiating factor for destinations (Sheldon, 1993). Many consumers demand specialized and in-depth presentation of the information to facilitate their decision-making. In order to address their needs, proper levels of information need to be accessible to the right consumers to initiate and generate

a purchasing interest. This is also mandated by the fact that CVBs have been constructed upon the solid foundation of information provision and the ability to do so in a timely and consistent manner. Information should be the bread and butter of a DMS and understanding how customers acquire information is important for marketing destinations.

Virtual Communication Space (VCS)

Once the DMS's information function has been sufficiently implemented, a destination can then move to the next hierarchical functional level, the virtual communication function. While the VIS lays the foundation for the destination's promotional aspects, the VCS opens up the communication mechanisms to allow for marketing efforts to be targeted. Research is also a major component in this function, allowing a destination to better understand the demographics, behaviors, and preferences of its potential consumers. This interactive phase helps in building partnerships, and goes beyond VIS' initial "flirting stage" to the "courting stage". It is at this level where communication is conducted through various channels and it transforms the trust element between the DMO, its stakeholders and individual consumers. In order to meet their strategic marketing objectives, CVBs must become proficient in the administration and utilization of market research, and must also be able to effectively communicate and develop buy-in opportunities with their stakeholders (Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002). Therefore, VCS is critical in helping CVBs strengthen their role as communicator and marketer for their destination, industry partners and visitors.

Virtual Transaction Space (VTS)

The transaction function proves a successful step towards a solid relationship, showing a trust of financial relationship, a sacred line to cross within the business world. This engagement between the CVB and the consumer is based upon previously strengthened trust built from a solid and timely information function and responsive communication function being in place. This introduction to the electronic marketplace is only possible after the integration of software and systems allowing for the CVB to initiate transactions in representation of the companies under which they have provided the initial information. In this new role, the CVB not only becomes the collective marketing vehicle and advocate for the local tourism industry, but a one stop shopping center for visitors (Barker, 1993; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2006). With the new transaction function the CVB can, for example, assist a convention or meeting planner with hotel availability, distribute meeting specifications to hotels, solicit bid proposals, conduct personalized site inspections, setup spouse programs and activities, provide transportation and other logistical need, with all financial transactions to be with the CVB, thereby eliminating the need for other relationships to be developed.

Virtual Relationship Space (VRS)

At the core of a DMS is the Virtual Relationship Space (VRS). It is at this stage where the relationship is in full bloom, where open communication and

commitment provide the qualities essential for a 'marriage'. It is a process whereby marketers come to truly know and understand the various aspects of their consumers. VRS entails a dynamic exchange of communication with consumers at all levels and is the one-to-one marketing system that enables the management of customer relationships through establishing, maintaining, enhancing and commercializing relationships. However, the misunderstandings and misuse of VRS only mystify the process and prevent its full utilization in the tourism industry (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002). While it is necessary for an organization to collect massive amounts of data on their consumers' preferences and buying habits, the challenge lies in how they truly gain an understanding of this data that miraculously transforms itself into meaningful information. Prior to implementation of the technology applications for relationship building, consumer data (including data acquired from emails, market research efforts, online surveys, commercial transactions, etc.) must be maintained in a marketing database (Gartrell, 1992; Min *et al*., 2002; Rachman & Buchanan, 1999; Sheldon, 1993). However, previous study found that only 50 to 75 percent of destination marketing organizations (DMOs) websites had this function (Feng *et al*., 2003).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Frame and Data Collection

Convention and visitors bureaus at three levels (i.e., regional, county, and city) in the United States were used as the population of this study. The sample was drawn from a database constructed from the integration of various sources. Specifically, names of CVBs were obtained through several searches of the Internet using keyword search including the names of each state (i.e., Indiana, New York, Wyoming, etc.), tourism, travel and visitor centers. In addition, the websites for each state were searched for up-to-date lists of CVBs. The results of these efforts were combined with a membership list provided by the International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus. A survey questionnaire was then mailed to the CEOs/Directors of 600 CVBs, together with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and seeking assistance and support from the tourism organizations. Two follow up mailings at an interval of two weeks were sent to those who did not respond. A free copy of the executive summary of the study results was provided as an incentive to responding to the survey. A total of 268 CVBs returned the survey, among which 260 of the responses were found usable, representing a 43% response rate.

Development of Applications and Effectiveness Measurement for DMS

As proposed in the conceptual model, DMS is composed of four interrelated components (i.e., VIS, VCS, VTS, and VRS) and each of them contains multiple applications. First, a list of items was identified for each of the four components of a DMS based on an extensive literature review and observation of destination marketing organizations' websites at different levels. A panel of experts was then consulted to confirm the appropriateness of the list for each area and this resulted in the identification

of 10 applications for Virtual Information Space (VIS), 5 applications for Virtual Communication Space (VCS), 7 applications for Virtual Transaction Space (VTS), and 10 applications for Virtual Relationship Space (VRS). Second, the results of this effort were integrated into the survey instrument whereby the extent of usage and perceived importance of each of the applications in the four respective components were evaluated based upon responses to two questions: (1) whether or not (0=No, 1=Yes) the bureau had implemented each of the applications in the four areas, and (2) the perceived importance of each of these applications in their organization's web marketing efforts. For the latter question, responses ranging from not at all important to slightly important (1 – 3) were recoded into 'not important' and the values ranging from somewhat important to extremely important (4 – 7) were recoded into 'important'.

In order to measure the effectiveness of all the applications in each of the four components, a 2 x 2 matrix was constructed (see Figure 2). Using this matrix, a set of four possible scenarios was recognized. Quadrant I (characterized as "missing opportunities") describes a bureau that does not use the application but perceives it important to its web marketing efforts. If, on the other hand, the bureau is using the application and perceives the application to be important to its web marketing strategy (Quadrant II), a practice of "effective" use of the application has been observed. Quadrant III was characterized as "wasting resources" because the bureau is using the application but does not perceive it to be important to its web marketing strategy. Last, Quadrant IV was labeled "indifferent" whereby the bureau is not using the application and does not perceive it to be important to its overall web marketing strategy.

	I Missing Opportunity	**II** Effective
	IV Indifference	**III** Wasting Resources

Yes / Importance / *No* (vertical axis) — *No* / Utilization / *Yes* (horizontal axis)

Figure 2. Effective Evaluation Matrix for Technology Applications in DMS

RESEARCH RESULTS

First, a comparison was made for each of the technology applications in each of the four components of DMS in terms of popularity (measured by extent of use) and perceived importance (measured by percent of CVBs stating important). This information is presented in Table 1. Several trends can be captured from the results. Firstly, in terms of popularity/extent of use, variance has been observed in the four components of DMS: most of the applications in VIS and VCS are more widely used than those in VTS and VRS, and the variance has demonstrated a pattern of hierarchical progression from the most popular in VIS and the least popular in VTS and VRS. Secondly, the results of the perceived importance have revealed some interesting information. For nearly all of the technology applications in the four DMS components, the ratings on importance are always higher than the ratings on popularity, among which, the discrepancy between importance and popularity for applications in VRS is the most pronounced.

From a statistical standpoint, the Chi-Square analyses (Table 1) show that the differences between popularity and importance for most of the applications are significant at the .05 level, with only five applications in VIS showing no statistical differences: activities/attraction information, accommodation information, events calendar, restaurant information, and links to regional/city/area pages. Thirdly, the low ratings on popularity for most of the applications, especially in the latter three components (i.e., VCS, VTS, VRS) do not imply that these applications are not important so that they can ignore; rather, the importance ratings have proved the opposite: these applications are important for the success of DMS, and measures have to be taken to improve the level of utilization of these applications.

As a second step, the effectiveness of each of the technology applications in the four components of DMS has been evaluated using the 2 x 2 matrix. Using this matrix, four scenarios have been generated for each of the applications: (I) missing opportunity (not use but important); (II) effective (use and important); (III) wasting resources (use but not important); and, (IV) indifference (not use and not important). This information is presented in Figure 3. For VIS, CVBs are effective in the use of most of the applications, with the effective percentage ranging from 98.8 for activities/attraction information to 70 for travel guides/brochures, indicating that these are core applications for a DMS and the majority of the CVBs are using them in their destination marketing system. However, two applications in VIS have raised some concerns: more than 60% and nearly 50% of the CVBs report that they are 'missing opportunities' for "trip/vacation planner" and "tour operator information" respectively, indicating that these applications are important for the success of a DMS but quite a number of the CVBs are not using them in their destination marketing system.

Table 1. Popularity vs. Importance Comparison of Technology Applications in DMS

VIS	Popularity (% of use)	Importance (% of important)	χ^2	Sig.
Activities/Attraction information	99.2	99.6	.008	.930
Accommodation information	99.2	99.2	.016	.903
Events calendar	97.3	98.5	1.49	.222
Restaurant information	94.2	93.1	.002	1.00
Shopping information	89.6	95	14.99	.000
Links to regional/city/area pages	88.1	92.7	2.70	.100
Maps/Driving directions	81.2	96.9	6.37	.000
Travel guides/Brochures	77.3	76.2	1.59	.340
Tour operator information	50.8	90.4	9.16	.000
Trip/Vacation planner	23.5	84.2	10.63	.000
VCS				
Brochure request capabilities	89.2	96.5	7.67	.006
Search functions	51.5	89.6	3.99	.046
Email newsletters	34.6	87.3	9.63	.002
Interactive tools	28.5	84.2	14.71	.000
Frequently asked questions	21.5	41.5	74.73	.000
VTS				
Online reservation	20.8	81.9	9.36	.002
Banner advertisements	19.2	27.3	70.79	.000
Themed products	18.8	30.4	104.25	.000
Secure transactions	10.4	29.2	55.11	.000
Events tickets	9.6	25.8	77.30	.000
Attraction tickets	8.8	26.5	58.00	.000
Shopping carts	8.5	25.8	42.74	.000
VRS				
Highlight special offers/best buys	33.1	43.5	119.58	.000
Direct email campaign	30	83.1	12.26	.000
Personalization/Customization	23.8	81.2	9.28	.000
Privacy policy	22.3	37.3	68.46	.000
Incentive programs	18.5	82.3	6.3	.012
Cross-selling opportunities	15.8	33.8	60.47	.000
Virtual tours	13.8	79.2	18.70	.000
Customer loyalty programs	4.2	23.8	24.72	.000
Web seal certification	2.3	18.5	13.04	.000

For VCS, only one application (brochure request capabilities) is rated to be effective by CVBs (87.3%) and the remaining applications demonstrated mixed results. 'Missing opportunity' has been identified as the dominating trend for several applications: interactive tools (56.2%), email newsletters (53.8%), and search functions (41.5%). Further, 56.9% of the CVBs believed that the use of the application "frequently asked questions" is indifferent to them, indicating that this is an application which will not do them much harm if they do not use the application in their destination marketing system.

The effectiveness analysis for applications in VTS has raised some issues of concern. Out of the seven applications, three of them (online reservation, banner ads, and themed products) have an effective rating by less than 20% of the CVBs, the remaining four (secure transactions, events tickets, attraction tickets, and shopping carts & payment systems) enjoy an effective rating by less than 10% of the CVBs. The application of online reservation is considered a 'missing opportunity' by 65% of the CVBs, reflecting the perceived importance on the one hand and the insufficient use of the application on the other. Surprisingly, the majority of the CVBs rated the other applications (ranging from 68.1% for banner ads and themed products and 73.8 for events tickets) in VTS as indifferent. This implies that though e-commerce transaction related applications have not been used effectively, CVBs do not perceive these applications to be important to their overall marketing efforts. This is consistent with the mission shared by a large number of CVBs in that they consider themselves as destination marketing organizations rather than destination sales organizations.

The effectiveness analysis of the applications in VTS reveals interesting results. Obviously, none of the applications has been rated effective, with 'highlight special offers/best buys' (30.4%) and 'direct email campaign' (28.8%) being the highest, followed by 'personalization/customization' (22.7%), 'privacy policy' (18.8%), and 'incentive programs' (17.7%). Only a small fraction of the CVBs (ranging from 3.5% for privacy policy to only 0.4% for customer loyalty programs and web seal certificate) believe that they are wasting resources in these applications. This observation is supported by the fact that the majority of the CVBs believe that they are missing opportunities for their ineffective use of these applications. This is especially true for the following applications: 'virtual tours' (67.7%), 'incentive programs' (64.4%), 'personalization/customization' (58.5%), and 'direct email campaign' (54.2%). However, quite a number of CVBs perceive that the use of the following applications are indifferent to them: 'web seal certificate' (81.2%), 'customer loyalty programs' (75.8%), and 'highlight special offers/best buys' (53.8%).
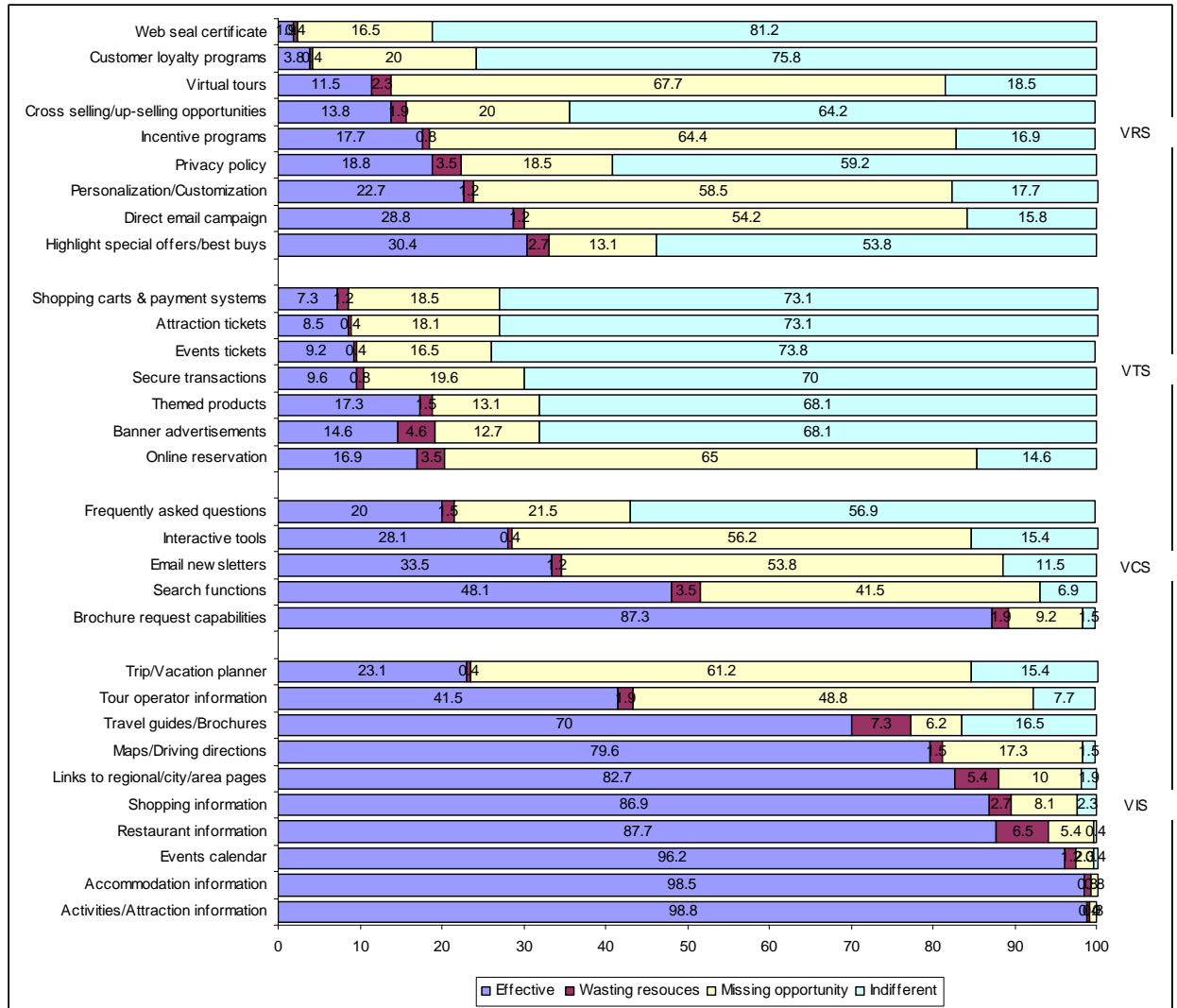
Figure 3. Effectiveness Assessment of Technology Applications in DMS

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Destination marketing system is a prevalent distribution channel used by destination marketers' to provide comprehensive tourism information and selection of tourism products to potential visitors. Most of the research in this area has taken a technological viewpoint, and not considered the particular functionality of a destination marketing system. This research attempts to fill this gap by proposing a conceptual framework in relation to the functions of destination marketing systems and by evaluating the effectiveness of each of the functions of the DMS. It is proposed that a DMS should be composed of four interrelated components: virtual information space (VIS), virtual communication space (VCS), virtual transaction space (VTS), and virtual relationship space (VRS).

The analysis of the applications in the four components of DMS seems to suggest that destination marketing systems are still in the preliminary stages of development, showing a hierarchical progression of usage and sophistication. It appears that CVBs are performing well in providing and incorporating information-oriented applications related to attractions, activities, and accommodations, and the performance is becoming weaker in relation to applications for communication purposes. The weakest areas are demonstrated by two areas: transaction and relationship building, with only a small percentage of CVBs being able to function in these two areas. From Yuan et al. (2003), this lack of development appears to be a manifestation of the CVBs' inability to effectively adopt and manage information technology necessary to support more sophisticated operations and business processes. This call for CVBs to move to a higher level in terms of the sophistication of their technology use in order to provide a more balanced, wider array of features and functionalities in their DMS to accommodate the diverse needs of potential visitors. From an educational perspective, the study results have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses of destination marketing organizations in their online marketing efforts which enable them to come up with better educated and informed marketing strategies before they can move to the next level.

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TOWARDS A CLASSIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL VISITORS AT HERITAGE SITES: A CASE STUDY OF HUANGSHAN, XIDI AND HONGCUN IN SOUTHERN ANHUI, CHINA

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ABSTRACT

To achieve the goal of determining if cultural and heritage tourists to Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun were a heterogeneous group, the study applied a market segmentation approach to international visitor markets based upon two classification factors: activity participation and trip purposes. It was designed to detect if there were differences between those international visitors participating in cultural and heritage activities with and without a cultural tourism trip purpose. The study used data from the International Visitor Survey for Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun in 2005. The results confirmed that different groups of cultural-heritage tourists existed, and they ranged from recreational or pleasure tourists who participated in some cultural-heritage tourism activities to augment their trip experiences to those people who traveled primarily to pursue these types of activities.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural tourist; Heritage tourism; Market segmentation; Huangshan; Xidi; Honhcun.*

INTRODUCTION

As Richards (2002) remarked, "the urge to travel to witness the extraordinary or the wonderful object seems to be deep in all human cultures." In considering the growth of cultural and heritage tourism, it is insufficient to look only at the development of heritage attractions (McKercher, 2003). The question of who consumes these attractions and the manner in which they are consumed also has an important influence on the production, form and location of these attractions (Richards, 1996). However, it is impossible for destination marketers to know and comprehend each individual traveler. The most practical solution is to segment the market into sizable groups to gain a more in-depth understanding cultural and heritage tourists. Previous research studies have shown that cultural and heritage tourists differ in terms of trip purposes, cultural motivations, tourism activity participations, cultural depths and socio-demographics (Kerstetter, 2001; McKercher 2001, 2002; Poria, 2001).

Mount Huangshan lies in the south of Anhui Province, China. The property extends over a core area of 15,400 hectares. UNESCO inscribed Huangshan as one of the World Heritage List sites in 1990. Huangshan occupies a central place in China's artistic, cultural and environmental heritage (UNESCO, 1990). UNESCO added the ancient villages of Xidi and Hongcun in southern Anhui province to the World Heritage List in 2000. The two villages are located quite close to Mount Huangshan. The patterns of buildings and streets in these two ancient villages reflect the socio-economic structure of a long-lived and settled period of Chinese history (UNESCO, 2000). They are graphic illustrations of a type of human settlement created during a feudal period and based on a prosperous trading economy; the Huizhou period.

The regional culture of southern Anhui is called "Huizhou culture". Huizhou culture is an ancient one, dating back to around 600 BC. It reached its apogee in the 14th-19th centuries, when Anhui had a dominant influence in various aspects of Chinese culture, such as arts, architecture, culinary arts, music, and the influential Cheng Zu (an ancient Chinese emperor) philosophy, which is an interpretation of Confucianism. The beautiful mountains and rivers of ancient Huizhou were home to many wealthy merchants and powerful families, creating a flourishing and unique culture. Some scholars regard it as a symbol of the Chinese national culture. Others believe that research on Chinese culture cannot solve the Oriental mystery without starting with an analysis of Huizhou culture (China International Tourism Service [CITS], 2006). This culture is epitomized by its social and economic base and ideology it reflects, the folkways and customs it retains, the feudal ethics it upheld, and the new academic ideas it failed to resist. The people of Huizhou have maintained their distinctive folkways and customs to this day, bounded by the special geographical location in southern Anhui and feudal ethics.

The number of international visitors to Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun has been increasing dramatically, from 2,205,000 in 2000 to 3,256,000 in 2004 (including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macao). The local tourism administrations and businesses have exerted considerable effort to market cultural heritage tourism products, especially to

international visitors. However, previous research in this geographic area of China has focused almost exclusively on destination planning for Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun. Insufficient research has been done to investigate the characteristics, structure and needs of visitor markets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural and heritage tourism is fundamentally different from traveling to a destination to experience different cultures (McKercher, 2002). As a special-interest tourism (SIT) product category, cultural tourism means more than just cultural displacement. Previous studies have found that cultural and heritage tourism requires a higher degree of involvement and a considerably more serious attitude (Reisinger, 1994; Stebbins 1996; Poria et al., 2001). Tunbridge and Ashworth (2001) pointed out that the study of heritage settings "must shift from the uses of heritage to the users themselves and thus from the producers (whether cultural institutions, governments, or enterprises) to the consumers." The general leisure and recreational motives do not adequately explain the core attributes of self-enrichment and self-discovery within cultural and heritage tourism (Poria, 2006). Heritage tourism should be understood based on the relationship between the individual and the heritage presented (Poria, 2001).

A motive is an emotion, desire, physiological need, or similar impulse that acts as an incitement to action (Roget's II: The New Thesaurus, 1995). Although they are only one of multiple variables that explain behavior, motives are the starting point that launches the decision process. The word "purpose" and "motive" are synonyms in the sense that both of them describe the idea, belief, or emotion that impels a person to act in accordance with that state of mind. The only slight difference between the two words lies in: purpose means no more than the specific mental purpose to perform a deed; while motive describes instead the reasons in the person's background and station in life that are supposed to have induced the behavior (Wikipedia, 2006). As for its application to the tourism field, the travel purpose is more directly related to the participation in tourism activities in order to fulfill personal needs. The travel motive rather addresses the importance of one's personal interests, which cause one to seek certain tourism experiences.

Researchers have tended to agree that tourists nowadays want more cultural and heritage experiences, whether these can be meaningful and authentic (MacCannell, 1976) or a vacuous, shallow form of entertainment packaged as "pseudo-event" (Boorstin, 1964) or an opportunity for people to produce and structure their own meanings from the tourism experience (Urry, 1990). A review of the studies suggests that the main reasons can be classified into two categories. The first category is associated with the individual (e.g., to learn, to be involved in a recreational activity, and to be with family), whereas the second is associated with the attributes of the site (e.g., location and being on the way to another site). In addition, many studies have emphasized learning as an important motive for heritage tourism. For example, Moscardo (1996) emphasized three main motivations for heritage tourism: educational motives, entertainment motives, and social

motives. Krippendorf (1987) suggested another dimension of motives for cultural and heritage tourism; self-discovery and exploration. Poria (2004) identified three categories of travel motives for heritage sites: the willingness to feel connected to the history presented; the willingness to learn; and to be linked with the historic attributes of the destination. Furthermore, a fourth element; the willingness to feel emotionally linked to the heritage tourists perceive as their own; was added by Poria et al. (2001).

Clearly, heritage tourists are a heterogeneous group both from the viewpoint of the site in relation to personal heritages and overall motivations for visiting (Poria, 2006). Market segmentation has become a universally recognized method of analyzing tourism markets. Customers who react in a homogeneous way, be it in their motivations, behavior, reactions to marketing activities, or the benefits they seek from consuming products and services can be grouped (Sollner and Rese, 2001), enabling products to be developed that can more effectively satisfy the differing needs of each segment. Seven general bases tend to be used in segmenting tourism markets including geographic, socio-demographic, purpose of trip, behavioral, psychographic, product related, and channel of distribution (Mill & Morrison, 2002). Logically, the most effective predictor of tourist behavior should be the behavior itself (Johns et al., 2002). Using "activity participation" for segmentation of the market is considered as "the thumb of rule"(Morrison, 2002). Consequently, this natural approach has been adopted in many studies, especially in early studies.

The literature has suggested a variety of approaches to segmenting the cultural and heritage tourism market. Many of them have underscored the importance of applying a cultural purpose as a factor for classifying tourists. The most obvious distinction is to differentiate two subcategories depending on whether the cultural motivation is primary or secondary (Espelt et al., 2006). McKercher (2002) argued that previous studies had largely treated the cultural heritage tourism market as an undifferentiated market, with the implicit assumption that all cultural tourists represent the prototypical "deep cultural" tourist: someone who is highly motivated to travel for cultural reasons and who seeks an in-depth cultural experience. In his study, cultural motives and depth of experience were employed as two dimensions to identify segments of cultural and heritage tourists. The results showed that the centrality of cultural motives in driving destination choice varied significantly among tourists. For some, culture was just a secondary reason to visit a destination and played no role in destination choice. The study identified five different types of cultural tourists: the *purposeful cultural tourist* (learning about other's culture or heritage is a major reason for the visit, and the visitor has a deep cultural experience); the *sightseeing cultural tourist* (learning about other's culture or heritage is a major reason for the visit, but the visitor has a more shallow, entertainment-oriented experience); the *casual cultural tourist* (cultural tourism plays a limited role in the overall visit decision and the visitor engages the destination culture in a shallow manner); the *incidental cultural tourist* (cultural tourism plays a minor role in the visit decision, however, the visitor still participates in cultural tourism activities, and has a shallow experience); and the *serendipitous cultural tourist* (cultural tourism plays no role in the visit decision, but this visitor ends up having a deep experience) (McKercher, 2002).

Kerstetter (2001) classified cultural and heritage tourists along a specialization continuum. Heritage visitors were categorized into "highly specialized heritage visitors", "medium specialized heritage visitors" and "lowly specialized heritage visitors." Highly specialized individuals indicated that they were more motivated to "learn about an historical period or event"; "experience authentic elements in a historic destination"; "consider the site's historic character in their decision to visit"; "visit because they have an interest in their heritage, culture, and/or ethnicity"; and "visit other historic sites along the Path of Progress" (Kerstetter et al., 2001).

The very nature of the intangible product or service means that in essence heritage tourism involves the consumption of an experience, which heritage attractions provide for their visitors through their site interpretation (Goodall, 1993). According to McIntosh (1999), the core product of cultural and heritage tourism is the beneficial experiences gained by visitors. Benefits are defined as "the advantageous outcomes, which receptionists and society realize from people participating in recreational activities" (Anderson and Brown, 1984). Experience are defined as "the subjective mental state felt by participants" during a service encounter (Otto and Ritchie, 1996). It was proposed by Hall and McArthur (1993) that the visitor experience should be placed at the center of any heritage tourism management process. A visitor perspective has been advocated as essential in achieving a symbiotic relationship between visitor and resource (McArthur and Hall, 1996). By understanding the personal values attained from heritage visits, justification can be afforded to cultural tourism development beyond that of economic generation to an understanding of how people need heritage to add perspective and meaning to their lives (McIntosh, 1999). Traditional management that has focused on the heritage source is "deficient because it generally takes inadequate account of the human element in heritage management especially in the significance of visitors" (McArthur and Hall, 1996).

The previous research studies have also revealed that tourists with and without the cultural motives/purposes were significantly different in terms of trip expectations, travel motivations, travel behaviors, activity participation, trip satisfaction, cultural experience and socio-demographic characteristics. For example, McKercher (2002) found there were substantial differences in perceived knowledge gained on departure among different categories of cultural and heritage tourists. Incidental and casual cultural and heritage tourists felt they had average knowledge after touring Hong Kong, whereas sightseeing and purposeful cultural tourists were more likely to say that they knew more than the average. Kerstetter et al. (2001) found high-and medium-specialization individuals were more satisfied with, and felt better about, the quality of their overall experiences than those in the low-specialization category. However, no significant difference was found in the cultural and heritage activities of cultural and heritage visitors with different levels of specializations.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main goal of this research study was to determine if cultural and heritage tourists to Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun were a heterogeneous group. To achieve the goal, the study applied a market segmentation approach to international visitor markets based upon two classification factors: activity participation and trip purposes. More specifically, the research was designed to detect if there were differences between those international visitors participating in cultural and heritage activities with and without a cultural tourism trip purpose. The two specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Segment international cultural and heritage tourists to Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun and determine if there was a purposeful heritage visitor group that considered Huizhou culture as a trip purpose (purposeful heritage visitors).

2. Based upon the results related to the first objective, compare the pre-trip benefits sought, post-trip benefits fulfilled, and satisfaction levels by purposeful heritage visitors versus other international visitors.

METHODOLOGY

The study used data from the *International Visitor Survey for Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun in 2005*. The survey was administered to departing international visitors at Huangshan International Airport, Huangshan train station and local hotels from July 2 to July 30, 2005. Interviews were conducted by undergraduate students from the Department of Tourism Management at Anhui University. A total of 867 usable surveys were completed and the respondents were from 41 different countries. The data were analyzed by SPSS and two-step cluster analysis was applied to implant the market segmentation approach. T-tests and Chi-square analyses were used to compare groups of heritage tourists in terms of pre-trip benefits sought, post-trip benefits fulfilled, and satisfaction levels with tourism activities.

RESULTS

Three groups of visitors were identified and the visitors were unevenly distributed among the three groups (Table 1). Cluster one was the biggest group (n = 604), which had more visitors than cluster two (n = 128) and cluster three (n = 139) combined.

Table 1. Cluster Analysis Results

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
n = 604	n = 128	n = 139

The results, as illustrated by Table 2, showed that each cluster had different visit purposes. The members of cluster 2 indicated stronger interests in Huizhou heritage; all

of the group members chose visiting heritage sites as one of their primary trip purposes. In contrast, visitors in cluster 1 and cluster 3 had no interest in Huizhou culture and heritage at all (0%). The three groups had approximately the same levels of interest in climbing the mountain (74%-80%). The people in cluster 3 generally displayed a low-interest pattern. They did not show particularly strong interest in any particular visit purpose except climbing the mountain.

Table 2. Trip Purpose Comparisons: Three Clusters

Trip Purposes	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	p-values
Climbing	80.0%	79.7%	74.1%	0.303
Heritage	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	0.000**
Shopping	4.00%	8.6%	1.4%	0.013*
Sightseeing	44.0%	52.3%	38.8%	0.081
Privacy	0.8%	0.0%	1.4%	0.418
Others	2.8%	2.3%	3.6%	0.820

** Significant at $p < 0.01$; * Significant at $p < 0.05$

Tourism activity participation proved to be very consistent with trip purposes (Table 6). Members of cluster 2, who had strong interests in Huizhou heritage, also had a very high participation rate in heritage activities (99.2%). Again, the cluster 3 visitors who displayed low-interest trip purpose levels had lower tourism activity participation rates. Cluster 2 could also be described as the most active group since they had the highest participation rates in five of the eight tourism activities.

It should be noticed that cluster 1 visitors held no pre-trip purpose related to heritage activities, but were very active in participating in heritage tourism activities at the destination, with a participation rate of 100%. It may be assumed that these visits to heritage sites were mostly out of recreational and convenience reasons rather than cultural purposes. Thus, one might wonder about the status of cultural heritage offerings in tourists' minds: was cultural enhancement the core benefit sought by most visitors? Were cultural and heritage activities merely regarded as ancillary tourism products to the main activity o climbing Mount Huangshan?

Activities such as rafting and playing golf had very low participation rates. There could be two possible explanations for this. Firstly, rafting and golf are newly developed activities, so they have not created much market awareness yet. Furthermore, most international tourists only tend to visit the main icon attractions such as Mount Huangshan and the two ancient villages. Consequently, although the stakeholders have invested a large amount of money in developing and marketing these new recreational activities to extend visitors' lengths of stay, the strategy has yet to prove to be effective. Second, it could also be that these newly emerged activities are not easily marketed as an integral part of the major theme and positioning of the destination. Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun were universally recognized for their historical nature, either from a cultural or natural perspective. Therefore, the modernity of rafting and golf do not seem to be in complete harmony with the destination's notoriety.

Table 3. Tourism Activity Participation

Activities	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	p-values
Climbing the mountain	93.4%	90.6%	94.2%	0.454
Shopping	41.7%	59.4%	58.1%	0.000**
Tasting local cuisine	66.9%	78.9%	31.7%	0.000**
Visiting local people	16.9%	27.3%	7.9%	0.000**
Rafting	1.8%	1.3%	3.6%	0.365
Heritage activities	100.0%	99.2%	0.0%	0.000**
Sightseeing	83.9%	91.4%	44.6%	0.000**
Playing golf	0.8%	0.0%	5.8%	0.000**

** Significant at $p < 0.01$

Apart from detecting significant group differences, another purpose of comparing clusters was to name them appropriately by capturing their distinctive and inherent attributes. As what has been mentioned in the literature review, McKercher (2002) identified five groups of cultural and heritage tourists: purposeful cultural tourists, casual cultural tourists, incidental cultural tourists, serendipitous cultural tourists, and sightseeing cultural tourists. Purposeful cultural tourists referred to those to whom learning about the other's culture or heritage was a major reason for visiting, and they had deep cultural experiences. By contrast, incidental cultural tourists were those to whom cultural tourism played little role in visit decisions, however, these visitors still participated in cultural tourism activities. This study borrowed these concepts from McKercher (2002) to name, identify and differentiate cluster 1 and cluster 2 members. Cluster 2 members, because they had a pre-trip purpose involving Huizhou culture and heritage, coupled with active participation in heritage tourism activities in the Huangshan area, were labeled as the "purposeful heritage tourists." Cluster 1 could be considered as the "incidental heritage tourists" for they indicated no pre-trip interest in Huizhou heritage but had high participation rates (100%) in heritage tourism activities. The remainder of this chapter further discusses the differences between these two groups of visitors. Cluster 3 was dropped from further analysis, since they had no pre-trip interest in heritage resources and no activity participation in heritage tourism activities after arrival in the Huangshan area.

Objective two used T-tests to compare the two types of heritage visitors' expected benefits sought before and benefits fulfilled from trips. McIntosh (1999) defined benefits as the outcomes of experience, which are perceived as important by consumers themselves. Heritage consumption involves valued imaginative, affective and emotional perspectives in the understanding of the period and place presented (McIntosh, 1999).

Heritage tourism, after all, belongs to the services industry. The heritage tourism destination is a place that involves numerous encounters. Service encounter research has increasingly recognized the experiential dimensions of consumption (Arnould and Price, 1993). In services marketing research, studies of the service encounter are increasingly turning their attention to the role of service providers in orchestrating and delivering service benefits to consumers through attention to the subjective and emotional

(affective) dimensions of the service experience (Arnould and Price, 1993). As such, the understanding of service encounters in terms of their beneficial and experiential dimensions has been advocated as providing a useful analytic perspective for successful service encounter management (Price et al., 1995; Prentice et al., 1998).

The pre-trip benefits sought were measured by two types of variables. The first described generic tourism benefits, which are achievable through almost all kinds of travel experiences. These included, "I am visiting this place for relaxation" and "I am visiting here to accompany other people or visit friends." These did not have to be fulfilled by participating in cultural heritage tourism. The second type represented specific cultural benefits that could be only be brought through involvement in cultural heritage tourism in Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun, such as "gaining insights into traditional Huizhou culture."

The mean scores for pre-trip benefits sought by visitors were calculated (Table 4) and significant differences were found for the three culture-heritage related benefits. According to Silberberg et al. (1995), cultural heritage tourists are moving towards a demand for "enrichment." Moreover, Poria (2001) added that heritage tourists had the desire to be "emotionally involved" in the cultural heritage conveyed by the attractions. This study's findings reinforced these assertions as both the purposeful and incidental heritage visitors rated to "learn something new" as the most important pre-trip benefits sought (purposeful mean = 4.37; incidental mean = 4.06). However, the purposeful heritage visitors were significantly more interested in seeking this new learning experience (p = 0.007).

The purposeful heritage visitors (cluster 2) and incidental heritage visitors (cluster 1) were also significantly different in "exploring a new culture" (p = 0.000). The purposeful heritage visitors (mean = 3.98) were more interested in exploring a new culture, traditional Huizhou culture, than the incidental (mean = 3.55).

The scores for seeking "cultural and historical similarities with my home country" were low for both clusters (purposeful mean = 2.32; incidental mean = 2.01). However, there was a significant difference between the two (p = 0.016), with the purposeful heritage visitors again attaching a higher rating than the incidental. This was not surprising since a higher proportion of the purposeful heritage visitors were Europeans. However, the Asian visitors did not consider themselves as culturally proximate to Huizhou culture as what had been expected.

As for the other two general trip benefit types, the two groups had similar and relatively low mean ratings. "Visiting this place for relaxation" (purposeful mean = 3.15; incidental mean = 3.08) and "to accompany other people or visit friends" (purposeful mean = 2.63; incidental mean = 2.56) were relatively unimportant benefits for both the purposeful and incidental heritage visitors.

In conclusion, two of the culture-heritage, pre-trip benefits were rated highest by both groups of visitors, and were much more important general trip benefits. They came

to Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun to achieve definite purposes, rather than just to spend time relaxing there. The ATLAS tourism survey conducted by European Union (1996) found similar results regarding cultural visitors' motives; the motives rated most highly by responding cultural and heritage tourists were experiencing and learning new things. For cultural heritage tourists within Europe, learning was more important than fun (Richards, 1996).

Table 4. Pre-Trip Benefits Sought

Pre-Trip Benefits Sought	Purposeful Heritage Visitors (Mean)	Incidental Heritage Visitors (Mean)	p-values
Learn something new (C-H)	4.37	4.06	0.007**
Explore a new culture (C-H)	3.98	3.55	0.000**
Visit for relaxation (general)	3.15	3.08	0.654
Accompany other people (general)	2.63	2.56	0.646
Seek cultural and historical similarities (C-H)	2.32	2.01	0.016*

C-H = cultural-heritage benefit ** Significant at $p < 0.01$; * Significant at $p < 0.05$

Among the fulfilled benefits, four belonged to the cultural-heritage tourism category: "enriches historical knowledge", "provides more insights into Huizhou folk arts", "know more about ancient Huizhou mythology and legends" and "makes me closer to local residents and their lifestyles." A critical part of the heritage tourism experience is to consume the ways of local residents' lifestyle (Richards, 2001). One of the recognized goals of cultural heritage tourism is to increase awareness of the destination's cultural heritage values (ICOMOS, 1999). Therefore, learning more about the lifestyles of local residents was considered as a cultural variable in this study.

The results suggested most heritage tourists did report having learned something after visiting Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun, but the amount and depth of learning varied between the two types of heritage tourists. Table 5 indicates that purposeful heritage visitors perceived higher levels of cultural heritage benefits than the incidental. Purposeful heritage visitors had significantly higher mean scores for: "enriches historical knowledge" (mean = 4.14; p = 0.000); "enjoy cuisine and tea culture" (mean = 3.72; p = 0.000); "provides more insights into Huizhou folk arts" (mean = 3.28; p = 0000); and "know more ancient Huizhou mythology and legends."

"Enriches historical knowledge" was the highest-rated cultural heritage benefit by the purposeful heritage visitors. This finding corroborated the previous findings that heritage tourists "usually seek an informed visitor experience rather than merely gazing" (Prentice, Witt, & Hamer, 1998). Heritage tourists also expect outcomes that include learning about their destination and gaining an insight into its past. While enjoyment is still crucial, the heritage tourist often expects a greater degree of involvement with the sites with a heavy educational component (Nicholls et al., 2004). It was no surprise to see that purposeful heritage visitors were found to have achieved significantly higher benefits

in learning historical knowledge than incidental heritage visitors in Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun. Just as McKercher et al. (2001) pointed out, people who were highly motivated to travel for cultural tourism reasons also would be expected to be the group most likely to have deeper experiences.

The purposeful heritage visitors also had significantly higher mean scores for "provides more insights into Huizhou folk arts" and "know more about ancient Huizhou mythology and legends." However, the ratings of these two cultural benefits were noticeably lower than "enriches historical knowledge." One possible explanation could be that these two specific activities demand significant mutual efforts from both visitors and hosts. For example, "know more about ancient Huizhou mythology and legends" required more active learning by heritage visitors and detailed interpretation by hosts, plus an interactive communication process between the two. Meanwhile, enriching "historical knowledge", a relatively general cultural activity, can take various forms including both linguistic and non-linguistic approaches. A visitor might think the physical features of a historical building were enough to enrich historical knowledge, thus no extra oral or written interpretation was needed.

Both purposeful and incidental heritage seemed to fail to have close touch with local residents. However, this result was not unexpected given the cultural and linguistic barriers between international visitors and local residents. Even for the purposeful heritage visitors, getting closer to local residents and learning more about their lifestyles was not a highly rated benefit of their experiences in the area.

Although both groups did not rate relaxation as an important pre-trip benefit sought, they had relatively high scores for "escape from ordinary life" and "have fun, be entertained." In fact, "escape from ordinary life" was the most highly rated benefits by both purposeful and incidental heritage visitors. This finding had dual implications. First, the destination may have provided some level of unexpected "fun" and "uniqueness" for international visitors. This enabled visitors to gain out-of-the-ordinary experiences, be it cultural or not, which could not be enjoyed in the everyday life. Therefore, the extra benefits of having fun and being entertained helped the destination to enhance the overall satisfaction levels of visitors. Second, even for the purposeful heritage visitors, the rating for "escape from ordinary life" exceeded "enriches historical knowledge" (Table 5). How to make the culture and heritage more accessible to satisfy the cultural needs of purposeful heritage visitors seems to be an urgent issue for destination managers.

Moreover, the results showed in Table 5 also showed that purposeful heritage visitors put more emphasis on the cultural and heritage benefits at the destination. Most of the significant differences between the two clusters were in the pre-trip and attained cultural benefits.

Table 5. Benefits Fulfilled

Benefits Fulfilled	Purposeful Heritage (Mean)	Incidental Heritage (Mean)	p-values
Escape from ordinary life (general)	4.21	3.85	0.005**
Enriches historical knowledge (C-H)	4.14	3.16	0.000**
Have fun, be entertained (general)	3.88	3.72	0.205
Enjoy cuisine and tea culture (C-H)	3.72	3.23	0.000**
Provides more insights into Huizhou folk arts (C-H)	3.28	2.53	0.000**
Make me closer to local residents and lifestyles (C-H)	3.02	2.78	0.055
Be together as a family (General)	3.02	2.74	0.084
Know more about ancient Huizhou mythology and legends (C-H)	2.91	2.24	0.001**

C-H = cultural-heritage benefit ** Significant at $p < 0.01$; * Significant at $p < 0.05$

To compare visitors' expectations and attained experiences, the placement of each attribute on an expectation-achieved benefits grid was depicted by using the means of expectation and achievement as the coordinates (Figure 1). The two-dimensional grid gives a clearer visual image of the within-group comparisons of how the fulfilled benefits contrasted with the pre-trip benefits sought by both groups of visitors. Additionally, the grid clearly shows the between-group differences in terms of fulfilled benefits and benefits sought. The X-axis represents the rating of the pre-trip benefit of "enjoy a new culture." The Y-axis shows the ratings of five fulfilled cultural-heritage benefits. The incidental heritage visitors, whose mean value for "explore a new culture" was 3.55 on the X-axis, were represented by the left vertical series of plots. The right series of plots, grounded at 3.98 on the X-axis for "explore a new culture", show the fulfilled benefit ratings for the purposeful heritage visitors. For the incidental heritage visitors, "enjoy cuisine and tea culture" had the highest rating (3.23). This seemed to reinforce the study hypothesis that incidental heritage visitors were more entertainment-oriented and perhaps less serious about seeking deeper, more comprehensive cultural-heritage experiences.
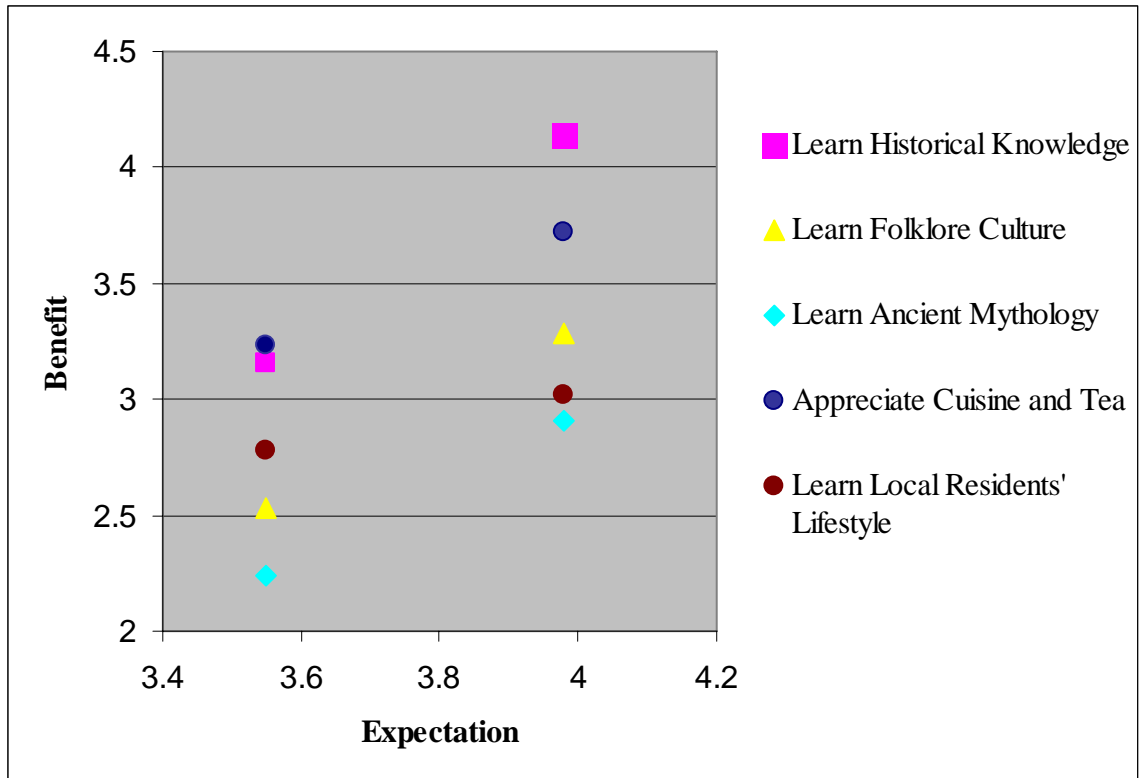
Figure 2. Cultural expectations and benefits achieved by purposeful heritage visitors and incidental heritage visitors

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The study provided useful data examining tourists who visited cultural heritage attractions in Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun. While definitive statements cannot be made about cultural-heritage tourism and cultural-heritage tourists, helpful insights into the profiles, motives/purposes and activities have been gained from the perspective of an important destination area in China. The basic hypothesis of this research was that the cultural and heritage tourism market at Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun consisted of several distinct segments. Indeed, the study confirmed that different groups of cultural-heritage tourists existed, and they ranged from recreational or pleasure tourists who participated in some cultural-heritage tourism activities to augment their trip experiences to those people who traveled primarily to pursue these types of activities.

The study classified international tourists in Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun based on their trip purposes and participation in tourism activities. It identified three clusters of tourists. Two of these were chosen to be the main focus of the study: one group was *purposeful* in seeking cultural-heritage experience and participated in culture-heritage tourism activities at the destinations; the other group had *incidental* participation, since they did not have a pre-trip cultural-heritage purpose yet participated in cultural-heritage tourism activities. The comparative analysis revealed that purposeful heritage visitors had

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higher pre-trip benefit ratings and also more highly rated the cultural-tourism benefits received from trips.

The results manifested that Huizhou culture and heritage was an important asset for tourists to Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun. However, cultural-heritage tourism was mostly complementary to another main purpose of the trip, rather than the core reason for travel to this area. Less than one third of the respondents described their primary trip purpose as cultural-heritage. Most visitors cited climbing Mount Huangshan and sightseeing as reasons the main travel purposes. The people who visited cultural-heritage tourism attractions did so to achieve different goals. Some were more motivated to learn about the cultural heritage of the destination area and thus they engaged in these activities at a deeper level, while many more saw participation in cultural-heritage tourism activities as being primarily for leisure or fun. The destination area's attractions and activities need to be shaped to reflect these differing visitor goals.

More specifically, it is recommended that destination managers consider reforming existing tourism products by concentrating on two primary themes. For the purposeful cultural-heritage visitors, the product theme should be: *enriching and memorable Huizhou cultural-heritage tourism experiences*. In implementing this theme, the existing cultural and heritage tourism products need to be restructured and given new formats. In addition, more cultural-heritage activities and attractions should be developed in various forms to better match market needs and expectations. These steps will better enable destination managers and tourism suppliers to market Huizhou culture and heritage as a primary focus in the future. In retrospect, this emphasis has largely been ignored since the three destinations were opened for international visitor markets. There has been a lack of sufficient effort to market Huizhou culture and heritage, and long before Xidi and Hongcun the cultural-heritage were placed in the World Heritage List, cultural-heritage sites were positioned as ancillary attractions to Mount Huangshan for people visiting the whole destination area. By contrast, the new themed strategy should help the destination area to develop a steady repeat-visitor market consisting of people who have genuine and strong special interests in the rich cultural and heritage offerings of Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun. It does not seek to maximize visitor numbers, but to provide special-interest visitors with quality cultural-heritage tourism experiences.

The second product development and marketing theme is designed for those other visitors (incidental cultural-heritage) who visit the destination area for recreational and other purposes: *sightseeing and recreation-oriented experiences based upon rich and diversified natural and cultural-heritage tourism resources*. Offering recreational and relaxing experiences is often the thread that strings different tourism products together. This is again not a mass-tourism strategy, but instead aims to attract repeat visitors who are willing to stay longer with higher travel expenditures. Mass tourism means most visitors only stay for a short time, spend a moderate amount of money for accommodation mainly, and leave with a shallow sense of place. By implementing these two themed strategies, the destination area will be better able to command an irreplaceable and unique image in the minds of international visitors when compared to other tourism destinations in China.

The first themed strategy requires enlivening and enriching Huizhou culture and heritage tourism from current situations and formats. This will involve changing and extending the existing cultural-heritage products better and more clearly perceived, understood and appreciated by international visitors from different cultural backgrounds, Western and Eastern. Importantly, they need to be transformed through better and more thorough interpretation and presentation into more memorable visitor experiences. The ultimate goal of enlivening and enriching Huizhou culture and heritage is to translate their underlying values into economic and social benefits for the community and tourism industry. The fact that most cultural-heritage tourism attractions were not originally intended for tourism necessitates sympathetic product development and management strategies (Ho and McKercher, 2004). However, to become successful in achieving financial and non-financial management goals, the tourism product must be manipulated and managed in such a way that can be easily consumed by visitors (Reynolds, 1999). In fact, treating cultural-heritage assets as products does not simply mean pricing and selling in them in the market. It also does not imply that "cultural-heritage assets" is synonymous with "cultural tourism products" in which these assets automatically become products promoted to and consumed by tourists. A successful cultural-heritage tourism product therefore needs to be developed, from its original form not designed for tourist use into something that can offer a satisfactory cultural-heritage experience able to satisfy tourists' needs (McKercher, 2003).

This result confirms that cultural-heritage tourism is still a pleasure activity that is undertaken largely for recreation, relationship building and rejuvenation (Poria, 2006). People participate in a wide array of activities, including cultural-heritage tourism to meet these goals. Since they constitute the destination areas' dominant visitor source, their trip expectations must be given specific attention. Therefore, it is recommended to reposition Huangshan, Xidi and Hongcun as a recreational resort area to cater to the needs from these visitors. As the destinations possess abundant natural resources, which should be fully utilized to expand and enrich the tourism activities so that the destination can be developed into a multi-functional tourism resort area. Diversifying and enriching recreational tourism activities is another crucial factor. In addition to developing more nature-based sightseeing products, it is imperative to add new activities that encourage visitors' active involvement. For instance, activities such as boating on Taiping Lake will allow visitors to have closer touch with the natural environment. It is a mistake to assume that all cultural-heritage tourists are alike. Likewise it is a mistake to assume that all or most cultural-heritage tourists are seeking a deep and meaningful experience (McKercher, 2003). However, this does not mean that for these incidental heritage visitors, cultural-heritage tourism should be completely screened out from their activities. The study results revealed that although incidental heritage tourists did not seek cultural experiences before trips, they did enjoy considerable cultural-heritage benefits. For them, cultural-heritage tourism ought to be presented in a manner that is enjoyable, and easy to be consumed. Although it may contain and element of learning, it must first seek to entertain.

The study sought to explore how the pre-trip purpose engaged in cultural-heritage experiences function that made visitors think and act differently. Future research might

also consider comparing these two categories of heritage visitors with other categories of visitors, such as low-activity visitors. It is also suggested that future research include questions focusing on the uniquely personal values derived during experiences at an attraction. Thus, future marketing may be able to foster maximum enjoyment, understanding and appreciation among visitors relating to the culture and heritage they encounter.

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A MODULE SYSTEM IN TOURISM AND LEISURE EDUCATION – THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The growing world-wide competition, changing demand patterns, the claim for better products and offers, the decreasing attractiveness and increasing uniformity of offers and other developments related to tourism consistently lead to new challenges for the education system. In order to meet the demands of the tourism industry both on a personal and job career level, people need competences that enable them to cope with the changing circumstances. Factors which are extremely important for the personal development and the job career of the students are: independent and creative problem solution, social skills, flexibility, tolerance, and the ability to handle conflict. In the light of this background the School of Tourism and Leisure of the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) in Austria has designed a module system for a degree program of higher tourism education. The system is based on the theory of professional, methodological and social competences which have received considerable attention in the former literature in this field (cf. Sonntag & Schmidt-Rathjens, 2004; Kauffeld et al., 2003; Kolb, 2002).

KEYWORDS: *Competences; Curricula development; Module system; Higher tourism and leisure education program.*

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays tourism providers in the alpine regions are not only confronted with dramatic changes on the information and communication technology sector, but also with increasingly critical, highly demanding and multi-optional customers who show new buying and bookings behaviours (Pechlaner & Tschurtschenthaler, 2003; Smeral, 1998). In addition to the changing business environment company sizes in the tourism and service sector also change and outsourcing processes result in new types of enterprises, the formation of business networks as well as in the formation of virtual organizations (cf. Nauwelaers & Wintjes, 1999). The growing market power of tour operators, the expansion of large hotel groups and, last but not least, the growing dominance of e-business solutions in tourism and leisure require distinctive strategic business approaches. These and other developments have brought about a fast-growing need for high levels of proficiency in the entire tourism and leisure industry, particularly in the education sector. I.e. that organisational requirements and general competences of managers and employees as well as the profession-related competence claims are the basis for future tourism curricula and education. This is reflected for instance in new and alternative forms of learning and the renewal of vocational learning culture. The coherences are represented in figure 1.
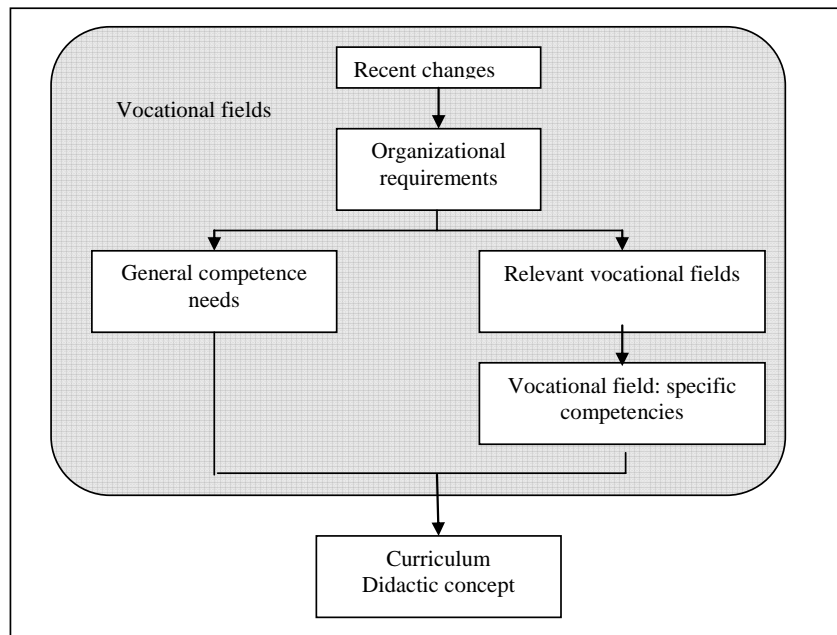

Figure 1: Vocational Field and Qualification Profile

Yet, there appears to be a considerable gap between what educational institutions offer as management level tourism education, and the needs as expressed by the tourism industry. "When the main features of tourism education arise through initiatives by the tourism environment on the one hand and the world of education on the

other, with no consensus between the two, problems arise for those on the receiving end of tourism education" (Amoah & Baum, 1997, p. 6). Lewis (1993) discusses the fact that curricula are often not tailored to what the industry needs at present, but to what it has needed in the past (Ryan, 1995). In order to cope with the changing demands of the tourism industry, high-skilled and qualified graduates have to be produced for the tourism industry. Jafari and Ritchie (1981) discuss the 'rigidity' of tourism education especially with regard to those educational programs where educators come from purely academic backgrounds. Much of the debate surrounding curricula content has been regarded as the influencing forces of the McDonaldizsation (Ritzer & Allan, 1998). Ritzer and Allan (1998) define McDonaldization as the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world. Following this view, Parker and Jary (1995) argue that this is leading to the progressive McDonaldisation of the university which they call 'the McUniversity'. The matter under discussion is the way in which higher tourism education is currently developed and implemented.

The Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) is an integral part of the unique "Open University Innsbruck" concept in Austria and has attained a leading position in international higher education as a result of its on-going quality and customer orientation. The 1994 introduction of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) in Austria has brought quite a breath of fresh air into the structures of European higher education systems. An UAS degree program is equivalent to but different from a traditional university degree program and is characterized in particular by its close relations with trade and industry, its practice orientation and customer focus, a strictly organized program schedule and a highly service-oriented approach. MCI's programs focus on all levels of the personality and include areas of state-of-the art knowledge from science and practice relevant to business and society. Besides degree programs (full-time and part-time in the fields of Biotechnology, Engineering & Environmental Technologies, Management & IT, Management & Law, Nonprofit, Social & Health Care Management, Social Work and Tourism & Leisure Management), the MCI also offers postgraduate programs, executive education, customized programs and management seminars.

Tourism Business Studies' is the title of the 6-semester Bachelor's Program at MCI. The special focus of this academic program lies in a distinct orientation to entrepreneurial approaches in tourism and leisure. The program is based upon a comprehensive business administration curriculum which is then specialised in the areas of marketing, finance, entrepreneurial studies and leadership (corporate governance). The praxis-relevance, a feature of Austrian 'Universities of Applied Sciences', is achieved by a high number of business experts on the faculty as well as the particularly strong project-orientation of the study program.

On the basis of this background, it is necessary to raise the question what kind of role key qualifications and competences could play in a broader context of modernisation potentials of education and training culture. European debates are characterised by a diversity of parallel concepts like

- 'key qualifications'
- 'key/core competences', and
- 'key/core skills'.

The approach on 'key qualifications' has been developing curricular solutions to promote capacities for flexibility, mobility and renewal of knowledge-bases within the curricula for initial VET. While the UK-based debates are related to the concept 'key skills', which refers to a particular set of identified 'skills' that are assumed to provide a support structure for more content-specific learning in educational system, the debates on 'key/core competences' have introduced new strategic ideas of how to develop learning contexts on a more systematic basis. These approaches put the main emphasis on developing particular solutions for multi-professional or cross-cutting training contexts.

Authors believe that the approaches of 'key qualifications' and 'key skills' insufficiently deal with strategic issues on vocational learning culture and do not provide a holistic view for the further development of educational tourism curricula. In this context research and development activities are needed to provide the frameworks for a new kind of 'knowledge practice' that takes into account the role of 'key competences'. Therefore, it is the concept of 'competences' that was dealt with in detail when authors designed the module curriculum for the UAS degree program.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF 'COMPETENCES'

As already discussed briefly, recent challenges in the tourism industry have a direct impact on the general competences of managers and employees as well as on the overall vocation-oriented competences. There is a plethora of taxonomies of competences. The most important component of competences is knowledge, abilities and skills in a specific subject area or skill set. Originally, the concept of core competences was developed in the field of management by Prahalad and Hamel (1990). Basically, competences may be defined as integrated totalities of expertise, know-how, processes, interests, motivations, knowledge and affections that are of value for successfully completing a task (Sonntag & Schmidt-Rathjens, 2004; Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003). Competences are coordinated by organisational learning processes (Hinterhuber, 2004). Sonntag and Schmidt-Rathjens (2004) divided competences into four components.

- *Skills* are automated components of tasks, which are undertaken with a relatively low mind-control. These skills include powered routine jobs as well as cognitive activities.
- *Abilities* are all kinds of innate skills of a person, which are necessary to perform tasks and services
- *Knowledge* is acquired know-how, which is composed by propositional (knowing that) and procedural know-how (knowing how).

Another competence class that is occasionally defined is content-related basic knowledge, i.e. "natural-science, social-science, and ethical basic knowledge in the fields

of history, literature, education, sociology, politics, philosophy, mathematics, biology, technology, etc." (Edelmann& Tippelt, 2004, p. 8). If competences are classified, literature distinguishes primarily among three types of competences (cf. Sonntag & Schmidt-Rathjens, 2004; Kauffeld et al., 2003; Kolb, 2002).

- *Professional Competences* comprise skills, abilities and knowledge which are necessary to meet the challenges and tasks of one's profession.
- *Methodological Competences* are universal problem-solving and decision-making competences, which may be applied in one's job, but also in one's personal surroundings.
- *Social Competences* are abilities to act in the social surroundings and includes cooperating with other people, interacting with them and building effective relationships.

Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2003) described over 40 methodologies to measure competences and kept their focus on human competences. They have different approach to categorizing competences and divide among four basic competence types (see table 1).

Table 1. Definition of Basic Competences (Source: according to Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003)

Ability (disposition) for self-organizational action with regard to…	Dimensions / Basic Competences	Definition	Examples
... exposure to objects	professional- and methodological competence	... is the ability to fulfil profession-related tasks with methodological know-how.	updated and continued development of professional and methodological know-how with regard to the vocational field
... exposure to other persons	social-communicative competence	... is the ability to cooperate and communicate with other people of one's own record.	e.g. communication ability, cooperation ability, flexibility, relationship management
... oneself as a person	personal competence	... is the ability to be critical to oneself, to one's values, attitudes and ideals.	e.g. handling of burden, stress, hectic; self management; operational readiness; authenticity; credibility; loyalty; attitudes and abilities to life-long learning
... one's own actions	activity- and action competence	... is the ability to implement all kinds of knowledge in terms of social communication, personal values and ideals and to thereby integrate all other kinds of competencees.	e.g. ability to implement; intuition for innovation ; readiness to changes; leadership competencies

Important in the present context is the multidimensionality of the concept of competence, which goes beyond merely specialist and methodological formal qualifications and includes the field of informally, acquired competences means. The concept of competence lies at the centre of efforts to achieve a systematic method of ascertaining and establishing competences for the purpose of precisely matched assistance and job placement. In this context, it is – as already stated - important to distinguish between competences and qualifications, since the latter refer to "clearly outlined complexes of knowledge, skills, and competences which people must have when carrying out occupational activities […]. They are action-centred and can usually be described so clearly that they can be tested in certification procedures outside of the working process" (Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2004, p. xxix). The concept of competence, by contrast, is more comprehensive. It refers not only to the ability to solve problems using specialized methodological and instrumental knowledge, but also contains social and communicative aspects, as well as personal ones. In general, competences involve self-organizing dispositions in physical and mental action, with "dispositions" referring to inner prerequisites for regulating activity that have been acquired by the time of a certain action and a high degree of self-organized action. Dispositions thus include not only individual talents but also the results of developments (Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2004).

Very often the three competence fields 'social-communicative', 'personal' and 'activity- and action-oriented' are referred to among the collective term 'extra-functional' (Dahrendorf, 1973) or 'process-independent' competences (Kern & Schumann, 1970). This may then be seen opposed to the 'functional competence' such as professional- and methodological competences. From the perspective of curriculum development the main thrust of such debates is in particular units or modules that promote the learning of these abilities.

MODULE SYSTEM OF THE BACHELOR PROGRAM

The 'Tourism Business Studies' Bachelor's Program comprises 6 semesters and a total of 124 credit units of required courses, which equals a total of 1.736 hours of instruction. Attendance is mandatory in all courses. In the third year (semesters 5 and 6) the students are required to do a practical internship and they have the option to study a semester abroad. Additionally, students have to write two Bachelor's Theses within that time. The goal of the study program is the development of entrepreneurs and managers for the local and international tourism and leisure industries. The cornerstones of the program are a sound education in business administration, the development of entrepreneurial approaches as well as the development of a high awareness regarding customer and service orientation. A further important feature of the program is the extensive number of courses in the area of applied information management (Fundamentals of Applied Information Systems, E-Business in Tourism etc.). In addition to teaching a high level of social and personal skills, the development of strong active

language competence in English and another foreign language are essential parts of the program.

The module system for master and bachelor programs is a prerequisite for the accreditation of a program at the University of Applied Sciences in Austria. This module system of curricula is a basic paradigm shift from the input-orientation (Which content do I like to convey?) to the output-orientation (Which qualifications or competences shall be the result of the learning process of the students?). Modules are units of educational programming for court-based use. They are smaller stand-alone components of larger units or seminars. Each module includes: a short description, format (i.e. exercises, lecture), the learning objectives, module length, related materials (i.e. publications, power points, and videos), a list of potential presenters, and the language in which it is presented. This type of system implies a consequent and intense adjustment of the content of teaching. Starting point of the module system is the description of the overall qualifications and competences to be achieved during the program. Out of it derivate partial qualifications which have to be gained by means of single modules. Relevant for the composition of a module are the partial qualifications which students shall gain after having passed the module. In case of the institution at hand, authors followed the classification of competences according to Dahrendorf (1973) distinguishing among 'extra-functional competences' and 'functional competences' (i.e. professional/methodological competences).
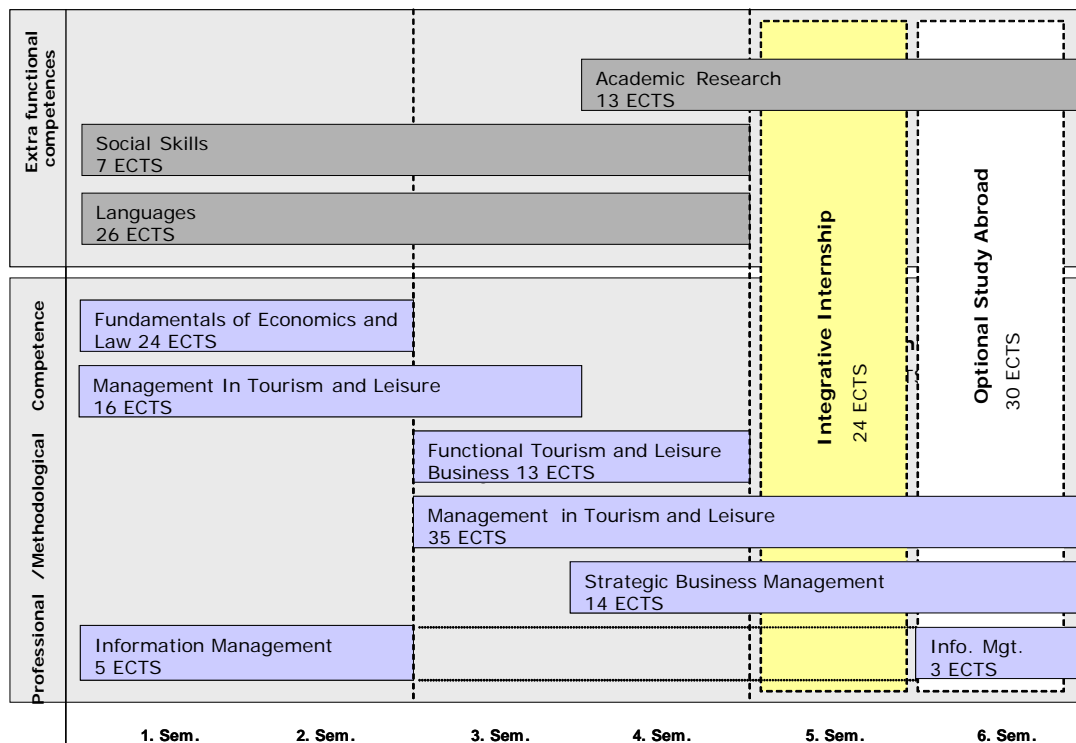
Figure 2: Overview of the Module System of the Bachelor Program

The curriculum consists of modules (see figure 2) that are related in content, with the goal of achieving a top-notch business studies qualification, as well as excellent active language skills in two foreign languages and the development of sound entrepreneurial approaches in tourism and leisure (see figure 3).

Subject/Methodological Competences

FUNDAMENTALS OF ECONOMICS & LAW

Statistics
Accounting
Funamentals of law
Economy

MANAGEMENT & BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Introduction to tourism
Introduction to finance
Introduction to marketing
Management
Project management

FUNCTIONAL TOURISM & LEISURE BUSINESS

Tourism & finance
Financial management
Tourism marketing
Human resource management
Service & quality management

MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM AND LEISURE

Tourism economics & politics
Event management
Intern. tourism & leisure markets
Operations management
Hospitality management
Incoming /outgoing tourism
Meeting & convention industry
Integrative synopsis in tourism
Innovation & strategic planning
Alpine tourism***
Destination management
Integrated tourism management

STRATEGIC BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Integrated corporate communications
Business management / strategic management
Controlling
Intercultural management

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

Applied information management
Information management in tourism

Extrafunctional Competences

ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Writing academic paper
Seminar internship
Internship
Bachelor's thesis

SOCIAL SKILLS

Teamwork & communication
Communication & self-management
Presentation & moderation skills

LANGUAGES

1st Foreign language: english
2nd Foreign language: Italian, french or spanish

Figure 3: The Two-Domain Model of Tourism Education at MCI

It can be summed up that the prime goal of the study program is to convey functional expertise, methodological competences as well as extra-functional skills, which enable students to meet the future challenges of the tourism and leisure industry.

Competences such as these are, among other sources, essential to be conveyed in educational institutions in order to best prepare students for their work life. Attention has to be paid that vocational programs are in line with present and not with past needs of the market. If this is achieved by the institution, it can be guaranteed that the institution can actually meet the demand of many employers in generating graduates possessing multi-faceted skills the industry is in need of.

SUMMARY

Vocational education and training (VET) is confronted with new challenges. Students therefore require a sound higher education that allows them to cope with the changing environment, speaking of competences such as the ability to handle conflict, creative problem solution, tolerance, social skills and flexibility. The developed module-based curriculum of the School of Tourism and Leisure of the Management Center Innsbruck (MCI) is a program that aims at best preparing students for the challenges of the time by conveying professional, methodological and social (extra-functional) competences.

The intent of the article was to discuss new developments and directions in vocational education and training (VET). The paper adds to a growing body of literature on module systems for tourism education and shall enhance our understanding of the significance and value of competence-based vocationally oriented programs. Hence, like any academic work, the paper should stimulate others to produce new academic research and it is believed that more extensive and timely research is needed on this matter.

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AN OBJECT ORIENTED APPROACH FOR MANAGING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

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ABSTRACT

The hotel Customer Complaint Management Knowledge concept introduced in the paper draws upon Knowledge Management and Customer Relationship Management, and Object-Oriented theories. The hotel Customer Complaint Management Knowledge concept includes four subsets: a) dissatisfied customers' complaint management knowledge; b) hotel staff's complaint management knowledge; c) hotels' structured complaint management knowledge; and d) suppliers' complaint management knowledge. The authors applied the hotel Customer Complaint Management Knowledge concept for the support of the hotel customer complaint management, although the concept can be applied in various domains. The hotel Customer Complaint Management Knowledge-based complaint management model applies a multidisciplinary approach to support the resolution, analysis, and utilisation of hotel customer complaints. It also supports the design and implementation of complaint management strategies for hotels.

KEYWORDS: *Customer complaint management; Customer Relationship Management; Knowledge Management; Object orientation*

INTRODUCTION

Service failure is one of the major sources for customer complaints. This, combined with the intangible nature of service delivery and recent trends in hotel industry such as declining customer loyalty; increased customer sophistication; and a changing business operational environment has led authors to address the area of service failure and customer complaint handling ((Davidow 2003), (Hoffman & Bateson 2001) and (Reid & Bojanic 2001)).

We first discuss the notion that customer complaint handling is an effective way to rectify customers' dissatisfaction. We then introduce an adapted object orientation theory to express the hotel Customer Complaint Management Knowledge concept (hCCMK) and then emphasize the importance of handling dissatisfied customer complaint management knowledge.

AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO RECTIFY CUSTOMERS' DISSATISFACTION

A customer complaint indicates a gap between the customer's expectation and the product and service provided by the organisation receiving the complaint. A dissatisfied customer might choose various actions against the product or service providers. Based on Sander's (1976) alternative dispute resolution (ADR) research and interviews with hotel management staff and academics in the hospitality management sector, it we believe that dissatisfied customers may take at least four types of actions against product and service providers namely avoidance, file complaints, seek ADR and litigation.

The option of avoidance has long been argued as an undesirable option and it often involves a heavy social and personal. A dissatisfied customer may complain to a hotel when the hotel fails to, in her mind, adequately address the enquiries raised. The dissatisfied customer may also take action against the hotel when the complaints have failed or she does not feel that the complaint will be addressed effectively.

Complaint handling, ADR and litigation are all aspects of addressing customer dissatisfaction. Complaint handling is concerned with settlements and relationships, and the resolution of the complaint often relies on the fairness embedded in the resolution process.

ADR promotes dialogues and negotiation; whilst litigation is concerned with the pursuit of justice. Complaint handling is a low cost, effective way to address customer dissatisfaction compared to other dispute resolution methods such as ADR and litigation. In the hotel industry, complaint management is not only an effective tool for resolving customer complaints but also provides quality improvement for the hotel that receives the complaints.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on: an extensive literature review of object-oriented system development theory, KM and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) theories; formal intensive interviews with seventeen hotel management staff and leading academics in hospitality management (refer to Table 1 for the overall constituents of interviewees); and informal discussions with hotel management staff and hotel management academics in Australia and overseas in 2005.

Each formal interview took approximately one and half hours. The hotel management staffs interviewed all held a managerial position in a functional area and each had more than 15 years' experience in the hotel industry. The academics were all researchers in the hospitality management area with research supervision experiences and having journal publications in hospitality management discipline in the last three years. A semi-structured interview method was adopted for the interviews. The interview questions were classified into three categories (i) the problem situations associated with hotel customer complaint, (ii) managerial perspectives on hotel customer complaint management, and (iii) current practices including policies, procedures and mechanisms in hotel customer complaint management.

	Hotel Management Staff	Academics	Total
Melbourne	3	1	4
Beijing	3	2	5
Hong Kong	1	2	3
Macau	2	2	4
Others		1	1
Total			17

Table 1: The constituents of interviewees

AN OBJECT ORIENTED APPROACH

Object orientation views the world as being related between objects. Coad and Yourdon (1990) propose that an object is an abstraction of something in a problem domain, reflecting the capabilities of the system to keep information about it, interact with it or both. Objects are used to model an understanding of the application domain, which concerns the system and abstraction. The central idea of the object orientation subsumes abstraction, generalisation and specialisation, and polymorphism - concepts that, on the face of it, lends to the re-use, which has been valued by engineering disciplines such as in automobile and software development. The Reuse approach is

starting to have influence on service-oriented organisations as well. For example McDonalds promotes reuse of rules and procedures in quality control to achieve a consistent brand image.

The object orientated approach has led to the development of readily reusable patterns, components and application frameworks (Fayad et al. 1999a; Fayad et al. 1999b). In addition to the theoretical support that the object-oriented approach provides, a practical reason that the authors choosing object-oriented approach to express the hCCMK concept is modelling facilities provided by the Unified Modelling Language (UML) and systems development environments such IBM Rational and Microsoft .net.

An object is a building block of any systems or models. Bennett et al (2002) claims that an object is an abstraction within a system. It can be either a model or the resulting software. A class is a set of objects that share the same attributes, operations, methods, relationships and semantics and the purpose of a class is to declare a collection of methods, operations and attributes that fully describe the structure and behaviour of objects. By contrast, an object is an instance that originates from a class; it is structure and behaves according to its class.

In the domain of hotel customer complaint management, the hCCMK concept can be expressed as a superclass that embeds the principles of hotel customer complaint management. Another four subsets of the hCCMK concept (dissatisfied customer complaint management knowledge, staff's customer complaint management knowledge, suppliers' complaint management knowledge and hotels' structured customer complaint management knowledge) inherit the principles of the superclass but contribute unique characteristics to the domain of hotel customer complaint management. The use of the hCCMK can facilitate the communication and collaboration between the dissatisfied customer and the hotel, which can be an effective tool in supporting the resolution of customer complaints. The following sections illustrate the principles of object-orientation to support the development of the hCCMK concept.

ABSTRACTION

Abstraction is one of the principal concepts of object orientation and aims to reduce the level of detail required for implementing software systems. The concept does not refer to a concrete object. Rather, it denotes a quality, an emotion, or an idea. In systems engineering, knowledge is to be seen as an abstraction that is difficult to engineer directly, but the principles can be applied by classes that are more concrete. For example, a customer complaint management knowledge class might be able to capture codified customer complaint management knowledge. The rationale behind the argument is that the more abstract the class, the more difficult it is for the knowledge engineer to articulate the knowledge, especially if it is tacit.

Abstraction is a powerful tool for business analysts and software developers. It allows the knowledge engineer to define the top domain in a well-researched domain,

without the need to reinvent the wheel. Most of the modern object oriented software development languages support the notion. Within an inheritance hierarchy, it is likely that some of the topmost classes may contain features whose definitions differ from the subclasses. In other words, there are no implementation details for these features within the super class. This type of class is subsequently known as an abstract class. For example, a knowledge class in the knowledge engineering domain is an abstract class.

An abstract class is a class that can't be instantiated (Szyperski 1997). That is to say that no object can be a direct instance of an abstract class. An abstract class can have unimplemented methods/abstract methods. Concrete classes that inherit from an abstract class have to implement all such abstract methods. An ideal abstraction should encapsulate all of the essential properties of an object, including data and processes. The principles accumulated to date in KM and CRM can be applied in domains that are more specific, for example, a hotel customer complaint management domain. The superclasses are more abstract than the subclasses. The abstract nature of knowledge provides a powerful tool to allow not only knowledge engineers to follow principles and theories but also to apply, validate and enrich the theories in a specific problem situation. In a knowledge engineering term, abstraction allows the knowledge engineer to develop top-level concept to support the development of typologies in a given domain.

GENERALISATION AND SPECIALISATION

Generalisation and specialisation are two important notions in the object orientated approach. Generalisation describes the logical relationship between elements that share some characteristics or describe the grouping of objects that have a common set of properties and operations. Fowler (1997) states that generalisation is a taxonomic relationship between a more general element and a more specific element. Specialisation is the refinement of an abstraction by adding additional features. In the hotel customer complaint management domain, the hCCMK can be seen as a superclass, which contains certain rules and principles that are proven to be effective in supporting the hotel customer complaint management. On the other hand, the subsets of the hCCMK, for example the dissatisfied customers' customer complaint management has its own characteristics.

Generalisation and its converse, specialisation is one of the most powerful tools of abstraction used in object-oriented modelling. The object-oriented approach uses generalisation and specialisation techniques to realise abstraction. In an employee-manager relationship, an employee object is a generalisation, which contains the attributes of employee id and employee name, and possibly other attributes such as the date of appointment, date of birth and line manager. The manager object has all of the attributes of the employees but with added other responsibilities, for example a manger may be assigned to a special responsibility or be given a right to overwrite certain rules defined in hotel customer complaint management procedures or rules.

POLYMORPHISM

Polymorphism denotes the ability to response to the same command differently. Graham (2001, p16.) defines polymorphism as "the ability to use the same expression to denote different operations". Many modern programming languages support polymorphic behaviour.

In the hotel customer complaint management domain, a particular customer complaint is viewed differently by the front line customer complaint handling staff and the management staff. The frontline staff's responsibility is to resolve the customer complaint whereas management is more concerned with the frequency and risks associated with the customer complaints.

Object-oriented programming languages derive most of their power from inheritance and runtime binding of function calls. Bennett et al. (2002) indicate that the object-oriented approach encourages the decoupling of subsystems.

The original object does not need to know which class is going to receive the message on any particular occasion. Instead, a receiving object is responsible for knowing how to respond to messages. Objects can respond differently to the same message and the same message with different implementations. The polymorphism notion permits knowledge engineers to design customer complaint management systems that provide consistent feedback to dissatisfied customers.

HOTEL CUSTOMER COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE

The hotel Customer Complaint Management Knowledge (hCCMK) concept introduced in the paper draws upon Knowledge Management (KM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and object-oriented system development theories. The expression of the hCCMK concept adopts an object orientated approach, which views hCCMK as a subset of hotel management knowledge, inheriting the principles embedded within KM and CRM theories. The hCCMK described in the paper provides a theoretical framework to support the practice of hotel customer complaint management. The management of hCCMK involves an ongoing process of generating, disseminating and using the hCCMK within a hotel, between the hotel and its customers and between the hotel and its suppliers.

From the perspective of an object-oriented approach, the concept of hCCKM has been modelled as a superclass that contains a set of principles, methods and strategies in the domain of customer complaint management. The hCCKM consists of four subsets: a) dissatisfied customers' complaint management knowledge; b) hotel staff's complaint management knowledge; c) hotels' structured complaint management knowledge; and d) suppliers' complaint management knowledge. These sets contribute to the effectiveness of the resolution of customer complaints and its management.

The hCMK concept assumes that enhanced communication creates an environment that facilitates the resolution of hotel customer complaints and increases the level of customer satisfaction. The fairness literature (Blodgett et al. 1997) supports the view that procedural justice and interactional justice dimensions are factors as important as the distributive justice dimension in service recovery situations. Communication is one of the most effective problem solving methods, especially in negotiation (see (Fisher & Ury 1983) and (Tillett 1999)); systems theory (Checkland 1981) and (Pidd 2003), alternative dispute resolution (Sander 1976) and equity theory (Adams 1963).

From a KM point of view, the hCCMK is a relationship specific knowledge and its application relies on dialogues between the dissatisfied customers and the hotel that receives the complaint. Diagram 1 illustrates that the knowledge flow and dialogue between the dissatisfied customer and the hotel that receives the complaint will enhance the resolution of the customer complaints and the efficacy of the customer complaint management. The systems approach (see (Checkland & Scholes 1990)) supports the notion that intervention can prove useful. In the hotel customer complaint domain, an effective dialogue between the hotel staff and the dissatisfied customers can facilitate the resolution of the complaint.
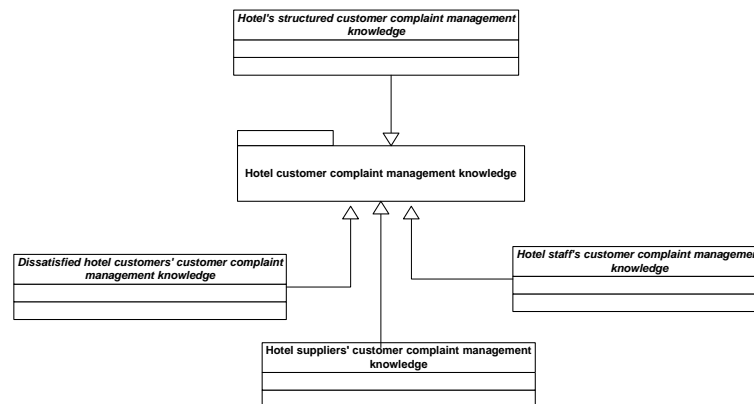
Diagram 1: Hotel customer complaint management knowledge

The hCCMK concept extends and instantiates the understanding of customer knowledge which has been valued as an important asset for creating competitive advantage (see (Darroch & McNaughton 2003); (Davenport et al. 2001); (Gibbert et al. 2003) and (Rowley 2004)). From the view of customer relationship management, Ballantyne (2004) argues that a customer relationship management approach attempts to create and offer the platform for knowledge creation and transfer between an organisation and its customers. From the point of view of knowledge as a capital asset (see (Brooking 1996); (Edvisson & Malone 1997) and Roos 1998)), the management of customer complaint knowledge will prove useful not only a tool for creating sustained competitive advantage but also a financial value for organisations.

DISSATISFIED CUSTOMERS' COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT KNOWLEDGE

In marketing literature, customer knowledge is often referred to as structured information about customers (see (Campbell 2003) and (Li & Calantone 1998)) and knowledge residing in customers (see (Gibbert et al. 2003)). Customer knowledge has been recognised as a significant resource that can be managed to support R & D (e.g. Gibbert et al. 2002) and the foundations for customer relationship management.

Whilst research has focused on determining what customers know about the products and services of the organisation, it has neglected the need to support customers with knowledge about products and services. Many hotel management staff and academics have indicated that the majority of the hotel customer complaints can be resolved through an effective dialogue between the frontline staff and the dissatisfied customer.

Dissatisfied customers' complaint knowledge is a specialisation or subset of the hCCMK. The complaint knowledge of dissatisfied customers is a set of knowledge that is difficult to capture, disseminate and use by the parties involved) than other three subsets (hotels' structured customer complaint management knowledge, staff's complaint management knowledge, and suppliers' complaint management knowledge) of the hCCMK. The literature review and the interviews indicate that most current knowledge management initiatives focus on managing organisations' internal assets and have neglected the importance of dissatisfied customers' knowledge.

The quality contents of the knowledge that a dissatisfied customer possesses are one of the major contributors in decision-making process with regard to dissatisfied customers. Consumer behaviour research (see (LeBoeuf 1990)) has noted that only about 4 percent of all dissatisfied customers will complain to product and service providers. There are some obvious social, economic, and psychological reasons why some people are less active than others in pursuing complaints (see (Denham 1998) and (Singh 1990)). The findings suggest that while they do not complain to the product and service providers they regularly tell others about their bad experiences.

One of the major reasons that some dissatisfied customers do not complain is because they do not know where and how to complain. A dissatisfied customer often performs avoidance rather than complaining to the organisation. This leads to negative implications for both the dissatisfied customers and for the hotels. The hotels might have just lost an opportunity to receive feedback about the product or service experiences.

As a result of not complaining to the hotel concerned, the dissatisfied customer may have given up a chance to have the situation rectified. However, research has indicated that dissatisfied customers who initially retreat from a conflict, might still take action against product and services providers.

In Australia, the Australian Standard Complaints Handling AS 4269-1995 Section 1.3 points out that *a consumer has a right to complain and to have the complaint suitably handled*. AS 4269-1995 claims that organisations should provide information to consumers on the relevant complaint process. The effective resolution of hotel customer complaints not only provides opportunities for the hotels to regain customers' trust but also provides a mechanism for hotels to improve the quality of services.

From our interviews we note that hotels value returning customers because of cost savings associated with the reduced need to recruit customers. Further, it is easier to resolve issues that involve regular customers because they know how and to who to address enquires by dissatisfied situation customers.

The satisfactory resolution of customer complaints is influenced by many factors. Service recovery studies show that the satisfaction level of a dissatisfied customer is not only influenced by the level of compensation, but also by other factors such as procedural justice and interactional justice associated with the situation. This study supports the notion that having an effective knowledge flow between the dissatisfied customer and the hotel facilitates can improve the chance of the satisfactory resolution of the complaint. Dissatisfied customers are part of the problem situation and their involvement can provide a positive input to the resolution, if it is handled well.

The knowledge that a dissatisfied customer possesses also affects the hotel's ability to handle, analyse and use complaints. Research (see (Barlow & Moller 1996); (Gilly, Stevenson & Yale 1991); (Stauss & Seidel 2004)) points out that complaints may be the single most accurate indicator of how well an organisation is meeting its clients' needs. In addition to having feedback about the product and services from dissatisfied customers, the organisation relies on knowledge from dissatisfied customers to take sufficient actions to maintain the confidence of dissatisfied customers.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The hCCMK concept described in this paper provides a theoretical framework to support the practice of hotel customer complaint management. The dissatisfied customers' complaint management knowledge is important not only to the dissatisfied customer but also to the hotel that receives the complaint. It helps in terms of supporting the resolution of customer complaints and the quality improvement process.

Dissatisfied customers' complaint management knowledge can be explicit or tacit. It is difficult if not impossible to codify dissatisfied customer's tacit complaint management knowledge unless dissatisfied customers contact the hotel organisations concerned. The process of resolving the customer complaints provides valuable clues for the hotels' quality improvement process and the enhancement of the ability for future service recovery.

Dissatisfied customers' complaint management knowledge is a key for complaint process management and can be used to construct a decision support tool for dissatisfied customers. The flow of customer complaint management knowledge between a dissatisfied hotel customer and the hotel that receives the complaint is the key for the resolution of the complaints. As Diagram 1 illustrates, the resolution of the hotel customer complaints can be enhanced if there is a good communication channel between the dissatisfied customer and the hotel. Marketing research (especially the CRM approach) in hotel management has been promising in analysing customer spending patterns to support future marketing initiatives. Our interviews with hotel managers and academics in the hotel management area reveal that complaint management in hotels is more reactive rather than proactive.

The complaint handling process can be more effective if the dissatisfied customer knows where to address the complaints. Our interviews indicate that a repeat customer is easy to serve than a new one.

As part of the research project reported in this paper, a hCCMK-based hotel management model has been developed and is being evaluated by hotel managers and academics. The hCCMK-based hotel complaint management model attempts to apply the KM approach to supporting resolution, analysis, and utilisation of customer complaints. The model applies the hCCMK concept in the domain of hotel customer complaint management. It consists of three layers: the conceptual layer, which defines the philosophical foundations, principles and the application of the hCCMK concept; the logical layer, which defines the relationships among various parties involved in the problem domain; and the process layer, which defines the tasks and processes of handling customer complaints and its management in hotels. Based on the principles of the three layers, future research will include prototyping hCCMK-based hotel complaint management systems and evaluating the effectiveness of the application of the hCCMK in complaint management in hotels.

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EXPERIENTIAL VALUE SCALES FOR MEASURING HOTEL BRAND EXPERIENCE - A CASE OF ECONOMY HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

Hotel rooms in the economy sector have become increasingly commoditized. Researchers appeal for brand experience as a future competitive edge and postulate that personal unique experiences delivered decide the success of the company. The aim of this study is to develop an experiential value scale (EVS) that can be used to assess the lodging experience in terms that go well beyond the traditional mix of price and quality. Experience that offers consumers values in esthetic, escape, efficiency, economic values, service excellence and social recognition is found to have positive impacts on consumers' repeat patronage, likelihood to pay more, and willingness to contribute to the brand's reputation.

KEYWORDS: *Brand experience; Economy hotels; Experiential value scale.*

INTRODUCTION

Branding is one of the most dominant trends in the global hotel industry. There are more than 188 multi-national, national and regional lodging brands operating across the United States (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2001). This unprecedented total of brands has intensified competition to a great degree. In recent years, hotel brands expansion picks up fast in the economy segment when developers and investors believe the economy hotels are more lucrative than their full service counterparts (Payne, 2005). Brand proliferation and room commoditization in economy lodging have become a reality.

In saturated and highly competitive segment such as economy lodging, customers are found easily to switch brands on several dollars' difference in room rate or on some simple amenities such as breakfast, thus making it hard for economy hotels to compete on functional offerings. Recent studies predict that the level of competition may increase even further. In face of the hotel brand proliferation and intensified competition for loyal customers, Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2006) cautioned the hotel owners/operators on brand damage and commoditization due to lack of distinctiveness, loss of reputation and failure to change.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA) and Smith Travel Research (STR), a national marketing research company, both identified the typology of lodging in five segments: budget hotels, economy hotels, mid-scale without food and beverage, mid-scale with food and beverage and upscale. Economy hotels are defined in market price segment as the next 20% lowest of average room rate before budget hotels (STR, 2005). Economy hotels are limited service properties by virtue of having limited amenities and no on-site food and beverage services. Based on AHLA's report in 2000, the economy segment's average daily rate is $51.85 and the average number of rooms is 100. Approximately 24 hotel brands of over 5,000 properties are associated with the economy lodging segment in the United States (STR, 2005).

The economy hotels companies have traditionally focused on developing 'products' rather than the brand. The traditional sources of value creation have been through managerial intuitive understanding of the market they serve. Operators in economy hotels companies usually take convenience of location and cleanliness to demonstrate how their products differ from their competitors. This difference is often used as the basis for differentiation as it is easy to sell a "tangible" functional difference. The concept of brand is not well developed. Even though it is acknowledged that hotel room has always been a function driven category, it is equally true that lodging experience is an emotive and personal subject. Theoretical and empirical data from service experience research suggests that customer reactions to the service experience may be more affective than cognitive, particularly when emotional consumption is involved.

Schmitt (1999) mentioned that the experiences that a company can deliver to its customers decide the success of the company. Experiences are memorable activities that

are created by a business through its products and services to customers (Pine & Gilmore, 1998). The experience value is critical in attracting new customers and retaining old ones (Yelkur, 2000). If companies fail to differentiate themselves at a level beyond functional benefits (product based), they will be unable to sustain brand loyalty. Consumers will opt for the lower priced generic accommodations, which satisfy the lodging needs unless they feel that a brand offers them some enhanced value. Hotel professionals have to realize that economy hotels have the potential to connect with consumers at levels beyond functional and this message has to be conveyed in all relevant touch points.

Despite its influence on customer satisfaction and its use in marketing, the brand experiential value in economy hotels has been the subject of little research. In addition, no instrument is available to specifically evaluate the brand experience in the economy hotel context. Thus, the goal of this research was to develop and validate an instrument that measures the brand experience provided in economy hotels.

The aim of this study is to develop an experiential value scale (EVS) that can be used to assess the hotel lodging experience in terms that go well beyond the traditional mix of price and quality. It also aims to build a conceptual framework of how the experience might influence customers' attitude and, in turn, how attitudes affect behavioral intentions identified by brand loyalty. Based on previous studies in brand experience from various industries, the first part of this study develops a multiple-item scale to measure the overall conceptual framework of experience in the economy hotel setting. The second phase of the study investigates the causal relationships between experience, experiential values (e.g., functional and emotional benefits) and behavioral intentions identified by brand loyalty (e.g., re-patronage, positive word-of-mouth, and likelihood of spending more than anticipated).

Specifically, the research addresses the questions:

1) What are the experiential value scales of economy hotels?
2) Which experiential values of economy hotels induce consumer brand loyalty?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brand Experience

According to research conducted by Booz Allen (2004), customization becomes the trend for hotel industry. Like most other industries, customers in the hotels industry are demanding ever-higher lever of customization. The way a company responds to these demands for customized products or services can make difference between performances that lead rather than lag peers.

To customize hotel offerings and achieve brand loyalty from segmented market, companies need to design and offer personalized and unique brand experience. For more

than half a century scholars in the theory of value have asserted that products and services are the means and experiences are the ends. Abbott (1955) stated that what people really desire are not products, but satisfying experiences. People want products because they want the experience-bringing services which they hope the products will render.

Carbone and Haeckel (1993) define experience in the economic setting as the take-away impression formed by people's encounters with products, services, and businesses – a perception produced when humans consolidate sensory information. Gupta and Vajic (2000) contend that experience refers broadly to any sensation or knowledge acquisition resulting from a person's participation in daily activities at some level of interaction with different elements of a context created by a service provider.

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) understood an experience as a private event that occurs as a reaction or a response to some environmental stimulation, which is often the result of direct observation of, or participation within, particular events. It is suggested that a brand experience includes the spectrum of events or interactions that a customer has with a brand. Thus, a brand experience can include customers' direct use of a product and/or service, as well as indirect consumption of brand images, associations, and events. Experiences provide customers a way to engage physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually in the consumption of the product or service making the interaction meaningfully real (McCann-Erickson, 2002).

The values of brand experience have long been recognized by service industry. In the case of economy hotels, customers may spend a day or more, and they sense the hotel experience consciously and unconsciously during their stay. While the room and the service must be of acceptable quality, pleasing hotel experience (e.g., lighting, décor, layout, employee appearance) and pleasant employee interactions may determine to a large extent the degree of overall satisfaction and subsequent behavior.

In service-based economies, consumer experience is playing a greater role in molding brand perceptions (Berry, 2000). Experience with the brand is the primary driver of brand equity over time, especially for service-oriented brands (Berry, 2000). Thus, delivering a comprehensive brand experience becomes paramount brand strategy whereby "marketing and external communications help build the brand, but nothing is more powerful than the customer's actual experience" (Berry, 2000, p. 136).

Experiential Values

The consumption experience can be rich in value. Researchers have used various dimensions to define experiential values and their benefits. According to Mathwick and Malhotra (2001), experiential value refers to customers' perceptions from directly using services or products or from indirect observation. Experiential value perceptions are based upon interactions involving either direct usage or distanced appreciation of goods and services. These interactions provide the basis for the relativistic preferences held by the individuals involved (Holbrook and Corfman, 1985).

Sheth, Newman and Gross (1991) stated that the value that motivates consumer behavior has functional, conditional, social, emotional and epistemic utility. Pine and Gilmore (1998) postulated that experience generates values in the realms of 4E, namely, *education, entertaining, escape and esthetic*.

Experiential value has been said to offer both intrinsic and extrinsic benefits (Babin and Darden, 1995; Batra and Ahtola, 1991; Crowley, Spangenberg and Hughes, 1992; Mano and Oliver, 1993). The internal benefit is from starting and finishing a task or a job, while the external benefit comprises the pleasure and happiness of a process (Babin, Darden and Griffin, 1994).

Holbrook (1994) added two categories of experiential values besides extrinsic/intrinsic and classifies them as self-oriented/other-oriented and active/reactive. Holbrook's analysis of how preference is created through experience leads to differentiate between eight core values on the basis of the three classifications (Table 1). This classification of different types of value allows clear distinction between products, services and experiences as the three potential components of a value proposition.

Table 1. Holbrook's Taxonomy of Values (1994).

Value	Outcome	Extrinsic/ Intrinsic	Self/Other- Oriented	Active/ Reactive
Esthetics	Awareness of beauty	Intrinsic	Self	Reactive
Play	Fun	Intrinsic	Self	Active
Excellence	Quality, fitness for use	Extrinsic	Self	Reactive
Efficiency	Productivity, convenience	Extrinsic	Self	Active
Esteem	Reputation	Extrinsic	Other	Reactive
Politics	Success	Extrinsic	Other	Active
Morality	Virtue, ethical acts	Intrinsic	Other	Active
Spirituality	Faith, ecstasy	Intrinsic	Other	Reactive

Companies provide these core values through elements such as environment factors. Many researchers postulated that different environment factors induce different customer responses to the experience. These factors include music (Areni and Kim, 1993; Hui, Dube and Chebat, 1997; Milliman, 1982), color (Bellizzi, Crowley and Hasty, 1983), and smell (Spangenberg, Crowley and Henderson, 1996). Through the use of branded scents, sounds and tactile elements, a deeper emotional connection to the brand is expected to be established. As Burt (2005) asserts, a brand is not a brand unless it competes along emotional dimensions. A brand must use the environment factors to symbolize a promise that people believe can be delivered and one they desire to be part of.

The strategically integrated factors of brand experience generate value propositions for customers. In turn, customers exhibit their response to those value propositions by demonstrating preference for one over another. Consumer preference is created which helps distinguish a brand amidst a sea of competing commodities by

carefully crafting and testing emotional appeals that align with the brand personality, thus creating consistent, unique brand experience.

Brand Loyalty

The influence of the brand experience on brand loyalty has long been acknowledged by architects, interior designers and service providers (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Turley and Milliman, 2000). Studies indicate that the emotions that customers experience during service consumption may be a major determinant of their satisfaction and subsequent behavior such as repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth (Mano and Oliver, 1993; Russell and Pratt, 1980). The strategically crafted experiential values drive loyalty because they meet the deep-rooted emotional needs of target consumers.

Brand loyalty has had a rich tradition of research in the field and the construct is sometimes identified as having a complex mixture of attitudinal and behavioral elements (Aaker 1991; Assael 1998; Day 1969; Jacoby and Kyner 1973; Oliver 1999; Tucker 1964). Oliver (1999, p. 34) defines brand loyalty as a deeply held commitment to repeat patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior.

Behavioral, or purchase, loyalty consists of repeated purchases of the brand, whereas attitudinal brand loyalty includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with the brand. Although the definition of brand loyalty varies depending on research context, this study considers loyalty as a customer's willingness to provide positive word of mouth, to visit the hotel again in the future, and to spend more than anticipated (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

METHOD

Measurement

MacKay (1999, p 182) noted that a product's or a service's appeal is an "amalgam of rational and emotional factors" and that "emotions play a part in every purchase decision (but) . . . very few purchases are entirely emotional." Prior literature (Sweeney and Soutar, 2001) shows that multiple value dimensions explain consumer choice better, both statistically and qualitatively, than does a single 'value for money' item and should produce superior results when investigating consumption value.

In this study, we developed seven subscales measuring the multi dimensions of experiential value. These subscales measure *esthetic appeal, entertainment, escapism, efficiency, economic value, service excellence and social recognition.*

A set of 36 questions regarding intrinsic and extrinsic experiential values were translated from Holbrook (1994) on top of the modifications from Brady and Cronin

(2001) on service quality, from Sweeney and Soutar (2001) on emotional value, from Mathwick and Malhotra (2001) on functional value, and from Gupta and Vajic (2000) on social interaction and recognition. Items generated for the *efficiency* scale were based upon qualitative research conducted by the Catalog Coalition (1993), a commercial cooperative of direct marketers led by Sears. This qualitative research was combined with published scales related to extrinsic value (Babin and Darden, 1995; Batra and Ahtola, 1991). Brand loyalty is measured in behavioral construct by repeat patronage, likelihood to spend more than anticipated and willingness to provide positive word-of-mouth (Zeithaml et al., 1996).

Survey Instrument

The surveys consisted of a sell-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaire that contained the scales for the measures relevant to the present study. This self-reported questionnaire was developed to empirically test the relationships among seven subscales of experiential values drawn from the previous literature, and to detect the causal link between the experiential subscales and the brand loyalty. The experiential subscales consist of *Esthetic*, *Entertainment*, *Escape*, *Efficiency*, *Economic values*, *Service Excellence*, and *Social Recognition*. A set of 43 questions regarding experiential marketing, service quality, emotional value, functional value and brand loyalty was modified and translated from previous studies (Brady and Cronin, 2001; Holbrook, 1994; Mathwick, Malhotra & Rigdon, 2001; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001).

The surveys began with an introductory statement that asked respondents to administer their own responses, assured them of confidentiality, and so forth. Respondents were asked to indicate their levels of agreement with a five-point Likert scale, where 1 = "Strongly disagree" and 5 = "Strongly agree." This was followed by a request for demographic and trip information. Twelve demographic and characteristic questions were included in this section.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were distributed by the primary researcher of the project at four economy hotels in a Midwest town in May 2006. The data collection was conducted during a time frame of a month and alternated between weekdays and weekends. The survey was distributed to customers at breakfast areas or at the lobbies of the surveyed hotels. The average time for completing the questionnaire was three minutes. A total of 221 completed surveys were collected.

Data Analysis and Primary Results

The original questionnaire was examined by a panel of experts to evaluate the validity of the questions and further tested by a small group of customers to verify the effectiveness of measuring customer's attitudes. All data were examined by using statistic software, SPSS with version13.0 and LISREL with version 8.5. The results of respondents' demographic information and their trip characteristics are reported (Table 2).

Table 2. Respondent Profile and Trip Characteristics.

Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%
Gender			**Purpose of trip**		
Male	109	52.2	Pleasure	68	32.4
Female	100	47.8	Business	58	27.6
Age			Other	84	40.0
Less than 20	7	3.3	**Travel Party**		
20-30	24	11.4	Only myself	45	21.7
31-40	14	6.7	With family	143	69.1
41-50	37	17.6	With friends	7	3.4
51-60	77	36.7	With colleagues	12	5.8
0ver 60	51	24.3	**Source**		
Ethnicity			Past experience	81	38.6
Caucasian	181	81.9	Friends' recom.	41	19.5
Others	29	18.1	Online	44	21.0
Income			Loyalty program	14	6.7
Less than $ 50,000	39	19	other	30	14.3
$50,000 – 79,999	43	20.9	**Education**		
$80,000 – 99,999	12	5.8	Less than college	26	12.6
Over $100,000	78	37.9	Some college	29	14
Prefer not to say	34	16.5	College degree	98	47.3
			Graduate degree	54	26.1

The gender of the respondents is almost equally distributed between the two genders when male (52.2%) is slightly more than female (47.8%). Most of the respondents are 51-60 (36.7%) or over 60 years old (24.3%). They are predominantly Caucasian (81.9%). Their purpose of trip is more a combination of business and pleasure (40%) than taking pleasure (32.4%) or business trip (27.6%) alone. This is accounted by the fact that there is a university graduation event during the month the data was collected and some respondents come to town for their children's graduation ceremony. This could also explain why most respondents traveled and stayed at the surveyed hotels with their families (69.1%). For the respondents, the past experience of the brand is the biggest source of knowing about the hotel (38.6%) followed by Internet (21%) and friends' recommendation (19.5%). Finally, almost half of the respondents (47.3%) have college degree and some (26.1%) have graduate degree. College degree and graduate degree combined make the respondent profile an educated group (73.4%).

The scales statistics and reliability examination is tested through SPSS. A total of 43 measurements and 8 latent variables were entered into the LISREL analysis. Before testing the overall measurement model, internal consistency reliability was examined. Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounted for by the true score of the "underlying construct." Construct is the hypothetical variable that is being measured (Hatcher, 1994). This value should be above 0.7 in most social science

studies (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). Any subscale with Cronbach's alpha lower than 0.7 will be considered as the case without acceptable reliability and be dropped. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha based on standardized items of each subscale is between 0.768 and 0.922. All of them are above 0.7 and demonstrate high reliability. The subscale statistics and reliability was reported in Table 3.

Table 3. Scale Statistics and Reliability.

	Scale Statistics					Reliability	
	Item	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	Grand Mean	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items
Esthetic	8	31.46	24.531	4.953	3.93	0.917	0.922
Entertainment	9	29.39	31.700	5.630	3.27	0.886	0.886
Escape	4	13.00	7.716	2.778	3.25	0.791	0.780
Efficiency	3	11.11	3.015	1.736	3.70	0.805	0.807
Economic Value	3	9.70	7.012	2.648	3.23	0.771	0.768
Service Excellence	4	14.84	6.555	2.560	3.71	0.832	0.839
Social Recognition	8	28.32	20.408	4.518	3.54	0.869	0.868

After the reliability is tested, the primary step of the data analysis is to verify the scales and find the relative importance of each scale. Each scale includes variety of subscales and direct variables. The proposed seven subscales are composed of a total of 39 questions and each subscale contains at least three or at most nine questions pertaining to experiential values. The grand mean of each subscale varies from less than 3.3, such as *Entertainment*, *Escape*, and *Economic Value*, to higher than 3.7, such as *Efficiency*, *Service Excellence*, and *Esthetic*. It is not surprising that the lower grand means were found in *Entertainment* and *Escape* and the higher grand means were revealed in *Efficiency* and *Service Excellence*. The case of the study is in the category of economy lodging where customers pursue convenience and consistent service. It is noted that the current study does not lend much support to the experiential values of entertainment or sense of escape.

It is also noted that although *Economic value* obtained the lowest grand mean, 3.23, and *Esthetic* value achieved the highest, 3.93, the standard deviations of the two subscales were higher than those consisting of the same item number, suggesting great variation in guests' input to the two value scales.

The standard deviation of each subscale changes depending on the number of items and how consistent the guests rated each item. Generally, the more items there are in each subscale, the larger the standard deviation. The more diversity there is in the respondents' comments, the higher the standard deviation of each subscale. The *Efficiency* acquired high grand mean with the lowest standard deviation, 1.736, revealing much consistency of efficiency value from guests' perspective.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was then employed to investigate inter-relationships among multiple concepts in the model. SEM is used to "explain the pattern of series of inter-related dependence relationships simultaneously between a set of latent (unobserved) constructs, each measured by one or more manifest (observed) variables" (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). SEM can be used to estimate variance and covariance, test hypotheses, conventional linear regression, and factor analysis (Reisinger and Turner, 1999). However, SEM must be directed by theory that is critical for model development and modification. Model fit determines the degree to which the SEM fits the sample size (Schumacker & Lomax, 1996). The purpose of this study is not to examine the Model Fitness, but to obtain the estimates of variance and covariance, which can reveal the relationship between direct variables and latent variables, as well as between independent latent variables and dependent latent variables.

The structure pattern is describes as the proposed model. There are seven independent latent variables and one dependent latent variable in this model. The "Maximum Likelihood" method was chosen for the analysis. The result of the SEM is illustrated in Figure 1.

The overall Goodness of Fit Statistics is reported in the bottom of Figure 1, including Full Information ML Chi-Square (3589.25), p-value (0.00000), Degrees of Freedom (832), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA 0.122). The probability of RMSEA with less than 0.05 is 0.00.

The relationship between direct variables and latent variables is illustrated in Figure 1 as well. The Lambda-X's estimated values are between 0.35 and 1.28, and the t-values are between 2.67 and 15.13. The Lambda-Y's estimated value is between 0.51 and 0.75. However, the t-value of variable BESTSTAY is not reported. It means this study does not support the attitudinal commitment in brand loyalty when guests are asked to perceive if the surveyed hotel is the best place to stay for a trip. This manifest variable could be excluded from brand loyalty subscale for future study. The rest of brand loyalty items are all reported as loyalty measurement as revealed by re-patronage, likelihood to pay more, and positive word-of-mouth.

Chi-Square=3589.25, df=832, P-value=0.00000, RMSEA=0.122
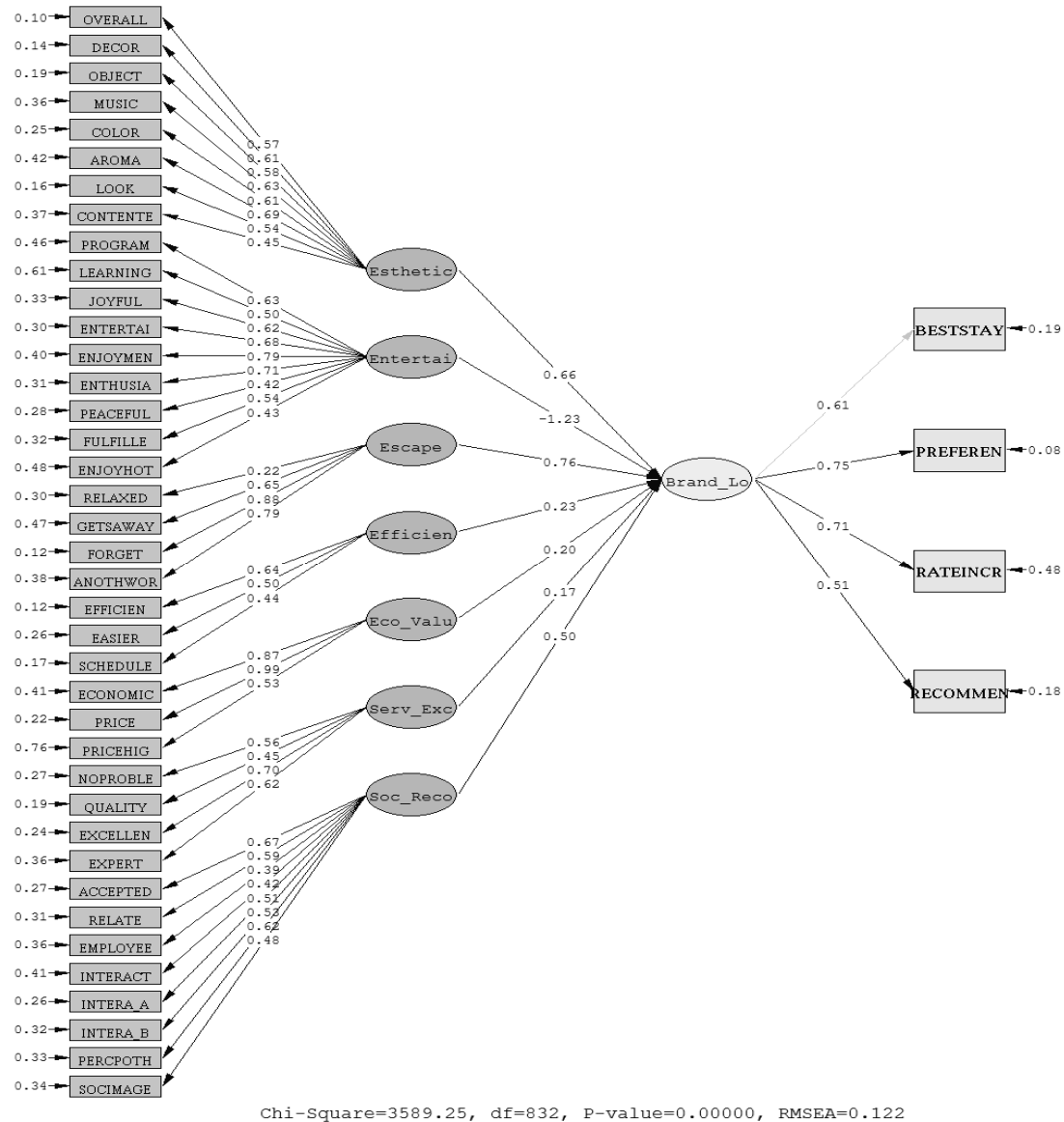
Figure 1. Structure Equation Model Analysis.

Overall, the relationship between each latent variable is the focus of this research. All Gamma values are reported in Figure 1. The negative value, -1.23, is noted for the connection between *Entertainment* and *Brand Loyalty*, which implies that the relationship of these two variables is negative in this study. The increases of entertainment in the economy hotel may lead to the decreases of the brand loyalty of the guests. This might be a fallacious conclusion and takes further study to validate the value scale. Besides, for further study the questions in this subscale need to be modified to reveal more specifically the practices of entertainment at economy hotels. On the other hand, it should be noted that the comprehensiveness of the model is not verified; some other subscales could be excluded from the structure pattern.

Nevertheless, the results of the SEM revealed the existence of the relationship between proposed experiential values, the seven subscales, and the brand loyalty. Whereas negative value is noted in *Entertainment* for brand loyalty, positive connections are found between brand loyalty and *Esthetic* (0.66), *Escape* (0.76), *Efficiency* (0.23), *Economic value* (0.20), *Service excellence* (0.17) and *Social recognition* (0.50). Besides, brand loyalty in this study is supported and revealed by repeat patronage, likelihood to spend more than anticipated and willingness to provide positive word-of-mouth.

CONCLUSION

Experience that offers consumers values in esthetic, escape, efficiency, economic values, service excellence, social interaction and social recognition have impacts on consumers' repeat patronage and contribute to the brand's overall reputation through positive "word of mouth". The experiential values offered by economy hotels could also drive up profit margin through premiums for unique brand experience. Although the study does not support the experiential value in entertainment subscale, it is forward thinking to craft entertainment elements into economy lodging experience and attain competitive edge among the commoditized lodging segment.

This study is important both theoretically and practically. First, an understanding of the effect of changes in experience on customers' brand loyalty might thus guide management's actions when making design or renovation decisions. This study also helps hotel owner/operators to understand what value scales customers are seeking through their lodging experience. The brand experience can be a major tool for communicating these values. Managers can identify the major variables of the brand experience that are available to generate the desired customer awareness and reaction. Besides traditional marketing in pricing and service for economy hotels, sight, sound, scent, touch and human interactions can each contribute to attaining the desired total effect. Management needs to be sure that details of the brand experience have been implemented in a way that is effective, and superior to the competition. Finally, as other marketing tools (e.g., location, price) become neutralized in the competitive battle, especially in the economy hotel sector, the brand experiential values may play a growing role by providing distinctive advantages.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several limitations for future research in experiential value scale study. First of all, the study should be conducted to more diversified areas such as metropolitan and suburb areas rather than merely to small towns. The time frame of the study should also be carefully arranged to avoid the interference of big events at the local area. Second, questions in some subscales, such as entertainment, should be modified to represent specifically the elements of the subscale at economy hotels. Third, the research model can be applied to other lodging segments, for example, mid-priced or upscale.

New results can be compared to the results proposed in this study to examine any differences between hotel segments.

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SECTION II: POSTER PAPERS

GROWING A HOUSE ON WHEELS: UNDERSTANDING AND PROMOTING RVING AS A TOURISM ACTIVITY AND INDUSTRY IN TAIWAN

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ABSTRACT

RVing is an extremely popular vacation in the United States but is growing slowly in Taiwan due to import costs, highway restrictions, and a lack of campground facilities and directed marketing. This study examines Taiwanese recreation and sports majors' perceptions of how an RV (recreational vehicle) is defined, what equipment it includes, the importance of that equipment, and how each of these, as well as the facilities offered by RV campgrounds, affects their potential interest in RVing. Demographic characteristics, including gender, age, and camping experience, were shown to have a significant impact on the amenities desired and their importance to defining an RV, and significant differences were found among the demographic groupings. Additionally, only a small majority of respondents correctly identified an RV/motorhome, confirming a misperception among Taiwanese as to what constitutes an RV. Finally, the sample showed significant interest in RVing if provided with appropriate campgrounds, facilities, and amenities.

KEYWORDS: *Camping; Motorhome; Recreational Vehicle; RV; Taiwan.*

INTRODUCTION

Chick (1998) wrote, based on his observations of informal experiments conducted by the college anthropology class he taught, that the ideas of recreation and play translated easily into a variety of Western and non-Western languages and cultures, and that the idea of recreation for pleasure seems to a universal concept. However, while the words "recreational vehicle," RV, or motorhome conjure up a very specific image of a giant house on wheels for Americans, they may mean something very different to other cultures. In the present 2006 survey of Taiwanese college students majoring in recreation or sports, 44% (see table 1) identified the vehicle Americans call a "sport utility vehicle", or SUV, as an RV, a distinction that would shock American vehicle advertisers. While Americans may use SUVs to get to far-away, backcountry camping spots, they would not consider using them as homes-on-wheels. However, in parking-spot-poor Taiwan, the SUV is considered the primary recreational vehicle.

Table 1. Frequency of Students' Responses in Defining the Term 'RV'

Identification	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage
Recreation Vehicle	95	38.9	38.9
Jeep	1	.4	.4
Motorhome	137	56.1	56.1
SUV	4	1.6	1.6
4x4	7	2.9	2.9
Total	244	100.0	100.0

Consistently across the recreation field's literature, one finds recreational vehicle (RV) use on the rise in the United States. It correlates to an increase in outdoor recreational pursuits and to the use of vehicles during recreation (Daquino, 2005). While exact numbers vary of campers, vehicles, sites, campgrounds, and dollars spent, there is an obvious upward trend. "According to the Recreation Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA), an estimated 25 million Americans from every walk of life enjoy the benefits of RV travel, and the number is growing rapidly" (Smith, 2004b, p. N30).

Estimates of every statistic for the United States are plentiful. Smith (2004b) stated that there are 12,000 privately owned campgrounds in the United States, with facilities ranging from basic water and sewage facilities to luxury resorts. There are also 8,000 public campgrounds in the nation, located mostly in national and state parks and wildlife areas. Compared to Smith's (2004b) numbers, Manske stated in 1995 that there were more than 16,000 publicly and privately owned campgrounds in the United States, a growth of 4,000, or 25%, in nine years.

Similarly, the number of RVs themselves has increased substantially. Seelhorst (1999) found that one in 10 American families now owns some type of RV. However, RVing has been slow to catch on in Taiwan. Additionally, as Zhuang (2006) pointed out, RVs are not manufactured in Taiwan. Therefore, retailers and self-importers face heavy

import fees; these usually run 35% of the retail cost in shipping taxes, 25% shipping fees, and 5% title transfer fee. These constitute a 40-45% increase, making an RV that costs $50,000 in the United States cost $90,000 by the time it reaches Taiwan. Secondly, parking is a critical issue in Taiwan, and few cities offer enough public space to park one, while the costs for private spaces are exorbitant. Only one vehicle has met the needs of RVers in Taiwan: Chen (2002) stated that the most popular RV in Taiwan currently is the conversion camper van. These are larger vans (usually a Volkswagen T4) retrofitted with beds, ovens, refrigerators, and extra storage. Because they are normal vans, can be parked more easily than larger RVs, do not need special hookups, and face no bans on highway travel, they have been the standard of Taiwanese RVing.

Nevertheless, compared to the United States, RV growth has been stagnant. Zhuang (2006) attributed RVs' unpopularity in Taiwan to the lack of RV facilities across the country. From 1990 to 2000, the number of RV parks and campgrounds in Taiwan increased by only five or six per year. The Formosa Camping and Caravanning Club (2006) reported only 168 campgrounds registered in Taiwan, with only very few offering RV facilities or electricity. The newest campgrounds usually offer RV hookups and camping facilities, but a few are designated as RV camps by name only, and older camps boast no facilities (Chen, 2002.). Thirdly is the difficulty in learning to drive a large vehicle on crowded and narrow Taiwanese roads. People who want to drive RVs must have a regular-automobile and a clean driving record for several years before testing for an RV license (Cai, 2005). Zhao (2005) agreed with all three assessments as reasons for RVs' unpopularity. Additionally, major highways are only now opening to RVs. Since the two-day weekend has been in place for several years, the government has begun to allow trailers and RVs on Taiwan's roads (Cai, 2005).

Xiang-jian You, vice president of Taiwan's largest RVing and camping club, defined an RV as a refitted car, SUV, or van with hygiene, cooking, sleeping, and living facilities, or a Western-style RV (2006). He made the point that an RV is not just an SUV or car. The American distinction of what constitutes an RV is much clearer. Golowenski (2005) defined the different types of RVs, in increasing order of expense and luxury: (1) pop-up camper: trailer that pops into a sleeping tent with no amenities or facilities; (2) truck camper: removable, hard-shell unit that fits on the bed of a pick-up truck and can hold facilities; (3) travel/fifth-wheel trailer: most popular American RV, which holds full kitchen and bathroom facilities, large beds, entertainment systems, and storage; (4) van/motorhome/bus: largest, hardest to drive, most amenity-filled, and expensive of the RVs. Prices range new from $2,500 for a pop-up to over $1 million for a luxury bus.

THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In spite of the abundance of RVs and motorhomes in the United States, and the increasing popularity of weekend, in-the-country vacations for both Americans and Taiwanese, the vehicles are making a slow penetration into the Taiwanese market. As regulations relax and Taiwanese camp owners recognize the benefits of adding RV facilities to their sites, RVs and related industries will grow at a phenomenal rate (You, 2006). This study will examine the perceptions of Taiwanese college students majoring in

recreation and sports regarding recreational vehicles and their uses, creating a foundation for educators, hospitality and recreational professionals and students, and camping and RV marketers to understand the needs and desires of several market segments and the issues surrounding the introduction of RVs to Taiwan.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What do Taiwanese college students majoring in recreation and sports perceive to be an RV?
2. What elements and characteristics do RVs and RV campgrounds in Taiwan posses, as perceived by Taiwanese college students majoring in recreation and sports?
3. What elements and characteristics of RVs and RV campgrounds do Taiwanese college students majoring in recreation and sports desire?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ethnicity is a useful tool in identifying segments of the travel and recreation markets because different ethnicities have different travel preferences, patterns, and motivations (Kim and Jogaratnam, 2002). Studying these segments allows researchers to understand, study, and market recreation and travel more effectively and thoroughly. Kim and Jogaratnam (2002) stated in their study of Asian and American college students that the two groups are "surprisingly" similar in their travel preferences and patterns.

In addition, using ethnicity as a tool can also point out inconsistencies that must be delved into more deeply. One regarding RVing is that the Japanese are quickly adopting the caravanning lifestyle, while the Taiwanese have not embraced RV vehicles: Zhaung (2006) reported that Japan already has more than 550 RV-facilitated campgrounds constructed, with more being built every day. He also believed if Taiwan followed Japan's example of excusing duties on RVs and constructing more RV-friendly campgrounds, RVing would become one of the most popular vacation activities.

Taiwanese students' enjoyment of outdoor recreational activities compared to that of American students is conflicting in the literature. Kim and Jogaratnam (2002) found small, but non-statistically significant differences in Asian and American students' travel activity preferences: American students prefer the beach, visiting a state or national park, and participating in a sporting event, while Asian students preferred going to a resort, touring a city, and sightseeing. However, Michael, Armstrong, and King (2003) stated Asian students studying abroad visit national and state parks on a regular basis.

Patterns in the activities undertaken during outdoor recreation by Americans and Asians also differs, if only slightly. Walker, Deng, and Dieser (2001) found that Chinese-heritage visitors to a Canadian national park reported viewing wildlife as their most preferred activity (23% compared to 15% of Euro-Americans), and viewing scenery as

the second-most preferred (17% to 3%), while Euro-North Americans preferred camping (18% versus 10%) and walking/hiking (21% versus 10%).

Despite the definite connection to nature that RVing offers, the sport in general has taken a turn toward luxury. Finley (2005) pointed out that the U.S. National Park Service found in a study conducted from 1995-2004 that backcountry camping of all types decreased by 22%, with RVing decreasing by 26%. While RV camping is increasing, these campers are turning to facilities campgrounds. Commercial campgrounds and parks that accommodate RVs numbered more than 8,000, totaling 1 million sites with an average summer occupancy of 77% (Daquino, 2005). Additionally, many national, state, and county parks and recreation areas offer RV facilities and hook-ups, but with no official count.

Americans' preferences in RV campgrounds lean toward more facilities, comforts, and activities, but show a definite preference for relaxation- and family-oriented sites. Holdnak and Rodgers (2004) investigated the importance of amenities, purposes for purchasing, and motivations for choosing a campsite at a large Midwestern ownership campground. The researchers found that "family/friends here" was the most important motivation, followed by "price/value"; however, "amenities" was ranked the lowest of the motivations. Nevertheless, the researchers found that camper age and length of ownership affect the importance of campground amenities. Older owners ranked amenities as being less important than did younger, newer members, while the researchers ascribed to differences in motivations for purchasing a campsite.

As American RVers demand more facilities in their campgrounds, so do Taiwanese campers (Cai, 2005). Chen (2002) pointed out that the newest, largest campgrounds boast, often with special advertising and signs, electricity, water, swimming pools, barbeque pits, and restaurants. Smaller campgrounds are following suit, but at a slower pace. Chen (2002) also cited the lack of facilitated RV parks as a major reason for the lack of participation. Additionally, he observed that traditional ideas of what camping involves (building campfires from kindling, catching and eating fish) keeps many people from investigating the pastime. But there are several camping and RVing clubs and organizations attempting to bring the comparative luxuries of RV camping to the fore.

Interestingly, the focus on family and social connections at RV parks has links to results found in studies of Asian recreation motivations. Walker, Deng, and Dieser (2001) found in their comparative study of Asian-heritage and Euro-North American visitors to a Canadian national park that Asians were more motivated by socially interdependent reasons (to fit in, to act modestly within the group) to participate in outdoor recreation, while Euro-North Americans were more motivated by socially independent reasons (introspection, tranquility, autonomy), meaning the Asian-heritage visitors were more likely to visit the park and interact as a group.

Even though the newest generation of RV owners places more importance on amenities as a whole, they spend less time in their RVs. Younger RVers travel with their families during weekend getaways, while older campers have the time and resources to

spend months or years traveling by RV (Mattingly, 2005; Smith, 2004b). Smith (2004b) described several different motivations for RVers: those who seek the "romance and high adventure on the open road," snowbirds, fulltime RVers, summer and winter vacationers who use the RV as a cottage or cabin, hunters and anglers, sports fans, and families who need a large second vehicle.

Finally, Smith observed that the increasing popularity in amenity-filled campgrounds may be their cost-effectiveness. In order to reduce costs, Smith (2004a) recommended several techniques, mostly aimed at keeping the towing weight low by taking advantage of campground facilities: using full hookups at campgrounds overnight, keeping only enough food and water on board to make it to the next campground, and disposing of trash and sewage every day.

The desire for increased luxury and convenience can also been seen in the buying and upgrade patterns of RV ownership. Golowenski (2005) found that a large number of long-time RV owners go through an upgrade process, many starting at tent- or truck-camping, upgrade to a towable trailer, then to a small RV, and ending with a fairly expensive and large RV. Convenience and comfort played a large role in their decisions to upgrade, as did increased time in the RV and costs associated with towing vehicles. Additionally, those using towing RVs tended to upgrade their towing vehicles to gain more towing power in addition to upgrading the size and luxury of the trailers themselves.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a survey questionnaire to gather data quantitatively on the perceptions and desires regarding RVs of Taiwanese college student students majoring in recreation and sports. Cluster sampling was used to generate the most consistent and analyzable results.

Participants

The study's population consisted of students majoring in recreation or sports at Taiwanese private technical universities. Two technical universities were randomly selected for the study, one located in the middle and the other located in the south of Taiwan. Only two universities (thereby, only two regions) were represented in the sample due resource restraints. Recreation and sports majors were chosen as the sample due to their knowledge of the most current trends in the leisure, tourism, and traveling fields; their anticipated influence on the RV and camping markets and industries as consumers and future professionals; and the inherent demographic differences in geographic and economic background, family travel history, and recreational interests, in order to potentially represent wide-ranging responses.

Data collection took place between March 15 and March 20, 2006. The researcher contacted the chairs of the recreation and sports programs at the sample universities, asking for their participation in the study. The chairs then distributed the survey

instruments to the programs' professors, who in turn administered the surveys during class time. The professors then returned the completed surveys to the researcher.

The sample was composed of 312 students, every member of the recreation and sports programs at the two selected universities, with 265 of these returning surveys, generating a response rate of 84.93%. Of the returned instruments, 244 were returned complete and deemed usable for the study.

Data Collection and Analysis

The survey questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on the review of related literature and You (2006). As the primary written language of the sample was Mandarin, the questionnaire was translated into Mandarin by the author, and two graduate students fluent in English and Mandarin were asked to translate the Mandarin questionnaire back into English to ensure clarity and consistency and provide suggestions to improve wording and structure in the survey's questions and organization.

The questionnaire consisted of three questions meant to gather demographic data on the sample. It also contained one question to identify how respondents defined the term "RV" and 14 items to determine what the sample perceived to be required pieces of equipment in an RV and how important each of those elements was.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In response to research question 1, identifying the types of vehicle that qualify as an RV, only a little more than half the sample selected an American-style RV, or motorhome (137 responses, 56.1%). The rest chose recreational vehicles such as Jeeps, 4x4s, or SUVs (a combined 107 responses, 43.9%) (Table 1).

For research question 2, a series of t-tests and one-way ANOVAs were used to generate a response to the question. For the t-tests, the independent variables were gender, age, camping-related classes taken or not, and liking camping or not, and the dependent variable was the perception of whether or not the presence of a select piece of RV equipment was crucial to its definition as an RV (for example, for item 1, a participant rating the item a five believes the presence of a table is critical to an RV). A summary of the responses to the demographic questions is displayed in Table 2. For the ANOVAs, the independent variables were the frequency of camping experiences, with three levels of experience given for respondents to choose from. The dependent variables were the same as in the t-tests. For research question 3, a series of t-tests and one-way ANOVAs were used, and the independent variables were the same as used for research question 2. However, research question 3's dependent variables measured the importance of each piece of equipment (for example, for item 1, the importance of the table).

Table 2. Demographics of Sampled Recreation and Sports Majors

Demographic	Factors	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	93	38.1 %
	Female	151	61.9 %
Age	Under or Equal to 20	66	27 %
	Over 20	178	73 %
Camping classes	Yes	157	64.3 %
	No	87	35.7 %
Like to camping	Like	216	88.5 %
	Don't Like	28	11.5 %
Experience	Yes	197	80.7 %
	No	47	19.3 %
Times	0	28	11.5 %
	1-2 times	196	80.3 %
	3-4 times	13	5.3 %
	5 times or more	7	2.9 %

The results of the t-tests performed for research question 2 found several results of significance. Item 7, kitchen sink; item 9, refrigerator; item 11, toilet; item 12, bathroom shower; and item 14, bed, were found to have a significant difference level for age, with respondents over 20 years old rating them as being more present in an RV (Table 3). For respondents who had taken a camping-related class, item 2, television, rated as more present in an RV (Table 4). The other survey items failed to reach a level of significant difference.

Table 3. Summary of Independent t-test for the Effect of Age on Each Item's Presence in an 'RV'

Item	Mean	SD	Sig. (p)
Q7: Kitchen sink	3.38	1.004	.001*
Q9: Refrigerator	3.70	.859	.024*
Q11: Toilet	3.80	.964	.002*
Q12: Shower	3.52	.980	.000*
Q14: Bed	3.76	.993	.016*

Note: The Q identification before the item identifies the item's number on the questionnaire.
*The mean difference is significant at the .025 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. Summary of Independent t-test for the Effect of Taken Camping Class on Each Item's Presence in an 'RV'

Item	Mean	SD	Sig. (p)
Q2: Television	3.40	.842	.011*
*The mean difference is significant at the .025 level (2-tailed).			

The one-way ANOVA also produced a level of significant difference for item 14, bed (Table 5), and was followed up by an LSD post-hoc test. The respondents who had reported the first level of camping experience, one to two times, and the second level of experience, three to four times, differed significantly in their perceptions of the presence of a bed from the respondents who reported having five or more camping experiences (Table 6).

Table 5. Summary of One-way ANOVA for Camping Experience's Effect on Each Item's Presence in an 'RV'

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.(p)
Q14: Bed	14.361	3	4.787	6.328	.000*

Table 6. Intercorrelations of Times of Camping Experience's Effect on Each Item's Presence in an 'RV'

Times	1-2	3-4	5 or more
1-2	--	.459	.000*
3-4		--	.000*
5 times or more			--

For research question 3, the t-tests reported a significance difference by gender for item 13, bathroom sink. Females scored higher than did males on rating the importance of this item (Table 7). Age also reached the significance difference on item 7, kitchen sink; item 8, oven; item 11, toilet; item 12, bathroom shower; item 13, bathroom sink; and item 14, bed. Subjects over 20 years old scored these items as being more important than did subjects under 20, with the difference reaching significance on those items (Table 8).

Table 7. Summary of Independent t-test for the Effect of Gender on Each Item's Importance in an 'RV'

Item	Mean	SD	Sig. (p)
E13: Bathroom sink	3.71	1.006	.010*

Note: The E identification before the item identifies the item's number on the questionnaire.
*The mean difference is significant at the .025 level (2-tailed).

Table 8. Summary of Independent t-test for the Effect of Age on Each Item's Importance in an 'RV'

Item	Mean	SD	Sig. (p)
E7: Kitchen sink	3.61	.959	.015*
E8: Oven	3.55	.964	.017*
E11: Toilet	3.92	1.012	.012*
E12: Shower	3.56	1.069	.000*
E13: Bathroom sink	3.65	.953	.010*
E14: Bed	3.64	1.047	.001*

*The mean difference is significant at the .025 level (2-tailed).

The one-way ANOVAs and post-hoc tests for research question 3 found that item 8, oven; item 11, toilet; and item 14, bed, all had significant differences among respondents' different levels of camping experience (Table 9). Respondents who had camped one to two times or three to four times rated oven as less important than did those who had camped five or more times. The results for items 11, toilet, and 14, bed, produced similar results, with those with the most experience rating amenities as more important (Table 10).

Table 9. Summary of One-way ANOVA for Camping Experience's Effect on Each Item's Importance in an 'RV'

Item	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.(p)
E2: Television	8.300	3	2.767	2.781	.045*
E8: Oven	8.246	3	2.749	3.017	.031*
E14: Bed	21.841	3	7.280	8.015	.000*

Table 10. Intercorrelations of Times of Camping Experience's Effect on Each Item's Importance in an 'RV'

Item 2: Television	1-2	3-4	5 or more
1-2	--	.041*	.572
3-4		--	.430
5 times or more			--

Item 8: Oven	1-2	3-4	5 or more
1-2	--	.211	.010*
3-4		--	.004*
5 times or more			--

Item 14: Bed	1-2	3-4	5 or more
1-2	--	.116	.000*
3-4		--	.000*
5 times or more			--

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The results of the survey questionnaire correspond to the review of literature in several areas. For research question 1, nearly half the sample misidentified an RV. Zhuang (2006) and Chen (2002) cited Taiwan's lack of exposure to American-style RVs because of their cost and size as the major reasons for Taiwanese RVers' use of smaller, un-facilitated vehicles as camping tools. Additionally, You (2006) made an extra effort to point out to his Taiwanese audience that the types of vehicles misidentified by the sample (Jeeps and SUVs) should not be called RVs, showing that he felt the misperception existed among Taiwanese.

Older campers (those who are over 20 years old), rated amenities both as being more present in a vehicle described as an RV and as being more important in an RV. This matches the results of Finley (2005), who stated that backcountry RVing was decreasing and campground RVing increasing, and Cai (2005), who noted that Taiwanese RVers expect more luxury from their RVs than they have in the past. The reason for this finding could be that older RVers generally can afford and expect more luxurious vehicles and accommodations. They need more and better sleep and hygiene facilities than younger campers to feel comfortable and participate in camping activities. The items that showed a significant difference generally required an electrical or generator hook-up, which also logically would suggest that these RVers would prefer facilitated campgrounds to backcountry RVing. Interestingly, the results of Holdnak and Rodgers (2004), who found that older and more experienced RVers expected less of an RV campground in terms of amenities, may also support this finding. The more facilities that are contained within the RV, the less dependent the RVer becomes on the campground's facilities. Also, as

Mattingly (2005) and Smith (2004b) reported, older campers spend longer periods of time in their RVs, making self-contained equipment more convenient and cost-effective.

In answering both research questions 2 and 3, it was discovered that subjects who had camped five or more times expected more RV amenities. This result also corresponds to previous studies, including Golowenski (2005), who noted that as RVers become more experienced, they tend to upgrade their type of RV and the luxuries within. It is likely that more experienced campers may be older (therefore relating the results of research question 2 to the results of research question 3, with older campers being more experienced), that older campers have greater financial means, or that more experienced campers are willing to pay for more luxurious amenities because they have enough interest in camping to make the financial investment (Golowenski, 2005). This finding does conflict with Smith (2004a), who believed more experienced campers rely more on campground facilities to reduce costs. Nevertheless, as Chen (2002) cited, Taiwan does not have very many facilitated campgrounds, forcing RVers to rely on self-contained equipment. In addition, as Chen (2002) pointed out, as RVing grows in popularity in Taiwan and new campgrounds are constructed, Taiwanese RVers are demanding campsites filled with more amenities. This may in turn shed light on both the age and experience of Taiwanese RVers; younger and less experienced RVers expect more amenities at campgrounds.

Finally, the result that respondents who had taken a camping-related class found television a more necessary amenity is interesting for two reasons. Firstly, because the respondents were recreation majors, it would be expected they would have more exposure to both RVing and camping, their tools and equipment, and associated facilities than the general population. However, the sample had only a very small minority who correctly identified an RV, while those who had an even greater exposure to camping in all its forms expected an amenity that required campground facilities and was antithetical to the point of camping. Walker, Deng, and Dieser (2001) had found that Asian-heritage wilderness visitors interacted more than Euro-North Americans while in the wilderness, seeming to contradict the need for outside entertainment. However, they also stated that the Asian-heritage visitors participated more in passive activities, such as wildlife watching, than American visitors, possibly indicating a difference in choice of pastimes for more experienced and knowledgeable campers among ethnicities rather than just among experience levels.

This study found that Taiwanese recreation and sports majors are very interested in RVing and its associated activities, with the results suggesting they will prefer facilitated campgrounds earlier in their RV experience and more luxurious RVs as they age. Previous studies reported similar findings for American RVers, and research states that Taiwanese and American college students share similar preferences for outdoor recreation. As the study's population moves into the tourism and recreation industries, RVing will become more prevalent and understood. Offering more information in college recreation and camping courses will also help these future travel agents, park rangers, and teachers discover and enjoy RVing. If Taiwan can begin to produce its own RVs to lower retail costs, generate marketing geared toward educating the Taiwanese public on the

social-interaction and relaxation benefits of RVing, better advertise facilitated campgrounds, and continue to ease restrictions on RV size and city bans, house on wheels will bloom.

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DEVELOPMENT OF A TOURISM EDUCATION PROGRAM IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS: A PILOT PROJECT FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT

The U.S. tourism industry is one of the country's largest employers with $163.3 billion in annual payroll. An industry needs assessment resulted in creation of a tourism management program in southern Illinois to provide an opportunity for students to gain industry knowledge and develop requisite skills to lead successful careers in tourism. The curriculum was designed in four steps using a combination craft/skill and tourism management approach with input from industry leaders and educators. Program evaluation focused on student perception, knowledge transfer and instructor effectiveness. Recommendations include continued communication with industry leaders and development of marketing strategies to build enrollment.

KEYWORDS: *Curriculum; Curriculum development; Tourism Curriculum; Tourism education.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry and indicators suggest that the economic importance of tourism will continue to grow. By 2010, the World Tourism Organization expects 1 billion people to spend $1.5 trillion annually on travel. (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.). The United States tourism industry is estimated to reach record highs in international and domestic travelers in 2006 with total traveler spending reaching and expected $675 billion, an increase of nearly 5% (TIA, 2006). As a result, tourism expenditures and industry employment will also reach record highs. In 2003, one in every 7 United States citizens was employed in the tourism industry (Travel and tourism in America today, 2003). According to the Travel Industry Association (2006), the travel and tourism industry is one of the country's largest employers with more than 7.3 million direct travel-generated jobs accounting for $163.3 billion in payroll income for Americans. Very few industries can boast such impact on the labor market.

Tourism is one of the fastest growing industries in southern Illinois. It is imperative that those employed in this industry have the abilities to provide the service expected by our guests. In addition to a variety of soft skills, these employees must be trained in areas such as customer service, heritage tourism, business management, destination management, and economic impact. Current and future employees must be provided with opportunities to develop these skills. A positive job outlook for the southern Illinois tourism industry caused leaders and educators to address concerns of an under educated workforce, ultimately creating an Associate of Science Degree program in Tourism Management at John A. Logan College located in Carterville, Illinois.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of creating this tourism management program was to provide an opportunity for students interested in tourism and current tourism industry employees to further develop an industry knowledge base and gain requisite skills to lead successful careers in the industry.

In addition, this program will enhance the southern Illinois tourism industry by providing employers with a competent, well-trained workforce, supplying the industry with low to mid-level management employees, and providing business management training in an arena where the predominant focus is on hospitality training.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum can be defined as "all the learning which is planned and guided by the school, whether it is carried on in groups or individually, inside or outside the school." (Smith, 2000). In his synthesis of curriculum theories and methods, Mark Smith points out that curriculum is a body of knowledge to be transmitted (from teacher to student) as

well as an attempt to achieve certain outcomes in students. Thus, curriculum can be seen as a means to an end.

In 1949, R.W. Tyler identified four key questions that became the basis of one of the earliest models of curriculum design: 1) What educational purposes should the school seek to attain?, 2) What educational experiences can be provided that are likely to attain these purposes?, 3) How can these educational experiences be effectively organized?, and 4) How can we determine whether these purposes are being attained? (Smith & Cooper, 2000). These key questions easily translate into a procedure indicated in following seven steps: diagnosis of need, formulation of objectives, selection of content, organization of content, selection of learning experiences, organization of learning experiences, and determination of what to evaluate and of the ways and means of doing so (Smith, 2000). These steps are most common in content curriculum design where behavioral objectives are emphasized and form a model that puts the basic elements of curriculum into place: objectives, knowledge, experiences, and evaluation (Smith & Cooper, 2000).

Tourism Related Curriculum

In 1982, there were only 23 tourism related degree programs at United States institutions of higher education. By 1992, that number had grown to 91, with 14 institutions offering graduate degrees in tourism-related fields; however, the lack of standardization among programs does not produce graduates with a common knowledge of the industry (Williams, 2005). Many tourism educators question whether tourism programs meet the expectations of the industry. Ongoing communication between educators and industry leaders is necessary in order to design adequate and competitive curricular programs.

In a study conducted in 1994, tourism educators and industry leaders disagreed on what skills and knowledge were important for students to acquire during a four-year tourism education program. Regardless of their disagreement, 26 competencies were ranked in order of importance to be included in tourism-related curriculum. The top four included human resource management theories, written communication skills, managing service quality, and interpersonal relationship skills (Koh, 1005).

In 2005, Deanne Williams attempted to measure the outcomes of hospitality curriculum from the student and industry perspectives. This study examined the characteristics of programs that prepare hospitality management students at the undergraduate level and attempted to show a correlation between curriculum approach and graduate performance by examining curriculum design and its influence on workplace performance.

Five common approaches to curriculum design were identified. The craft/skill approach helps students acquire technical operational skills, which dominate the curriculum. This approach is commonly found at the community college level. The tourism approach primarily emphasizes the content of tourism and economic impact in addition to social science such as economics and sociology. The foods and home

economics approach emphasizes food science, nutrition, food production and delivery systems, and natural and social sciences. The business administration approach, usually housed in schools of business, focuses on administration and management concepts and less on actual products. The combined approach simply combines two or more of the above mentioned methods (Williams, 2005).

JALC Tourism Management Program Development

Background of project

A consortium of five community colleges in southern Illinois, along with Southern Illinois University Carbondale, was created in 2003 for the purposes of creating a new region-wide approach to tourism education. An inventory of the certification and two-year degree programs offered by each community college was completed. A tourism management program related to nonprofit sector of the industry did not exist. Carbondale Convention & Tourism Bureau worked in partnership with Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) and John A. Logan College (JALC) to develop a tourism management program that would complete the inventory. The program trains individuals for mid-level management positions and entrepreneurial roles in the industry.

Development of JALC tourism management program

Representatives from JALC, SIUC and Carbondale Convention and Tourism Bureau first met in July 2003 to begin discussing the creation of the new tourism management program. This group was quickly expanded into the curriculum planning committee, which was made up of area tourism educators and industry professionals, predominantly from the area convention and visitors' bureaus. The program was developed in four steps: needs assessment, definition of program goals; development of the curriculum design, and evaluation.

Needs assessment

A needs assessment was conducted during January and February of 2004. Primary data was gathered via telephone interview with tourism related businesses in the JALC college district. Unfortunately, businesses were somewhat unwilling to cooperate with this effort and only 15 were interviewed. Although this is a small sample, the planning committee felt that the information gathered was relevant to their efforts. Of those interviewed, 60% felt that there was a shortage of qualified workers in the area. When asked about required and preferred education levels of new hires, 27% preferred an associate's degree, 27% preferred a bachelor's degree and 13% preferred a master's degree. However, the majority (47%) only required a high school diploma or equivalent.

Secondary data from the United States Department of Labor and the Illinois Department of Employment Securities were also analyzed to supplement primary data.

The anticipated overall job growth in the United States for this industry is 18% by the year 2012, resulting in over 2 million new jobs over the next several years.

According to the US Department of Labor, the occupations of Waiter/Waitress and Retail Salespersons are among the top ten occupations with the largest job growth by 2012 with an 18% and 15% increase, respectively. Also listed are Food Preparation and Service Workers with an increase of 23% and Customer Service Representatives with an increase of 24%. Although only four jobs are listed, each of these jobs is vital to the ongoing success of the hospitality and tourism industry.

On a more local level, the Illinois Department of Employment Securities (IDES) estimates increases in Illinois job openings between 10% and 17% by 2010, depending on which industry sector is considered. Figure 1 shows the largest job increases in Eating and Drinking Places and Amusement and Recreation, both with an anticipated 17% increase.

The Illinois Department of Employment Securities (IDES) estimates an increase of 228,546 tourism related jobs between 2002 and 2012. The majority of these will be in accommodations and foodservice, followed by arts, entertainment and recreation. Approximately 1,700 of these jobs will fall in the John A. Logan Community College District with an additional 860 jobs in the immediate area.
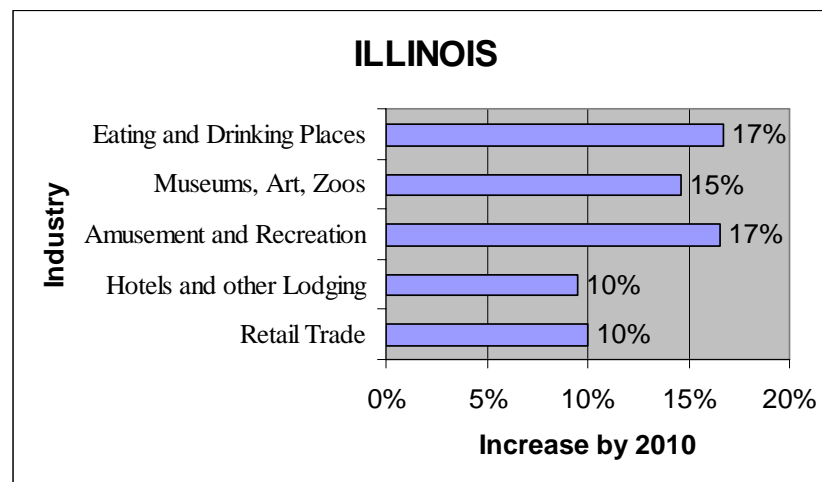

Figure 1: Illinois Job Growth

Curriculum design

Although the largest growth sectors were foodservice and lodging, these programs already existed within the Southern Illinois Community College Market area. Based on this information, the outcome of the needs assessment, and an inventory of tourism-

related jobs in southern Illinois, the curriculum planning committee decided to focus the program on the business management and nonprofit aspects of tourism.

An advisory board was established to further aid in the creation of a curriculum outlines, as well as individual course objectives. With the help of the advisory board, the curriculum developers chose a combination of the afore mentioned craft/skill and tourism approaches to curriculum design, believing that this approach would provide the greatest opportunity for students entering the program. Members of the advisory board include industry leaders within the JALC district and allow the curriculum planners to connect each course to the industry, making its content relevant to the student. Courses that were identified include an introductory course, tourism geography, business and fiscal management for nonprofit entities, beginning destination management courses, and heritage tourism courses. Overall objectives were set for each with the understanding that instructors would develop individual unit objectives. Although these courses were designed with the implication that graduates would stay in southern Illinois, these are subjects very relevant to the tourism industry. The skills and knowledge gained in each of these courses are transferable to any type of tourism-related job.

Although the tourism industry is very service oriented, it is important for those employed in the industry have some basic technical skills. As a result, a variety of learning methods will be integrated into each course. The curriculum development committee seeks to provide students with ample opportunity to learn from industry leaders. Therefore, industry experts have been invited to guest lecture courses when appropriate. Students have also had opportunities to network with professionals in industry settings, such as conferences and other events.

An articulation agreement between JALC and SIUC was created, giving students mobility between the two programs and allowing those who graduate from the JALC 2-year program to easily transfer into the 4-year program offered by SIUC. This agreement will allow a student to acquire background knowledge about the tourism industry at JALC and either obtain a job upon graduation or move into the SIUC program and further develop their skills and knowledge in one of three areas: Foodservice Management, Lodging Management, or Tourism Management.

Evaluation

Although the first class of students has not yet graduated, the curriculum planners have begun the evaluation process. Each course taught is evaluated by the students at the conclusion of the course. Instructors for each course are also evaluated. In addition to course evaluations, each class of students will be asked to complete a program evaluation toward their completion of the entire program.

The first program evaluation was conducted during the summer 2006 semester and included all students enrolled in 2nd year courses (10 in total). The curriculum developers were concerned with a variety of aspects of this program: student perception, transfer of knowledge and skills, student plans upon graduation, and instructor effectiveness. Overall, student perception of the program was positive, with a few

students commenting on the uniqueness and variety of courses offered. The majority of the students planned to continue their education at the baccalaureate level. Instructor effectiveness was also rated high among those who returned the questionnaires. Students offered suggestions on how to improve the program ranging from increased hands-on activities in each course to more challenging academic courses, as well as increased opportunities to network with industry professionals.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Courses in the Tourism Management Associate Degree in Applied Science were first offered in the fall semester, 2004 at John A. Logan College. Although the program started off with only half a dozen students enrolled, it is growing as awareness of the industry and the program build among the surrounding communities. In the second year, courses averaged 15 students per semester.

The largest hurdle of this project has been building awareness of the tourism industry among local schools and prospective students and their parents. A complete marketing plan is necessary to effectively build awareness prior to the implementation of such a program. A marketing plan also provides a roadmap as to how the program will be advertised to the public, helping recruitment efforts. However, as a part of this plan, one must determine the target market. Is the program to target high school students or adult learners returning to school? In the case of the JALC program, it has been a combination of both, which was not anticipated. Therefore, all of the awareness efforts were placed in recruiting high school seniors and recent graduates into the program. Additional research on how to market business related education programs should be conducted.

The evaluation process and recommendations from several industry leaders resulted in a new phase to this pilot project. At the time of this writing, the curriculum planning committee has begun the review process to adjust and expand course offerings. In addition, funds have been secured to provide paid internships for a minimum of four students. Industry interest has caused the planning team to pursue the possibility of offering professional development seminar training for individuals already working in tourism and to launch a pilot of a new Lodging Management Certificate program for students solely interested in lodging.

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MEASUREMENT OF KOREAN TRAVELERS' PERCEIVED IMAGES ON OVERSEAS TRAVEL DESTINATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to learn how the perceived images are varied when Korean tourists want to choose overseas travel destinations. 27 tourist attracting attributes were used for the evaluative criteria on the basis of the assumption what the importance of attributes is a measure of how desirable when an individual selects a travel destination. Chi-square analysis was to apply to determine the relationship between travel characteristics and tourist attracting attributes. As a result, "safety" and "service" were strongly perceived. A considerable amount of attention has been devoted to "cost" and "accessibility". The highest ratings were accorded to safety, kindness and accessibility by the travelers who want to travel Asia. Price, accessibility and food were highly perceived to the travelers who want to travel America. Tourists who want to travel Europe considered safety and accessibility. Travelers who want to travel Oceania and Africa were interested in something different and unusual. These findings can serve the tourist industry as a tool for decision-making regarding tourism policy activities and measures for determining priority of assignments aimed at improving elements of the tourist supply.

KEYWORDS: *Korean overseas tourists; Travel destination choice; Perceived images; Decision-making tool; Tourism supply.*

INTRODUCTION

The understanding of the perceived image of various destinations is an important first step to facilitate market segmentation. As Mok and Amstrong (1995) commented that effective tourism resource management is dependent on understanding destination choice behavior, most marketing activity associated with a tourist destination revolves around developing the destination and persuading tourists to choose that destination. The segmentation of the comparison and matrices can become the starting point and stimulus for marketing activities directed toward specific tourist markets. A destination can be better matched to a target market's need if appropriate supply elements are allocated to provide the tourist attractions what the target desires. Although differences in tourists' perceived images have been recognized for different types of market segments, little analysis has focused on the underlying reasons for the spatial preferences.

The purpose of this study is to analyze how perceive a certain travel destination. This study information explores the difference of perceived image level according to the different overseas travel destinations such as "Asia", "America", "Europe", "Oceania" and "Africa". This study's results can provide a managerial tool for destination or product managers by determining the type of choice images of travelers on different travel destinations and by integrating the issue of inherent development and marketing ramifications.

BACKGROUNDS

A destination's position is the result of a complex set of images and impressions consumers have for a destination compared with comparing destinations. For this reason, good imaged and reputable countries is an important determinant of product viability and that frequent and repeat customers have the highest likelihood of repurchasing the same product again. The perceived destination environments what were determined by the travelers were important criterion variables that travelers use in marketing vacation destination decision.

Some researches related to Korean travelers (Kim & Prideaux, 1996; Bureau of Tourism Research 1995; Cho 1998; Jung 1997; Jung 1998; Cook, R.L. & McCleary, K.W 1998.) verified that Korean travel behavior was differed by the different perceived level according to the different travel destinations. Kim & Prideaux (1996) found that Australia's beautiful scenery and cuisine as important attractions were the most popular features of their Australian holiday. According to an International Visitor survey (Bureau of Tourism Research 1995), Korean visitors to Australia are interested in culture and lifestyle, eco-tourism, and nature-based adventure experiences have a wide appeal among younger Korean visitors. They want more active and diverse experiences and activities. In the Cho's (1998) study of segmenting the attractiveness of Australia as a holiday destination of younger Korean, it was concluded that three market segments such as cultural and eco-tourism seekers, activity and variety seekers, and tourist resort stylists.

Jung (1998) concluded that travel behavior on the preference of destination or product choice was varied between different types of travel such as domestic or overseas travel. He summarized in his study of perceptual attitudes about tourist attracting attributes that the importance of personal safety, cleanliness, quality of service, accommodation and kindness such as hospitality is strongly revealed to the domestic travelers. On the other hand, accessibility, price and transportation were highly perceived among overseas travelers.

These findings give a theoretical background for us to expect that the perceptual preference attitudes will be varied according to the different travel destinations such as domestic and overseas travelers. Actually, attractions are a primary motive for tourist visits and their success or failure in satisfactory products has implications for the provision of provided attributes at destination. The preference will be made as results of perception on expected attractions. This is why the information of different tourist perceptual images on choice of tourist attracting attributes between different overseas travel destinations is useful to establish the strategy and managerial direction towards tourism development.

METHODS

The perceived level of destination attributes was measured by asking respondents to rate twenty seven destination attributes which were determined by the related theoretical background on a five-point scale varying from "very unperceived" to "very perceived. The univariate analysis of frequency tabulation provided information about ten socio-demographic characteristics of travelers.. The characteristics were noted that the travel destination distribution patterns provided some clues to explain the behavior of several other socio-demographic characteristics.

The 69.8 percent of respondents who reported their family size to be majority tended to be in their small family comparing 23.0 percent of large family. 5.7 percent of the respondents worked for government and state-run institutions and 6.2 percent of enterprises. It is also reported that travelers were spent their expense by their family and relatives and 44.1 percent of himself/herself. The cross-tabulation indicated that 75.5 percent of the respondents were pleasure purposed travelers and 10.4 percent of business, while only 14.1 percent of the sample were other kinds of travel purposes.

This study used a comparison of means of perceived image level among different regions such as America, Europe, Asia, Oceania and Africa. The respondents were asked why they want to travel to a certain region. Chi-square techniques were used to test for significant differences in the survey responses according to different destinations. Ratings for each of the 27 attributes items were examined into five attribute categories dealing with very unperceived to very perceived.

Table1. Profiles of respondents

Variables		Percentage (%)
Destination	Asia	18.3
	America	24.8
	Europe	19.1
	Oceania	11.4
	Africa	7.4
	Other	19
Sex	Male	58.2
	Female	41.8
Age	-24	29.7
	25-34	11.6
	35-54	20
	55-64	24.7
	+65	14.1
Profession		
	Businessmen	6.2
	Educator/student	49.0
	Culture/athletic related	3.0
	Official servicemen	5.7
	Pressmen	0.5
	Technicians	2.2
	Others	11.9
	Unemployed	21.5
Type of Family		
	Large family	23.0
	Small family	69.8
	Others	7.2
Travel experience		
	Homeland	71.8
	Asia	15.8
	America	4.0
	Europe	2.5
	Oceania	1.7
	Africa	0.7
	Non-experienced	3.5
Travel purpose		
	Pleasure	75.5
	Business	10.4
	Others	14.1
Travel type		
	Group tour	44.8
	Individual	29.5
	Family	18.6
	Others	7.2

FINDINGS

The features ranked at the top of the list marked "very perceived" included a number of unusual elements and elements what characterized service activities in tourism, as well as accessibility and safety. The range of family and friend relation, and sports were predominantly ranked at the lower end of the list. The motives for visiting Asia were Adventure (m=3.67), kindness (m=3.64), and accessibility (m=3.60) was appeared in importance. Safety (m=3.81) and price (m=3.78) were found as important expected attractions to travelers who want to travel America. Tourists who want to travel Europe motivated safety (m=4.20) and accessibility (mean=4.10). Travelers who want to travel Oceania and Africa were most interested in something different (m=4.41), and unusual (m=4.26).

On the other hand, the less perceived attributes are sports conditions such as recreation and sports facilities among travelers who want to travel Asia.. Familiarity and quiet associated with lowest aggregate attributes in the groups of travelers who want to travel America. Intimacy such as relative/friends and familarity associated with lowest aggregate attribute in tourists who want to travel Europe. Shopping and popularity associated with lowest aggregate attribute group evaluation in tourists who want to travel Oceania. Lowest aggregate attribute evaluations were consistently recorded intimacy and popularity in America, Europe and Asia.

Tourism marketing and management should pay attention to these elements, because their cumulative effects could cause a permanent important among guests which could, in turn, have a negative impact on their intention to visit the country again. Relatively few statistically significant regional variations in reported aggregate attribute ratings were apparent according to Chi-square. Significant regional differences occurred in only 38% of the aggregate attribute category. Safety, kindness and climate corresponded with the highest aggregate attribute ratings. In contrast, sports, amusement and shopping were associated with lowest aggregate attribute evaluation ratings.

Table 2. Perceived image level on Attributes

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank
Quiet	2.80	1.21	20
Kindness	3.87	1.11	2
Popularity	2.98	1.22	15
Fun	3.54	1.10	11
Shopping	2.73	1.17	22
Amusement	2.66	1.24	23
Accessibility	3.87	1.20	2
Price	3.82	1.14	4
Food	3.72	1.13	6
Adventure	2.88	1.28	18
Climate	3.68	1.21	8
Safety	3.99	1.17	1
Remembrance	3.69	1.15	7
Culture	3.60	1.10	9
Sightseeing	3.72	1.06	5
Relatives/friends	2.44	1.24	25
Events	2.80	1.16	21
Recreation/leisure	2.91	1.16	17
Intimacy	2.38	1.15	26
Unknown	2.80	1.24	19
Resort	2.93	1.16	16
Something different	3.11	1.09	14
Relax	3.59	1.09	10
Sports	2.55	1.18	24
Family	3.20	1.22	13
Amenities	3.52	1.13	12
Unusual	3.72	1.19	6

Table 3. Differences of Perceived Images.

Variables	Asia Mean(rank)	America Mean(rank)	Europe Mean(rank)	Oceania Mean(rank)	Africa Mean(rank)	F	Pr.
Quiet	2.86(18)	2.52(22)	2.71(20)	2.69(22)	2.70(21)	3.91	0.001
Kindness	3.64(2)	3.65(4)	3.93(4)	4.15(3)	4.13(2)	2.78	0.017
Popularity	3.00(15)	2.95(15)	2.97(16)	2.86(21)	2.43(22)	2.40	0.036
Fun	3.41(6)	3.52(9)	3.58(11)	3.63(14)	3.80(6)	0.62	0.588
Shopping	2.87(17)	2.69(18)	2.88(18)	2.91(20)	2.93(19)	3.09	0.009
Amusement	2.81(18)	2.66(20)	2.87(19)	2.97(19)	2.80(20)	5.31	0.000
Accessibility	3.60(3)	3.77(3)	4.10(2)	4.21(2)	3.70(10)	2.35	0.040
Price	3.44(5)	3.78(2)	3.93(4)	3.97(8)	3.90(5)	2.34	0.041
Food	3.31(10)	3.63(5)	4.00(3)	4.06(7)	3.76(8)	4.00	0.001
Adventure	3.67(1)	2.92(17)	3.27(13)	3.34(15)	3.66(11)	13.73	0.000
Climate	3.37(7)	3.55(8)	3.84(7)	3.73(10)	3.30(13)	4.15	0.001
Safety	3.47(4)	3.81(1)	4.20(1)	4.15(3)	4.10(3)	6.21	0.000
Remembrance	3.32(8)	3.63(5)	3.83(8)	4.13(6)	4.06(4)	4.05	0.001
Culture	3.28(11)	3.53(10)	3.87(7)	3.73(10)	3.76(8)	2.23	0.050
Sightseeing	3.32(8)	3.60(7)	3.83(8)	3.82(9)	3.80(6)	4.31	0.000
Relatives/friends	2.68(21)	2.38(23)	2.32(23)	2.45(23)	2.36(23)	0.81	0.543
Events	3.00(15)	2.69(18)	2.92(6)	3.08(17)	3.13(14)	4.82	0.000
Recreation/leisure	2.09(23)	2.95(15)	3.07(14)	3.04(18)	2.93(19)	3.45	0.004
Intimacy	2.74(20)	2.26(24)	2.40(22)	2.23(24)	2.03(24)	2.41	0.035
Unknown	2.79(19)	2.61(21)	2.53(21)	2.73(10)	3.03(17)	3.78	0.002
Resort	2.87(17)	2.85(17)	2.89(17)	3.08(17)	3.06(15)	0.39	0.856
Something different	2.97(16)	2.97(14)	3.27(13)	4.41(1)	3.63(12)	3.96	0.001
Relax	3.27(12)	3.38(13)	3.63(10)	3.73(10)	3.90(5)	4.31	0.001
Sports	2.47(22))	2.66(20)	2.62(21)	3.04(18)	2.96(18)	6.71	0.000
Family	3.09(15)	3.13(14)	3.07(14)	3.30(16)	3.06(15)	1.45	0.206
Amenities	3. 20(14)	3.47(12)	3.49(12)	3.69(13)	2.73(9)	2.25	0.048
Unusual	3.17(13)	3.51(11)	3.92(6)	4.15(3)	4.26(1)	7.29	0.000

Note: Note: Numbers in parenthesis are rank orders. The scores were based on a five-point Likert scales. On the importance axis: 1=very perceived; 2=unperceived; 3=somewhat perceived; 4=perceived; 5= very perceived.

Table 4. Comparisons

Variable	Asia	America	Europe	Oceania	Africa	X^2	P
Sex						3.39	0.581
Male	11.14	14.85	10.40	5.69	5.20		
Female	7.80	9.90	8.66	5.69	2.23		
Age						130.4	0.001
-24	9.65	9.65	8.99	7.43	1.73		
25-34	4.46	4.46	3.96	1.24	2.72		
35-44	0.79	0.99	1.40	1.09	1.90		
45-54	0.88	0.45	1.68	1.93	0.89		
55-64	7.18	7.18	4.95	2.48	2.72		
+65	3.47	3.47	1.24	0.25	0.25		
Profession						152.2	0.001
Business	1.98	0.74	0.99	0.74	0.99		
Educator	5.20	13.61	12.38	8.42	4.21		
Student	1.73	0.74	0.00	0.00	0.25		
Culture/Athletics	2.48	2.72	0.25	0.25	0.00		
Unemployed	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00		
Family type						46.5	0.001
Large family	4.70	5.84	1.73	1.24	0.99		
Small family	12.87	18.32	14.85	9.65	5.40		
Others	2.48	0.50	2.48	0.50	0.99		
Travel experience						47.5	0.022
Homeland	11.14	18.07	13.12	8.66	5.45		
America	4.21	3.71	3.72	1.98	0.74		
Europe	0.99	1.24	1.24	0.00	0.25		
Oceania	0.50	1.24	0.25	0.25	0.25		
Africa	0.74	0.00	0.74	0.00	0.25		
Non-	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.25		
experienced	0.50	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.25		
Travel purpose						25.4	0.005
Pleasure	11.14	19.55	15.35	9.41	5.69		
Business	4.21	3.22	0.74	0.25	0.50		
Others	2.97	1.98	2.77	1.73	1.24		
Travel type						16.9	0.328
Group	6.93	12.38	7.92	4.95	2.72		
Individual	5.94	7.67	5.94	2.72	2.48		
Family	4.70	3.71	4.21	2.23	1.24		
Others	0.74	0.99	0.99	1.49	0.99		

SEGMENT PROFILES

As Weber (1989) mentioned that combined with demographic characteristics of tourist consumers, insight into the perceptions provides a possibility of identifying different market segments, in turn, present a basis for market orientation., When compared to those Korean travelers bound for 5 continents of travel destination, the market was different in six out of eight socio-demographic characteristics and travel characteristics at 0.001 and 0.01 significance level (see Table 4). They are age (x2=130.4, p=0.001), profession (x22=152.2, p=0.001), family type (x2=46.4, p=0.02), travel experience (x2=47.4, p=0.02), and travel purpose (x2=25.3, p=0.02)..

Chi-square analyses show that tourist attracting attributes of shopping, amusement, food, adventure, events and sports in the groups who want to travel to Asia. Popularity, remembrance and safety were considered among travelers who want to travel America. While, sports recreation/leisure and intimacy in the groups of travelers who want to travel Oceania were significantly statistically different. On the other hand, amusement, and family /relatives in the travelers group who want to travel to Europe, amusement in the groups who want to travel America were significantly different in the statistical level. Accessibility and unknown were statistically significant difference in the groups who want to travel Africa. There is no significant difference in intimacy (Asia), culture/history(America), climate and kindness(Europe), adventure(Oceania) and Relative and friends(Africa) between male and female counterparts.

The difference and similarities were analyzed in these age brackets -25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55, 56-65 and +66. There is significantly different in the chi-square test of almost all attracting attributes in the significant level of 0,001 in the both domestic travelers group and overseas travelers group. Especially, amusement and remembrance and sports(America), and fun and unusual(Europe), adventure and events(Oceania) and sightseeing(Africa) were significantly perceived in the younger age group. Eight categories of profession such as business, educator, student, culture/athletic related, official servicemen, technicians and others were analyzed. Using the total population as the expected frequency, a chi-square test indicated a highly significant difference in the attributes of educator(homeland ($x2 =5.20$, $p =0.001$) and Asia ($x2 =5.20$, $p=0.001$) and America ($x2=13.61$, $p=0.001$), Oceania ($x2=7.43$, $p=0.001$) and Africa($x2=4.21$, $p=0.001$), and culture (Asia($x2=2.48$, $p=0.001$) and America ($x2=2.72$, $p=0.001$) were observing highly significantly different between different profession. Specifically, fun, shopping facilities and amusement (America), event, recreation, intimacy and sightseeing (Africa) in the business travelers group, while, the attributes of unknown(Oceania) and unusual(Africa) were significantly different in the students travelers group.

In the category of three family types such as large family, small family and others, the results of preliminary analysis indicates that there existed significant differences in the attributes of large family(Asia ($x2=4.70$, $p=0.001$) and America ($x2=5.84$, $p=0.01$). Otherwise, almost all of travel destinations in the category of small family were significantly different in the group of travelers who want to travel America. The experience is divided as to what respondents have traveled to five continents. The significant differences were observed in all the attributes of travel experience in the group of homeland travelers. While Asia ($x2=4.21$, $p=0.02$), America ($x2=3.71$, $p=0.02$) and Europe ($x2=3.72$, $p.0.02$) were revealed as significantly different in the group of travelers who want to travel Asia.

A chi-square test for independence based on this tabulation indicated statistically significant differences in the cell size of $p<0.001$ appears in the attributes of all travel destinations in the dependent variable of pleasure travel, Asia ($x2=4.21$, $p=0.005$), America ($x2=3.22$, $p=0.005$) were significantly different in business travels group. While, only family/relative of Africa and others were not express significantly different except

homeland travel. Significant difference was evident for the category of both groups of individual and group travelers including family travelers. The Europe market achieved the higher significant level, as compared with Oceania and Africa. The differences were mainly accounted for the divergent distribution patterns observed for the group or individual travel and family travel types. Significant differences were observed for a variety of trip-related attributes between homeland and overseas countries.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Effective tourism policy and marketing management is dependent on understanding destination choice behavior. Most marketing activity associated with a tourist destination revolves around developing the destination and persuading tourists to choose that destination. An understanding of travelers' perceptions and how these might vary from destination to destination can assist tourism marketers in identifying how competing products/services are perceived in the marketplace in terms of strengths/weaknesses and similarities/dissimilarities (Rajsheker, Edward, Thomas, and Rao, 1991).

The patterns associated with highest aggregate attribute evaluation ratings were similar attributes of homeland travel, accessibility price were included in this area. Lowest aggregate attribute evaluations were consistently recorded in the attributes of sports, recreation/leisure and relative/friends. Relatively few statistically significant regional variation in reported aggregate attribute ratings were apparent according to level of preference on a certain attributes. The highest ratings tended to be distributed randomly in the attributes of safety and kindness according to each region's preference attitudes. The highest ratings accorded to safety, kindness and accessibility among travelers who want to travel Asia. Food and price corresponded with the highest aggregate in all aggregate categories among travelers who want to travel Europe.. Highest ratings existed in accessibility among travelers who want to travel America..

Detailed examinations of evaluation patterns associated with each of the 27 attribute items with statistically significant differences in response under varying perceived image level of different regions and respondent contexts were explored. Almost significant differences at the $p=.05$ level of confidence or better are reported in this study. The purpose of this study was to determine whether differences exist in the perceived image level of travel attraction preference to a specific travel destination. Information from this analysis provides a basis for a perspective of how tourism businesses might approach marketing services to majority tourists. This study results suggests strategic issues and tourism destination management strategy. The findings of this study reported would be useful to tourism marketers in formulating marketing strategies in the tourism market.

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COMPARISON OF THREE DIFFERENT METHODS OF FORECASTING HOTEL DEMAND

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ABSTRACT

In 2004, the United States lodging industry experienced an increase in total industry profits for the first time since 2000. Profits declined to $ 16.8 billion in 2001 from $ 22.5 billion in 2000. The main causes of decreasing trend in this industry included the 9/11 terrorist attack and economic recession. These unexpected events have a huge impact on various business activities such as air transportation, international business, and conventions. In this study, Chicago is selected as a target experimental city for forecasting hotel demand. Chicago is easily subject to the number of travels through economic condition because it is considered as a hub for domestic and international air transportation. The hotel industry in Chicago can develop strategies to boost their revenue through forecasting demand and alternatives to cope with uncertainties. This study will show demand forecasting with the least error and its monthly trend subject to seasonal impact for the recent five years.

KEYWORDS: *Forecasting; hotel room demand; time series method; exponential smoothing methods.*

INTRODUCTION

Chicago enjoys its status is thought as a hub for national and international air transportation. This gives rise to potential growth in many other industries. Chicago is expected to become a national leader in business meetings, and conferences based on its infrastructure, hotels, restaurants, and convention centers such as McCormick Place. Moreover, Chicago's prospering businesses including advertising, management consulting, and research development benefit from the broad travel offerings at O'Hare and Midway (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2005)

According to city-compiled statistics, Chicago is listed as the fourth destination for domestic tourists in the United States and ninth for international tourists. At the end of 2002, approximately 5000 new hotel rooms were built in this city's downtown area. Essentially, this wave of new hotel rooms will raise the total number of rooms in Chicago to over 31,000 by the end of 2006, a huge jump from 25,000 in 1996 (Grillo, Jim, Norris, Kathy, Ruby, Kimberly, Walton, Sue, Chapman, Ben, Hardin, Terri, 2005). However, Chicago's hotel room demand in 2005 is predicted to be stable as compared to the last year. By estimating the accuracy of the result, this study will suggest alternatives to the industry.

In this paper, the focus is on forecasting Chicago hotel demand in 2005 with commonly used forecasting methods. Hotel room demand is defined as the number of hotel rooms which tourists will occupy. The purpose of this study is to discover a pattern of room demand in Chicago using historical data, and predict hotel demand for the future using three time series methods. Ultimately, this study will suggest the best predictor of Chicago hotel demand for the future. Assuming future trends will be similar to past trends, forecasts can be extrapolated from historical data. Time series methods in this study are used for the time series of hotel demand in Chicago from 2000 to 2004. Among other methods, the exponential smoothing method is selected as the best way to forecast hotel demand with the lowest MAD. Accurate forecasting is important to avoid financial damages in lodging, especially when making a decision about building room projection. A poor forecast may cause increased cost issues for a company.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forecasting plays an important role in tourism planning, especially when the project is expected to bring large amounts of money. The projection for the future value should estimate future demand and market penetration. Analyzing current and past tourist traffic, and predicting the nature of changes in tourism demand strongly contribute to tourism planning (Cho, 2003). Cummings and Busser (1994) enhanced the importance of accurate forecasts using suitable time series methods and appropriate data, with an expectation of yielding benefits in destination marketing and scheduling of resources. According to Pickrell (1990) and Richmond (1998), estimating the financial ability of projects is dependent upon the accuracy of the travel demand forecasts. In the study of

transportation demand forecasting, Flyvbjerg (2003) mentioned the importance of estimating uncertainty and risk associated with forecasting projects.

Forecasting is an essential factor of managing any company or organization. It is clear that a company's continuous growth depends on how well the business director is able to anticipate the future and develop appropriate strategies (Moore, T., 1989). In the study of inaccuracy in traffic forecasts, Flyvbjerg, Holm, and Buhl (2006) provided that the forecast is an available valuation of determining whether they plan to build the project or not. However, it is difficult to anticipate volume or size, because some sectors of business could be affected by unexpected factors, such as changing demand and terrorist attacks. Therefore, using historical data is helpful for management to measure its business volume and size, and to find its cycle.

In this time series method, whose data consist of a set of observations at successive periods of time, management can identify certain trends. In this aspect, some studies found advantages to this time series methods. Witt (1995) described its benefits as facilitating specification, estimation, and evaluation, and even providing more accurate forecasting results. Moreover, the time series method provides a basis for economic and business planning, production planning, inventory, and production control along with control and optimization of industrial processes (Box, Jenkins, & Reinsel, 1994).

There are many studies on forecasting tourism demand using different smoothing time series methods. The forecasting performance of various models can be affected by the type of data used (monthly, quarterly, or annual). For example, Geurts and Ibrahim (1975) studied a series of monthly tourist arrivals to Hawaii, and Choy (1984) examined a time series regression model. Time series methods consist of three components: smoothing (moving average, weighted moving averages, and exponential smoothing), trend projection, and trend projection adjusted for seasonal influence. This study will discuss exponential smoothing and trend projection with seasonality.

Exponential smoothing is one of the most commonly used forecasting methods to separate trends or seasonality from irregular variation. This requires the current level of the time series data to be evaluated (Gardner, F., S. 1982). Granger and Newbold (1977) mentioned that it represents the latest assessment available of the constant predictable element of the time series. By using weighted averages of the past data, exponential smoothing allows the impact of the recent observations to decrease over time (Cho, 2003). This is why forecasters prefer to use this method in determining the impact of recent observations on the forecast values. It is especially effective when the time series data changes slowly over time. (Yaffee & McGee, 2000). Joshua, Rachel, and Peter (2003) studied the monthly use rates at the Milwaukee County Zoo to explain the seasonal time series. Cho (2003) has compared three different approaches to tourist arrival forecasting. A study of forecasting tourist arrivals was conducted by Lim and McAleer (2001)

Recently using seasonality for forecasting has become an important issue in tourism demand. Kulendran and King (1997) examined about seasonality in their study of modeling seasonality in tourism forecasting. Careful consideration and handling are

required in time series in order to improve the accuracy of seasonal tourism demand forecasts because it is an important feature in the tourist arrivals time series. Seasonal variation indicates differences in tourism demand from season to season, also called fluctuation. It can be adversely affected by several conditions in tourism demand: climate, available holidays, special characteristics of the destination, marketing, and special events. Baum and Lundtorp (2001) discussed measures for seasonality and the reasons for measuring seasonal variation in tourism demand. In terms of international tourism demand, the importance of building seasonal variation has been highlighted (Kulendran and King, 1997: Kulendran and Wong, 2005). As shown above, several studies have found that seasonal impact can enhance a great relationship with tourism and other variables. This is why seasonal variation cannot be ignored in the forecasting of seasonal tourism demand.

Analyses use the magnitude of the forecasting error to evaluate forecasting achievement in time series. To estimate the accuracy of forecasting, various methods have been used. MAPE (Mean Absolute Percentage Error) is mentioned as one of the most common methods in the previous forecasting studies. (Martin & Witt, 1989; Wong, 1997). Lewis (1982) suggested the criteria to judge accuracy in the study of industrial and business forecasting methods. Cho (2003) suggested targeting the Japanese market in 1998 may be helpful to simulate increasing market demands using forecasting methods: exponential smoothing and univariate ARIMA. This study will use MAD to measure forecast accuracy, which indicates the average of the absolute values of the forecast errors.

METHODS

Data for the Chicago hotel's demand were obtained from Smith Travel Research. The period of collected data is the range from January 2000 to December 2004, which is used to predict variations in the following year. Four years' time series data were used to find a pattern in hotels' demand.

Hotel demand can impact decisions in the hotel industry regarding plans for building new hotel rooms, so it is subject to other variations such as time series trend and seasonality. In this study, three forecasting methods based on time series will be used, including a trend regression model adjusted with seasonal index, a regression model with dummy variables (monthly), and an exponential smoothing method with smoothing constant α ($0.1 \leq \alpha \leq 1.0$).

Exponential Smoothing: $F_{t+1} = \alpha * Y_t + (1 - \alpha) * F_t$

To provide the best prediction for the future value, this study calculates and compares MAD from the results of each method. This is calculated from the average of the sum of the absolute forecast error. After that, choose the smallest value of MAD. The smaller MAD is, the more accurate the forecast is;

$$MAD \text{ (Mean Absolute Deviation): } \{\textstyle\sum |\, Yt - Ft \,|\} / N$$

RESULTS

According to three forecasting methods, the results are displayed as follows:

Regression Model I => Y=1872855 - 587.61X

Regression Model II => Y=1453639 - 625.496T – 59228.5 M1 + 2969.642 M2
+ 341350.9M3 + 364750.6M4 + 587624.5M5
+758838.6 M6+ 738848.7 M7+ 704993.6 M8
+ 580657.1 M9 + 650791 M10 + 377191.3 M11

Exponential Smoothing with α =1.0 => Ft+1 = 1.0* Yt

Table 1. Predicted Hotel Room Demand for 2005

	Regression Model I	Regression Model II	Exponential Smoothing with α =1.0
MAD	1833777.535	538615.2583	303198.0909

According to the analysis indicated in this study, exponential smoothing with α=1.0 is selected as the best method for forecasting hotel room demands. With the result of exponential smoothing, demand forecasting in Chicago hotels can be sensitized to reflect current market conditions. This is because it consists of values in more recent time periods which have impact on the forecast, and thus should be given more weight.
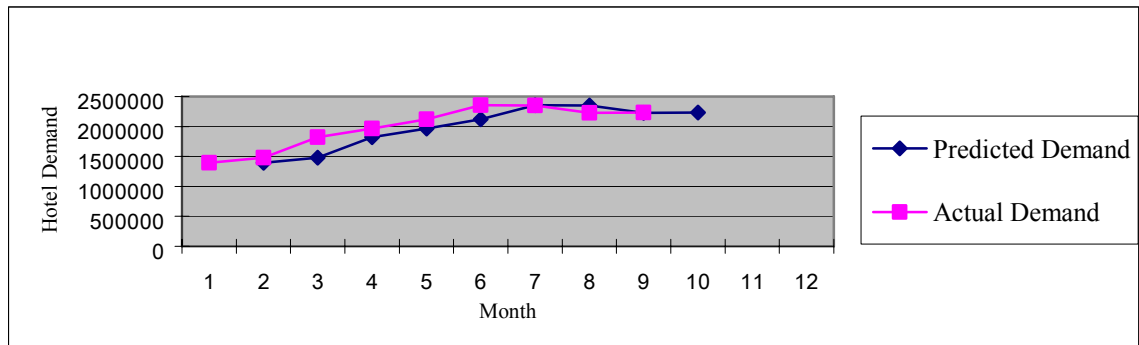
Figure 1. Chicago hotel demand

In the exponential smoothing table, forecast error indicates the difference of values between actual and predicted demand. As shown in figure 1, the predicted demand graph displays the same form as the actual demand graph. That is, the resulting prediction

follows the Actual graph with a one month time gap. This result can be interpreted as the amount of hotel room demand for the next month is the actual number of hotel room demand for the previous month.
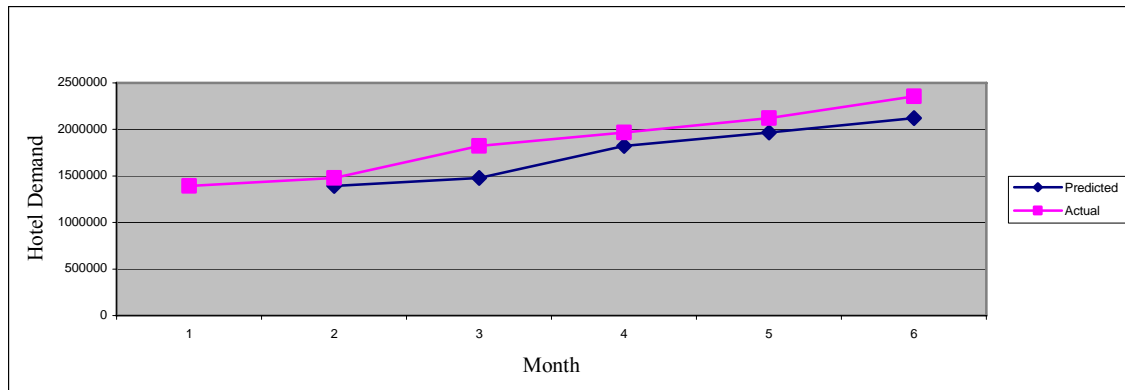
Figure 2. Hotel demand of the first half in 2005

Figure 2 shows the differences of two data sets, given the period of the first half year in 2005. Although forecasting demand is always lower than actual demand, predicted values seem close to the actual room demand, exception of the month of the March. Therefore, one can conclude that forecasting is relatively accurate for the first six months.

Although using exponential smoothing is selected as the best way to forecast hotel room demand, there remains a need to provide explanations of seasonal effects in Chicago's hotel demand. "Seasonal index" is calculated from the data from 2000 to 2004. The standard deviation of seasonality for this 5 year period is 0.16077.
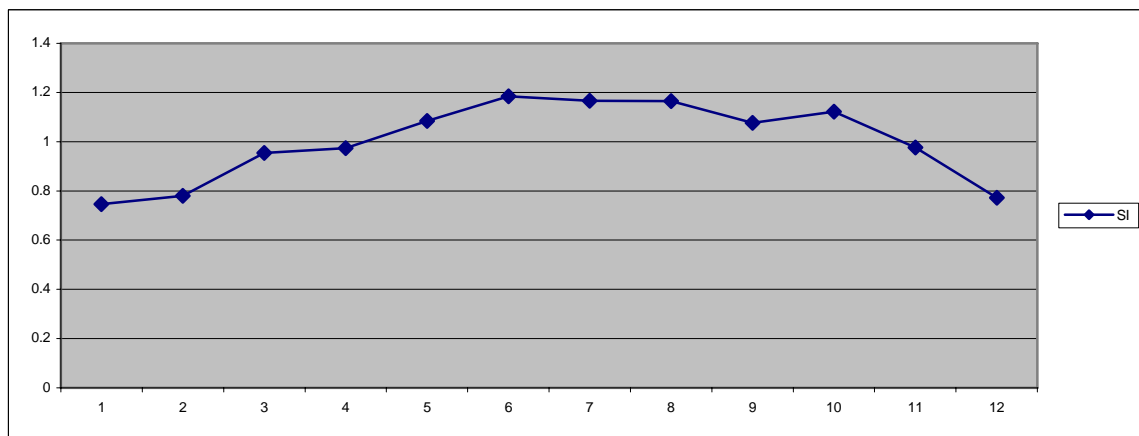
Figure 3. Seasonal index

Figure 3 shows outstanding trends in both spring and winter: a gradual increase in spring, (Mar. through Jun.) and a sharp decrease in winter (Oct., Nov., and Dec.). Chicago's winter is its low season because of its 24 F° average temperature, which is much lower than the 31 F° national average. Additionally, its 13 inch snowfall is greater than the national average. However, in the spring, increasing SI is due to increasing special events and convention business. There is evidence to prove this result. On the average Chicago hosts 53 events and conventions were held in between the months of March and June.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

The following two charts below are drawn based on actual data, with the exception of the 2005 column in figure 4. The 2005 column involves the predicted number of hotel room demand from February through October. Demand for 2001 and 2002 are relatively lower than other years because it takes into account unexpected events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and economic recession. According to the PricewaterhouseCoopers Hospitality & Leisure practice, actual personal air travel and business meeting activity had been impacted by the slow economy and terror shocks to air travel at that time. After the economy rebounded in late 2002, hotel room demand showed increases. Based on the Smith Travel's findings, Chicago's market in 2003 was driven by two factors. Since 2003 Chicago had a great convention calendar, with large volumes of room nights booked (Bruce, 2003). Additionally, it experienced a large increase in corporate meetings for firms with their home base in Chicago (Airoldi, 2003). However, it was still below levels in the same period in 2000.
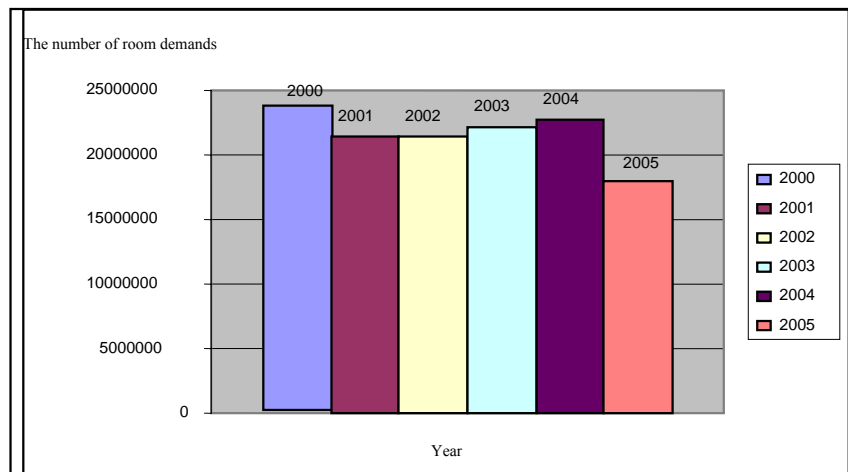
Figure 4. Annual hotel room demand
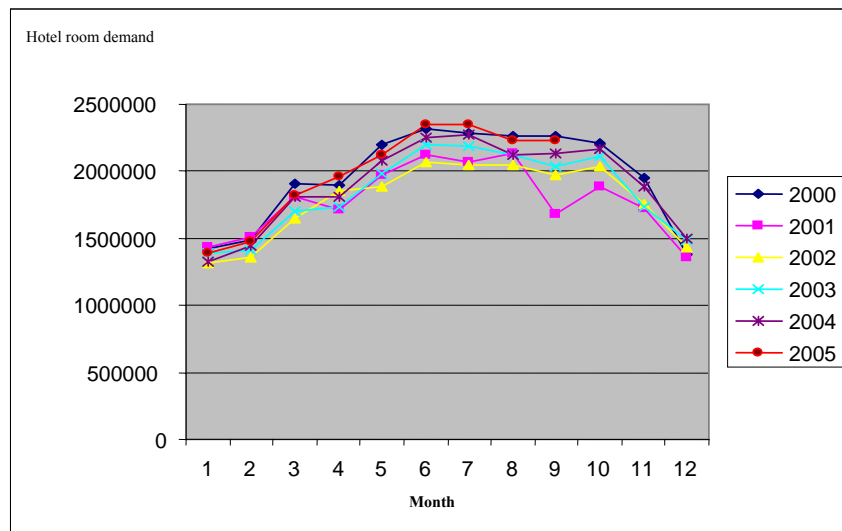
Figure 5. Monthly hotel room demand of the five years

As shown in figure 5, hotel room demand for 2004 was close to the actual demand of 2004. As a matter of fact, 2004 was the first year Chicago experienced an increase in city visitors since 2001. According to figures released by the Chicago Convention and Tourism Bureau (CCTB), 2004 enjoyed an unprecedented numbers of travelers (31.91 million). This arguably placed Chicago as one of the foremost domestic business destination cities. This could be seen as a return of sorts to historical travel patterns (Dakota, 2004). That is, people are realizing they must return to business and attend conventions, and it leads the positive prediction of advanced hotel bookings for the following year (Selwitz, 2003).

Due to a lack of actual data in 2005, we cannot determine whether hotel room demand in Chicago increased or not. However, we can anticipate that demand would be similar to both 2000 and 2004, based on the (2005) red line near 2000 and 2004 in Figure 5. With similar graphs over the twelve months, demand seems to be impacted by the seasonal patterns. In other words, Chicago hotel's demands are subject to various variables; seasonality in winter and spring, unexpected events, and economic environment. Moreover, we can conclude that the exponential smoothing method is the best forecasting method for the hotel room demands in Chicago, 2005, because it has the lowest MAD.

The big question moving forward is whether the most recent surge in demand will experience substantial growth, or whether the demand will remain stable. With accurate forecasting, the Chicago hotel industry can conduct better planning for building additional rooms to add to future supply. The industry needs to pay attention to changing demands for hotel rooms. Based on the forecast, Chicago hotel industry can conclude their investments on the room supply. If the prediction does not show an increase, hotels are better off maintaining their supply, than they are building new properties. At the same time, the hospitality industry has to consider alternatives to increase hotel room

occupancy and revenue. Hotels can attract business and leisure travelers from neighborhood locals, planning to offer newly renovated restaurants with new menus and more innovative meeting space in the aspect of size and technology. Multiple modes of transportations in this city would be helpful for the industry to achieve this.

A limitation of this study is the lack of actual data for 2005. Therefore, this study cannot compare the differences between actual and predicted data to determine to the forecasting accuracy. It could not provide enough explanation of the forecasting accuracy since MAD method cannot measure how accurate the forecast is. Among the three forecast methods, MAD is essentially used for determining the best method with low forecast error. Moreover, since this study has a small data set of five years, it cannot measure seasonal volatility. Larger periods of historical data are required to yield more reliable results. Finally, the main limitation of this study is that we cannot exactly conclude the results of this paper regarding an increase or decrease of hotel room demand in Chicago, 2005.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Predicted Hotel Demand for 2005 by Regression Model I

*Mo	Actual	Period	Predicted	Norm.SI	Seasonal	Forecast Error	Absolute Error
1	1,392,403	61	**1837010**	0.74629179	1370946	1837009.646	1837009.646
2	1,479,677	62	**1836423**	0.78049352	1433316	1836422.001	1836422.001
3	1,821,934	63	**1835835**	0.95446313	1752237	1835834.217	1835834.217
4	1,966,509	64	**1835248**	0.97337529	1786385	1835246.588	1835246.588
5	2,122,376	65	**1834660**	1.0840804	1988919	1834658.867	1834658.867
6	2,353,915	66	**1834072**	1.18434187	2172169	1834071.156	1834071.156
7	2,348,022	67	**1833485**	1.1663183	2138427	1833483.564	1833483.564
8	2,225,322	68	**1832897**	1.16472351	2134818	1832895.955	1832895.955
9	2,235,198	69	**1832310**	1.07643812	1972368	1832308.433	1832308.433
10		70	**1831722**	1.12162295	2054501	1831720.778	1831720.778
11		71	**1831134**	0.97569221	1786623	1831133.313	1831133.313
12		72	**1830547**	0.77215891	1413473	1830545.907	1830545.907
						Total	22005330.42
						MAD	**1833777.535**

* Month

Table 2. Predicted Visitors for 2005 by Regression Model II

Month	Actual	Period	Predicted	Forecast Error	Absolute Error
1	1,392,403	61	**1356255**	36148	36147.65
2	1,479,677	62	**1417828**	61849	61849.05
3	1,821,934	63	**1755584**	66350	66350.25
4	1,966,509	64	**1778358**	188151	188151.05
5	2,122,376	65	**2000606**	121770	121769.65
6	2,353,915	66	**2171195**	182720	182720.05
7	2,348,022	67	**2150580**	197442	197442.45
8	2,225,322	68	**2116099**	109223	109223.05
9	2,235,198	69	**1991137**	244061	244061.05
10		70	**2060645**	-2060645	2060645.35
11		71	**1786420**	-1786420	1786420.15
12		72	**1408603**	-1408603	1408603.35
				Total	6463383.1
				MAD	**538615.2583**

Table 3. Predicted Visitors for 2005 by Exponential Smoothing with α =1.0

Month	Actual	Predicted	Forecast Error	Absolute Error
1	1,392,403			
2	1,479,677	**1392403**	87274	87274
3	1,821,934	**1479677**	342257	342257
4	1,966,509	**1821934**	144575	144575
5	2,122,376	**1966509**	155867	155867
6	2,353,915	**2122376**	231539	231539
7	2,348,022	**2353915**	-5893	5893
8	2,225,322	**2348022**	-122700	122700
9	2,235,198	**2225322**	9876	9876
10		**2235198**	-2235198	2235198
11			0	0
12			0	0
			MAD	**303198.0909**

THE PERCEPTIONS OF MINORITY STUDENTS: A FOLLOW-UP STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of minority students as to their hospitality curriculums preparing them to reach their career goals. Students that attended the Conference of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality in 2006 were contacted to participate in the survey. The results of the study showed that the majority of the respondents were female, 21-25 years of age, African Americans in their junior or senior years, and with a grade point average (GPA) of B or above. The findings indicated that the majority of students responded positively toward the quality of their hospitality programs and felt confident about their preparation to succeed in the hospitality industry.

KEYWORDS: *Minority students; Hospitality programs; Career preparation.*

INTRODUCTION

It is understood that the number of African-Americans in hospitality managerial positions is not in parity with the number of African-Americans working in the hospitality field (Noriega & DeFranco, 1995). Additionally, women and people of color are still not represented equally in career positions, despite industry's good intentions and generally moral character (LaVecchia, 1998). According to the *Monthly Labor Review*, the labor force is projected to increase substantially by 2010, with an expected increase of 17 million jobs over the 2000-2010 period, reaching 158 million in 2010. A closer view of the 2000-2010 labor force indicates that certain demographic groups are projected to grow more rapidly than others, such as women and minorities (Fullerton & Toossi, 2001). As more minorities enter the workforce, ideally the representation by management should also increase.

As the United States moves to a society of color, it will become even more important that managers reflect the workforce and customer base. Furthermore, customers tend to like employees who are able to relate to them and will respect an environment where differences are appreciated. Companies with a multicultural workforce will have the competitive edge to attract customers of different ethnic backgrounds. In order to change the existing cultural makeup of the industry, diversity leaders believe that focus should be given to education and creating awareness of career opportunities. Through focusing on education and career opportunities the number of minority executives and business owners may be increased (Gunter, 2004).

A study conducted by Lin and Noriega (2005) revealed the perceptions of African-American students pertaining to managerial positions in the hospitality industry and investigated whether African-American students perceive their education as preparing them to reach their career goals in the hospitality industry. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of African-American students responded positively toward the quality of their hospitality programs and felt confident about their abilities to be able to succeed in the hospitality industry.

In order to provide updated information and investigate changing perceptions of minority students over the years, a follow-up survey was conducted in February 2006 by using the questionnaire from Lin and Noriega (2005). The instrument contained three sections. The first section requested demographic information about the respondents. The second section asked information of respondents' hospitality programs. The final section of the questionnaire consisted of 20 statements regarding respondents' perceptions toward themselves, their educational preparation, and other perceptions pertaining to the hospitality industry. A five-point Likert scale was used to determine the perceptions, with 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = somewhat agree, and 5 = strongly agree. All minority students that attended the Conference of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH) in February 2006 were approached to participate in the study.

There were 37 questionnaires completed and returned during the 2006 NSMH conference. The descriptive data analysis shows that the majority of the respondents were female (84%), 21- 25 years of age (70%), African Americans (61%), in their junior or senior years (73%), and with a grade point average (GPA) of B or above (95%). The most popular positions that respondents looked for were combination of food, beverage, and lodging (23%) and marketing and sale (23%). About 51 percent of the respondents' programs were predominantly Black institutions and the majority of the average class size was 1-30 (62%). Approximately 46 percent of the programs were geared toward a combination of food and beverage and lodging components. When asked which specific courses in their curriculum were found the most rewarding, 27 percent of the respondents indicated that the lodging course was the most rewarding followed by cost control (17%). In addition, about 54 percent of the respondents felt they were best prepared to enter the lodging area, followed by the food and beverage area (31%). (Please see Tables 1 & 2)

Similar results were found between both studies in terms of participants' demographic information and their hospitality programs' size and concentration area. In addition, students from both studies indicated that food & beverage and lodging were the most popular positions they look for. In addition, they also felt that they were best prepared to enter the areas of food & beverage and lodging operations. However, the top two courses students found the most rewarding in their curriculum were lodging and cost control in this study, changing from food & beverage and hospitality management in the previous study. More comparison results regarding minority students' perceptions toward self, educational preparation, and hospitality industry will be presented in the conference presentation.

SUMMARY

As the impact of parity in numbers between minority employees and management receive more attention in the hospitality industry, additional research among current hospitality employees and managers must be completed to provide more current and comprehensive viewpoints. This study attempted to understand the changing perceptions of minority students toward themselves, their educational preparation, and other perceptions pertaining to the hospitality industry over the years.

This study only investigated a convenience sample of minority students that attended the Conference of the National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH). Therefore, the ability to generalize the study's findings is limited because the study's sample may not represent the population of minority students across the nation. Also, a relatively small sample size may bias the results of the study. It is recommended that future studies should be conducted with different and diverse samples to validate the findings of this study.

Table 1. Respondents' Profile

Characteristics	N	Percentage
Gender		
Male	6	12.2
Female	31	83.8
Age		
< 20 years old	11	29.7
21 – 25	26	70.2
Race		
Africa American	22	61.1
Caucasian	7	19.4
Asian	5	13.9
Hispanic	2	5.6
Academic classification		
Freshman	2	5.4
Sophomore	6	16.2
Junior	12	32.4
Senior	15	40.5
Graduate	2	5.4
Grade Point Average (GPA)		
A	11	29.7
B	24	64.9
C	2	5.4
Specific type of position sought		
Lodging	6	1.6
Food & beverage	4	9.1
Combination of food, beverage, and lodging	10	22.7
Tourism	8	18.2
Recreation	2	4.5
Marketing and Sale	10	22.7
Event and meeting planning	6	13.6
Human resources	2	4.5
Accounting and finance	6	13.6

Table 2. Profile of Respondents' Programs

Characteristics	N	Percentage
Was your institution a predominantly Black institution?		
Yes	19	51.4
No	18	48.6
Average class size		
1 – 30	18	62.1
31 – 60	11	37.9
Program concentrated toward		
Combination of food, beverage, and lodging	22	45.8
Lodging	11	22.9
Food & beverage	4	8.3
Tourism	6	12.5
Others*	5	11.4
The specific course that you find the most rewarding		
Food & beverage	4	7.7
Hospitality management	7	13.5
Cost control	9	17.3
Lodging	14	26.9
Marketing	4	7.7
Tourism	4	7.7
Law	3	5.8
Internship	2	3.8
Others**	5	9.6
What areas of the industry do you feel that you were best prepared to enter?		
Food & beverage	12	30.8
Lodging	21	53.8
Travel and tourism	4	10.3
Gaming	2	5.1

Note: Other (*) include sports (2), even planning (1), hospitality management (2)
Others (**) include media relations (2), microcomputer (2)

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REGIONAL DESTINATION MARKETING: TOWARDS A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on empirical findings of an ongoing research project on how destination management organizations in one region can form partnership among themselves. Based on a literature review, a research framework was developed and empirical data was collected via semi-structured interviews with senior executives of DMOs in the Central Florida Region. The interview findings suggest that forming partnerships among DMOs is beneficial in terms of cost reduction and reaching more potential tourists. There are many areas DMOs can work together. These include sharing information, designing joint promotion and training programs. There seems to be several challenges in forming partnership. However, the main barrier appears to be political issues among neighboring destinations which prevents forming partnership among DMOs and subsequently tourism development in a region.

KEYWORDS: *Collaboration; CVB, Destination marketing; Destination marketing organizations; Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) tend to treat other neighboring destinations as their competitors. However, excessive competition between localities within a region weakens the overall effectiveness and efficiency of regional tourism development (Prideaux & Cooper, 2002). When tourists travel they rarely confine themselves to one part of a region. They generally aim to maximize their travel benefits by bundling different destinations throughout a region. Travelers' behaviors, the nature of tourism products, and geographic regional destinations call for a collaborative and partnership approach among DMOs in the form of regional marketing and management efforts.

Despite the popularity of collaboration and partnerships in tourism, few theories have been developed to explain the critical issues underlying collaborative destination marketing. The literature on interorganizational relationships and strategic alliances in general have used different theoretical paradigms to approach the issue, such as resource dependency theory (Pfeffer & Salancick, 1978), transaction cost economics (Williamson, 1975), strategic management theory (Porter, 1985; Prahalad & Hamel, 1990), and networking theory (Gulati, 1998; Granovetter, 1985). However, none of these generic theories is applicable in capturing the dynamic and idiosyncratic nature of tourism marketing and tourism development. In addition, in order to be effective and successful in such endeavors, DMOs need to be aware of the critical factors in the process of building and sustaining collaborative relationships, another area which lacks both conceptual and empirical guidelines. Having identified this gap, this paper intends to:

1. Evaluate motivational factors for forming partnership among DMOs;
2. Identify specific areas where partnership can be established and maintained;
3. Evaluate facilitating and inhibiting factors in forming partnership among DMOs;
4. Propose a framework for establishing collaboration among DMOs.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Studies on collaborative destination marketing mainly focus on two levels: the intra-destination collaboration at the local level (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006), and the inter-destination collaboration at the regional and national level (Henderson, 2001). The latter stream of research explores the means by which destinations can work in partnership with other destinations in improving inter-regional, inter-state and inter-destination product.

The issue of inter-destination collaboration has been raised much in the past but progress to date on achieving it has been somewhat slow, indecisive, and fragmented. Back in the 1980s, Teye (1988) outlined the need for greater regional cooperation among destinations in Africa, with joint promotion and marketing being just one of the avenues for potential collaboration (Fyall & Garrod, 2004). Teye (1988) argued that inter-

destination marketing collaboration was crucial to long term success based on studies of long-haul travel trends and the migration to multi-destination trips. He concluded that it was the tourism marketing that provided the primary reason for whatever regional cooperation exists in many countries. This view was supported by the limited offering for tourism products in some destinations, and the availability of complementary tourism products in neighboring destinations.

The existing literature refers to several reasons for firms to enter into alliance relationships. A reason often identified is that the partners want to gain access to critical external resources (Fyall, Oakley & Weiss, 2000; Oliver, 1988; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Other reasons for entering into an alliance are rapid technical changes in an industry (Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Hamel, 1991; Wang & Xiang, 2006), financial difficulties, reducing risks, and to rapidly enter markets (Fyall & Garrod, 2004; Lei & Slocum, 1992). These motivations emphasize the instrumental and rational aspects of alliance formation. In other words, firms enter into alliances with the purpose of achieving a limited number of well-specified goals which are usually articulated in advance.

According to Pearce (1989) tourism organizations can best achieve their goals when the activities of multiple participants work within a formal structure. Several characteristics of the tourism industry provide encouragement to the formation of such relationships. However, the prime motivations behind involvement in tourism alliances may vary substantially, ranging from achieving economic, strategic, social and learning objectives (Bramwell & Rawding, 1994). This is especially true for destination marketing since competitive advantage is gained only by bringing together the knowledge, expertise, capital, and other resources of the various tourism organizations (Fyall & Garrod, 2004).

Importantly, the fast pace of social, economic and technical change has forced tourism businesses to adapt their product offerings to meet the needs of sophisticated consumers (Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006), thus gaining and maintaining their competitive advantages (Poon, 1993). Similarly, increased competitive pressures have prompted collaboration between tourism organizations trying to gain access to new assets, markets and technologies or spread the cost of marketing innovation over several parties (Fyall & Garrod, 2004; Selin, 1993), which eventually improves their strategic positions in the marketplace. Therefore, it is increasingly difficult for individual tourism destinations to make decisions without taking other surrounding destinations interests into account.

Taking a case study approach, Wang and Fesenmaier (2006) provide empirical evidence as to why tourism organizations are willing to work with each other for collective gains. Their study indicates that tourism businesses enter into collaborative relationships with different motivations, which can be classified into three broad categories: strategy oriented, transaction cost oriented, and learning oriented. These findings have been by and large supported by previous studies using different theoretical frameworks. For example, the strategic behavior approach (Bleeke & Ernst, 1993, Ohmae, 1989) focuses on the consequences for the competitive positioning of the organization. According to this view, the formation of interorganizational linkages can be explained as

the strategic or resource needs of organizations (Hagedoorn & Schakenraad, 1994; Hamel, 19991; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978).

Secondly, from the transaction cost perspective, organizations entering into alliances and networks are driven by the need for efficiency with the emphasis on providing incentives for efficient transactions and economizing on transaction costs (Williamson, 1975; 1985). Lastly, organizational learning perspective focuses on the ability of organizations to extract new knowledge and skills or to protect core competences from competitors (Baum, J. A., T. Calabrese, & Silverman, B. S., 2000; Dredge, 2006; Hamel, 1991; Hamel, G., Doz, Y. L., & Prahalad, C. K. 1989; Hennart, 1989; Parkhe, 1993; Saxena, 2005).

Previous research highlights a number of facilitating factors exist with respect to collaboration within and among destinations (Fyall & Garrod, 2004). These include: 1) efficient and effective exchange of resources for perceived mutual benefit; 2) generation of increased visitor flows and positive economic impacts; and, 3) broadening of the destination domain. Evidence has also been found in attempts of identifying factors facilitating or inhibiting collaborative relationships in the general business literature. For example, the study by Little, Leverick and Bruce (1995) reveals that collaboration requires frequent communication among all involved parties, and the likelihood of success is greatly enhanced by the presence of a collaboration champion. Other success factors include ensuring that partners contribute as expected, creating the perception of equal benefits among partners, and building trust between partners. Firms that are more experienced with collaboration also cite the importance of flexibility in corporate systems and management style, fit with existing businesses, and the choice of a partner.

On the other hand, Fyall and Garrod (2004) also highlighted the following main constraints/inhibitors to collaboration: 1) general mistrust and suspicion among collaborative partners; 2) inability of stakeholders to work together due to excuses of political, economic or administrative nature; and, 3) particular stakeholders fail to recognize the real value of collaboration and remain closed to the benefits of working together. These inhibitors to collaboration have been verified by a series of concerns researchers have identified in the general management literature. First, there can be a leakage to collaborating partners of a firm's skills, experience, and general "tacit" knowledge that may form a significant part of the basis of its competitiveness (Hamel, at el. 1989). Second, entering into collaborative arrangements is invariably likely to lead to a reduction in the direct control held by one organization over the project in question (Hakansson & Laage-Hellman, 1984). Third, although collaboration is frequently promoted as a means of reducing cost and improving efficiency, the additional financial and time costs incurred in managing the collaboration are likely to affect the collaboration process negatively.

In the context of regional destination marketing, the broader context within which collaboration takes place is also likely to have a significant bearing. Changes in the partner destinations' markets, in their competitive fields, in the range of technological resources available, or in the regional/community policies and governance can have a

critical effect on the project, as can a redefinition of the collaborators' own missions and objectives.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Further to a critical review of relevant literature (Baum et al. 2000; Bramwell & Lane, 1999; Dredge 2006; Fyall & Garrod, 2004; Fyall at el, 2000; Oliver, 1988; Prideaux & Cooper, 2002; Saxena 2005; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006; Wang & Xiang, 2006), it was decided to follow a sequential exploratory research design (Creswell, 2003). In other words, the research project was planned to be completed in four stages: (1) Data collection through semi-structured interviews, (2) designing a survey based on the qualitative research findings, (3) collecting data through a survey and (4) analyzing and disseminating the empirical data.

Destination Marketing Organizations in the Central Florida Region were particularly chosen for the initial stage of this study. This is because they are among the leading destinations in the U.S. Second, as the authors of this paper have been working in this region, they have a good understanding of the region as a destination. In addition, they have established good contacts with senior executives of several CVBs in the region which could ease the access process into these organizations.

In order to carry out semi-structured interviews with key informants, an initial semi-structured interview protocol was designed based on a critical literature review. It was believed that interviewing key informants would provide invaluable and in-depth information about the issues under investigation (Yin, 2003). The researchers carried out a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews with senior executives of several DMOs/CVBs in Central Florida under the jurisdiction of several counties. These DMOs/CVBs include Orlando CVB (Orange County), Daytona Beach CVB (Volusia County) and Kissimmee/St. Cloud CVB (Osceola County), and Cocoa Beach CVB (Brevard County). Interviews were carried out in the form of face to face or on the telephone which lasted from 30 minutes to one hour. Each interview was tape-recorded and transcribed in verbatim format.

It is suggested that when analyzing qualitative data researchers can employ both a 'tight', more theoretically driven approach, or a 'loose', inductively oriented approach (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). As qualitative studies aim to describe and explain a pattern of relationships and interactions, a legitimate and useful path is to start with a more theoretically driven approach and move towards a loose inductive approach. Given this, the theory driven and the inductive sequential approaches (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were used together for this study. Miles and Huberman (1994) and Yin (2003) suggest that through employing the theory driven approach, existing theories frameworks can be evaluated. Through using the inductive approach new theories can be developed.

In order to analyze the interview findings, a coding scheme was developed based on the literature review. By following this coding scheme, much of the data analysis consisted of breaking down the interview transcripts and notes into manageable blocks in order to classify them under each code/grouping. The interview notes and transcripts were read many times by the authors in order to identify emerging issues. Following Ritchie and Spencer's (1994) guidelines, a 'cut and paste' approach was adapted whereby 'chunks' of verbatim texts or summary notes were regrouped according to their categories. Each passage of text was annotated with a particular reference and entered on the chart. The original text was cross-referenced so that the source could be traced and the process of abstraction could be examined and replicated.

As stated above, alongside the theory driven approach the inductive mode of analysis was also employed for this study. Employing this inductive approach was particularly important for this exploratory research study since the literature on this area has been limited and therefore following this approach provided an opportunity to explore emerging issues from the data. For example, the coding scheme was not very useful in identifying and grouping all issues. In such cases open coding (Maxwell, 2005) was employed to identify and reflect the emerging themes and sub-themes from the data. All the data was sifted and charted and according to core categories, the researcher begun to pull together key characteristics of the data, and to map and interpret the data set as a whole. Further to this, key concepts were redefined, the range and nature of phenomena were mapped and index trees were created, associations and explanations were sought. The next section will present the empirical findings in the form of 'thick' description.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Reasons for Forming Partnership among CVBs

All informants agreed that forming partnerships among CVBs would be helpful for all parties. Several reasons for forming partnership among CVBs emerged from the research findings. These are cost efficiency and reduction, information sharing, and reaching larger markets. However, the informants mainly referred to cost efficiency and reduction as the most important reasons for forming partnerships. Similar statements as below were often made by the informants:

> "*Well we should work together for cost efficiency. It is so expensive to market. The cost of marketing doubles and triples and when you take the exchange rate in foreign countries and add that on to it… I mean it just makes perfect sense in certain markets that you should be there together if you can, just to save some dollars and present the entire region to the consumer*" (Daytona CVB).

> "*There are two things: to reach out to more people at a small cost. You are pooling your money together*" (Kissimmee CVB).

Areas that CVBs Can Form Partnerships

Efforts have also been made to identify the major areas in which CVBs can form partnerships. These include information sharing, developing joint marketing programs, designing joint training workshops, networking, providing legislation support, carrying out joint trade shows and distributing other CVBs' promotional materials in their own stands/activities.

It emerged from the findings that information sharing and joint marketing activities seem to be the major areas referred to by the informants. This can be exemplified by the following statements:

> "*We share everything, anything. If they call me and ask me for anything, I don't care whether it has to do with zero operations or market origins or anything we have. I think you will find that with CVBs all over the country that there aren't [sic] people holding the information close to the vest and not sharing the information with their neighbors and not sharing it with others in the bureau business. That has long gone*" (Daytona CVB).

The Kissimmee CVB executive commented that:

> "*One other thing that we are doing with other CVBs is in our welcome centers we'll put their materials no charge…we do a swap. For example, we focus on I-95/I-75 CVBs. And we work with them and put our materials in their welcome centers as you come down I-95, and then we put their materials here for people that come down here because we have locals that want information. So that's a swap out*".

The executive of the Florida Space Coast Office of Tourism (Cocoa Beach CVB) explained their partnership with Orlando as follows:

> "*Our logo is Orlando's closest beach. We tie it together very well. We promote visits… Attractions, Kennedy Space Center and Port Carnaval Sterling Casino Lines. Orlando talks about the port, the cruise, it really is a cross partnership between Orlando and FSCOT. It takes a regional perspective*".

Challenges and Inhibiting Factors in Forming Partnership among CVBs

Similar statements were made by the interviewed executives. They generally indicated that timing, determining the portion of expenses, priorities of each CVBs, differences of target markets among CVBs, resistance from the hotel industry in each region, legal issues, and finally political issues among neighboring destinations were the main challenges and inhibiting factors. It is apparent that most of these factors are interrelated.

Concerning this, the respondents often made comments like "we are competing with each other". Therefore, forming partnerships among them does not always seem to be an easy process. For example, there were statements saying that local industries in each location, particularly the hotel industry would often resist the idea of working with another destination in marketing activities. They want all the business to their own county/location.

It emerges that each destination is different in terms of product and customer portfolios. For example, the executive of Daytona CVB stated that:

"When you sit down at the table and your start talking about timing, start talking about expense, start talking about significant markets that may be very significant to one destination but not as significant to another...it is a challenge".

On the same issues, the executive of the Kissimmee CVB commented that:

"We are different than Orlando. We are 80% leisure, 15% business and 5% visiting friends & relatives. Orlando is much different with the new Convention Center, even though they spend a lot on leisure... Because each different county have a different sets of economics and structure and political oversight. So that (forming partnership) is very challenging. It is very difficult".

However, one issue referred in almost each interview is that there seems to be political conflicts among destinations. The ongoing political conflicts seem to hinder forming long term partnership among them.

What Should be Done to Form Long Term Partnerships

Different strategies were put forward by the informants about what CVBs in Central Florida can do to form long term partnership among them. For example, the executive of Daytona CVB stated that:

"Well I don't know if you need a formal structure... You must keep open lines of communications between the marketing people and the CEOs of bureaus...as I said, we got that. I mean we had Kissimmee over here a few weeks ago just talking to us about how we package golf".

The executive of Florida's Space Coast Office of Tourism (Cocoa Beach CVB) stated that:

"I think cross promotions is the way to go. We enjoy 58% return visitors. If you make an effort to say why you don't stay in Orlando in your next visit? If I have to lose business ... make information available on different

areas. Due to repeat business we need to make efforts to do cross promotions for other areas in the region".

The executives referred to legal issues and explained how CVBs are structured creates barriers for them to work together. For example, the executive of the Kissimmee CVB stated that:

> "*The question that you are asking is how to get the six counties to work together? So you almost need to take a structure from outside and develop it for Central Florida and make a Central Florida CVB. And then everybody still does their own thing. Each CVB does their own thing; you are just going above and beyond. You then take X amount of dollars and put into (programs), just like what you do with Visit Florida (the DMO for the State of Florida). You are looking at a mini Visit Florida structure*".

Understanding the Process of Forming Partnerships

One finding emerged from the interviews is that forming partnerships among CVBs generally starts through personal relationships and informal discussions. It is evident that senior executives and managers of CVBs often communicate with each other and they exchange information on prospective visitors, business trends and developments. Forming partnership does not seem to happen overnight. Ongoing discussions and informal and formal meetings seem to take place to identify potential areas for future partnership. For example, the President and CEO of Daytona Beach CVB explained how they initiated a partnership with regional CVBs.

> "*When we first started meeting, we did not know what we wanted to do. I think we first met 3 or four years, maybe longer. At our first meeting we were all over the place. We were talking about what we could do for an area wide golf program, did that make any sense*".

The region's major CVB may have to take a leading role in bringing together the regional CVBs. Due to their substantial resources and experiences; they can design comprehensive and inclusive marketing programs which promotes other regional destinations. For example, in the Central Florida region, Orange/Orange County CVB seems to be the major CVB attracting the majority of the visitors traveling to the region. All the other areas such as Kissimmee, Daytona, Seminole, and Cocoa Beach feed off the Orlando/Orange County target markets. This is reflected by the following comments by one of the CVBs:

> "*You know Orange County CVB is so much international. We don't have a big enough budget to focus on the world, whereas they really need to... they have to and a lot of times they will be printing something that are in ten languages or sometimes it will have a big price tag on it and we just can't afford to do it.*"

On the other hand, the executive of Orlando/Orange County CVB stated that they have tried to form partnership with all neighboring CVBs but so far they have not been successful in achieving their intended aims. When asked why they have not been successful, he stated that "it is all politics". It appeared that there has been an ongoing political conflict between Orange and Osceola counties. In short, it appears that CVBs have limited power in forming long term partnerships among themselves in Central Florida region. In order to establish a working relationship among CVBs, political figures and the members of the Tourism Development Council have to get involved in this process.

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Previous studies have looked at how destinations compete and the role of DMOs in creating and maintaining competitive advantage. However, there has been relatively limited study on forming partnerships among DMOs. It is known that in order to succeed destinations do not have to necessarily compete with each other. They can also establish strategic partnerships in many areas and all partners can win. This is often called as *win-win* solution. The current study provides new empirical evidence on main reasons for forming strategic partnerships among DMOs, current and future areas for forming partnerships among DMOs and finally, facilitating and inhibiting factors when forming strategic partnerships among DMOs.

The study contributes to tourism literature in several ways. First, this study has highlighted the importance of destination marketing as a collective effort which requires various organizations and businesses to harmoniously work together in order to achieve a common goal. To this end, this study demonstrates an important, although preliminary step toward a research theme focusing on capacity and competence building for regional tourism development within a marketing context. Secondly, this study further contributes to the study on tourism specific partnerships and networks in response to the escalating environmental pressures.

Thirdly, while the primary goal of the study is to describe and explain several critical issues in regional destination marketing efforts, it is believed that the current study has the potential to lead to a general framework development which can serve as a theoretical foundation for understanding this type of partnerships and networks in tourism destinations. Finally, this study offers practical implications for marketers/managers in regional destination marketing organizations by helping them gain a better understanding of the issues related to partnerships and networks so that they can not only improve their own destination's performance but also be able to achieve competitiveness and sustainability for the region's economy at large.

The authors of this study intend to continue their research by interviewing other key executives from CVBs in Central Florida Region. After fully analyzing the interview findings, focus group interviews are planned with policy makers in the region. The

authors also plan to design a survey to collect empirical data nationally in the USA. It is hoped that this ongoing research will bring new insights into this relatively under researched area.

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SECTION III: WORKING PAPERS

HERITAGE TOURISM AND THE TIMESHARE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Heritage tourism and the timeshare industry have both seen dramatic growth during the last decade. The purpose of this research project is to determine if there is a link between heritage tourism and the timeshare industry. Vacation club owners that belong to an internationally recognized branded vacation club are to be surveyed to determine their interest in Orlando's heritage and cultural attractions. The results of this survey will help developers better understand their owners and give them the information that will help diversify the planned activities that they offer the vacation club owners. The community's tourism marketers will be aided in support for this growing area of tourism in Orlando.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural Heritage Market; Timeshare; Tourism; Vacation Club.*

INTRODUCTION

Visiting heritage and cultural attractions while traveling in the United States continues to be among the top activities to pursue while on vacation. In 2004 according to the Travel Industry of America, 17% of the person-trips taken that year included visits involving heritage and cultural attractions. The timeshare industry continues to be the fastest growing segment of the hospitality industry. In 2004, $7.87 billion in sales were recorded collectively by timeshare companies in the United States.

Florida houses 22.7% of the timeshares in the United States and a large percentage of these are located in Orlando (ARDA, 2004). Orlando is known for its theme parks, but it does house many heritage and cultural attractions of which most visitors are unaware. This research project will ask respondents that own a timeshare at a branded timeshare resort in Orlando about their interest in heritage and cultural attractions. This research will also determine if the Orlando heritage and cultural attractions were effectively marketed and were more easily accessible, would timeshare owners be interested in visiting these attractions.

On the surface the connection between a heritage tourist and a timeshare owner may not be evident. However, research indicates that both heritage tourists (Silberberg, 1995) and timeshare owners (ARDA, 2004) have a higher income, spend more money in the communities that they visit, stay longer in the communities that they visit, and have a higher education level.

TIMESHARE LITERATURE

The empirical research thus far has looked for the reasons behind purchasing vacation ownership units in the United States, including flexibility of product usage in terms of location choice, unit size, and time of year. This concept of flexibility is reported by 86% of vacation ownership purchasers as being a dominant force that drives their satisfaction with their timeshare purchase (Crotts, J. and Ragatz, R. 2002). Other factors that were critical to owner satisfaction included: (a) the guarantee of quality accommodations (84% in agreement), (b) exchange opportunity with other resorts through exchange company (80% of the respondents), (c) credibility of the vacation ownership company (77%), and (d) 72% of the respondents noted that available resort unit amenities enhanced their product satisfaction (Crotts, J. and Ragatz, R., 2002).

Recent timeshare research has sought to determine underlying differences which may be present between timeshare owners. Despite the growth in timeshare ownership there has been limited research to understand and better define the potential timeshare consumer. There have been steps to better understand the timeshare consumer. Kaufman, Severt, and Upchurch (2006) found a significant relationship between timeshare owner satisfaction and their knowledge of various timeshare product components. Kaufman and Upchurch (2006) have begun to segment the timeshare market based on age and found that there were also relationships present based on the age

of a timeshare owner and their current as well as future consumption patterns. Finally, Kaufman and Upchurch (2006) looked at differences present based on gender and found significant differences present in areas of satisfaction, and planned usage.

HERITAGE TOURISM LITERATURE

Heritage tourism, a worldwide phenomenon, is also presently undergoing significant growth in the United States. A need to recapture the past is important to travelers who now expect a greater depth of experience than they did in the past. An ordinary vacation is no longer acceptable; today's traveler is sophisticated and expects more when vacationing than a mundane and shoddy experience. In general, travelers have a greater wealth of knowledge because of higher education levels and varied experiences. Therefore, developers must plan to meet these needs by offering greater opportunities for guidance and interpretation (Gunn, 1997). Balancing the growing numbers of tourists interested in historic sites and cultural attractions while providing a quality experience that does not lead to overdevelopment and degradation of the attractions and its environs have been vital issues for practitioners and researchers (Weaver and Kaufman, 2000).

Many things have caused the increased interest in heritage/cultural tourism. Some of the more evident reasons include: the aging baby boomers, the use of the internet and other technology, the rise in weekend travel, and an increasing interest in vacation packages. The Travel Industry of America recently released figures for 2000 that show 30 million U.S. travelers have stayed longer at a destination because of cultural/heritage tourism (Medina, 2001).

In general, travelers have a greater wealth of knowledge because of higher education levels and varied experiences. Therefore, developers must plan to meet these needs by offering greater opportunities for guidance and interpretation (Gunn, 1997). Balancing the growing numbers of tourists interested in historic sites and providing a quality experience that does not lead to overdevelopment and degradation of a historic site and its environs has been a vital issue of concern for practitioners and researchers (Weaver & Kaufman, 2000).

Light and Prentice (1994) found that there is no uniform demand for one type of heritage tourism experience, this makes it difficult to determine what the public wants. It appears that the heritage tourist has different motivations for travel than a traditional traveler (Millar, 1989). A person that is more historically preservationist minded may be seeking an entirely different experience at a heritage site than one that is not. Visitors can no longer be treated as one collective mass and sites must differentiate themselves in order to market effectively. It has been suggested that visitor experience should be placed at the center of any heritage management process. Traditional management focusing on the heritage resource is thought to be inadequate because it does not take into account the human element or the significance of visitors in heritage management (Hall and McArthur, 1993). Managers at heritage sites have begun to explore ways to increase

attendance and control operating expenses by evaluating operating policies and practices. The issues emphasized include a heightened focus on customer service (Silberberg, 1995). By studying what the more historic preservationist minded tourist wants at heritage sites, planners will be better able to comprehend what these individuals expect from their visit. By determining preferences, planners will be poised to capture the "heritage and cultural tourist market".

The growth in the heritage and cultural tourism area is producing a diverse audience seeking a variety of services and benefits from the heritage and cultural site experience; at the same time individuals place authenticity as a key factor in selecting a cultural or historic site. Realizing that the public is demanding an authentic heritage or cultural experience, practitioners must accommodate these wishes or they will be replaced by other practitioners who are planning, marketing, and developing heritage sites with the awareness of the "pulse of America" in mind (Kaufman, 1999).

METHODOLOGY

During summer 2006, data will be collected by e-mailing the timeshare owners and inviting them to participate in an on-line survey (see appendix 1). The company has given us permission to contact the owners, have provided 22,000 email addresses and additionally with provide a letter of support for the project which will be sent to the timeshare owners.

The results will be used to: 1) bolster support for improved marketing of Orlando's heritage and cultural attractions, 2) look at a possible link between these two growing areas of hospitality and tourism, and 3) better to understand the timeshare owner (limited empirical research has been performed in this area).

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APPENDIX 1

Survey Instrument

Please answer the following questions 1 to 29 by circling the response that represents your level of agreement. Use the following scale:

1 "Strongly Disagree"
2 "Disagree"
3 "Neither Agree or Disagree"
4 "Agree"
5 "Strongly Agree"

		1	2	3	4	5
1	I am more likely to visit art museums					
2	I am more likely to visit history museums					
3	I am more likely to visit historic sites					
4	I am likely to include a visit to an art museum during a vacation to Orlando if it was convenient and easily accessible					
5	I am likely to include a visit to a concert at a performing art center during a vacation to Orlando if it was convenient and easily accessible.					
6	I am likely to include a visit to a local festival during a vacation to Orlando if it was convenient and easily accessible					
7	I am likely to include a visit to shops that showcase the work of local artists during a vacation to Orlando if the shop was convenient and easily accessible.					
8	I am likely to include a visit to antique shops during a vacation to Orlando if the shop was convenient and easily accessible.					
9	If I knew that Orlando had well planned cultural attractions I would extend my vacation to Orlando.					
10	If I knew that Orlando had well planned cultural attractions I would be more likely to visit Orlando more often.					
11	I would participate in Orlando's Cultural attractions if transportation was provided.					
12	I prefer to stay at my Orlando Hilton Grand Vacation Property.					
13	I prefer to stay at another Hilton Grand Vacation Property other than the Orlando locations.					
14	I prefer to stay at an RCI (Resorts Condominiums International) property.					

15. On vacation in Orlando, how far would you be willing to travel to participate in cultural attractions that interest you?

A) Not interested B) ½ hour C) 1 hour D) 1 ½ hour E) 2 hour

16 How much would you be willing to spend per adult ticket for admission to an art museum?

A) Less than $5.00 B) $5.00-$9.99 C) 10.00-$14.99
D) $15.00-$19.99 E) $20.00 or greater

17. How long do your average vacations generally last?
A) 1-2 nights B) 3-4 nights C) 5-6 nights D) 7-8 nights E) More than 8 night

18. How much do you generally spend per person (per person or per day?) on your average vacation (including food, transportation, entertainment, and souvenirs **EXCLUDING LODGING**)?

A)Less than $99.99 B) $100.00-$249.99 C) $250.00-$499.99
D) $500.00-$999.99 E) More than $1000.00

19. How many vacations do you take per year on average?
A) 0-1 B) 2-3 C) 4-5 D) 6-7 E) 8 or more

20. How old are you?

	Under 20		40-49		70 and over
	20-29		50-59		
	30-39		60-69		

21. You are ….

_____ Male   _____ Female

22. What is your household income?

	Up to $24,999		$55,000-$69,999
	$25,000-$39,999		$70,000-$84,999
	$40,000-$54,999		over $85,000

23.What is the highest education level that you have attained?

	Less than high school		High school graduate
	Some college		College graduate
	Masters		Doctorate
	Post Doctorate		

24. Are you?

	Single		Living with a significant other
	Married		
	Divorced		
	Widowed		

PROFESSIONAL MODULE DEVELOPMENT: YEAR TWO

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ABSTRACT

This research is a continuation of a project that began in 2005. The purpose of this research is to survey human resource managers that employ Rosen College students in order determine their level of professionalism. The results will act as a benchmark to find out if various activities that professors use in their classroom affect the students' weak areas. The survey will be pilot tested Fall 2006.

KEYWORDS: *Professional Development; Career; Human Resources.*

INTRODUCTION

This is a continuation of professional module development program for hospitality students. Research began in 2005 focusing on developing the hospitality students' professional skills. Human resource managers participated in a focus group where their impression of the current state of Rosen College students relating to their professionalism was given in Fall 2005. These results were presented at the ISTTE 2005 annual conference. This data gave a comprehensive understanding of where the students excelled and where they needed to make improvements. The qualitative data was transformed into a survey to be distributed Summer 2006 to Human Resource managers that have interaction with Rosen College of Hospitality Management students. The results will be used to shape a program that will educate and train students in the areas of professionalism where they need the most help.

The Rosen College of Hospitality Management maintains a close working relationship with hospitality and tourism professionals throughout the world. Based on the applicability of the course offerings at the College, emphasis is spent on keeping our students up to date on current best practices in the industry. Through ongoing discussions with our contacts, we have found that our students need assistance in developing their professionalism skills. These include everything from proper interview attire to conflict resolution.

The survey instrument will be posted online and any company that is involved with working with Rosen College students will be invited to participate. The results will be used as a benchmark and the survey will be distributed annually in order to track where improvements need to be made. The entire Rosen College faculty will have access to the results so that they may incorporate them into their classes.

SURVEY

1. Briefly describe your company (ex. Hotel, Resort, Themepark, Total number of employees etc.) and/or provide a web address. _____

2. Approximately how many Rosen College students/graduates do you have employed part time?

3. Approximately how many Rosen College students/graduates do you have employed full time?

4. Approximately how many students/graduates from other colleges/universities are employed?

These questions are related to your interactions with the Rosen College students during the interview process.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

1. Rosen College students have the ability to professionally represent themselves verbally during the interview process. They are able to maintain a professional conversation avoiding slang and properly representing themselves.

2. Rosen College students dress professionally for interviews and arrive on time.

3. Rosen College students know key facts about your company and have done their research on your organization (which is evident during the interview).

4. Rosen College students are able to express convincingly why they are interested in a position with your company and are clear about their goals.

5. Rosen College students have the ability to portray themselves as contributed contributors (willing to work hard for your company) during the interview process.

6. Rosen College students have a positive attitude towards the hospitality industry that is conveyed during the interview process.

7. Rosen College students have an adequate amount of knowledge and past experience to prepare them to effectively work (for the position applied at the interview) in your company.

8. Do you think our student's internship experiences are the type your company appreciates?

9. Rosen College students have the ability to convey how their knowledge and past experience will help them succeed in your company.

10. Rosen College students have a realistic picture of the hospitality industry.

11. Rosen College students understand that it is necessary to "start at the bottom and pay their dues" unless they have a great deal of work related experience.

12. Rosen College students understand current pay levels and have the ability to understand the value of the entire compensation package?

13. Rosen College students present themselves with poise and self confidence during the interview process.

14. Rosen College students show proper etiquette and manners during the interview process. (ex. Send thank you notes, show up for the interview on time).

15. Overall, the Rosen College students convey themselves professionally during the interview process.

16. Rosen College students let you and your company quickly know quickly if they are going to accept a job offer you make.

17. Overall, do you feel that Rosen College students are better prepared to succeed in the hospitality industry compared to other college graduates that you interviewed.

The following statements relate to Rosen College students as they represent themselves on the job.

5	4	3	2	1
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

0
Not Applicable

1. Rosen students have effective leadership abilities.

2. Rosen students have effective conflict resolution skills.

3. Rosen College students are effective motivators of their fellow colleagues and employees that they supervise.

4. Rosen College students are aware of the hard work it takes to have a successful career in the hospitality industry.

5. Rosen College students are flexible and are receptive to change and have no reluctance working in different departments.

6. Rosen College students have the capability to serve non-English speaking customers effectively (for example: seek help from other colleagues who speak the language that the customer speaks).

7. Rosen College students possess the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

8. Rosen College students possess the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

9. Rosen College students provide caring, individualized attention to your company's guests.

10. When involved in a conflict with a guest, the Rosen College student has the ability to come up with effective resolutions to problems.

11. Rosen College students work well in group situations (integrate well with fellow employees).

12. Rosen College students have the ability to understand a given task and have the ability to complete the task effectively with minimum supervision.

13. Rosen College students have the ability to communicate effectively in writing (e-mails, memos, etc.).

14. Rosen College students have the ability to be effective in their verbal communication.

15. Rosen College students have the makings of future industry professionals.

KOREAN AND AMERICAN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT STUDENTS' CAREER PERCEPTIONS AND EXPECTATIONS: ARE THERE ANY DIFFERENCES?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the career expectation of undergraduate students enrolled in hospitality and tourism management programs in the United States of America and Korea. Data collection takes place at universities in Korea and in the state of Illinois and Mississippi in the United States. The groups of students, the American and the Korean, are compared to find out about the existence of possible differences and similarities between the two in terms of their career expectations including salary, working hours and other career related variables. Descriptive and Chi-square statistics are used to analyze the data collected. Implications of the results and limitations are discussed in the conclusion section.

KEYWORDS: *Career expectations; Culture; American; Korean; Students; Hospitality; Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

It is a well known premise that an individual's satisfaction is directly related to his or her expectations of the outcomes of an experience. In the case an individual's perceptions of the outcome are not met his or her expectations of experience, he or she is lead to the experiencing of frustration. In other words, an organization fail to offer and meet employees' expectations, the latter will perceive the gap, become dissatisfied with their professional life and most likely leave the organization (Blanchard, Johnson, & Hersey, 1996; Knutson, 1989). The same theory may apply to hospitality and tourism management students in regard to their expectations toward their future career in the field. If the students' expectations from their first post-graduation professional positions are different from what the industry is actually offering, the gap between their expectation and their perception of reality may influence their satisfaction level and continuity in the industry (Charles, 1992). Therefore, it is crucial for not only hospitality and tourism industry but also hospitality and tourism academic institutions to identify and comprehend hospitality and tourism management students' expectations in regard to their future career in the hospitality and tourism industry; such an understanding may lead to gaining satisfied, productive and loyal new recruits. Such an understanding would also aid companies in saving costs by not losing personnel they invested on their training and development. Through their generation of graduates who carry realistic career views, academic institutions would be more positioned to earn credibility and respect not only from their students but also from industry professionals as well.

In the 1980's, several researchers, mostly in the United States have actively conducted research studies on students' job expectations and published the results in various academic journals. Since then, the number of hospitality and tourism management academic programs has been growing tremendously in the United States and abroad. However, the number of research on this subject has not been met with the increasing number of academic programs and students in this field. This deficiency of available and updated research on hospitality and tourism management students' career expectations presents a critical need for additional research on the subject, especially abroad. The purpose of this study is to fill the research gap by investigating American and Korean hospitality and tourism management students' expectations of their future career. In addition, the study will attempt to reveal possible differences and similarities that may exist between the two groups and this research compares the findings with existing research to uncover any changes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Limited research on hospitality and tourism management students' post-graduation career expectations has been undertaken in the past. One of the few available studies was conducted by McCleary and Weaver (1988); this study investigated variables that college students valued the most when selecting a professional position. In their research, McCleary and Weaver (1988) asked respondents to rank 16 variables in terms of importance related to selecting a job. They concluded respondents ranked "chances for

promotion and growth" as the most valued variable, followed by "work that keeps me interested", and "a chance for increasing responsibility."

In a similar, but more in-depth study, Casado (1992) disputed a common industry myth about hospitality schools. The industry's misconception was that hospitality management schools created false career expectations among students which led to the industry experiencing a high job turnover with recent graduates. The results of this study results showed that students' career expectations before they graduated were fair and realistic; most respondents expected to be offered a trainee position, and accepted the idea of working well over 40 hours per week. Knutson (1987) found similar results in regard to students' expectations of salary, working hours and other employment related components.

Cheng (1998) has also researched hospitality and tourism management students' career-related preferences. Her study's outcomes were similar with previous researchers' findings. The results indicated that 42% of respondents preferred to establish their career path in the food service sector.

The limited availability of current research on the subject of hospitality and tourism management students' career expectations presents an opportunity for additional research. No previous study has examined the differences and similarities that may exist between groups of students with different cultural backgrounds.

METHODS

The target population of this study was students majoring in the field of hospitality and tourism management in Korea and the United States. The self-administered survey questionnaire was distributed to students at a universities located in South Korea, and in the United States of Illinois and Mississippi. The survey instrument aimed to extract students' career-related expectations including the following factors that may affect their job selection: expectations related to working hours, initial salary, promotions and advancement periods. In addition the survey sought information related to participants' most preferred industry's sectors (e.g. food service; lodging; etc.) and their demographic characteristics. The instrument was adopted from McCleary and Weaver (1988), Knutson (1987) and Cheng (1998) studies and revised to fit sample populations. The survey was implemented in June 2005. One hundred twenty six questionnaires were collected in South Korea and one hundred questionnaires in the Sates. All were determined to be valid. The researchers made sure that no student completed the survey more than once.

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ASSOCIATION CONVENTION PLANNERS' SITE SELECTION AND SATISFACTION: A PILOT STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to assess the meeting site selection and satisfaction by investigating the importance of different decision attributes meeting planners perceive when they select a meeting site. Based on the review of the literature, ten decision attributes are identified: facility location/inventory/price, quality of sleeping room/hotel personnel/meeting room/meeting service, hotel quality/safety, and overall affordability of destination. The questionnaire was pilot tested in summer 2006 by 20 members of meeting planner association. The final questionnaire is revised based on the results of the pilot test and will be randomly distributed to the meeting planners associated with a convention visitor bureau located in the southeast region in fall 2006.

KEYWORDS: *Association convention planners, Event planners, Meeting site selection.*

INTRODUCTION

Meeting and convention is one of the largest and fastest growing sectors within the tourism and hospitality industry (Oppermann, 1996). According to recent industry data, the total spending for the convention and meeting industry in 2000 in the US was $122.1 billion, which represents an average 9 percent year-over-year growth since 1992 (Successful Meetings, 2001). Corporates and organizations spend millions of dollars each year on conferences, meetings, trade shows, and special events. It is estimated that meeting and convention industry generates billions in federal, state, and local tax revenue and directly supported millions of jobs.

Unlike individual traveler being the key decision maker for pleasure travel, association members typically do not have input on site selection for their annual meetings or conventions (Baloglu and Love, 2001). Instead, association executives and meeting planners play an important role in the site selection process and must consider the important match between a location and program goals because a site can enhance a meeting's success (Chamberlin, 1989). Lee and Back (2005) indicated that meeting planners' perceptions and preferences of site-selection criteria have been a main research topic in this area. Major site selection criteria frequently identified in empirical studies include "accessibility", "availability", "destination image", "attraction/entertainment", and "safety/security"

The purpose of this study is to assess the meeting site selection and satisfaction by investigating the importance of different decision attributes meeting planners perceive when they select a site for their clients and their general satisfaction level about the facilities used in the recent years. Based on the review of the literature (Choi, 2000; Campbell, 1999; Hu and Hiemstra, 1996; Oppermann, 1998; Lee and Back, 2005), ten decision attributes are identified: facility location/inventory/price, quality of sleeping room/hotel personnel/meeting room/meeting service, hotel quality/safety, and overall affordability of destination. This study applies importance-performance analysis (IPA) to evaluate facility performance for important attributes affecting meeting planners' site selection process. In addition, questions related to participants' demographic information and association characteristics are included for profiling and statistical analysis purposes. The questionnaire consisted of (1) demographic information and association characteristics, (2) questions for measuring meeting planners' perceived importance and satisfaction of hotel/meeting facility attributes and destination attributes. A five-point Likert scale is used to measure the level of importance, with 1 = least important to 5 = most important. In the context of this study, meetings, conventions, and conferences have the same meaning.

The questionnaire was pilot tested in summer 2006 by 20 members of meeting planner association. The final questionnaire was revised based on the results of the pilot test and will be randomly distributed to all members of the meeting planners associated with a convention visitor bureau located in the southeast region in fall 2006 (Please see Appendix A for the final questionnaire).

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Section I: Site Selection Attributes

"Decision Attribute": An element that influenced your decision on the meeting facility.
Directions: Please circle a number to indicate the level of importance for each attribute.
Scale: 5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = neutral, 2 = not important, 1 = not very important

Decision Attribute	Level of Importance

1. Location

Proximity of hotel to meeting facility	5	4	3	2	1
Proximity to shopping, art and business	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of nearby restaurant facilities	5	4	3	2	1
Availability of sports and recreational facilities	5	4	3	2	1
Distance traveled by attendees	5	4	3	2	1

2. Inventory

Number of sleeping rooms	5	4	3	2	1
Number of rooms with 2 beds	5	4	3	2	1
Number of meeting rooms	5	4	3	2	1
Capacities of meeting rooms	5	4	3	2	1
Banquet space	5	4	3	2	1
Capacity of on-site parking facilities	5	4	3	2	1

3. Price

Sleeping room rates	5	4	3	2	1
Sleeping room discounts (i.e. comp. rooms)	5	4	3	2	1
Meeting room rates	5	4	3	2	1
Complimentary meeting space	5	4	3	2	1
Competitive catering rates	5	4	3	2	1

4. Quality of sleeping room

Size of sleeping rooms	5	4	3	2	1
Comfort of sleeping rooms	5	4	3	2	1
Appearance of sleeping rooms	5	4	3	2	1
Room Amenities	5	4	3	2	1

5. Quality of hotel personnel

Efficiency of check-in/out	5	4	3	2	1
Timely, readable, and accurate billing	5	4	3	2	1
Friendliness of hotel personnel	5	4	3	2	1
Problem-solving skills of hotel personnel	5	4	3	2	1

6. Quality of meeting rooms
    Comfortable seating in meeting room   5   4   3   2   1
    Meeting room design   5   4   3   2   1
    Lighting, climate, and soundproofing of meeting space   5   4   3   2   1
    Availability of audiovisual equipment   5   4   3   2   1

7. Quality of meeting service
    Provision of special meeting support services   5   4   3   2   1
    Experience of hotel convention manager   5   4   3   2   1
    Availability of adjoining breakout rooms   5   4   3   2   1
    Pre-convention meeting coordination   5   4   3   2   1
    Prior Satisfactory experience with facility and staff   5   4   3   2   1

8. Hotel Quality
    Hotel cleanliness   5   4   3   2   1
    Availability of on-site restaurant facilities   5   4   3   2   1
    Availability of on-site recreational facilities   5   4   3   2   1
    Availability of business services (computer, fax)   5   4   3   2   1
    Quality of food and beverage   5   4   3   2   1

9. Safety/Security
    Hotel security   5   4   3   2   1
    Meeting room security   5   4   3   2   1
    Safety of destination   5   4   3   2   1

10. Overall affordability of destination
    Weather   5   4   3   2   1
    Hospitality of local community   5   4   3   2   1
    Cultural attractions and sightseeing   5   4   3   2   1
    Special events/exhibits   5   4   3   2   1
    Convention Visitors Bureau services   5   4   3   2   1

1. Which best describes your employment as a meeting planner.
   ____ Privately owned operation
   ____ Employed by a meeting planning company
   ____ Employed by a state
   ____ Employed by a hotel/motel
   ____ Employed by a convention center
   ____ Other, please state _____

2. What types of meeting do you plan and conduct most often?
   ____ Association
   ____ Corporate
   ____ Incentive
   ____ Government
   ____ Comprehensive
   ____ Other, please state _____

3. Please rate the importance of your key information sources when selecting the meeting site using a 5-point scale. (5 = very important, 4 = important, 3 = neutral, 2 = not important, 1 = not very important)

Past experience	5	4	3	2	1
Member input	5	4	3	2	1
Hotel Advertising	5	4	3	2	1
General reputation	5	4	3	2	1
Other: _____	5	4	3	2	1

4. How many meetings do you plan a year?____

5. Do you have any annual meetings that you regularly plan? Yes ____ No ____

6. What is the average registration fee for most of your meetings? ____

7. What is the average attendance at the majority of the meetings that you plan? ____

8. What is the average room rate for most of the meetings that you plan? ____

9. What was the lead-time for the meeting site selection? _____year(s) _____ month(s)

Section III: Your Information

1. Gender: ____ Male   ____ Female

2. Age: _____

3. What is the highest level of your education?
   ____ None or some high school   ____ High school graduate
   ____ Some college   ____ College graduate
   ____ Some post-graduate   ____ Post graduate degree

4. How long have you been a meeting planner? _____ year(s)

5. What is your position title?_____