



Connecting the Past and the Future of Travel and Tourism Education



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Volume XIX*

*Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina, United States
October 4 – 6, 2007*

Clark Hu, Ph.D., Editor

Connecting the Past and the Future of Travel and Tourism Education



The Twenty-Sixth Annual Conference

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

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*Clark Hu, Ph.D.
Editor*

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Preface

The 2007 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) conference theme is: “*ISTTE Charleston – Connecting the Past and the Future of Travel and Tourism Education*”. This theme echoes the heritage of our conference site, Charleston, South Carolina, the premium historical destination in the United States! 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 working papers. This year, 37 submissions were received across the various categories in the research and academic paper section competing for presentation opportunities. After a double-blind review process, 19 of 25 research and academic full papers were accepted. This represents approximately 76% acceptance rate for research and academic full papers. For each accepted submissions, authors were invited to submit a final paper. A total 30 final papers appear in this Proceedings and in the conference program, including 19 refereed full papers, eight refereed poster papers and four refereed working papers that were invited for presentations at the conference.

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 many reviewers who contributed generously 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. I have included their names and affiliations in this proceedings for recognizing their kind efforts and contributions. Dr. Michael Sabitoni, President of ISTTE, Dr. John Crotts, Conference Chair, Dr. Wayne W. Smith, Conference Program Coordinator, and members of the ISTTE Board of Directors have continued their support and commentary regarding the research paper stream for which I am grateful. I also wish to note my thanks to the Conference Organizing Committee along with invited Paper Review Committee members for their support and assistance with the Paper Calls and paper reviews. 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 AGAIN... Without his help, this Proceedings would not be possible! Thanks, Pradeep!!



Clark Hu, Ph.D.
Editor, 2007 Annual ISTTE Conference Proceedings
Research and Academic Papers Committee Chair

General Information

The 2007 Annual International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference will devote several sessions to the presentations of academic and research 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, tourism, and hospitality services. ISTTE is an international organization; therefore, submissions from international scholars are highly encouraged. This coming year's conference title will be *"ISTTE Charleston – Connecting the Past and the Future,"* which supports our overall theme: *"Connecting the Past and the Future in Tourism Education"* that also echoes the heritage of our conference site, Charleston, South Carolina, the premium historical destination in the United States!

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
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- 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

In this Proceedings, three types of papers are presented in their individual sections:

- SECTION I: FULL RESEARCH PAPERS
- SECTION II: POSTER PAPERS
- SECTION III: WORKING PAPERS

Recognition of Reviewers

As the 2007 ISTTE (International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators) Conference Review Chair for Research & Academic Papers, I want to express my personal gratitude for the following reviewers' kind contribution to review this year's submissions. They were selected as a Review Committee member because of their expertise and scholarship in tourism and hospitality management. Reviewing others' scholarly work is time-consuming and often a non-paid task (especially in this case). I found their timely comments/suggestions insightful and helpful for the authors. Their reviews are useful for the authors to improve their final papers and presentations at the conference or resubmit to other possible venues such as journals. Their strong support has certainly made a significant impact on the quality of academic/research papers in the proceedings and presentations at our Annual Conference held during October 4-6 at Francis Marion Hotel, Charleston, South Carolina, USA. THANK YOU!

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Tables of Contents

<u>FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
A SMOOTH TRANSITION? THE CASE OF DIRECT ENTRY STUDENTS AT A SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY	1-15
Paul Barron School of Marketing and Tourism Napier University Edinburgh, United Kingdom	
and	
Norma D'Annunzio-Green School of Management and Law Napier University Edinburgh, United Kingdom	
EFFECT OF EXPERIENCE ON COGNITION, AFFECT AND SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF JAPANESE VISITORS TO MACAU	16-32
Yi Chen Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Purdue University, USA	
Xinran Y. Lehto Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Purdue University, USA	
and	
Soojin Choi Department of Tourism Yong-In University, Republic of Korea	

FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)	PAGE
---	-------------

DEMYSITIFYING TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS: THE AGE OF QUALITY OF LIFE	33-47
--	-------

Robertico Croes
Rosen College of Hospitality Management
University of Central Florida, USA.

and

Manuel Antonio Rivera
Rosen College of Hospitality Management
University of Central Florida, USA.
& Universidad del Este, Puerto Rico

FRANCHISE ERA VERSUS DOT.COM ERA: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE DIFFUSION OF SERVICE INNOVATION	48-65
--	-------

Philippe Duverger
Department of Marketing
George Washington University, USA

and

Larry Yu
Department of Tourism
George Washington University, USA

CULTURE WORKS BOTH WAYS: IMPROVING THE INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	66-81
---	-------

Meg Houghton
School of Sport, Tourism and Hospitality Management
Faculty of Law & Management
La Trobe University, Australia

and

Bao-Qiang Gao
School of Social Sciences (Asian Studies)
Faculty of Humanities
La Trobe University, Australia

FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)	PAGE
---	-------------

DIFFERENCES IN TRAVEL BEHAVIORS BETWEEN BABY BOOMERS, GENERATION X'ERS, AND GENERATION Y'ERS	82-86
---	-------

Yu-Chin Huang
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University, USA

James F. Petrick
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University, USA

and

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Texas A&M University, USA

A COMPARISON OF THE COGNITIVE DESTINATION IMAGE OF RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT TOURISTS BASED ON IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE APPROACH	87-92
--	-------

Yu-Chin Huang
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University, USA

Hyungsuk Choo
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University, USA

and

James F. Petrick
Department of Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences
Texas A&M University, USA

FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)	PAGE
---	-------------

ANTECEDENTS OF VISITORS' LOYALTY	93-100
----------------------------------	--------

Zhuowei Huang
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Purdue University, USA

Liping Cai
Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
Purdue University, USA

and

Mimi Li
School of Hospitality and Tourism Management
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China

AN EXAMINATION OF VIRTUAL DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION MODEL: TELEPRESENCE PERSPECTIVE	101-119
--	---------

Martin Yongho Hyun
School of Tourism & Hospitality Management
Temple University, USA

and

Dimitrios Buhalis
School of Service Management
Bournemouth University, United Kingdom

<u>FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
--	--------------------

MOBILE-MEDIATED VIRTUAL TOURISM: CONCEPT, TYPOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS	120-133
--	---------

Martin Yongho Hyun
School of Tourism & Hospitality Management
Temple University, USA

Seoki Lee
School of Tourism & Hospitality Management
Temple University, USA

Clark Hu
School of Tourism & Hospitality Management
Temple University, USA

and

Daniel R. Fesenmaier
School of Tourism & Hospitality Management
Temple University, USA

AFFECTIVE IMAGE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN DESTINATIONS AND THEIR SLOGANS	134-147
--	---------

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Hanwha Resort Co, Ltd., Seoul Korea

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Purdue University, USA

and

Joseph A. Ismail
Hospitality and Tourism Management
Purdue University, USA

<u>FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
MOTIVATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED FESTIVAL ATTENDEES	148-156
<p>Mimi Li School of Hospitality and Tourism Management The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, China</p> <p>Zhuowei Huang Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Purdue University, USA</p> <p>and</p> <p>Liping A. Cai Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management Purdue University, USA</p>	
THE ROLE OF POSTCARDS IN DESTINATION IMAGE DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMPLE FROM ALANYA, TURKEY	157-168
<p>Ady Milman Rosen College of Hospitality Management University of Central Florida, USA</p>	
THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE DMO WEBSITES IN TOURIST INFORMATION PROVISIONING	169-184
<p>Cristian Morosan Department of Hotel, Restaurant, Institution Management and Dietetics Kansas State University, USA</p>	

FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)	PAGE
---	-------------

COLLABORATIVE DESTINATION BRANDING	185-202
------------------------------------	---------

Oun-Joung Park
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Purdue University, USA

AVOIDING UNINFORMED RESPONSES IN DESTINATION IMAGE QUESTIONNAIRES	203-212
--	---------

Steven Pike
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Queensland University of Technology, Australia

AN EXAMINATION OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION AT RURAL FESTIVALS IN INDIANA: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	213-222
---	---------

Carol Ann Silkes
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<u>FULL PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
--	--------------------

EMPLOYABILITY IN TOURISM – A SURVEY AMONG GRADUATES FROM MCI TOURISM DEGREE PROGRAM	223-235
--	---------

Anita Zehrer
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Birgit Firschhut
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and

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School of Tourism and Leisure
Management Center Innsbruck (MCI), Austria

ILLUSTRATIVE PAPERS (POSTER PRESENTATIONS)	PAGE
---	-------------

QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATIONAL TOURISM	236-245
---	---------

Barbara A. Carmichael
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Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

and

Culum Canally
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Wilfrid Laurier University, Canada

A COMPARISON STUDY OF HOSPITALITY PRACTITIONERS AND STUDENTS WORK VALUES	246-253
--	---------

Po-Ju Chen
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and

Tammie Kaufman
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REVEALING THE TRAVEL EXPENDITURE PATTERN AMONG SENIOR TRAVELERS IN THE UNITED STATES	254-264
--	---------

Kam Hung
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<u>ILLUSTRATIVE PAPERS (POSTER PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY: A PILOT STUDY IN A HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM	265-270
Sandra Naipaul Rosen College of Hospitality Management University of Central Florida, USA	
Youngsoo Choi Rosen College of Hospitality Management University of Central Florida, USA	
and	
Denver Severt Rosen College of Hospitality Management University of Central Florida, USA	
A MODEL OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM AND AN OPEN ACCESS INITIATIVE	271-277
Bing Pan Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management College of Charleston, USA	
EVENT TERRORISM: A PLAN FOR RESEARCH	278-288
Linda M. Robson Department of Recreation & Leisure Studies University of Waterloo, Canada	
VIDEO GAME PLAYING AS A COMPONENT OF ATTRACTION MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTION – DOES IT IMPROVES STUDENT PERFORMANCE?	289-299
Michael Scantlebury Rosen College of Hospitality Management University of Central Florida, USA	

<u>ILLUSTRATIVE PAPERS (POSTER PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
--	--------------------

AN EXPLORATION OF DETERMINANTS OF INTENTION TO ADOPT MOBILE DEVICES FOR TRAVEL: A MULTI-NATIONAL STUDY	300-309
--	---------

Sujin Yang
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Purdue University, USA

JungKun Park
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Purdue University, USA

and

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Purdue University, USA

WORKING PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)	PAGE
--	-------------

BUILDING COMPETITIVE WINE TOURISM ROUTES: THE CASE OF NORTH CAROLINA WINERIES	310-319
--	----------------

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and

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT	320-328
---	----------------

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<u>WORKING PAPERS (STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
---	--------------------

REALITIES OF EMPLOYMENT IN VACATION OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT	329-334
---	---------

Tammie J. Kaufman
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THE CAROLINA SHAG DANCERS: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK OF STUDY	335-342
---	---------

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SECTION I
FULL PAPERS
(STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)

A SMOOTH TRANSITION? THE CASE OF DIRECT ENTRY STUDENTS AT A SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

While the most common type of student entering higher education in the UK falls within the 17-19 year old age group, universities are keen to accept non-traditional and mature students onto programs as a means of increasing diversity and maintaining student numbers in the latter portion of a program. Such students normally enter a program directly into the second or third year through various formal and informal articulation agreements between institutions and the recognition and granting of credit for previous studies or experience. This paper examines the experiences of a cohort of students entering directly into the second and third year of an undergraduate degree in the business school of a Scottish university. This research identified a range of learning, personal and working issues amongst this group of students. Academic concerns included ability to cope with a higher academic level, time management, assessments and study skills. Personal issues focused on coping with existing responsibilities and achieving an appropriate work/life balance. This research identifies the need to develop such students' academic self confidence in the early stages of their time at university and indicates that this group of students have specific needs and require additional institutional support.

KEYWORDS: *College; Transition; Student Experiences; University.*

INTRODUCTION

The ongoing expansion of higher education (HE) to include both school leavers and previously excluded groups such as first generation students and mature students is still a key priority for many institutions. Driving this trend is both the hard, economic imperative for more students as well as the softer, developmental benefits that students derive on an individual basis. As Baxter and Britton, (2001) opine, "Education is seen as empowering, in that it opens up employment opportunities and is a vehicle for the development of the self" (2001:87).

There are a number of different types of students that have been studied by researchers and considered as having differing educational needs and subsequently different expectations of a period of university study. In the main the distinction is drawn between differences in student needs and experiences according to age with much of the research focusing on more mature students (Michie, Glachan & Bray, 2001). While it is recognised that age is certainly a factor worthy of academic debate, it is interesting to consider the wider profile of students and focus on particular groups. It has been widely reported that the most common type of student entering university will be the standard school leaver, here defined as those students aged between 17 and 19 and who have come straight from school to university with perhaps a gap year in-between. However, a combination of financial incentives, government policy and a desire to personal development has resulted in the emergence of specific groups of students entering university who are markedly different to the standard school leaver whose journey to university has been made in a different way.

Sometimes referred to as top-up or advanced entry students, these students are defined as those who enter into their undergraduate degree program in any year other than first year and will hereafter be referred to as direct entry students. These students often join the university from a further education (FE) college, or indeed transfer from another HE institution. These students comprise home students and overseas students of all ages. Implicit in this arrangement is some form of credit for the students' previous college or university education. Typically, students who have already completed a one year certificate at an FE provider would have this previous study recognised and transfer directly into the start of the second year of a university program. Those who had completed a two year diploma would receive credit for their previous study and normally transfer into the third year of their chosen university program.

This paper argues that the needs and expectations of these direct entry students are different to standard school leaver students. Students who enter directly into the second or third year of a program will obviously not have experienced the early years of higher education. Research has found that those students who start their HE experience in the first year of their chosen program develop a familiarity with the workings of the university (Tait & Godfrey, 2001), develop peer networks (Hinds, 2006) and possess specific expectations of their time at university. Direct entry students enjoy no such background and are expected to effectively make the change from further to higher education and blend into an already developed group. It is suggested that this is potentially a stressful time for such direct entry students and the development of a better understanding of direct entry students' needs and expectations will potentially have an impact on the completion rates of this group of students and ultimately provide a more valuable learning experience.

The aim of this paper is to examine the experiences of direct entry students at different stages in their university career and focus on specific areas of learning, personal and work issues. Little is known about the specific learning needs of these students in terms of their expectations of, and ability to cope with, the demands of HE academic study. Focussing on a particular group of direct entry students that started their university experience in semester one, 2006, this research aimed to identify the nature of such students' concerns and attempted to understand to what extent the university provides targeted support. This research also aims to explore the nature of students' personal concerns relating to issues both internal and external to the university that may impact on their university experience. Finally this

paper will present a picture of the extent, type and level of part time employment amongst this group of students.

DIRECT ENTRY STUDENTS

The paucity of research specifically examining the experiences of direct entry students in HE provides little assistance when attempting to examine how and why such students are different. As a means of providing an indication of differences between HE and FE, certain universities provide direct entry students with a list of useful if highly descriptive information available on university websites. This information attempts to provide direct entry students with a list that identifies several key distinctions regarding a reduction in the level of individual student support and necessity to move from directed to more independent learning.

Previous research that examined direct entry students' experiences identifies some useful educational and assimilation issues. Daines (1992) suggests that these students are likely to lack confidence in themselves as learners and to underestimate their academic ability. These students are described as overanxious and risk averse (being particularly nervous of failure), fearing that they may appear foolish when compared to other students. Research by Mitchie et al (2001) examined differences in the experiences of traditional school leavers and direct entry students, using a questionnaire to examine the impact of past educational experiences and motivations for participating in HE on self esteem, academic self concept and academic stress. Findings demonstrated that direct entry students had experienced the most negative educational experiences at school; female students had the lowest academic self concept; and stress levels were highest among those students whose decision to continue to HE was taken in order to improve their career prospects. Interestingly the research findings highlighted that the direct entry students demonstrated lower levels of academic stress while at University than the traditional students, contrary to many assumptions about these students who have stereotypically been identified as experiencing more difficulties in this area as highlighted in the previous section.

TRANSITION FROM FURTHER TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Progression routes from FE to HE are increasing, largely as a result of widening participation and lifelong learning policies with heavy emphasis being placed on groups of students previously under represented. There are both advantages and disadvantages for students entering HE using this route. Firstly they may be less well qualified than some of the other students in their cohort (HEFCE, 2001) and have to make a quick adjustment to both the new University environment and higher level academic demands at a time when other students have had one or two years to make that adjustment. Experience has shown that these students will have thought carefully about their future career path and so may be highly committed and motivated to learn as a result.

In attempting to develop a better understanding of the dynamics surrounding student transfer and progression from FE to HE, research highlights a number of factors to consider. Banning (1989) emphasises the importance of understanding the difference between the environment the student has come from and the HE environment - suggesting that if the gap between the two can be reduced, student transition from one to the other will be easier. Tinto

(1975, 1987) suggests that academic and social integration is key to successful transition citing a number of influential factors such as prior work and life experiences; matching of expectations with reality, opportunities for social interaction and academic performance.

The realities of contemporary HE in the UK have forced many academics to adopt what is referred to as mass production standards where all students are treated in the same way regardless of their different needs and requirements. A recent Scottish Funding Council Project (2005) has highlighted the concern that there is very little on-going research examining the student experience in transition from FE to HE and it is argued that research in this area will enable institutions who value direct entry students to develop strategies to help them cope with this transition.

In order to narrow the gap between expectations and reality the unfortunately acronymic Student Progression and Transfer Project (SPAT) was created. The primary aim of which was to promote effective student progression, particularly focusing on students progressing from HND to the second or third years of a degree programme. Their research identified common issues raised by both staff and direct entry students (see Table 1) and the project, funded by HEFCE, developed a number of useful teaching and learning resources to assist the understanding of staff and enhance the learning experience and retention of the direct entry students.

Table 1. Issues concerning direct entry students

<i>Issues raised by staff</i>	<i>Issues raised by students</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre- entry information • Partnerships and progression routes • Key skills – those specific to honours degree • Induction • Different culture including teaching styles and staff expectations of independent study • Staff awareness of existence and needs of direct entry students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre entry information • Early information on module choice • Different teaching styles and class size • Availability of information on subjects covered in previous years of the course • Skills, particularly essay writing and exam technique • Financial implications of further study

Source: SPAT project (2004)

From these issues a number of themes were identified which provide a deeper understanding of the direct entry student experience. An examination of pre-entry issues (Scottish Funding Council, 2005) showed that FE students knew remarkably little about the detail of the university programme that they planned to progress to. In addition there was a lack of knowledge and understanding about what differences to expect between college and university in terms of teaching learning and assessment mechanisms and approaches.

Student interviews revealed the importance of the role of academic staff and module leaders in ameliorating some of the problems that they experienced. Students felt that many staff did not realise they were new to the University and therefore were not aware of the

specific help and support they might need. Being unfamiliar with specific computer packages or asking for access to previous years notes were cited as examples. There seems to be a fine dividing line here in terms of protecting the direct entry students feelings of self esteem in terms of offering the students extra support and making them feel conspicuous or different in front of their class.

The research also uncovered feelings of loneliness and isolation at university in general and more specifically in within their peer group. Students reported feeling that university life was not what they expected and that they did not know what was expected of them. This is a concern as research shows that dissatisfaction with a programme due to mismatch of expectations is a major cause of student drop out (Cook & Leckey, 1999). The lecturers interviewed for the SPAT (2004) project suggested that a bridging programme may be useful in assisting the communication of mutual expectations but both staff and students expressed concern that if this were optional some students would not attend and if compulsory then students may decide to choose a different progression route where attendance at bridging programme was not mandatory.

Learning Issues

When dealing with direct entry students Maguire (2001) found that these students experienced certain academic difficulties. As a means of minimising the transition to university, it was suggested that clear lines of group and individual communication systems between the student and academic staff be created and readily available. It was also found that such students had significant concerns regarding the level of work required from them. Consequently it was suggested that these students be assessed early and provided with extensive feedback. Tait and Godfrey (2001) consider that students entering directly onto a program from an FE provider bring with them both positive and negative learning issues. Indeed they consider that “These incoming students differ considerably from first year entrants in many respects, perhaps most notably in their superior levels of motivation for study and their inferior levels of academic self confidence” (Tait and Godfrey, 2001:261).

It has been found that direct entry students experience a variety of other learning issues upon joining an existing cohort. For example, Trim (2001) considered that these students felt isolated on entering university. This isolation was brought about by two factors; firstly, Trim (2001) contended that these students feel out of place in their new learning environment and, secondly, that these students have no recognisable peer group with which to identify. Young (2006), felt that these students had been exposed to an educational environment that was very different to that upon which they were about to embark and they were consequently unfamiliar with the teaching, learning and assessment methods common in university. Finally, Tait and Godfrey (2001) consider that direct entry students are used to experiencing a prescribed approach to learning and that the increased level of responsibility that they are expected to take for their own studying was alien to them. These issues result in a cohort of students who potentially, can find their educational experience challenging. In order to succeed, such students have to acquire new learning and examination techniques which will have been absent from their previous education experience, but which are taken for granted by continuing students and university staff alike. It is contended that this can lead to students becoming quickly alienated from their new environment and may result in loss of confidence, loss of self esteem and ultimately in attrition from the program.

Personal Issues

In their study of direct entry students at university, Baxter and Britton (2001) identify a range of personal issues that might impact on such students' academic experience. Centred on the concept of improving oneself and having to cope with family and other relationships, they consider that direct entry students who enter university by non traditional means have to contend with relationships with partners and are more likely to have responsibility to deal with children. They argue that entering the HE sphere also results in an element of personal reflection regarding identity – a fact often overlooked by traditional students.

In an earlier study of students in HE, Kerka (1989) found that direct entry students experienced problem when attempting to balance family and work commitments and that the logistics of managing the extra burden brought about by studying can result in significant stress to the student. In addition, Kerka found that finances, or lack thereof, is often a serious problem for such students. From a psychological perspective, direct entry and mature students were found to display concerns regarding belief in their ability to cope with the higher level study and unrealistic concerns regarding expectations of the forthcoming period of education.

Work Issues

The concept of full time students engaged in part time and sometimes full time employment whilst studying is increasingly commonplace in western nations. Barron (2006) found that almost nine out of ten home students studying hospitality and tourism management at an Australian university either worked part time or were actively looking for employment. Anyanwu (1998) identified that almost all Australian students work up to 30 hours per week in order to support their studies. In the UK, Watts and Pickering (2000) considered that working part time whilst studying full time was an increasingly common phenomenon among students and while there were a variety of positive outcomes of working part time, respondents generally viewed part time employment as a necessity to survive in the contemporary HE sphere. Manthei and Gilmore (2005) found an overwhelming majority of students they surveyed were involved in part time employment with 8 out of 10 students holding at least one job during term time for an average of 14 hours per week. The necessity for part time employment whilst studying was emphasised in this study which found that money earned was typically spent on essential living expenses.

A variety of studies have examined the impact that part time employment might have on full time students' studies. For example Manthei and Gilmore (2005) considered that working part time left less time than desired for study. Jogaratnam and Buchanan (2004) found that new students who were balancing a full time academic load along with a part time job were likely to suffer from stress. Indeed it has been suggested that a combination of studying full time, working part time and being in debt can have a detrimental effect in the physical and mental health of students and that the common method of addressing debt (i.e. increase hours worked), can create the perception of a negative effect on academic performance (Carney, McNeish & McColl, 2005). Curtis and Shani (2002) determined that those students who worked part time were more likely to miss lectures and felt that they could have achieved higher grades had they not been working. However in later research, Curtis (2002) found a majority of her (admittedly small) research sample considered there to be wholly positive outcomes of working part time and that there was no conclusive

relationship between the students' marks and their perceptions regarding their academic performance.

A clearer appreciation of the extent of students' part time working commitments is a common finding amongst research projects and there is a suggestion that part time employment is not always detrimental to students' academic efforts, particularly if the hours worked are manageable given their course load (Manthei & Gilmore, 2005). Several researchers (e.g., Barron, 2006; Curtis, 2005) have argued that universities should be more aware of contemporary student life and introduce an element of flexibility as a means of structuring assignments and course requirements to recognise this, perhaps by flexible scheduling of class times and the offering of study support services, especially so given the increasingly non traditional students common in modern universities (Moreau & Leathwood, 2006).

METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

The sample and setting for this research were all students who entered directly into the second or third year of programs offered by the Business School of a Scottish university in semester one, 2006. A three part questionnaire was developed specifically to determine the learning, living and working expectations and concerns of this cohort of students and was administered on day one of their orientation experience at this university. The timing was planned as a means of collecting initial and unbiased data from this cohort – students had not attended formal orientation classes and prior to the administration of the questionnaire had merely enrolled on to their respective programs. The first section asked respondents to answer questions concerning age, gender, nationality and previous educational experiences. This section asked questions that solicited information regarding previous full time and part time work experience and also attempted to determine motivations for current area of study and reasons for choosing their particular program. The second section consisted of a selection of questions that aimed to determine students' expectations of studying at university. The first question asked students to consider what challenges they felt would be faced as a direct entry student. Following on from this question, the second question specifically asked students to identify three concerns they had regarding the academic element of their forthcoming period of study. Students were then asked to reflect on three domestic or personal issues they felt they would face whilst studying and finally were asked to provide information regarding part time employment whilst studying. The final section asked students to consider their initial career upon graduation.

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 during the student's orientation and under the supervision of the researcher. Ticehurst and Veal (1999:138) describe this approach to a questionnaire survey as a 'captive group survey' and suggest that this method of questionnaire administration is expeditious and less problematic than in less controlled situations. The controlled nature of the questionnaire administration resulted in a total of 101 useable questionnaires being completed. The sample population comprised a majority of students (62%) under 24 years, single (71%), female (69%) and domestic with 83% of respondents identifying themselves as either Scottish or British. Not surprisingly, given that these students had been accepted directly into second or third year of their undergraduate degree, all students possessed an FE qualification with 30% of the cohort in possession of a

one year higher national certificate (HNC) and 70% with a two year higher national diploma (HND). This finding was verified as those who had completed an HNC were entering directly in to second year, whilst those with an HND were entering into third year. Students tended to have undertaken their previous qualification at a local FE college with the majority (43%) previously studying in Edinburgh. The majority (92%) of students had transferred directly from their previous college with only 5 respondents stating that they had experienced a gap in excess of five years since last they studied full time. The programs on which this cohort of students had enrolled were diverse, however the most common area of study was Accounting with 33% of respondents, followed by Business Management with 32% of respondents. Other areas of study were Festival and marketing Management with 12% of the cohort, Tourism 7%, Human Resource Management 7% and Law 5%.

The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed via SPSS. Students' responses to the non prompted, qualitative questions relating to learning, living and working issues were coded and a range of frequency tables and cross tabulations were generated which subsequently allowed for the development of bar charts. These charts will be presented in the next section along with a selection of appropriate qualitative responses made by students.

RESULTS

Respondents were asked why they had chosen their particular program. Given the fact that students were entering directly onto a program, the findings, not surprisingly suggested that their choice was pre-determined by their previous studies with the majority of respondents stating that their current studies were a progression of their previous qualification, typically a one year Higher National Certificate or a two year Higher National Diploma. Respondents were then asked why they had chosen to continue their studies at this particular university. The most common response (n=35) for choosing was the universities reputation, followed by 30 respondents stating that an articulation agreement existed between their previous educator and this university. However, location appeared to be a reasonably popular reason with 22 students of this cohort suggesting location as the main reason for choosing this university.

Students were then asked to consider what studying their chosen qualification at this university was going to be like. This cohort of students were under no illusions regarding their expectations of university level study level of work with the most common response with 73 students considering that their study period at university was going to be rigorous and challenging, but ultimately rewarding. A feeling that was summarised by one respondent (female, 24) who stated that:

“Coming to university is going to be a challenge – I’m looking forward to it though. More challenging than college; but fun and informative”.

This realistic but positive view was echoed by a further 8 respondents who felt that their educational experience at university would be exciting. The vocational outcome of undertaking higher level study was recognised by a minority of respondents with 9 students from this cohort considering that their qualification would focus on specific industries and would provide a good preparation for future careers. This study highlights high levels of motivation amongst these students at the start of their university experience and usefully

signposts the types of expectations that the direct entry students are beginning to form. It would appear that they expect their time at University to be more 'rigorous and challenging' than their previous FE experience – expecting to be stretched academically and challenged on a personal level by the higher level of academic work that will be expected of them. In order to ease their transition it is important that staff are aware of these expectations so that they can accurately diagnose the support needs of direct entry students (SPAT, 2004). It is also important for academic and support staff to understand the different academic background from which these students have arrived (Banning, 1989) to ensure any gaps can be filled.

Given that this group of students were entering directly into the second or third year of an undergraduate degree, and in most cases were transferring or articulating from an FE college into a university, the researchers were interested to determine what educational concerns these students might have. Consequently, students were asked to consider three issues regarding their forthcoming period of education that constituted areas of worry. It can be seen from Figure 1 below that the most common concern amongst this group of students was managing time. Many students felt that balancing their university studies with other commitments such as part time employment, family life or social life would prove to be difficult. This was a view that is summarised by one respondent (male 33) who stated that they had concerns regarding:

“... balancing my social life, my part time job and my university work. I am worried that I will leave assignments to the last minute, fail and start to fall behind”

Many of the other responses to this question concerned the content and level of the program. It can be seen that the second most frequent concern held by students was that their new program would be too advanced and consequently they would have to work harder as a means of keeping abreast of their studies. One international student (Female, 22) stated that:

“I think that it will be a lot different than at college especially with essays and examinations. I would say that I will have to work harder than I had to at college”

The significance of student concern relating to the level of work expected of them has previously been identified (Maguire, 2001) and our findings concur with Tait and Godfrey's (2001) research which suggests high levels of motivation and lower self confidence with many direct entry students fearing failure or falling behind. This finding suggests a need for early diagnosis of student skill levels and early assessment feedback opportunities in order to build their academic self confidence and self esteem.

In addition to the high level of work, many students were concerned about their organisation skills and the amount of work that they felt would be necessary to successfully complete the program. One concerned respondent (female, 25) highlighted a typical feeling amongst this cohort when they stated that:

“I think that there will be a lot of coursework and assessments and I am afraid that it will be too fast moving for me to cope with. I am worried that I will not be organised enough to be able to cope with overlapping deadlines for submitting assignments”

Thus it would appear that this group of students have similar concerns regarding the level and amount of work to first year students and other direct entry students (Davidson, 1996). Indeed the normal level of anxiety when starting a new program was evident, albeit tempered with a feeling that the experience will become normal over the forthcoming days. Experiencing an induction crisis was neatly summarised by one respondent who clearly understood that the feelings of awkwardness would soon subside and stated that:

“I think it will be difficult at first, but once I know my timetable and what is expected of me, I will integrate well” (male, 24).

This research has previously identified the importance of academic staff understanding the expectations of direct entry students. However this quote clearly emphasises the importance of *mutual* expectations. It might be stated that these direct entry students will be eager to understand more about what will be expected of them and this will be crucial in the first few days, weeks and months of their university experience. Consequently, the sentiments suggested above highlight the fact that while students expect the first few weeks to be difficult, they will look for support and communication from academic staff as a support with the students’ own academic efforts to ease the transition and the anxiety that they may experience in the early days. Findings from this study confirm the value of separate inductions for direct entry students and usefully highlight the need for support mechanisms to continue throughout the first few months when the initial ‘honeymoon period’ and settling in process is over and the reality of assessment deadlines, coursework criteria and submission dates is looming.

Respondents also made comments regarding assessment with over 30 sperate comments suggesting concerns regarding examinations and a further nine comments from students for whom the giving of presentations appeared stressful. The final three categories of responses concerned respondents worried regarding the style and speed of learning in their new university. Some 30 respondents considered that different study skills were required and almost 20 respondents felt that different teaching methods would be employed. These two issues were compounded by the fact that a number of respondents felt that in addition to different learning skills and teaching methods, the speed of teaching would be quicker than previously experienced.

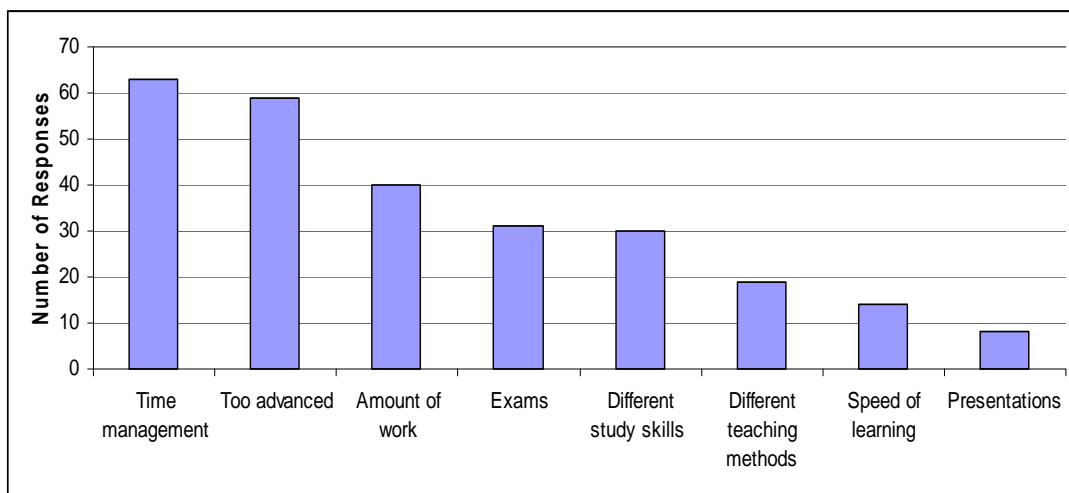


Figure 1: Concerns regarding the academic element of the forthcoming program.

In a manner similar to the previous question, students were asked to identify domestic or personal issue that they felt they may face during their forthcoming program. It can be seen from Figure 2 below that most students could not foresee any domestic or personal issues. The above notwithstanding, Chart 2 does identify a range of concerns and issues, the most common of which was that there was forecast to be a problem regarding the balance between university and personal or social life. Typical of responses to this concern were one respondent who placed university before other elements of their life and suggested that:

“I have serious concerns about organising my part-time work around studying and organising my social life around university responsibilities”
(male, 26).

However, equally common were students who viewed studying as merely another element of a busy life with which to cope. One respondent suggesting:

“Spending time studying and doing well at university is important but I have to work to survive and I want to be able to have time to go out and enjoy myself – I’m only young once!!” (female, 24).

Many respondents took the opportunity to state their concerns regarding the practical issues of finance and travel. The move from the FE system where students, at most, paid only a small contribution to their studies, to one when a student can potentially possess significant debt on graduation (Student Finance Direct, 2006) might have an impact on requirement to work whilst studying. coupled with living and other expenses was identified by many students as a worry. Indeed of the 45 respondents who, when asked to indicate a personal issue, 40 merely stated “Money” as their main concern. Respondents also identified travelling time and cost as an issue that would have to be faced over the forthcoming study experience.

The balancing act that these students expect to face confirms and updates the findings of Kerka’s, (1989) research on mature and direct entry students and indicates increasing financial concerns and constraints faced by students having to balance home, work and study commitments. The fact that the majority of students did not give details of personal issues which may be concerning them is interesting and is perhaps indicative of the private nature of these issues and student confidentiality concerns. Subsequent in-depth interviews, held as a follow up to this paper, may help us to deepen our understanding of the impact of students’ personal circumstances on their university life.

Not surprisingly for a group of new students, relations with peers were identified as a concern. While this is obviously a genuine worry for some students, one would assume that this element would decrease as the orientation period progressed and as students settled into their period of study as identified above. However cross tabulations were conducted to determine the background of students identifying relations with fellow students as a concern. It was found that international students and those domestic students who had come from a college which had supplied one or perhaps two students were more likely to articulate anxiety regarding relationships with fellow students. One respondent stated that:

“I feel very alone and am concerned that I won’t make any friends. Everyone else seems to already know people and have their own groups. Hopefully things will get better when classes start” (female 27).

Previous literature has shown that direct entry students can experience feelings of isolation, feeling out of place with little peer group support (Cook and Leckey, 1999). This research confirms these feelings and signals international students as being particularly vulnerable. This study suggests that strategies such as pre-semester bridging programmes will be helpful to direct entry students in assisting with social integration and feelings of belonging to the university.

The inclusion of concerns regarding health issues was a surprising response given the demographic composition of this group. There were 18 comments that identified health as a major concern. While respondents made a variety of comments regarding health issues, the most common response concerned psychological issues such as levels of stress and the ability to cope as opposed to more physiological ailments that might result in respondents having to be absent from class.

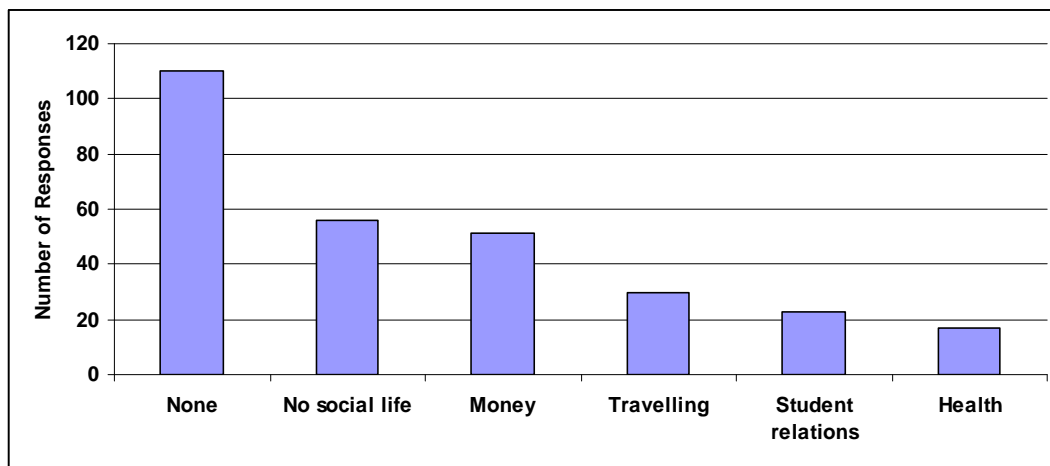


Figure 2: Domestic or personal issues that might be experienced during the forthcoming program.

The final question in this section asked respondents to indicate their involvement in part time employment. Some 67 respondents were currently in some form of part time employment and worked an average of 12.5 hours per week. The majority (n=35) of those with part time employment worked in the hospitality industry; the remainder worked in the retail industry (n=20), call centres (n=7) and office administration (n=3). Of those respondents who did not have a part time job at the point of completing the questionnaire, half indicated that they would actively look for part time employment; the remainder indicated that they had no desire to source a part time position whilst studying. These results accord well with Barron's (2006) study where it was found that approximately 80% of full time students were either in part time employment or actively looking for a part time position.

CONCLUSION

This paper has focused on a new cohort of direct entry students, examining their views on a range of personal, learning and work related issues in the early days of commencing university. The findings uncovered a range of issues of importance to this group of students – most notably that of learning and assessment. Students presented as being

extremely optimistic about their decision to study at University but anxious about their ability to cope, with high levels of concern with time management, achieving the appropriate academic level concerning their studies and bridging the gap between their previous studies at college and their forthcoming university experience. Consequently a key finding of this research is the identification of the need to develop these students' academic self confidence in the early stages of their time at University.

From a personal needs perspective one strong theme emerging from this study was students' feelings regarding the importance of achieving an appropriate level of work/life balance. Results from this study would indicate that students were concerned about achieving the balance academic deadlines with the desire for a social life. This was further complicated with the requirement, identified as essential by many students, to work part time as a means of addressing financial concerns. Work/life balance has been examined in mainstream business literature. However, how students cope with the many demands on their time and the implications of not achieving a balance has not been explored in any detail in the pedagogical research. The second phase of our longitudinal research aims to examine this area in more depth.

Finally this research confirms high levels of part time work among these direct entry students. While some commentators (eg Barron, 2006) have identified positive outcomes from continuing to work whilst studying, the negative impact on student performance were highlighted earlier (Manthei and Gilmore 2005; Jogaratnam and Buchanan, 2004). Consequently the next phase of this study will aim to identify the implications of this requirement on students' academic progress and general wellbeing. This study also highlighted the career-minded focus of these direct entry students with many of them considering this university experience as being the last phase in their education journey. This is possibly related to previous financial concerns or low academic self concept. This concurs with Musselbrook and Gooch (2004) who found that third year direct entry students felt that study to Honours level would be too much of a financial burden, coupled with a belief that they could not cope academically. This raises issues for programme leaders in who are keen to ensuring that direct entry students are assisted in making informed choices about University progression based on their academic ability and motivation.

The recruitment of students from non traditional backgrounds is an increasingly common and important activity for universities in the UK. This research suggests that such students have issues and concerns that are different from newly recruited first year students and continuing students. Given the increasing importance of student attraction, retention and completion it remains to be seen if universities are willing to positively respond to this important group of students.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The focus of this paper was to determine direct entry students' views regarding their forthcoming period of education and consequently to highlight issues and potential concerns. The next stage in this research is to undertake a survey at the conclusion of this cohort's experience to determine if indeed, the initial issues and concerns materialised. Once this second research intervention has occurred, the researchers will be able to develop strategies that could be adopted by various higher education providers which will address issues and concerns and allow for a smooth transition into higher education by direct entry students.

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EFFECT OF EXPERIENCE ON COGNITION, AFFECT AND SATISFACTION: THE CASE OF JAPANESE VISITORS TO MACAU

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the paper was to test the effect of experience on two key antecedents of destination satisfaction, affect and cognition. The analysis utilized the Macau Visitor Experience Survey (2005). The results indicate that both cognition and affect are predeterminants of satisfaction. The effect of cognition on destination satisfaction judgments increases as their experience accumulates while the effect of affect decreases with experience, albeit in both cases the influence of experience is limited. The results bear important implications for destination visitor experience management and planning.

KEYWORDS: *Affect; Cognition; Experience; First Time Visitors; Repeat Visitors; Satisfaction.*

INTRODUCTION

A satisfactory purchase experience appears to be one of the key factors contributing to continued interest in a product and thereafter repeat purchase (Oliver, 1993). As a result, customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction has been a topic of great interest to marketing and consumer researchers for years. Among the various antecedences of customer satisfaction, cognition and affect have been recognized as significant predictors for satisfaction judgments. As early as in 1980s, researchers have found that cognition predicts satisfaction, while serving as a function of comparison between expectations and performance (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2006). Meanwhile, affect experiences (e.g., joy, happiness, disgust) during the acquisition and consumption of a product or service have shown to have a significant influence on satisfaction

judgments (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2006) although its influence seems to be present to a lesser extent when compared with cognition (Szymanski & Henard, 2001). Researchers have also investigated the simultaneous cognition and affect effect on customer satisfaction (Kempf, 1999; Oliver, 1993; Smith & Bolton, 2002). These studies provided evidences that satisfaction seems to be tied to cognitive assessments and affective reactions elicited in consumption. Carrying these results one step further, Homburg, Koschate and Hoyer (2006) systematically investigated how satisfaction judgment developed over time with joint effects of cognition and affect in the case of utilitarian goods. Three important findings were derived from their study. First, the influence of cognitive evaluation increases while the influence of affect decreases over time. Second, these effects are attenuated with inconsistent performance experiences. Finally, the variance in customer satisfaction jointly explained by cognition and affect increases as experience accumulates.

The varying roles of cognition and affect as moderated by experience have led to important practical implications. However, the applicability of these insights in the context of travel and tourism has largely been unknown. An important consideration lies with the fact that compared to other general consumer product, leisure travel product possesses a much higher degree of intangibility and perishability. It may not be appropriate to simply apply previous results generalized from consumer goods, either utilitarian or hedonic products, to the travel and tourism product context. For one reason, the product consumption process may be driven by tasks' different functional levels and consumers may have different affective or sensory experiences (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Strahilevitz & Myers, 1998). For another, the relative importance of cognition and affect as drivers of tourist satisfaction could be different (Homburg, Koschate, & Hoyer, 2006). Hence, the purpose of this research was to examine the moderating effect of travel experience on relationship between cognition, affect and satisfaction of a leisure trip.

The study used Japanese travelers to Macau as a case for investigation. Japanese tourism is one of the well known and profitable travel markets in the world. Statistics shows that the overseas tourism from Japan has been substantial over the last 20 years and reached 17.4 million in 2005 (Japan Tourism Marketing Co; 2006). While much has been conferred about the behavioral characteristics of Japanese tourists as one of the major sources of traffic to many international markets, little research has investigated Japanese travelers' accumulated experiences, its role in the dynamic of cognition, affect and satisfaction. To enhance our current knowledge and understanding of the Japanese international travelers, it would be interesting to investigate the structure of Japanese tourists' cognition and affect, the role of experience and its influence on the nature of Japanese travelers' satisfaction with a destination. This research could bear insights for destinations as to how to sustain the attractiveness of a place and the continued patronization of visitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cognition, Affect and Satisfaction

Satisfaction as consumer's fulfillment response is defined as "a judgment that a product or service feature or the product of service itself, provided (or is providing) a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment, including levels of under- or over-fulfillment..." (Oliver, 1997). By this definition, satisfaction represents a construct that requires experience and use of a product or service. It is a short-term attitude that can change by a constellation of conditions (Oliver, 1997). As various factors influence consumer satisfaction judgment, much research has strived to reveal the process of transiting experience into satisfaction judgment from different perspectives. One of the focuses is on the relationship between the affective and cognitive components, as they relate to customer satisfaction.

Previous research has recognized that both cognition and affect significantly predict satisfaction judgments. From cognition perspective, one of the well-known models is expectancy disconfirmation model. It addressed satisfaction as a function of the expectation level and perceptions of disconfirmation. Consumers are posited to form preconception expectancies, observe product performance, compare performance with expectations, form disconfirmation perceptions, combine these perceptions with expectation levels and form satisfaction (Oliver, 1980; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Yi, 1990). Perceived performance often differs from objective or technical performance, especially when a product/service is complex, intangible, and when the consumer is unfamiliar with the product/service. Perceived disconfirmation is the evaluation of perceived performance according to one or more comparison standards. Disconfirmation can have a positive effect, a negative effect or a zero effect. This model is a dominant model in satisfaction studies. It provides basis for a lot of other work in explaining the complicated process of forming satisfaction (Oliver, 1993).

Affect is another construct that has received much research scrutiny in recent years. As early as 1987, Westbrook suggested that consumers form two fundamental affect states in consumption – the positive affects and the negative affects. Russell (1980) and Watson and Tellegen (1985) proposed affective structure dimensions including pleasure/displeasure and arousal/ boredom. The role emotions play in influencing consumer satisfaction and behavior has become the focus of much recent research. Oliver (1992) and Westbrook (1987) conducted studies supporting the appropriateness of the two-dimensional view of affect as the basis of product-consumption-elicited response. For satisfaction in particular, Oliver (1999)' proposed a framework where the generalized affect path is parallel to the cognitive sequence, influencing satisfaction simultaneously. Yi (1990) suggested that affect is processed with consumption experience in forming satisfaction judgment.

Several other studies further addressed the relative strength of cognition and affect in influencing consumer satisfaction. Hoch and Ha (1986) and Kempf and Smith (1998) discovered that experience of different types of products may be processed differently by consumers. On the one hand, information value of different experience varies across product categories. Product with more experiential attributes will be less susceptible to influence by previous media exposure. On the other hand, Kempf (1999)'s study demonstrated significant different levels and influences

of affective and cognitive responses to hedonic and functional products. Specifically, emotional responses rather than cognitive responses were significant antecedents of satisfaction for hedonic product. In contrast, cognitive responses were significant antecedents for functional product but emotional responses were not. Such results suggested marketers and marketing researchers have good basis for utilizing different category responses in product evaluation of considering both the cognitive and affect structure.

While there are rich literature concerning customer satisfaction in general consumer goods, within tourism literature, cognition and affect has rarely been investigated simultaneously with regard to travelers' satisfaction about leisure travel products. Compared with general consumer goods, leisure travel product possesses a much higher degree of intangibility, perishability and much diverse attributes. On the one hand, although the tourism product is generally considered hedonic by nature (Douglas, Mills, Kavanaugh & Jang, 2007; Go & Govers, 2004), there were also arguments asserting that a destination incorporates a critical mass of functional elements that include attractions, transportation venues, and diverse types of lodging, dining, retail, and support services (Gunn, 1994). On the other hand, various factors, such as the geopolitical situation and social structure of the originating country, perceived and social distance to the destination, experience of traveling abroad, language barrier, and so on, affect the composition of tours (Enoch, 1996). As a result, the relative influences of cognition and affect on travel products satisfaction can be quite different from other utilitarian or hedonic products. This dynamic relationship is worthy of further research effort.

First Time and Experienced Travelers

Previous research showed that prior experience influence current trips in terms of activity participation and expenditure patterns and will subsequently invoke different demands and requirements unique to the repeat vacation market (Lehto, O'Leary & Morrison; 2004). There are also studies suggesting experience's relationship to satisfaction levels with linkages to personality, attitudes, and values (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992; Ryan, 1995; Um, Chon & Ro; 2006; Alegre & Cladera, 2006). However, different from general consumer goods, where repeat purchaser expects exactly the same item with consistent quality, the quality of the holiday experience can vary based upon the performance of the service providers and the expectations of repeat tourists may change with experience (Lehto, O'Leary & Morrison; 2004). Alegre and Cladera (2006)'s study indicated that despite the fact that repeat visitors are more likely to make a further visit to a destination, its main determinant is a high level of satisfaction. Moreover, the repeat visitation rate has only a limited effect on overall satisfaction. Based on the findings of these prior studies, studies on effect of experience on relationship between cognition, affect and satisfaction become a meaningful and interesting topic. It is logistical to assume that varying level of experience with a destination could prompt varying degree of expectation and thereafter satisfaction. The role of experience certainly warrants further investigation in the context of cognition, affect and their impact on destination satisfaction.

Japanese Oversea Travelers to China

This study uses Japanese travelers to Macau, China as the study subjects in witness of the fact that Japan has been a major contributor to the impressive growth of international tourism in

recent years despite ups and downs due to wars, terrorism, and epidemics such as SARS. In fact, the highlight story of world tourism since the 1970s has been the emergence of Japan as a leading tourist generating country. In addition, benefits from the short-haul convenience (an average flight of two hours to China), and comparatively lower costs of travel to China than to other destinations have all spurred the growth of this outbound market and underscores its importance to China's inbound tourism while Japan has been China's largest tourist-source country for a number of years. Given the importance and increasing value of this market, current study aims at gaining a better understanding of Japanese overseas travelers to China and providing implication for sustainable development of this relative mature market in the future.

RESEARCH MODEL

As illustrated in Figure 1, the objective of the current study was to investigate how the strength of the links between the cognition, affect and satisfaction changed with increasing level of travel experiences with a destination.

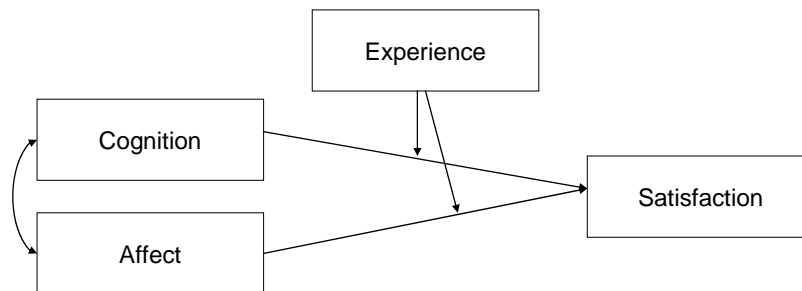


Figure 1. Research Model.

Compared with Homburg, Koschate and Hoyer (2006)'s research model for general consumer goods, this model was proposed with two major improvements. First, in measuring the affect construct, the original study only empirically measured the prevalence of positive affect and did not consider negative effect. As discussed previously, literature showed emotions can be described in terms of two primary independent dimensions: positive and negative affectivity which can have asymmetric effects on customers' judgments and choices were suggested as the two primary independent dimensions. Hence, this study incorporated positive and negative affect simultaneously for assessing the underlying structure of affect.

Second, this study took into account the correlation between cognition and affect through assessing and comparing cognitive and affect factors' inter-correlation with levels of experience. Prior studies have verified the existence of the relationship between these two constructs. For example, in investigation of the effect of good mood on cognitive processes, Isen, Shalcker, Clark and Karp's study (1978) shows that affect has effect on accessibility of cognitions. In studying mood statuses and their importance in consumer behavior, Gardner (1985) maintains that mood states have direct and indirect effects on behavior, evaluation and recall. Through linking the two causal factors, the current study provides a more valid view of the simultaneous cognition and affect effects on satisfaction.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Based on the discussion above, five hypotheses were developed for this study:

Hypothesis 1: Visitors' cognitive response has a positive effect on their satisfaction judgments of the destination

Hypothesis 2: Visitors' affective response has a positive effect on their satisfaction judgments of the destination

Hypothesis 3: The effect of cognition on destination satisfaction judgments increases as their experience accumulates while the effect of affect decreases with experience.

Hypothesis 4: The strength of the relationship between cognition and affect differs between first time travelers and experienced travelers.

Hypothesis 5: The strength of the relationship between cognition and satisfaction, affect and satisfaction differs between first time travelers and experienced travelers.

METHODOLOGY

To gather the required data, a visitor experience survey was conducted in Macau from July 20 to September 1, 2006 at major attraction sites, hotels in Macau, the Macau International Airport, and the Macau Ferry Terminal. While the sample respondents were international visitors to Macau, only Japanese leisure tourists were retained for this research, resulting in a sample size of 181.

The cognition construct was measured by twenty items about how Japanese visitors perceived Macau as a travel destination. The respondents were asked to rate cognitive items on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 ("Least Descriptive") to 5 ("Most Descriptive"). The affect construct was measured by five bipolar scales about how Japanese visitors described Macau, with both the positive and negative affectivity. Travelers' satisfaction was measured by the sum of travelers' expectancy about Macau as travel destination and the perceptions of disconfirmation. To measure traveling experiences with Macau, respondents were also asked about how many times they have visited Macau in the past five years. The data revealed that among the respondents, 52.5% were first time visitors while 47.5% have had at least one prior visit.

A moderator specifies the conditions under which a given effect occurs, as well as the conditions under which the direction or strength of an effect vary (Baron and Kenny, 1986, pp.1174). SEM is often considered as a preferable statistics strategy to test moderator effect because it provides a less biased assessment of the significance of moderator effects considering the problem of compounding of measurement error when computing interaction terms (Jaccard

and Wan, 1995). In current study, the moderating hypothesis was analyzed through Multiple Group Latent Variable Structural Equations modeling.

Analyses were conducted in four stages. First, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) by means of SPSS package was employed to identify the underlying factor structure of the twenty cognition items. Principle component EFA analysis with varimax rotation was employed. Items with primary factor loading $< .40$ and trivial factors (i.e., factors with only one item having a loading of $.40$ or higher and factors with Cronbach Alpha value lower than $.60$) were removed one at a time. Factor analyses were repeated until a solution in which all the items included in the analysis met all criteria were attained.

In the second stage, using Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) version 6.0, a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then conducted on the identified cognition and affection factors to determine whether the factor structure required modification. The CFA is a structural equation modeling technique used to confirm the exploratory model and to determine the goodness of fit between a hypothesized model and the sample data. The CFA affords several advantages over other analytic techniques in that it allows the specification of causal relationships between observed variables and latent constructs while simultaneously accounting for item-level measurement error (Bryant & Yarnold, 1995).

In the third stage, based upon the factors identified and validated, SEM was used to further examine the overall relationships among cognition, affect, and overall satisfaction. The goodness of fit was used for the SEM and testing Hypotheses 1 and 2.

Finally, the same structural model was estimated separately for first time visitors and for experienced visitors to examine the moderate effect of experience on cognition, affect and satisfaction. Comparing the strength of the path coefficients between the two groups tested Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5.

RESULTS

The socio-demographic characteristics of the travelers are profiled in Table 1. Among the 181 Japanese respondents, there were more males (57.9%) than females (42.1%). The majority of respondents were married (63.3%). In addition, around 56.2% of respondents had a bachelor degree or graduate degree and around a third (29.4%) of them held professional positions.

Table 1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents.

Variable	Freq	%	Variable	Freq	%
Gender			Occupation		
Male	103	57.9	Clerical/Sales	30	18.8
Female	75	42.1	Farming/Fishing	1	0.6
Education			Homemaker	21	13.1
High school	22	12.4	Manager/Executive	28	17.5
Graduate college	56	31.5	Professional/Technical	47	29.4
Bachelor degree	83	46.6	Self-employed	6	3.8
Master degree	17	9.6	Student	13	8.1
Marriage			Retired	5	3.1
Single	60	33.3	Other	9	5.6
Married	114	63.3			
Divorced	4	2.2			
Other	2	1.1			

Measurement Model

Principle component EFA analyses with varimax rotation identified an interpretable solution of five factors among the twenty cognition items. These factors explain 67.9 percent of the variances with each factor obtaining an acceptable reliability level of higher than 0.6. These five factors are culture and heritage, facility, urban scenery, activity and comfortability (see Table 2).

The results of confirmatory factor analysis indicated that the suggested cognition and affect model fits the observed data well generally (Table 3). However, while most factors had significant factor loading with p -value $< .001$, one affect (Familiar \leftrightarrow Exotic) was not significant (p -value = .419). As a result, in the final measurement model, factor Familiar \leftrightarrow Exotic was removed. Table 3 presents the improved model's path coefficient and fit statistics. These fit statistics indicated that the data fit the suggested measurement model pretty well. The root-mean square residual (RMSR) was 0.028. In general, an RMSR value less than .10 is considered a good fit, and a value less than 0.05 is considered a very good fit (Marcoulides & Schumacker, 1996). The chi-square test was significant, which frequently occurs with large sample sizes; however, the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), were better than suggested criteria of 0.90, 0.90, and 0.80 respectively (Marcoulides & Schumacker, 1996; Bentler, 1990; Brown & Cudeck, 1993). The p -value associated with each of the loadings was less than .01. Therefore, all factors were significantly related to their specified construct.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis on Cognition.

	Factor Loading	Cronbach Alpha	Eigen-Value	Variance Explained (%)
Factor 1 -- Culture and Heritage		0.835	2.246	14.977
Macau has interesting cultural and historical attractions.	0.875			
The museums and galleries in Macau are interesting to visit	0.844			
Factor 2 -- Facility		0.661	2.067	13.780
Macau has good and convention facilities.	0.765			
The transportation system in Macau is convenient.	0.695			
Tourist information is readily available in Macau.	0.660			
Factor 3 -- Urban Scenery		0.709	2.047	13.647
Macau cuisine is unique.	0.710			
Macau offers a large variety of events and festivals	0.682			
Macau has attractive climate weathers	0.656			
Macau has attractive urban and city sights	0.467			
Factor 4 -- Activity		0.753	1.972	13.143
There is a variety of nightlife activities in Macau.	0.877			
Macau has sufficient sports facilities and activities.	0.700			
Macau offers large variety of shopping opportunities.	0.579			
Factor 5 -- Comfortability		0.606	1.852	12.346
It is easy to communicate with people in Macau	0.760			
Macau has attractive natural attractions	0.677			
Macau is easily accessible from my country.	0.572			

Note: KMO = .820, Bartlett's Test = 930.416 with significance < .000

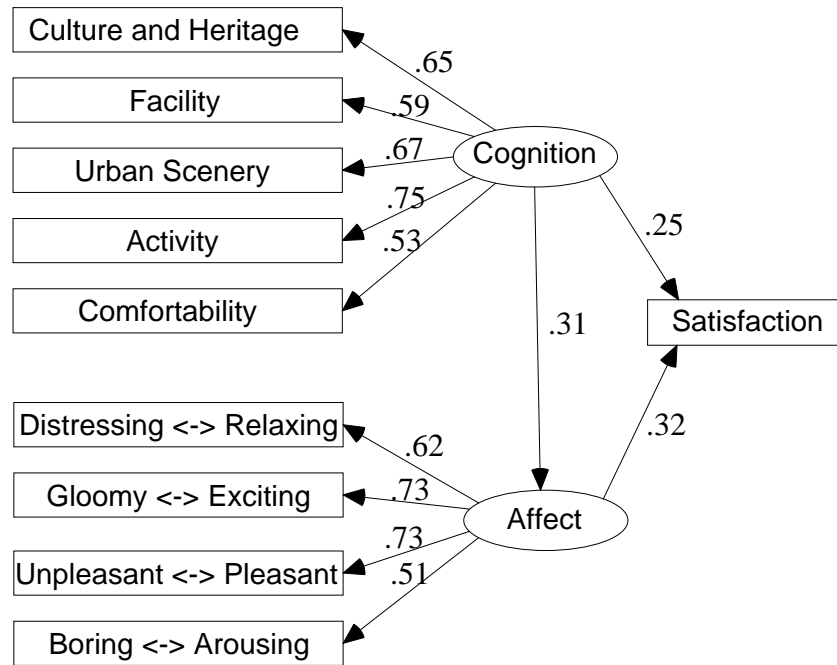
Table 3. Goodness of Fit Statistics of the Proposed and Improved Measurement Models.

Fit Measures	Proposed	Improved
Degree of freedom	30.00 ($p < .01$)	22.00 ($p < .01$)
Chi square	59.12	51.85
Root mean square residual (RMR)	0.03	0.03
Goodness of fit index (GFI)	0.94	0.94
Adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI)	0.89	0.88
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.93	0.93

Test of Overall Satisfaction Model: Hypothesis 1 and 2

SEM was conducted to test the proposed structure model presented in Figure 1. The estimated model illustrated the proposed overall conceptual model which include the satisfaction construct, the cognition and affect measurement models and paths among the latent constructs. Figure 3 shows the estimated factor loadings and path coefficients of the structural-equation model. Although the chi-square test was significant, all the other model fit indices indicated that the suggested model fits the data.

Hypothesis 1 and 2 predict positive paths from cognition and affect to visitors' satisfaction. Results showed that the paths from cognition and affect to visitors' satisfaction were significant (all $p\text{-value} < .001$), supporting hypotheses 1 and 2. Comparing the effects of cognition and affect, cognition appears to play a less important role than affect as indicated by the lower coefficient of the path from cognition to satisfaction compared to that from affect to satisfaction. It is also noted that cognition has a significant effect on affect.



RMR = .04 GFI = .93, AGIF = .87, CFI = .91
CMIN/DF = 2.35

Figure 2. Factor Loadings of Cognition and Affect and Path Coefficient of the General Model of Visitors' Satisfaction.

Test of the Differences between First-Time Visitors and Experienced Visitors: Hypotheses 3, 4 and 5

The path coefficient from cognition and affect to visitors' satisfaction were compared between the first-time and experienced visitors. Figure 3 and Figure 4 presents the factor loadings of cognition and affect as well as path coefficients to satisfaction for First time and experienced Visitors groups. Table 3 presents model fit indices and summarizes estimated path coefficients. Goodness-of-fit indices suggested that both models fit the data well. Most fit indices exceeded or were close to the suggested criteria.

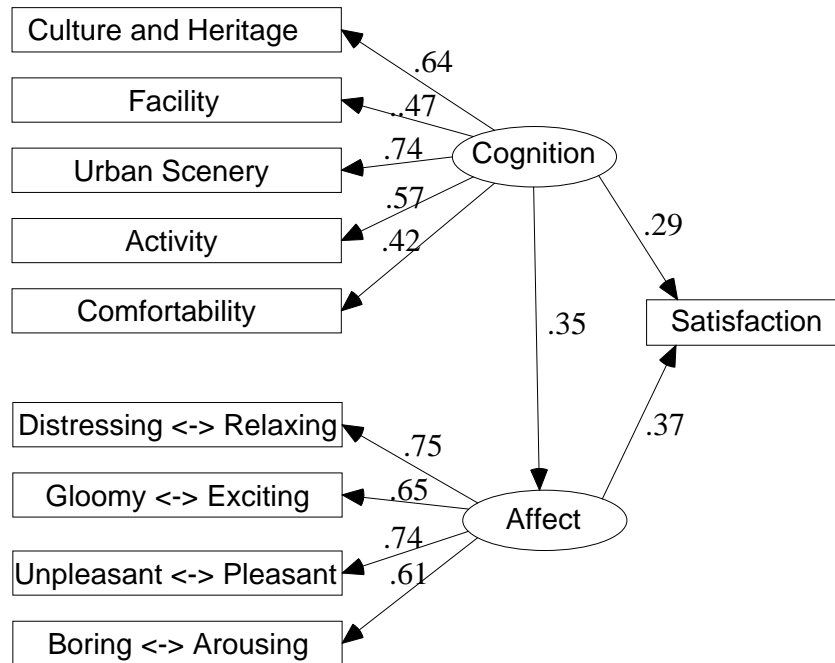


Figure 3. Cognition, Affect and Satisfaction: Path Coefficients of First-time Visitors.

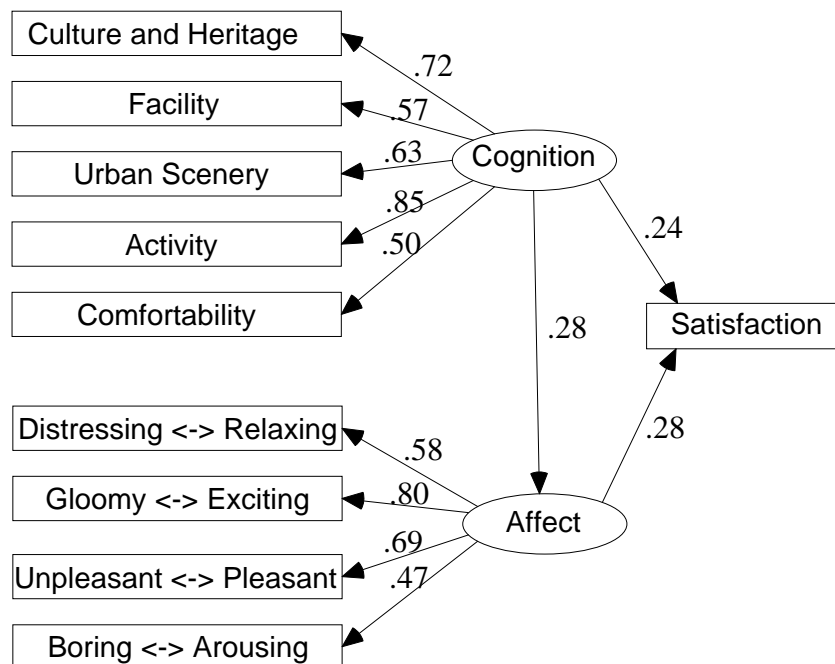


Figure 4. Cognition, Affect and Satisfaction: Path Coefficients of Experienced Visitors.

For first-time and experienced visitors, both cognition and affect had significant influence on satisfaction at 0.05 significant level. Moreover, path coefficient of cognition to satisfaction for first-time visitors was lower than that for experienced visitors (path = 0.24 and 0.29 respectively) while path coefficient of affect to satisfaction for first-time visitors was higher than that for experienced visitors (path = 0.37 and 0.28 respectively). It suggested that the effect of cognition on destination satisfaction increased as visitors accumulated experiences while the effect of affect decreased with experience. The directions of changes in coefficients appear to lend support to hypothesis 3.

In addition, both groups show significant influence of cognition on affect at $p = 0.1$ level. The influence of cognition was at a higher value for first-time travelers than for experienced travelers as indicated by the path coefficients (path = 0.35 and path = 0.28 respectively). The directions of changes in coefficients appear to lend support to hypothesis 4.

Table 4. Fit Indices and Path Coefficients of First-time and Experienced Visitors.

	General	First-time	Experienced
Fit Measures			
CMIN/DF	2.352	2.08	1.78
Root mean square error residual (RMR)	0.04	0.04	0.03
Goodness-of-fit index (GFI)	0.93	0.90	0.89
Adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI)	0.87	0.82	0.81
Path Coefficient			
Cognition --> Satisfaction	0.25***	0.24*	0.29**
Affect --> Satisfaction	0.32***	0.37**	0.28**
Cognition --> Affect	0.31**	0.35*	0.28*

*** $p < .001$; ** $p < .05$; * $p < .10$

Test of moderating effect was conducted by multigroup comparison analysis by SEM in order to assess whether the coefficient differences between first time and experienced visitors were statistically significant. First, the appropriate structural parameters were constrained to be equal across groups, thereby generating an overall χ^2 value and df for the sets of submodels as part of a single structural system. Next, the parameter equality constraints were removed, resulting in a second χ^2 value with fewer degrees of freedom. The moderator effects were tested by assessing whether statistical differences exist between the two χ^2 values firstly. If the change in the χ^2 value is statistically significant, it suggests some equality constraints do not hold across the two types of travelers. Then analyses proceed to test first for the equivalence of the measurement model and then for the equivalence of the structural model (Brockman and Morgan, 2003). The results of this analysis are shown in Table 4. As the difference in χ^2 values between constraint model and constraint-free model does not exceed the 0.05 critical value ($3.96 < 3.84$), hypothesis 5 was rejected: experience does not have significant moderating effect on the cognition and affect's relationship with satisfaction. This result does not conform to previous research although the directions of changes were consistent.

Table 5. Chi-square Difference Test for the Moderating effect of Experience

Model Description	χ^2	df	$\Delta \chi^2$	Δ df	Sig.
Hypothesized model	119.35	62	--	--	
Factor loadings, variances and error covariances constraint equal	129.91	73	10.56	11	0.48

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the analyses indicated that Japanese travelers' satisfaction is build upon both their cognition and affect towards the destination. Cognition appears to play a less important role than affect as indicated by the higher coefficients of the path from cognition to affect (Figure 2). In addition, the influences of affect and cognitive factors on satisfaction vary as Japanese travelers' experience with Macau increases (Figure 3 & 4). Experienced visitors' cognition responses have higher effect on their satisfaction than first-time visitors, while first-time visitors' affect responses play a more important role on their satisfaction than experienced visitors. These findings supported previous studies about relationship between experience and satisfaction (Koschate & Hoyer, 2006; Kempf, 1999). The study also suggested a dynamic role of experience in cognition's influence on affect. More specifically, cognition has more important influence on affect for first-time visitors than for experienced visitors.

However, there is no statistically significant difference existing between first time and experienced Japanese travelers in terms of the relationship between cognition, affect and satisfaction. It appears that experience does change the strength however the change did not warrant significance. This finding is not consistent with previous studies conducted by Kempf (1999) in that experience was found to be moderator in cognition and affect's relationship with satisfaction. A possible reason for the different results may have to do with attributes of tourism products. Tourism as a system consists of several interrelated parts, such as: accommodations, food service, and retailing sectors, attractions and events sectors and etc., working together to achieve common purposes (Mill & Morrison, 2006). Travelers' satisfactions were established based upon their visitations on different sets of parts which result in different cognition and affect responses. In current study context, five cognition dimensions are culture and heritage, facility, urban scenery, activity and comfortability. It is hard to predict Japanese travelers' satisfaction levels even if travelers are visiting the same destination because they may have different purposes and take part in different activities. The complexity of tourism products and the possible varying expectations of each trip could have played a role in increased need for cognition. This reason does show that the path coefficient from cognition to satisfaction stayed fairly stable for first time and repeat visitors. .

The study outcomes bear both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, this study confirmed the dynamic role of experience on determining cognition, affect and satisfaction relationship within tourism context. It also pointed out the relatively limied influence of experience on destination satisfaction formation in the context of international tourism consumption. Secondly, despite the amount of research focusing on travelers' cognition and

affect, this research represents an initial step towards investigating changes of their interrelationship with the experiences. It furthered the current understanding of these two important concepts in marketing. Finally, current study used improved instrument in measuring affective responses. Five bipolar scales with both the positive and negative affectivity comprehended better how Japanese visitors feel about Macau.

Practically, the findings from this study imply that to improve travelers' satisfactions, destination organizations may strengthen either cognitive or affective components of their destination mix. Moreover, travelers' previous destination experience needs to be considered and incorporated into the dynamic picture of cognition, affect and satisfaction with a destination. Destinations' marketing decisions need to effectively utilize cognitive or affective factors based on visitor's prior destination experience. Marketing communications targeting first time visitors and experienced visitors should have different emphases. For instance, the need to emotionally connect with the potential visitors can be much greater in the case of novice travelers. For experienced visitors, while affective connection still needs to be maintained, the need for information and other cognitively oriented functions appear to be critical.

To capture the effect of experience on travelers' cognition, affect and satisfaction, current study employed the multigroup comparison analysis based on two groups of Japanese visitors with various visiting experiences to Macau. Future studies may adopt longitudinal approach to avoid the noise factors, such as: personality, travel behaviors. Also, for the better generalization of study results, future works may consider test the relationship between cognition, affect and satisfaction within broader geographic scopes and for more generic types of travelers. Current study was carried out in Macao and specifically for Japan travelers. A replication of the study in other settings that have different destination attributes may be helpful to test the validity of the study results.

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DEMYSITIFYING TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS: THE AGE OF QUALITY OF LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Competitiveness has been associated in the literature as a means to an end in order to propel a higher level of quality of life of the populace. There is scant empirical evidence, however, on this relationship. This study, therefore, investigates this empirical relationship in the case of Puerto Rico, where tourism spending is the independent variable while competitiveness is the dependent variable. Competitiveness in this study was approximated with productivity and was measured by per capita incomes. It tests for cointegration and causality in the relationship between tourism and destination competitiveness and used time series for Puerto Rico from 1963-2004. The study found a negative causal relationship running from tourism spending to competitiveness and suggests that this relationship is probable the result from the prominent presence of ethnic travel in the demand composition of Puerto Rico. The results have relevant strategic management implications for the destination.

KEYWORDS: *Causality; Cointegration; Destination Competitiveness; Puerto Rico; Ethnic Travel.*

INTRODUCTION

Competitiveness in the literature has been associated with the achievement and maintenance of an improved level of quality of life of the populace. From this perspective, competitiveness is considered as a means to an end (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Buhalis, 2000). Prosperity is generated through the increase in productivity, which is induced in turn by growth in tourism. Economic growth facilitates the investment in human capital and the acquisition of greater skill intensity in the production process and public infrastructure thereby generating

productivity increases. And yet, the link between tourism numbers and economic contribution is not obvious.

This study is a contribution to the ongoing debate about the role of competitiveness and tourism in the development planning of a destination. It examines the empirical relationship between competitiveness and tourism. It claims that there is a positive causal relationship between competitiveness and tourism. Specifically, it attempts to answer the following questions:

- (1) Is there a relationship between competitiveness and tourism?
- (2) If there is, what is the direction of this relationship?
- (3) Under what specific conditions does this direction take place?

For the purpose of this study competitiveness is defined as the inventory of assets (endowed or created) and the process of converting these assets in sustainable economic gains through sales to customers (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999). It focuses on human development, growth and improved quality of life. Competitiveness in this study is captured through the real income per capita. Tourism is defined as the spending of the visiting tourists at the destination and is captured through the real tourism spending.

The study uses the Johansen and Juselius (1990) Full Information Maximum Likelihood Cointegration procedure to estimate the long-run equilibrium relationship between competitiveness and tourism. In addition, it uses the Engle and Granger (1987) causality test in order to answer the causality question. This study is applied to the case of Puerto Rico, a major tourist destination in the Caribbean area.

Due to the effects of globalization, competition has shifted from inter-firm competition to competition between destinations. Therefore, recognition of the causal nexus between competitiveness and tourism could have important implications for the formulation and development management of economic, tourism, promotion, marketing, and human development policy decisions.

COMPETITIVENESS AND TOURISM

There is no single theory underpinning the complex relationship between economic growth and competitiveness. There are several perspectives attempting to define, measure and explain this relationship. The variety in perspectives generates confusion as to the definition and measurements of concepts, as well as to the unit of analysis.

A review of the literature reveals that the notion of competitiveness seems to refer to a number of endowed and created assets and the process to convert these assets into economic gains for the populace from the sales to tourists. This definition suggests that the heart of competitiveness is embedded in growth and improved quality of life (Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Buhalis, 2000; Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto, 2005).

Destinations which are competitive have the ability and capacity to be superior in several respects from this perspective and, only by being superior, is the destination able to provide for the quality of life of its residents through new and better jobs and better living conditions. The ultimate purpose of competitiveness is therefore to maintain and enhance the real income of its populace.

Productivity gains appear to be the mechanism for national competitiveness (Porter, 1990; Dollar & Wolff, 1993; Krugman, 1994; Crouch and Ritchie, 1999). Competitiveness is therefore associated with the ability of a destination to raise tourism spending and to provide memorable experiences to tourists, while enhancing the quality of life of the residents and simultaneously preserving the integrity of its natural capital (Crouch & Ritchie, 1999).

Several journals and studies expend a lot of efforts in identifying factors or elements composing competitiveness, thereby making a destination superior. For example, *Tourism* (1999) and *Tourism Management* (2000) dedicated complete issues to the notion of competitiveness, the variance in perspectives addressing competitiveness and its impact on tourism.

One study tried to capture the intrinsic characteristics of a destination, such as quality of beaches, friendliness of host population, shopping facilities (Kozak and Rimmington, 1999). Crouch and Ritchie (1999) identified several categories of factor endowments- human resources, physical resources, knowledge resources, capital resources, infrastructure, and historical and cultural resources.

Another study of Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto (2005) identified eight factors of tourism competitiveness, i.e., price, openness, technology, infrastructure, human tourism, social development, environment and human resources. Dwyer and Kim (2003), drawing from Crouch and Ritchie (1999) made an extensive inventory of the resources and capabilities necessary to make a destination competitive, such as factors condition, demand conditions and rivalry conditions. Most of these attributes or factors seem plausible, but there has been no sufficient analysis or evidence to substantiate them, thereby remaining at the level of informed speculation.

This is partially to blame to measurement problems. As indicated in our previous analysis, studies seem to associate competitiveness to the notion of superiority as the basis for the success of the destination (Kozak and Rimmington, 1999; Crouch and Ritchie, 1999; Mihalic, 2000; Buhalis, 2000; Dwyer and Kim, 2003; Gooroochurn and Sugiyarto, 2005). This success is measured through increased market share and growth in visitation levels. Croes (2005) and Papatheodorou and Song, (2005) question this measurement as the appropriate one for competitiveness because it could provide distorted information about the level of sustained competitiveness of a destination.

The end result of the above is the lack of a clear empirical relationship between tourism and competitiveness. The literature reveals that there is no clear cut nexus between tourism (spending), economic growth, quality of life and competitiveness. Traditionally the impact of tourism has been measured in terms of its contribution to the Gross National Product and employment created. A multiplier effect analysis is used to estimate the direct, indirect and induced effects of tourism spending. Growth rates are applied such as arrivals, tourism

expenditures, average length of stay, bed nights, etc. (Archer, 1973; Zhou et al., 1997; Mihalic, 2002; Mak, 2003; Vanhove, 2005).

Computable General Equilibrium modeling has cast doubts about the validity of some results indicating that tourism can have a crowding out effects on other economic sectors, resulting in a change in the composition of industry rather than an expansion of economic activity (Adams and Parmenter, 1992; Dwyer and Forsyth 1998).

Growth studies have shown mixed results as well. For example, Shan and Wilson (2001), Balaguer and Cantavella-Jorda (2002), Vanegas and Croes (2003), Durbarry (2004), and Dritsakis (2004), analyzed the impact of tourism on economic growth in China, Spain, Aruba, Mauritius, and Greece, respectively. All of them concluded that, there is a positive relationship between the two.

Eugenio-Martin et al. (2004) based on a panel data approach, used a broader sample for 21 countries in Latin America and suggested causality between tourism and economic growth rate and suggested that tourism expansion is adequate for the economic growth of low-and-medium income countries. Oh (2005), on the other hand, found that there is no long run relationship between these two variables in South Korea, while Kim et al. (2006) indicated that the two reinforced each other in the case of Taiwan.

None of these studies attempted to test the impact of tourism (as the independent variable) on competitiveness. As the goal of destinations to compete in the international tourism market seems primarily to foster economic prosperity of their populace, it is pertinent to test to what extent tourism demand is the result of having competitive sources. If competitiveness is the productivity of outputs due to inputs of assets and processes, demand can provide a direct indicator of the level of competitiveness of a destination. The study will follow this line of reasoning in the next section.

TOURISM COMPETITIVENESS: A FRAMEWORK AND ECONOMETRIC INVESTIGATION

The impact of tourism (as the independent variable) on competitiveness has not been tested directly before. For the latter to be tested, competitiveness has to be explained by tourism. Accordingly, the causality has to run from tourism (shares) to competitiveness. In order to test this hypothesis, the equation model should be of the following type:

$$(1) \quad C_i = f(T_i, \mu_i)$$

Where C stands for competitiveness and T for tourism share and μ_i is the error term.

In this context, important questions pertain to the choice and definition of variables, the specification of the equation, and the estimated method and overall methodology. A key magnitude in assessing the relationship tourism and competitiveness is the elasticity of competitiveness with respect to tourism spending, which we denote by η . Estimates of this

elasticity can be obtained in a variety of ways. Here, we present results from regressions of the form:

$$(2) \quad \log C_t = \theta_t + \eta \log T_t + \mu_t$$

From the productivity-competitiveness perspective, tourism should be expected to affect productivity, thereby per capita incomes positively. This is derived from the new growth theories where tourism by generating economic growth facilitates the investment in human capital and the acquisition of greater skill intensity in the production process, and public infrastructure, thereby generating productivity increases. It is claimed that tourism is a positive determinant of productivity and hence per capita incomes. In this line of reasoning, therefore, competitiveness is approximated with productivity and the latter is proxied by per capita incomes (Porter, 1990; Krugman, 1994; Smeral, 2003).

T is measured as the share of real tourist receipts of the real gross domestic product (GDP). Typically, the tourist moves to the destination and buys and consumes locally, thereby providing opportunities for selling additional goods and services. Tourism expansion is perceived as having positive economic effects thereby stimulating the standard of living of the residents of a destination.

Increases and decreases in competitiveness are a function of both recent changes in tourism demand conditions and the degree to which competitiveness as approximated with productivity is consistent with the current nature of tourism demand. The latter as mentioned before is approximated with spending. Therefore, the degree of competitiveness is still expected to be related to the levels of tourism spending, but only as patterns in a moving equilibrium. Thus, the coincidence of a high level of competitiveness and low level of tourism spending (and vice versa) is permitted with the expectation that the level of competitiveness will eventually change so as to re-attain an equilibrium related to the tourism spending.

Rather than unidirectional, we expect tourism spending to be cyclical (implying back and forth movement). When faced with favorable economic conditions at home and globally, tourism spending will increase due to its high income elasticity, while when economic conditions are less favorable, spending will decrease (Smeral, 2003). The cyclical behavior of tourism spending, it is hypothesized, will influence productivity in a similar fashion and may therefore be expressed as a moving equilibrium. Therefore, we do not expect the two processes to drift apart and stay away from one another for very long.

The order of integration of a series, therefore, has implications for the manner in which past events influence present behavior. In addition, it is important to identify the co-integration relationship between non-stationary variables because this relationship implies an equilibrium between these variables. For example, we expect tourism spending to influence economic performance, and we expect growth performance on its turn to influence productivity levels, thereby influencing competitiveness. In other words, if the two variables are integrated, there is a long term relationship that prevents them from drifting away from each other.

Economic theory does not often provide guidance in determining when such trends are common among variables, and which variables have stochastic trends. Economic theories are generally formulated for levels of variables rather than for differences (i.e., growth rates). A simple solution to this problem is to rewrite equation (2) in error-correction form:

$$(3) \quad \Delta \log C_t = c + \eta_1 \Delta \log T_{t-1} + \eta_2 (\log C_{t-1} - \eta_3 \log T_{t-1}) + \mu_t$$

Where Δ denotes the first differencing operator (defined as $\Delta X_t = X_t - X_{t-1}$).

This model indicates that competitiveness depends on the rate of change in tourism spending and potentially on the deviation from the equilibrium relation between these two variables.

To test for co-integration between the variables, a Maximum Likelihood procedure applied by Johansen and Juselius (1990) is used. The hypothesis being tested is the null of non co-integration against the alternative of co-integration. If at least one co-integrating vector can be established between the variables under review, then a Granger causality test is warranted in order to determine the direction of the vector. A final procedural step in the process is, therefore, to address if growth in share of tourism receipts of the GDP (*TourExp*) is causing growth in the GDP per capita (*Comp*) or vice versa.

To determine the direction of the causality a Granger test will be performed by regressing ($\Delta LComp$) on its own lagged values and on lagged values of ($\Delta LTourExp$). The Granger test will yield four possible findings:

- (1) Neither variable “Granger causes” the other. In other words, independence is suggested that when the sets of X and Y coefficients are not statistically significant in both regressions
- (2) Causality from X to Y : That is, X causes Y , but not vice versa
- (3) Causality from Y to X : That is, Y causes X , but not vice versa
- (4) X and Y “Granger cause” each other.

According to Miller and Russek (1990), bilateral causality between X and Y only exist if X and Y “Granger cause”. Based on these assumptions the null hypothesis that X does not Granger cause Y and Y does not Granger cause X is rejected if the coefficients in the next equations are jointly significant (i.e. $\delta_1 \neq 0$ or $\delta_2 \neq 0$), based on the standard F-test.

$$\begin{aligned} \Delta LComp_t &= \mu_1 + \sum_{i=1}^j \alpha_{1i} \Delta LComp_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^k \delta_{1i} \Delta LTourExp_{t-i} + e_{1t} \\ \Delta LTourExp_t &= \mu_2 + \sum_{i=1}^m \alpha_{2i} \Delta LTourExp_{t-i} + \sum_{i=1}^n \delta_{2i} \Delta LComp_{t-i} + e_{2t} \end{aligned}$$

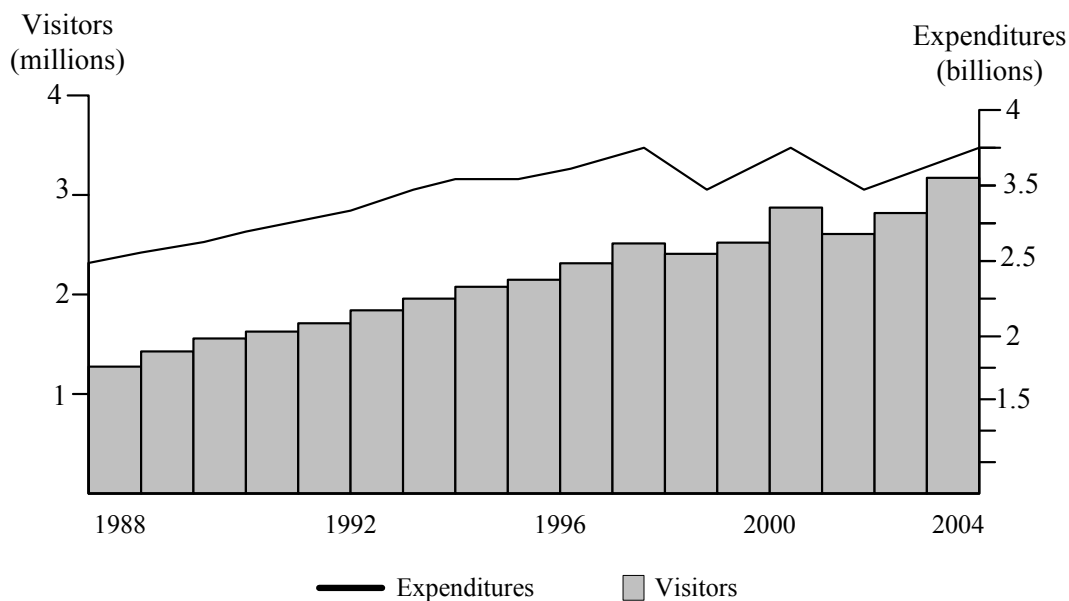
Where δ_1 and δ_2 are white noise error correction and j, k, l, m are the maximum number of lags. If both, some $\delta_1 \neq 0$ and $\delta_2 \neq 0$, then there is feedback between *TourExp* and *Comp*.

DATA COLLECTION

The data used for the analysis is annual time series for Puerto Rico from 1963-2004. Both Tourism Receipts and GDP figures were obtained in current dollars from the Puerto Rico Planning Board (PRPB) Yearly Statistical Report. All the series were deflated to 1954 dollars as the base year based on the Consumer Price Index published by the PRPB. The data for Tourism Receipts were calculated by including only receipts from those visitors that fulfill the definition of a tourist according to the World Tourism Organization (special visitors and cruise visitors were excluded).

Puerto Rico, considered a territory of the United States, is a small island located at the north east of the Caribbean Sea. Since 1917 Puerto Ricans are considered US citizens and as of 2004 there are close to 4 million Puerto Rican living in the USA, exceeding the number of Puerto Rican living on the island (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007). These are Puerto Ricans who left the island to the U.S. mainland but maintained strong links with 'home' and seem to travel regularly to their home island. For the purpose of this study, we define this group as ethnic travel.

Puerto Rico is considered one of the most dynamic economies in the Caribbean region, manufacturing has surpassed agriculture as the primary sector of economic activity. Although tourism revenues represent less than 10% of the GDP, present-day Puerto Rico has become a major tourist destination and is considered to have the largest Caribbean Travel and Tourism GDP Economic impact (WTTC, 2004).



Source: Made by the author's based on Tourism Statistics from the Puerto Rico Planning Board.

Figure 1. Arrivals and Tourism Receipts (1988-2004).

Table 1. Tourism indicators growth rates (1961-2004).

Tourism Indicators (Growth Rates)	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>
Tourist Receipts Share of GDP ¹	1.42%	6.67%	-13.59%	12.79%
Tourist Receipts ¹	13.08%	13.59%	-54.72%	28.03%
Hotel Tourist Receipts ¹	12.91%	14.10%	-57.34%	32.87%
Non Hotel Tourist Receipts ¹	13.60%	15.73%	-52.71%	38.90%
Tourist Arrivals	5.68%	7.49%	-13.07%	20.00%
Hotel Tourist Arrivals	5.48%	8.82%	-15.26%	26.18%
Non-Hotel Tourist Arrivals	6.08%	9.92%	-17.98%	26.66%

¹Tourist Receipts are based on constant 1954 dollars

Note: Author's calculations based on Tourism Statistics from the Puerto Rico Planning Board.

Since 1992, Puerto Rico's hotel inventory has been growing at a rate of 5.25% annually for a total increase of 6,834 rooms in the 15 year span. As a result, tourist arrivals and receipts almost doubled since 1988 (see Figure 1). Since 1961, total arrivals have increased at a rate of 5.68%, while growth rates for hotel tourists at 5.48%, while at 6.08% for those tourist that do not stay in hotels (See Table 1). Growth expectations for the tourism sector are high, rooms inventory is estimated to increase by 7,500 new hotel rooms in the next five years (Business Register, 2006).

EMPIRICAL RESULTS

The study proceeded to test for co-integration between the two variables (tourism share GDP and real GDP per capita) included in the equations, thereby assessing the presence of unit root for each individual variable. The stationarity of the time series was tested using the Augmented Dickey Fuller test (ADF), developed by Dickey and Fuller (1979, 1981). The ADF test considers several regression equations (autoregressive process of order p) to test for the presence of unit root.

The STATA version 9 software package, which is used to conduct the ADF tests, reports the simulated critical values. Table 2 presents the results of the ADF tests of $\log C_t$ and $\log T_t$. The ADF tests statistics are compared with the critical value at the 5% level significance. The test suggests that both series contained a unit root. After taking first-difference of the data, we found that the data attained stationarity, with the ADF statistics being less than the critical value at 1% level significance.

Table 2. ADF Unit Root test results

<i>Variable</i>	<i>ADF Statistic levels</i>	<i>ADF Statistic First Difference</i>
<i>LComp</i>	-2.607	-6.765*
<i>LTour</i>	-2.649	-5.878*

** Significant at the 1% level. Note: The reported critical values of ADF Statistic for levels at 1% and 5% significance are -3.621 and -2.947 respectively. Critical values of ADF Statistic for first difference at 1% and 5% significance are -3.628 and -2.950 respectively. The critical values are obtained from STATA version 9 and correspond to 43 observations.*

To test for co-integration between the variables, a Maximum Likelihood procedure applied by Johansen and Juselius (1990) is used. The hypothesis being tested, therefore, is the null of non co-integration against the alternative of co-integration. Table 3 presents the Johansen and Juselius test statistics for the number of co-integrating vectors. The trace statistics test has the null hypothesis of the number of cointegrating vectors being less than or equal to r against a general alternative. The trace statistics reported in Table 3 indicate the possibility of one co-integrating vector, i.e., there exists one linear combination of these two variables which is stationary. The results, therefore, indicate that there is a long-run relationship between real GDP per capita and tourism share of the GDP.

Table 3. Johansen and Joselius Trace Test for the Cointegration Equation.

<i>V numbers of cointegrating vectors (null hypothesis)</i>	<i>Trace</i>	<i>Critical Values 95%</i>
R=1	33.88	15.41
R=0	2.96*	3.76

** Indicates acceptance of the null hypothesis of no cointegrating vectors at 5% level*

Note: Trace is likelihood ratio for the number of cointegrating vectors. Estimation has been performed using STATA version 9

Another important issue to be addressed is how the long run relationship between real GDP per capita growth (competitiveness) and real tourism spending as a share of GDP is causally related (Granger 1969; Engle and Granger 1987). Evidence of co-integration suggests that there is a causal effect between competitiveness and tourism spending. In other words, is tourism spending causing competitiveness or is competitiveness causing tourism spending? Table 4 reports the empirical results of the Granger tests indicating a Granger-causal running from tourism spending to competitiveness exists for Puerto Rico.

Table 4. Granger Causality Test

	<i>Wald Test</i>	
<i>Null Hypothesis</i>	<i>Chi 2</i>	<i>p>Chi 2</i>
<i>L Tour</i> does not cause <i>LComp</i>	5.0171	0.0810
<i>LComp</i> does not cause <i>LTour</i>	0.0291	0.8650

Note: Test for causality have been carried out for the two variables of the model each time using STATA version 9. The critical value is 4.6051 for two degrees of freedom

When normalized for a unit coefficient on real $Y_{\text{gdp}} / \text{cap}$ the most appropriate co-integrating regression of the long-run, the coefficient on the log GDP per capita or the elasticity η is equal to -0.0037 with a standard error of -0.0018. It reveals a negative sign and the long-run tourism effect is rather small on competitiveness, indicating that a 1% increase in the share of tourism receipts in the GDP would decrease competitiveness by 0.4%, *ceteris paribus*. The adjusted R^2 is 0.2150 with an F-statistic of 4.83 ($p > 0.0059$), while the DW statistic is 1.84.

The magnitude of tourism spending effects provides an intriguing result because most studies have associated tourism positively with increase in real per capita GDP. How do we account for this surprising result? A closer look at the tourism demand base of Puerto Rico reveals that the VFR segment is a relative large market patronizing the Puerto Rican tourist product. This seems to be the result of ethnic travel between mainland USA and Puerto Rico. Indeed, if we assume that the VFR segment is associated with ethnic travel then the latter represents about 60 percent of the total arrivals in 2004.

Based on this assumption, the study proceeded to separate the two groups in hotel and non-hotel group in order to account for ethnic travel. It regressed the share of spending of each segment on the per capita GDP. Table 5 reports the results. The elasticity for the Hotel segment is 0.1056 with a standard error of 0.024, while the Non-Hotel (ethnic travel) segment has a negative elasticity of -0.0652 with a standard error of 0.067. The adjusted R^2 is 0.3513, with an F-statistic of 5.55 ($p > 0.0007$) and a DW statistic of 1.81.

This suggests that a 1% increase in the share Hotel segment spending to GDP will increase competitiveness by about 11%, *ceteris paribus*, while a 1% increase in the share of ethnic travel will decrease competitiveness by 6.5%, *ceteris paribus*. If therefore at the aggregate level the relationship between spending and competitiveness is negative (as this study is suggesting) then the plausible explanation to this result is the larger weight of ethnic travel on competitiveness - as our results indicated.

Table 5. Long term coefficients of Competitiveness and Tourism Spending at the aggregate and disaggregated level.

	<i>OLS coefficient</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>adj R²</i>	<i>p value</i>	<i>DW</i>
Aggregate Level					
<i>Tourism Receipts Share GDP</i>	-0.0037	-0.0018	0.215	0.0059	1.84
Disaggregate level					
<i>Hotel</i>	0.1056	0.024	0.3513	0.0007	1.81
<i>Non-Hotel</i>	-0.065	-0.067	0.3513	0.0007	1.81

Note: Using STATA version 9.

CONCLUSIONS

The study set to answer three questions related to the empirical relationship between tourism spending and competitiveness and its causality direction. The results indicate that there is a causal relationship between tourism spending and competitiveness running from the former to the latter. The sign of the direction and the magnitude of the elasticity called for some pause. The sign is negative implying that tourism spending has a negative incidence on competitiveness while the elasticity seems rather small in the case of Puerto Rico.

This is a rather surprising result and seems to contradict some earlier findings of among others Hazari and Sgro (1995) and Lanza and Pigliaru (2000) and Algieri (2006). Hazari and Sgro (1995), for example, observed that world demand for tourism would have a favorable effect on the long-run growth of small countries. Similarly, Lanza and Pigliaru (2000) and Algieri (2006) asserted that small economies specialized in tourism grow faster than larger countries not specialized in tourism.

This result requires therefore a closer look at the demand components in the case of Puerto Rico and the role of tourism in the overall economy of Puerto Rico. The demand composition since the 1970s clearly indicates a growing presence in ethnic travel as reflected in the VFR segment in the Puerto Rican tourism product. Over half of the tourists patronizing this island are related to ethnic travel and yet they indicate a declining real spending per person as compared to the other group. Based on this reality the study proceeded to estimate the elasticity of both groups. The results indicate that ethnic travel was significantly negative with an elasticity of 6.5% while the Hotel tourist was significantly positive with an elasticity of about 11%.

The above result is a plausible explanation of the negative incidence of tourism on competitiveness at the aggregate level in the case of Puerto Rico. This might explain as well why the effectiveness of its marketing dollars have been decreasing as such an accelerated rate lately. In 1985, every one million dollars that Puerto Rico spent on marketing produced \$72 million in tourism spending, while 17 years later in 2001 that same one million dollar was only producing \$65 million in spending (Fajardo, 2002).

Therefore, such decline could be attributed to the fact that current marketing strategies specifically target markets in the US where Puerto Rican population is also the largest in the US. For example, in 2006, marketing strategies still pursues key markets such as New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Florida, Texas, Massachusetts and California. Hence these key markets account for 69% of the total hotel registrations and also accommodate 87% of the total Puerto Rican population in the United States. A complete side by side comparison of hotels registrations and population by state is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Comparison of Hotel Tourists Arrivals to Puerto Rico and Population Estimates of Puerto Ricans in the US for selected States.

<i>Puerto Rican Population of the U.S.</i>			<i>Arrivals of Hotels Tourist from the US (2004)</i>	
3,406,178			1,204,330	
State	Population	Share	Arrivals	Share
California	140,570	4%	61,083	5%
Connecticut	194,443	6%	27,198	2%
Florida	482,027	14%	151,208	13%
Illinois	157,851	5%	51,272	4%
Massachusetts	199,207	6%	43,955	4%
New Jersey	366,788	11%	137,303	11%
New York	1,050,293	31%	228,557	19%
Ohio	66,269	2%	18,641	2%
Pennsylvania	228,557	7%	38,188	3%
Texas	69,504	2%	76,987	6%
Sub-Total	2,955,509	87%	834,392	69%

Source: Author's calculations based on Puerto Rico Tourism Company, Visitor's Statistics from <http://www.gotopuertorico.com> and from the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies 2000 Census Data from <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/lastudies>

The implications of this finding are straightforward. Ethnic travel is having a negative impact on the Puerto Rican tourism product. The Puerto Rican tourist authorities should revisit their marketing plans and seek instead to promote transient international travel instead of ethnic travel in an attempt to become more competitive. The reason for this is the high positive incidence of international travel on competitiveness. The elasticity of hotel tourists is almost double that of ethnic tourists. Another plausible explanation is the fact that tourism is not a leading industry in Puerto Rico if compared to other small islands in the Caribbean or as the case of Spain (Vanegas and Croes, 2003; Balaguer and Cantavella-Jorda, 2002).

The study concludes based on its empirical tests that there is in fact a statistical relationship between tourism spending and competitiveness, and that tourism spending could have negative effects on competitiveness if demand is driven by ethnic travel. In addition, it has demonstrated its internal validity by showing the causal relationship. However, the study cannot be generalized to other situations or destinations. External validity therefore seems to be a limitation of this study, meaning that the results tend to be more specific to the Puerto Rican case and are less generalizable to other situations.

The results of this study have relevant implications for the management of the tourism product in Puerto Rico. Changing the seemingly negative course of the Puerto Rican tourism industry in order to reap greater benefits will depend on the ability to improve competitiveness in

an increasingly competitive environment. This in turn relies on the application of effective management, planning and marketing approaches. The development and implementation of these strategies relies on the role of research and education in guiding the tourist industry towards sustainable economic gains for the populace.

Without such a framework, many of the resources that could make Puerto Rico a more appealing product may be degraded and opportunities that could enhance the quality of life of the residents could be dissipated. Further research should also shed light on the role of tourism specialization on competitiveness perspectives as well as whether the tourism area life cycle is an important determinant of competitiveness.

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FRANCHISE ERA VERSUS DOT.COM ERA: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE DIFFUSION OF SERVICE INNOVATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper uses historical time-series of selected service companies at selected time-periods to study their diffusion in the US market and empirically estimate the logistic curve parameters allowing for generalization. The experiment will consist of studying the differences between the “franchise era” companies (1955-1980) and the “dot-com era” companies (1981-2006). Using the Bass model we uncovered significant differences between the two groups. Due to a significant difference in the parameters the companies in the “franchise era” group diffuse at a slower pace than the companies in the “dot.com” era group. Furthermore the parameter representing the social contagion in the model is significantly larger in the “dot.com” group allowing the service companies to “surf” on the dot.com wave and showing a multiplier factor of two between eras’ parameters. Potential explanations are explored.

KEYWORDS: *Bass Model; Diffusion of Innovation; Network Externalities; Retail; Service Companies.*

INTRODUCTION

Is Starbucks more innovative than McDonald’s? Are Internet service companies more innovative than “brick and mortar” service companies?

Since the birth of the Personal Computer (circa 1980), and the rise of the Internet, technology has been synonymous of innovation, and consequently very few non-technology service companies make the popular press top-innovative rankings (McGregor, 2007). More precisely, Starbucks was the only hospitality service company worthy of being in the “2006 top 50 world’s most innovative companies”, only joined by McDonald’s listed at number 48 in the

2007 ranking. In comparison, technology-driven companies, such as internet services, have seven companies listed in the top 50: Amazon, AT&T, eBay, Google, Microsoft, Research in Motion and Verizon. Judging by this ranking (based on 2,468 executive interviews), it would seem logical to infer that the technology-driven companies are more innovative than the hospitality companies. This would support the hypothesis that the most innovative service companies differ in their innovativeness, thus probably exhibiting a different diffusion rate in the marketplace.

An explanation to the Starbucks top honor could hypothetically be that, beyond its own merit, its diffusion “surfed” on the internet wave. But then, where are the other innovative hospitality companies? Have they not benefited from the same wave?

Similarly, McDonald’s absence from the 2006 ranking could logically be explained by its relative vintage (the first McDonald’s opened in 1948); yet McDonald’s is the only new entrant in the 2007 ranking. Does this mean that Burger King is less innovative than its archrival and, therefore, diffused in the marketplace at a slower pace? A quick glance at Figure 1, showing a scaled diffusion curve for both companies seems to point to the contrary.

Could it be that the pre-internet, pre-MTV, pre-PC era was a homogeneous social context with respect to the diffusion phenomenon? Similarly, could it be that the Internet, with its networking capacity, its speed of communication and its mass-customization capabilities created a different social context favorable to a faster diffusion of innovations?

This paper examines the relationship between the diffusion of selected service innovations and two distinct social contexts: the pre-internet era (from 1955 to 1980) – referred to as the “franchise era” – and the post-internet era (from 1981 to 2006), referred to as the “dot.com era.”

The key idea underlining the present study is that, if the internet phenomenon increased the diffusion of innovative companies (as perceived by the market), we should be able to identify its particular effect, and by comparison we should be able to contrast the diffusion of service companies pre-internet.

The choice of 1981 as a cut-off point between the “franchise era” and the “dot.com era” is not entirely arbitrary. Several innovations leading to the internet as we know it were introduced on or around 1981. For instance, the IBM personal Computer was introduced in late 1981, Apple Macintosh was released in 1984 and Hayes Communications introduced the Smartmodem in 1981 while the full switchover to the new internet protocol TCP/IP took place on January 1, 1983.

From a social context point of view, powerful events shaped the Generation X: consumers of the 80’s born between 1961 and 1981 (Strauss & Howe, 1991). For instance, MTV was launched in 1981, the end of the cold war took place in early 1980s, the Tiananmen Square protests happened while the new AIDS virus was first recognized. The birth of the World Wide Web in 1989 paved the way for what consumer behavior experts call: “the most profound influence on consumer behavior in recent times” (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2006). Not only

does the Internet help consumers in their purchasing decisions, it also facilitates communication between web surfers, creating a tremendous “buzz.” Companies, as well, took advantage of the internet as a mass-media channel and have developed unique marketing activities. Customer Relationship Management, viral marketing and mobile marketing are among some of the new means available to a company wishing to spread its message (Tischler, 2004).

Our research strategy consists in developing hypotheses in a quasi-experiment environment taking the “franchise era” companies and comparing their diffusion curve parameters to that of the “dot.com era” companies.

We find that the “franchise era” group and the “dot.com era” group are homogenous evidenced by the fact that their curves are not significantly different. There is no significant difference between the speed of diffusion of McDonald’s, Burger King, Red Lobster, Holiday Inn, or Super 8. Similarly there is no difference between the diffusion speed of Starbucks, Olive Garden, Holiday Inn Express, Fairfield Inn, and the technology companies (cellular phone, online banking and domain names).

Looking at the between-era effect we find evidence that the eras differ by their parameters yet that their curves fit within the 95% confidence limits. Our findings provide partial evidence of the “dot.com” effect in the diffusion of service innovation. We suggest that the diffusion of service innovation, whether technology-driven or not, should be looked at in the context of network externalities (Katz & Shapiro, 1985).

Franchisor, in particular, should leverage network externalities existing within the group of potential franchisees in order to increase the speed of diffusion of their service innovation.

BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW

The theory of adoption and diffusion of a particular innovation by a social system has been very well covered by scholars, such as Gatignon and Robertson (1985), and summarized by Rogers (2003). Although adoption is defined as a behavior that goes beyond the first time purchase and that involves repeat purchases (Rogers, 2003), the probability of first-time purchase is an accepted unit of study when one wants to build a mathematical model to forecast future adoption (Mahajan, Muller & Bass 1990).

The diffusion literature is dominated by the adaptation of the contagion phenomenon explained in the form of an S-shape curve. In that context the Bass model (1969) is the most recognized, and the most parsimonious of the models used by diffusion researchers.

Bass (1969) builds on Rogers’ theory of adopter categorization (innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards respectively distributed around the mean of a bell curve) and has the unique feature of requiring the estimation of only three parameters. The Bass regression model is given by:

$$X_t = \underbrace{p(m-N_{t-1})}_{\text{Innovators' effect}} + \underbrace{(q/m)N_{t-1}(m-N_{t-1})}_{\text{Imitators' effect}} + \varepsilon_{ti} \quad (1)$$

Where p, q, m are respectively the probability of innovators' adoption, the probability of imitators' adoption, and the total market potential. X_t is the adoption at time t , N_t is the cumulative adoption at time t and ε_{ti} is assumed to be an independent and identically distributed (i.i.d) error term with mean zero (Boswijk & Franses, 2002; Franses, 2003).

The Bass model has been used extensively in the marketing literature for the study of consumer durable goods, agricultural, industrial, educational or technological innovations (Mahajan, Muller & Bass, 1990). Several authors have built on the Bass model (Mahajan & Peterson, 1978; Mahajan, Muller & Bass, 1990) and have looked at the impact of price on the diffusion curve; the effect of country or culture on diffusion, or the possibility of successive generations of innovations within the same category of products. Despite some weaknesses the model's variables have explanatory power and seem to hold across studies. Although some recent advances in the diffusion research have criticized the so-called mixed influence Bass-type model, the critic was centered on diffusion hazard curves exhibiting "dips" in their patterns (Van den Bulte & Joshi, 2007).

The behavioral promise underlining the Bass model has the advantage to link the parameters to endogenous and exogenous variables grounded in the consumer-behavior theory critical to the service industry. For instance, five transfer mechanisms affecting the flow of individuals from one segment to the next (i.e., from imitators to early adopters, etc...) have been identified in the literature to represent the underlining constructs of the diffusion model (Mahajan & Muller, 1979). These mechanisms are: (1) mass-media communication (2) word-of-mouth communication (3) other marketing efforts, price, promotions (4) individual experience with the product or service and (5) exogenous factors (e.g., economic environment, disposable income, unemployment rate, population, competition) (Mahajan & Muller, 1979; Van den Bulte, 2000).

The first four mechanisms are intimate to the relationship between the service and the customer. As a group, these mechanisms explain a large portion of the diffusion pattern and represent holistically the explanatory variables of the innovativeness of the service relative to the market. However, Van den Bulte and Lilien (2001) demonstrated that marketing efforts can be a confounder in social contagion and recommend controlling for this effect.

Drawing on earlier research (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) Rogers (2003) looks at two categories of purchasers in the early stage of a company's life, and identifies innovators from early adopters in such a way that the two categories are linked together, via a social interaction.

The innovators' influence on early adopters characterizes the interactive effect of the diffusion. By their adoption of the innovation, their word-of-mouth, or their opinion leadership, these two critical sub-groups will influence the rest of the potential market defined by Rogers (2003) as the early majority, the late majority, and the laggards.

Watts and Dodds (2007), for their part, have challenged the so called "two-step flow" of communication central to the diffusion literature, and have introduced the notion of thresholds, or critical mass, necessary to "cross the chasm" (Moore 1999) from innovation to success. That critical mass, the authors argue, is not made entirely of influential opinion leaders (such as the premise of the generally accepted diffusion theory), but rather by the combination of the influencers with "easily influenced people influencing other easily influenced people". This dynamic of social contagion stands on the principle of "global cascades" – the widespread propagation of influence through networks. Watts (2007) suggests that the key to an effective marketing spending might be more in helping a large number of ordinary people – possibly with Web-based social networking tools– to reach and influence others just like them.

It would seem probable that, in the context of the "dot.com era" instant communication devices such as the cellular phone, blackberry, blue tooth devices, peer-to-peer networks and other virtual communities, such as Facebook or Myspace, create a "social multiplier effect" described by Van den Bulte and Joshi (2007). Thus, innovations in the "dot.com era" would diffuse at a faster rate not only because of their relative innovativeness, but also because of the social context.

HYPOTHESES

Our main hypothesis is that there is a significant variation between the parameters estimate of the "franchise era" service innovations and the parameters estimate of the "dot.com era" service innovations. Specifically, the "dot.com era" group parameters should be indicative of a higher speed of diffusion. Where in the Bass model the parameter p captures the intrinsic tendency of a social group to adopt the innovation, parameter q captures the social contagion (Van den Bulte & Stremersch, 2004). Therefore we expect both parameters to be significantly different between the "franchise era" service innovations and the "dot.com era" service innovations, but in different proportions. Consistent with Rogers' theory of diffusion (2003) coefficients of innovation (parameter p) have been fairly stable across studies at an average of .03 (Hauser, Tellis & Griffin, 2006). Other studies have found that parameter p falls between 0.2% and 2.8% of the total market potential (Mahajan, Muler & Bass, 1990) mirroring the adopter classification defined theoretically by Rogers (2003).

We would expect the two groups to fall between the same interval, but will hypothesize that the different social contexts will impact the parameter and will lead us to find parameters for the "franchise era" group to be on the lower end of the interval, when the "dot.com era" group should be on the higher end of the interval, suggesting that the intrinsic tendency to adopt is stronger post-internet.

Hypothesis 1: The diffusion curve of the service innovations in the “franchise era” group will be significantly different than the diffusion curve of the “dot.com era” group.

Hypothesis 1.a: The 95% confidence limits of the parameter p estimate will be between 0.2% and 2.8% across companies and across time.

Hypothesis 1.b: The parameters p of the “franchise era” group will lower than 1.5%, while the parameter p of the “dot.com era” group will higher than 1.5%.

Hauser et al. (2006) observed that the imitation coefficient (parameter q) is varying largely among studies, and across innovations, at an average of 0.40. Furthermore, linking *hypothesis 1, 1.a and 1.b* implies that the speed of diffusion, if significantly different, will lead to a significant difference in the parameter q of the model. The parameter q represents the power of the social network amongst the group composed of the early adopters, early majority, late adopters, and laggards. Should that hypothesis be verified at a significant level, it could imply that either the services of the “dot.com era” are more innovative than those of the “franchise era,” or that the social interactions, such as internet networking, e-mail, instant messaging or cellular phones, have a mediating effect on the relationship between the service innovations and the customers’ adoption behavior.

Hypothesis 1.c: The parameter q will be significantly different between eras, greater for the “dot.com era” group than for the “franchise era” group.

Additionally, we are interested in testing to see if there is a significant difference between the technology driven service companies and the non-technology service companies within the “dot.com era”. Our belief is grounded in the fact that Nevers (1972), for instance, had estimated the parameters of Color TV diffusion to be different from the non-technology driven services under study such as McDonald’s or Holiday Inn hotels. We expect significant differences in the parameters, and the curves, confirming that technology-driven companies diffuse at a faster speed than non-technology driven companies due to their endogenous innovativeness.

Hypothesis 2: The diffusion curve will be significantly different between technology driven service innovations and non-technology driven service innovations.

DATA AND METHOD

Due to the particularity of the Bass model, and the fact its precision is greatly increased when focusing on first-time purchase (Nevers, 1972), we choose hospitality companies as our non-technology driven service group. Our choice is driven by the fact that the BusinessWeek ranking (McGregor, 2007) lists two main players (McDonald’s and Starbucks) and no hotels companies. This gives us some ground for exploring if the ranking’s merit could be justified via testing our hypotheses. We recognize that the hospitality companies are not necessarily representative of the entire service industry, and that generalization will be limited by the convenience of the sample. The technology-driven service innovations part of the “dot.com era” group are composed of the registered number of web sites since the creation of the World Wide Web represented by the domains: .com, .net, .org, .biz, .info and .edu; as well as industry level estimations (Libai, Muller & Peres, 2006) of the online banking users and cellular phone

subscribers. Previous research has mixed brand level or company level data and industry level data in order to draw meta-analytic conclusions (Van den Bulte & Stremersch, 2004).

One advantage of choosing retail store unit or web site domain as our primary data is that the diffusion parameters, although describing brand level adoption, also capture individual consumer behavior in the form of a franchise or a web site domain name purchase.

Choosing first-time purchase should also reduce the “corruption of the data” in the form of potential multicollinearity between parameters. Should the model include repeat purchases, the validity of the parameters would be questionable due to multicollinearity between two or more purchases made by the same customer, and would hinder generalizability particularly if we cannot measure the impact of price or marketing incentives on the parameters. Nevers (1972) discusses the potential problem of mixing company owned units with franchised units in the data set. Agreeing with Nevers, we propose that the diffusion of a service innovation should be measured in terms of total output in the market place, company owned or franchised, because the forces underlining the decision to open a new unit, whether franchised or company owned, should not be significantly different.

Each company is chosen based on the fact that it reached the 50% diffusion point before 1981 – the “franchise era” group, or did not reach the 5% diffusion point before 1981 – the “dot.com era” group. These thresholds have been used before as critical point in the diffusion process (Van den Bulte, 2000). Furthermore, each company is chosen based on the availability of getting sufficient data points at the different time intervals. Some of the data sets have missing observations, but all sets have more than 10 observations (annual series), sufficient to obtain a 95% confidence interval (Heeler & Hustad, 1980), and sufficient for a reliable parameters estimation (Srinivasan & Mason, 1986). All data sets include the starting point and several observations around the peak point. For the historical sets (“franchise era”), all have the saturation point, defined as the time of maximum number of unit in operation and very few missing data points. Table 1 shows the list of companies by family and eras, with their respective number of units in operation as of 2005.

Estimating the Total Market Potential Parameter “m”

Bass (1969) and colleagues (Mahajan et al., 1990) propose that the estimation of total market potential be inferred from other exogenous marketing analyses or by interviewing the company executives. However, knowledge at one point in time is largely influenced by beliefs, potentially making it difficult to predict an exact total market potential accurately and without bias. The market potential estimation is identified as a weakness in the model (Van den Bulte, 2000; Fildes & Kumar, 2002) if not assessed properly.

In the case of past service innovation we can more precisely estimate the total market potential. In most cases, it corresponds to the peak number of units in operation. We looked a few years past that peak to evaluate if it is a maximum or if the company reached a plateau before resuming growth. It tells us whether or not the estimation is representative of the saturation level for that service innovation. Holiday Inn, for instance, went in decline after 1981, and consistently declined there- after. We can, with some confidence, estimate that the total market potential for

Holiday Inn is 1,755 units (1980's level). Comparing that parameter to Nevers' estimate of m at 1,403.4 shows a significant difference explained by the fact that Nevers, in 1972, was using an approximation derived from the regression procedure.

When past data are not available, Mahajan et al. (1990) propose the utilization of an analogous market in order to come up with the total market estimate. For instance, Starbucks' total market potential is estimated by the company to be 40,000 units worldwide (Starbucks annual report, 2006), which is not so far from McDonald's current unit count of 32,000 (McDonald's annual report, 2006). In fact, Starbucks' 10K statement identifies that "the company's primary competitors are restaurants, specialty coffee shops, and donuts shops. Competition is increasing particularly from the quick-service restaurant sector" (2006 Starbucks' SEC 10k report, p 8).

Another way of estimating the market potential of current services would be to derive it from the exogenous characteristics (i.e., population per unit), in essence building a market curve (Mahajan & Muller, 1979; Emerson, 1990). One main advantage of observing the past (as in the "franchise era" group) is that we can, with some confidence, evaluate the market potential *a posteriori*. This will allow for more precise control, and a much better estimation of the parameters. In the per group estimations, and due to the different market potential of each company, we scaled the data in percentage. So, for instance, all market potential parameters will be fixed at 100%.

Regression Procedure

Several studies have demonstrated a better estimation of the parameters when using maximum likelihood procedure (Schmittlein & Mahajan, 1982), and non-linear least square estimation (Srinivasan & Mason, 1986) rather than ordinary least square estimation as originally used by Bass (1969) and Nevers (1972).

Using the SAS NLIN procedure and the Bass equation (1) we will start with our best estimate of the parameters drawn from the literature, and historical data (market potential of the "franchise era" group). We will use a Levenberg-Marquardt method – best when the parameters are correlated– for fitting the non-linear algorithm to the data letting the maximum likelihood iteration converge on the parameters (Schabenberger, 2007).

Our procedure involves parameter estimates for each of the companies, independently and in groups ("franchise era", "dot.com era", hotels, restaurants, technology-driven companies), as well as a 95% asymptotic confidence interval around the parameters and the curve.

Table 1. Sample of Service Companies.

	<i>Starting Year</i>	<i>2005 U.S. units in operation</i>	<i>Estimated U.S. market potential</i>
<i>“Franchise Era” (1955-1980)</i>			
McDonald’s	1948	13,727	15,228
Burger King	1954	7,634	7,725
Red Lobster	1968	679	719
Holiday Inn Hotels and Resorts	1952	974(b)	1,706
Motel 6	1962	850	916
Super 8	1974	1,974(b)	2,027
<i>“Dotcom Era” (1981-2006)</i>			
Starbucks	1971	4,918	10,891
Olive Garden	1983	563	534
Holiday Inn Express	1991	1,506	1,581
Courtyard by Marriott	1983	623	1,240
Fairfield Inn	1987	519	529
Dotcom domain names (.com, .net, .org, .biz, .info, .edu)	1989	60,783,042	87,053,705
Cellular Phone (a)			209,100,000
Online Banking (a)			42,900,000

(a) Aggregate estimated number based on Libai et al. (2007). (b) Companies that have passed their estimated market potential. Sources: companies’ 10ks or investors’ information.

RESULTS

Table 2 reports the individual company parameter estimates, as well as the lower and upper approximate confidence intervals around the mean m parameter. The average p parameter is 0.0186 and the average q parameter is 0.2797, both significantly different ($p < 0.05$) from the average values reported in previous studies (Hausser et al., 2006). The parameter estimates of previously estimated McDonald's and Holiday Inn are also different, more so in the value of the q parameter (Nevers, 1972). This is easily explained by the fact that our estimation has very few missing values, and uses a better starting m value in the regression.

The Bass model fit all companies' series fairly well, as evidenced by the significance of all χ^2 tests of the -2Log Likelihood difference ($p < 0.0001$) and the pseudo- R^2 average of 0.62 (with the lowest values being 0.279 and 0.33 for the Dot.com domain names and Red Lobster respectively).

Era estimates

Regrouping companies by era in order to estimate their curves and parameters is done in two steps. First, we regroup the companies by families: i.e., restaurants, hotels and technology services; and estimate the curves' parameters. Second, we combine the families in "era curves" and estimate the parameters.

We use Schabenberger's method (2007) to calculate a sum of square reduction test between treatments (each company within families, or each family with eras was considered a treatment). Two versions of the model are fitted; one is the reduced model imposing constraints on the parameters. The null hypothesis is that the curves are the same. For all families the sum of square F-test has a p-value > 0.05 . Although we cannot accept with confidence that the curves are the same, we also cannot be 95% confident that they are different. The family curves average pseudo- R^2 is .57.

Combining all data by eras into two base models, one for each era, allows estimation of the eras' curve parameters, and the comparison of the two curves together.

We end up with two curves representing the "franchise era" and the "dot.com era". For the "franchise era" the sum of square reduction test yields a significant F-value ($F_{1,83}=3036.45$, $p < 0.0001$) indicating that the curves are different. The p parameter equals to 0.00573, while the q parameter equals to 0.1853. Only the q parameter is located within the 95% confidence interval, suggesting that the difference between the curves is induced by the parameter p . The "franchise era" curves has a pseudo- R^2 of .754 and the "dot.com era" group pseudo- R^2 is .53 (Table 3). The "dot.com era" curve sum of square reduction test yield a non-significant F-value ($F_{12,124}=1.311$, $p=.22$). The p parameter equals 0.00968 and the q parameter equals 0.3524.

Finally, combining all data together and testing one era curve against the other we obtain the parameters and results shown in Table 4.

The sum of square reduction test is significant ($F_{1,90}=6428.53$, $p<0.0001$) suggesting that the “franchise era” curve is not significantly different from the “dot.com era” curve. A quick look at the curves in figure 3 seems to show that some differences might reside in the parameters.

Testing for differences in the parameters shows that both p and q are significantly different when constrained in the reduced model, signifying that both curve’s shapes are different, yet contained within the 95% confidence interval. Although we do not verify our first hypothesis that the diffusion curve of the service innovations in the “franchise era” group differ significantly from the diffusion curve of the “dot.com era” group, we can show some evidence that they differ in their parameters.

Testing for *hypothesis 1.a*, we find that parameter p ’s approximate 95% confidence limit is located between 0.12% and 1.02% for the “franchise era” group and between 0.194% and 1.74% for the “dot.com era” group, thus validating the *hypothesis 1.a*. As for *hypothesis 1.b*, we can only validate that the “franchise era” group p parameter is lower than 1.5%, but not validate that the “dot.com era” p parameter is greater than 1.5%.

Furthermore, testing now for the difference of the q parameter between eras (*hypothesis 1.c*), we find that the confidence limits are between 16.61% and 20.46% for the “franchise era” group, and between 30.18% and 40.3% for the “dot.com era” group allowing us to validate our *hypothesis 1.c*, that the q parameter is significantly different between eras.

Finally, we are not able to validate *hypothesis 2* that technology-driven companies have a significantly different curve than non-technology driven companies of the “dot.com era” group. The significant F-value ($F_{1,96}=339.18$, $p<0.0001$) suggests that there is no difference between the curves, however, due to the nature of the test we cannot be 95% confident that the curves are the same.

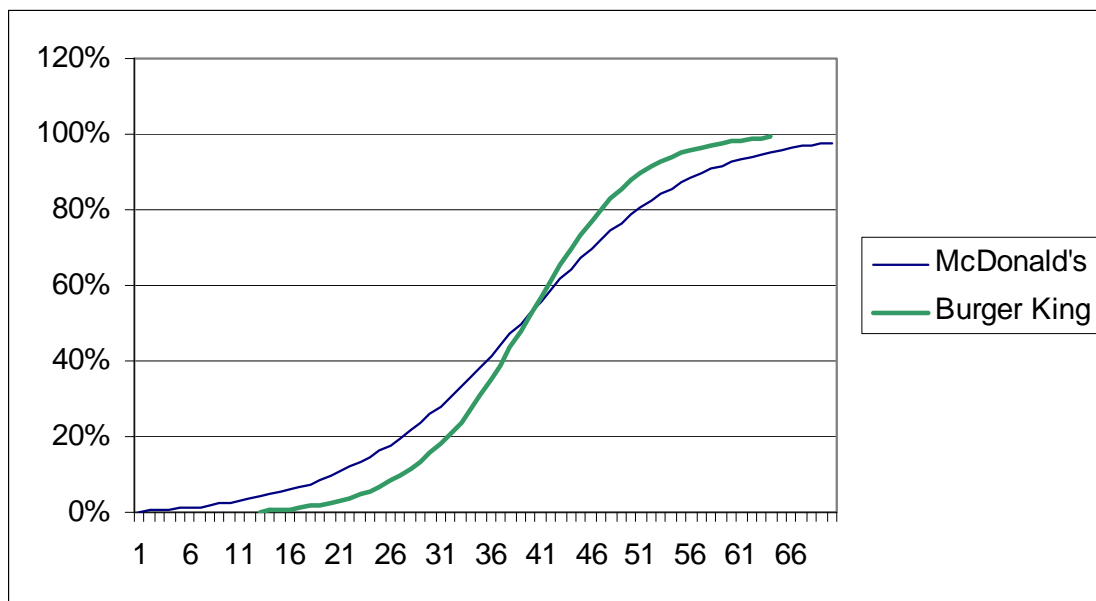


Figure 1. “Franchise Era” fitted diffusion curves.

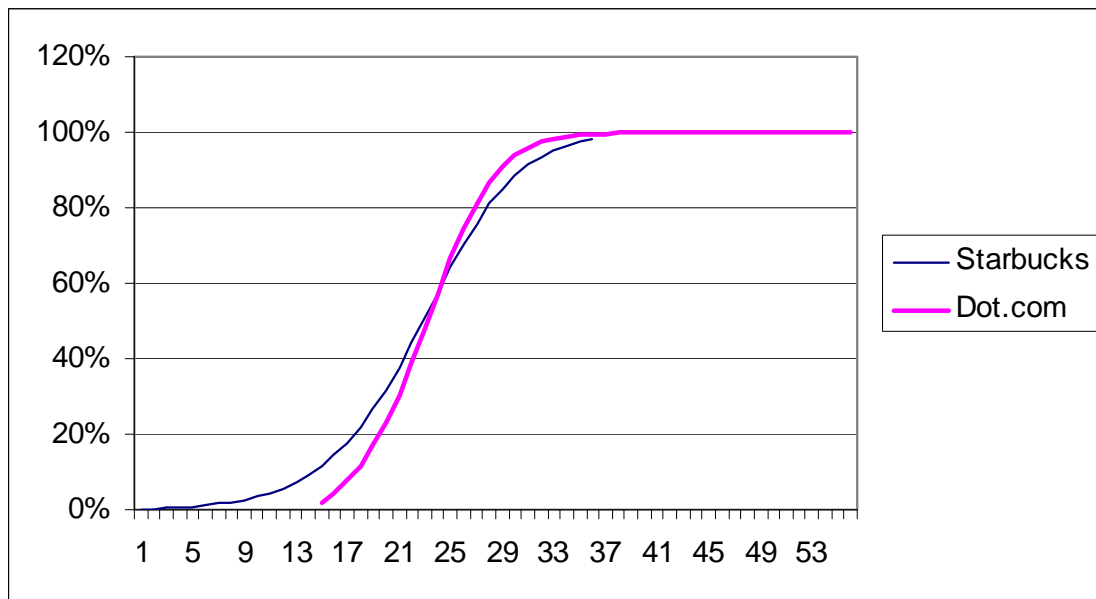


Figure 2. “Dot.com Era” fitted diffusion curves.

Table 2. Individual Companies' parameter estimates.

	p	q	m	$mL95$	$mU95$	$Pseudo-R^2$
<i>“Franchise Era” (1955-1983)</i>						
McDonald's	0.00151	0.1145	15,228	13,284.4	17,171.5	0.439
Burger King	0.00173	0.1782	7,725	4,973.2	10,475.9	0.775
Red Lobster	0.0259	0.1167	719	641.6	796.1	0.33
Holiday Inn Hotels and Resorts	0.0082	0.3201	1,706	1,660.5	1,751.8	0.793
Super 8	0.0016	0.2658	2,027	1,918.3	2,136.3	0.66
<i>“Dotcom Era” (1983-2006)</i>						
Starbucks	0.00097	0.2696	24,210.1	11,768.3	36,651.8	0.871
Olive Garden	0.0409	0.3419	534	495.3	573.2	0.516
Holiday Inn Express	0.0403	0.255	1,581			0.308
Fairfield Inn	0.0193	0.3359	529	495.2	562.7	0.685
Dotcom domain names (.com, .net, .org, .biz, .info, .edu)	0.0189	0.3361	87,053,705			0.279
Cellular Phone (a)	0.003	0.364	209,100,000			0.935
Online Banking (a)	0.0142	0.545	42,900,000			0.812

(a) Aggregate estimated parameters based on Libai et al. (2007).

Table 3. Comparing within Eras curves.

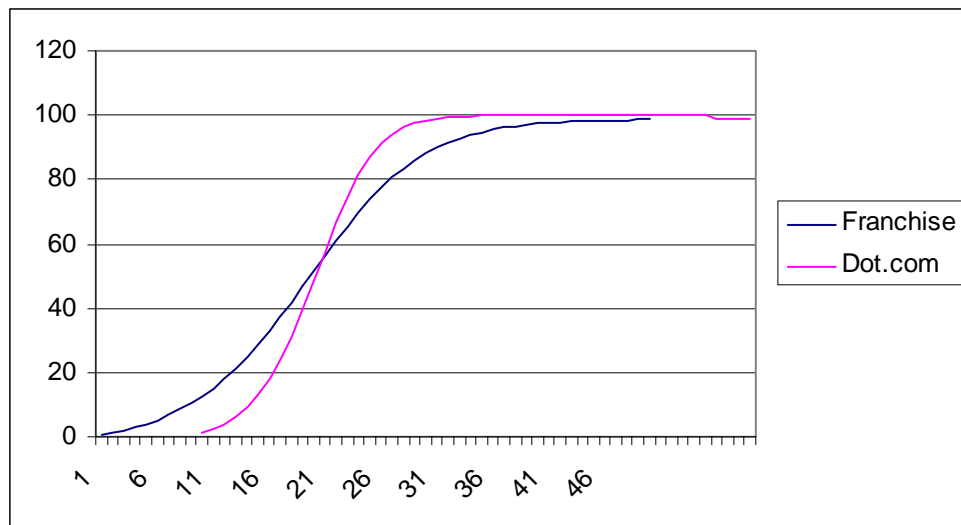
	p	q	$Pseudo-R^2$
<i>“Franchise Era” (1955-1980)</i>			
Restaurants + Hotels	0.00573(a)	0.1853	.754
<i>“Dotcom Era” (1981-2006)</i>			
Restaurants + Hotels + Technology Services	0.0112	0.3321	.53

(a) Parameter is significantly different between treatments ($\alpha=0.05$).

Table 4. Comparing between Eras parameters.

	p	q	$Pseudo-R^2$
<i>“Franchise Era” (1955-1980) + “Dotcom Era” (1981-2006)</i>			
	0.0089(a)	0.2190(a)	.819

(a) Parameter is significantly different between treatments ($\alpha=0.05$).

**Figure 3.** Eras fitted diffusion curves.

DISCUSSION

Our results provide empirical support for the claim that the diffusion speed of service innovation whether technology-driven or not, is significantly different in the parameters since the birth of the Internet.

Although our results do not explain the reason why the Internet seems to act as a force pulling other services, one explanation, expressed as a key feature of the “dot.com era,” is the increase of networking activity fostered by the Internet.

We think that network externalities (Katz and Shapiro, 1985), or small-world networks effects (Watts, 2003; 2007), are the reason why information about opportunities (such as franchise opportunities or stock investment opportunities) are more readily available. The access to web-based trading or web-based companies research also act as a “social multiplier effect” (Van den Bulte & Joshi, 2007) in diffusing the information necessary for the social system to evaluate and eventually adopt an innovation.

Looking at the value of p and q for each Era (Table 3) one can see that the multiplier effect that could be attributed to the “dot.com era” is approximately two. Future research needs to be done to validate that intuitive finding, particularly in trying to incorporate more service companies in the model, and allowing the parameters to have random effects. Using a mixed model will also allow to verify our findings without having to rely on data availability and convenience sampling.

Future research should also look at the fit of the curves to the actual data during the first years of the companies’ life. Whether we look at McDonald’s, Starbucks or the dot.com domain names, they all have in common a long left tail representing the struggle before their exponential growth. However, that left tail is always way under the fitted Bass curve. This implies that companies “catch up” to the fitted curve later, and that, therefore, the speed of diffusion at that point is much greater than the overall speed estimated with the Bass model. Causal factors impacting takeoff of innovation are not part of the Bass model, but could be partially compensated by the use of a Hierarchical Model in a non-linear context (Van den Bulte, 2000).

Another path for a strategy of research is to look into the history of the well diffused companies such McDonald’s or Burger King, and try to determine the factors that could explain and predict the long term market potential. Estimating market potential early on, when only few data points are available, is what most forecasters have to deal with. However, we see that early diffusion curves are different from fitted curves projected from complete series (see Nevers 1972 versus our findings). This “correction for youth” could be estimated allowing more precise market potential estimation that could serve as a basis for company fundraising or budgeting.

It could be quite interesting to look at the dynamic between the growths of these U.S. based companies and their diffusion internationally. When did they start to grow internationally? Was that explained by the monotonic decline locally (passed the 50% penetration point), or was it randomly happening among the companies? Given that the Internet phenomena seems to speed

up diffusion in the U.S. context, it would also be interesting to see if there is a difference between the International development of these companies and their diffusion in the U.S.

There are several implications for management. First, using the proper network to market a franchise has to include a web strategy. Uniform Franchise Offering Circular (UFOC) documents are not as available as 10k reports yet, and franchisor companies have limited information on their web sites. They need to think of franchisees as first-time purchaser of their service. Franchisors need to use the same communication strategy they use with their end-user customer and leverage networks by using the Internet to spread the necessary information.

Second, popular press seems to be relying on executive perception more than diffusion factors when they publish their “most innovative” ranking. This would not be a problem if the companies’ ability to acquire new franchisees or new investors would not rely in part on the “innovativeness” image projected. Companies not present on the ranking list need to assess the pertinence of the list in their funding strategy and need to seek ways to influence the perception of the executives interviewed.

Third, a company can use diffusion curve estimation to forecast future growth. Using aggregate and family curve parameters can be valuable in order to model the need for franchise agreements, locations, or funding in order to fuel the growth. Knowing the inherent speed of diffusion, a company should concentrate on finding the right match between the innovativeness of its offering, and the need present in the mass-market.

CONCLUSION

Our findings provide partial evidence of the “dot.com” effect in the diffusion of service innovations. Diffusion of service innovations, whether technology-driven or not, should be looked at in the context of network externalities. Consumers, including potential franchisees, are connected to a mass of information, and to each other, in a way that seem to multiply by two parameters characterizing most post internet service innovation diffusion curve.

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CULTURE WORKS BOTH WAYS: IMPROVING THE INTEGRATION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

International students who choose to study at an overseas university often do so with preconceived ideas and expectations. Meeting these expectations is sometimes problematic because differences in culture lead to varying models of learning and teaching, resulting in frustration and failure for students and dissatisfaction for teachers. This report investigates the pre-conceptions and expectations of overseas students' before their departure for university and examines where and why misunderstandings occur. The study, which focuses on Asian students (mostly Chinese) traveling to Australia, suggests some explanations for this behaviour and proposes a model that could offer better integration of newly arrived international students.

KEYWORDS: *Cultural Differences; International Students; Learning and Teaching.*

THE BACKGROUND

With the globalization of business and education, Australian university staff and administrative officers are increasingly gaining more experience with, and exposure to, overseas students. Before the 1980s the Australian education sector was largely national and local in orientation with an international development assistance program focusing primarily on Australia's national interests. Today this has been permanently altered through increasing numbers of full-fee paying overseas students creating strong 'market-driven' requirements.

Australia now has the world's highest per capita number of international students. According to the former Assistant Director General of Education at UNESCO, Sir John Daniel, international students comprise 22 per cent of Australia's tertiary students nationwide, while the State of Victoria (the location of this study) had more than 25 per cent of students from overseas (Anonymous, 2004). Education, in recent years, has become Australia's third largest export "commodity".

This increase in overseas students has led to the questioning of the practice of utilizing a 'one size fits all' system of knowledge distribution; a system that may have its weaknesses and inequalities. Consequently a number of questions arise, namely:

- How do overseas students perceive and respond to different values, beliefs, attitudes and preconceptions?
- Why is it that overseas students feel confused, bewildered and frustrated?
- How do these students cope with the unfamiliar requirements and expectations in their new studying environment?
- Are both local staff and overseas students prepared for the different expectations and roles of their academic environments?
- How well do Australian teachers understand overseas students?
- How do they communicate and teach them effectively?

Many overseas students understand English well, although there can be discrepancies between their verbal and written skills. At this level of understanding they have achieved offers of university placement in Australia but, not surprisingly, they continue to behave and perceive education according to the rules of their own culture.

By the time these young adults reach Australia, they have been exposed to and have internalized many basic values and beliefs from their own culture. They have accepted the rules of behavior considered appropriate to their role in various situations and settings, including places of education. For example, many of them have been educated in a system that emphasizes systematic learning from a standard textbook and requires them to complete a lot of homework. Therefore, when they enter the Australian (western) academic environment which encourages a very informal and active interchange between teachers and students, they feel "lost and disoriented". They are not clear about what to do and "have difficulties understanding the protocols, class arrangements, the ways of interacting with staff as well as the assessment criteria, etc". Some even feel "confused and bewildered" or "frustrated, intimidated" and as a result lose confidence.

For example, overseas students from a Chinese background are usually attentive but quiet in class, rarely ask questions and expect teachers to lecture all the time. Despite the teacher's

encouragement, they are usually passive and very reluctant to express opinions or make critical comment. When called upon to speak or participate in discussion some feel embarrassed or even ashamed.

Students, in fact, encounter certain problems at almost every stage from the orientation program onward. Many students never get past the initial stage of shock, annoyance and embarrassment.

Some members of staff may see these students as “slow, lazy or not mature” while students may see staff as “indifferent”, “too casual”, or “irresponsible”.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

A study was undertaken to investigate overseas students’ perceptions and responses to different values, beliefs, and attitudes towards study in Australian tertiary institutions. Specifically the aim of the study was to investigate:

- (1) whether the overseas students are prepared for the different expectations and roles in their new academic environments and,
- (2) what needs to be done to assist their assimilation and transition into effective students/studies at an Australian university.

By identifying expectations of overseas students, factors which influence their expectations and the areas where most misunderstanding occurs, the objective was to develop a model/program better designed to meet the needs of international students who are entering an Australian university for the first time. A model that could lead to improved academic interactions between staff and overseas students and more effective learning and teaching.

A questionnaire was developed that focused on overseas students’ perceptions and preparations for studying in Australia. In the questionnaire more than 30 questions were listed focusing on students’ understanding of Australian universities’ learning-teaching practices, class activities, expectations of teacher-student interaction and study methods.

Before the questionnaires were distributed, introduction classes, informal discussions and group activities were organized in the 2nd semester, 2005. These were designed to provide students with background information. Two hundred questionnaires in total were then distributed among students, and 164 were returned and valid for analysis. Since the majority of the students involved were of Chinese background, a questionnaire with Chinese translation was provided for a better and more accurate understanding. An 82% response rate reveals and confirms a very strong level of interest in the topic by overseas students.

The compiling and initial analysis of the questionnaires clearly supported the researchers’ original proposition/hypothesis. There was an obvious breakdown in communication between

teachers and students that appeared to originate from a misunderstanding of their respective cultural outlooks and perceptions.

For example, Chinese students continue to behave in a way that is acceptable within Chinese culture and the Chinese educational environment but this is quite different from the Australian way. That is, in spite of their adequate language skills they continue to behave and perceive education according to the rules of their own culture as their knowledge of appropriate local cultural patterns does not match their language skills.

A DISCUSSION OF CULTURAL COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Unfortunately, until recently, for many staff and students, cultural awareness was not been a high priority within their learning and teaching. In the last two years, there have been many reports and publications in Chinese media focusing on the frustrations/bewilderment/problems overseas students' experience. Even worse, tragic fatalities have happened on campuses in Canada, Australia and the United States of America.

What is the basis of the breakdown in the communication? Why are these students unable to fit in as smoothly or as quickly as hoped despite a reasonable command of the English language?

In recent times more research has been done to examine the cultural attitudes underpinning linguistic communication and culturally appropriate manners. People have realized that "Language competence alone is not enough to communicate successfully, for language itself is but a code which functions within the framework of its culture" (Ronowicz, 1995, p.1).

It is therefore necessary to understand properly the cultural reasons for a situation that results in overseas students (the majority in this study Chinese students) being usually passive, quiet in class and reluctant to participate in class discussions.

Hofstede's (1984) research findings on inter-cultural communication are very useful in trying to understand the situation, especially his analysis on cultural differences. Through his work, it is possible to interpret further the hidden values that guide the behavior of these students.

Value Dimensions

In 1984, Hofstede, the Dutch researcher, published his well-known cross-culture research on business culture. His research, conducted in over forty countries, identified four value dimensions, against which he measured people's attitude and behavior. The dimensions are:

- individualism-collectivism,
- power distance,
- uncertainty avoidance and
- masculinity-femininity.

He suggests these are the basis for much cultural variation and significant in interpreting cultural differences. In this study, the dimensions that are most applicable are the power distance and the individualism-collectivism dimensions.

Power Distance (PD) is the dimension concerned with a person's attitude to authority. In a high PD corporate culture, there is a significant distance between the levels in the hierarchy. The company in which subordinates hold their bosses in awe and where the bosses like it that way, has a high PD culture. The organization in which a team member is able to contradict the team leader in public has a low PD culture (Pfeifer, Amila Duka & Havnes, 2003). With Individualism-collectivism, we are interested in the extent to which individuals feel and are encouraged to be independent or interdependent.

Some of the characteristics of those cultures that value individualism are:

- an 'I' consciousness prevails;
- competition rather than cooperation is encouraged;
- every individual has the right to his or her private property, thoughts and opinions.

These cultures stress individual initiative and achievement, and they value individual decision-making. "People's personal goals take priority over their allegiance to groups like the family or the employer. The loyalty of individualists to a given group is very weak;" (Samovar, 1995, p.89).

Although Hofstede's research was conducted in the workplace at business organisations, it nevertheless provides a model for exploring the cultural differences in the educational setting. It helps us to explain the underlying cultural factors that have an impact on people's behavior.

Characteristics of Communication in Chinese Culture.

Since the majority of the overseas students are from Asia especially from China, it is therefore appropriate to explore further the characteristics of communication in Chinese culture.

Obviously China and Australia are two quite different countries. China is, if we follow Hofstede's analysis, typical of a culture that emphasizes collectivism, conformity and respect for authority. Chinese, students cannot avoid being influenced by these ideas and other age-old traditions at schools, at home and through social encounters.

Chinese culture has specific rules and norms for everyday social interaction. For example:

- age brings seniority (i.e. the higher one is in the generation hierarchy, the more respect, prestige and privileges one is given);
- parents, teachers and bosses must all be obeyed;
- subordinates expect to be told what to do;
- individualism is taboo (there is some change in recent years with the development of the economy);
- relationships are more important than tasks.

The primary functions of communication in Chinese culture, Gao and Ting-Toomey (1998) argue, “are to maintain existing relationships among individuals, to reinforce role and status differences”. Lewis (1997) in his book “When Cultures Collide” summarizes Chinese values and the basic teaching of Confucius, as including:

- filial piety, modesty,;
- the observance of the unequal relationships;
- one must behave in a virtuous manner towards others. Everybody’s “face” must be maintained;
- people are members of a group, not individuals and the family is the prototype of all social organizations.

Collectively these provide the context for Chinese educational ideas and pedagogical values.

Pedagogical/Educational Perspectives

Not all cultures educate people in the same way. Each culture bases its educational endeavor on a set of different assumptions and beliefs. Teachers’ and students’ attitudes and beliefs about education will inevitably influence their interaction with one another.

The Australian and Chinese cultures’ attitudes towards learning conflict in several important ways including philosophical understanding, attitudes, interpretation on the nature of learning and teaching, role perceptions and the responsibilities of teachers and of students. Attitudes may affect the way we perceive, and may prevent us from approving and accepting things as well as rejecting things. In order to understand attitudes towards learning we need to see better the relations between the teacher and the learner, and the role and the expectation from both sides.

Chinese Educational Ideas

Chinese perceptions and attitudes towards the learning process have something in common with traditional Western attitudes. Learning involves mastering a body of knowledge. This knowledge is presented by the teacher and the student is expected to understand and reproduce that knowledge later on.

However, learning in Chinese eyes is fundamentally considered as “bitter/suffering”. Students are expected to endure under arduous conditions and to make painstaking efforts. Learning has never been associated with ease and comfort. There are always anecdotes, fables and stories, dating from ancient times to the present, to remind learners of this.

Chinese believe learning is a process in which learners can refine and temper themselves both mentally and physically by remembering certain knowledge. It is considered essential for the learners to follow closely the teacher’s instruction for the mastery of a body of knowledge. Deductive presentation therefore tends to be favored over inductive.

This situation certainly strengthens the teacher's position as the only one who can guide and help in this process. The teachers have already mastered the knowledge and have been trained professionally to hand it on to the learners. Students who follow the teachers' words receive encouragement.

Chinese attitudes to the teaching-learning process appear rarely to emphasize or encourage challenge, critical thinking, or even creativity. Whereas encouragement of these aspects is generally believed to be one of the key aims of Western education (Brick, 1991, p.154).

In Western countries, enjoyment, curiosity, adventure, excitement, exploration and inquiry are emphasized and encouraged and have been since Dewey in the early 20th century.

Western Educational Ideas

Both Chinese and Western educationalists/educators believe education and learning have an important role to play in passing on knowledge from one generation to the next. But the West also emphasizes another important role, that is, to provide people with skills that enable them to analyze, diagnose and question (Hills, 1982, p.137).

One definition of learning is that "it is important to realize that learning need not be correct, deliberate, or overt" (Thomas, 1979). Some basic parameters on how the west actually sees the process of learning include:

- learners need to be actively involved with their own learning;
- learning is achieved through initiative and creativity;
- learning needs to be seen as relevant and significant;
- learning should be linked, where possible, to existing knowledge and understanding;
- learning should be reflected on;
- learning should be presented in logical order;
- learning should be sufficiently challenging

In putting this notion into practice, it is important that the education/learning process should involve teaching people to think analytically; this may lead to questioning many things and developing a critical attitude to society.

This is obviously different from Chinese traditional ideas. Critical thinking does not receive as much attention, nor is it particularly encouraged. Additionally, authority in the educational environment (the teachers' authority) may, under no circumstances, be challenged.

A Teacher's Role and Teaching Style and Teacher-Student expectations

Traditionally the teacher in China is typically viewed as a leader with absolute right and the person in control. Some common traditional Chinese beliefs are:

- Since the teacher has the knowledge students should listen quietly in class while the teacher lectures.
- Challenging a teacher's opinion or disagreeing with the teacher is a sign of disrespect.
- Memorizing a lot of information is more important than learning how to think critically and creatively in studying;
- Textbook knowledge, learning and written work is more important than discussion, debating and oral work.

Teachers in Australia however have a quite different set of assumptions to those and some which obviously conflict with those of Chinese students and their teachers.

Table 1 provides a comparison of two different styles of teaching. The characteristics presented in this diagram can be found in all educational systems and in all cultures. Some learning strategies, however, are given greater importance than others according to the context. The context determines the preferred learning strategy.

Table 1. A comparison of class teaching styles.

Style A	Style B
Class teaching style and methodology	
(for both t & s). Discussion, role play, debating, survey, project, problem solving, simulation, improvisation; pair and group work; more collaborative learning is encouraged.	(while t) lecturing, (s) listening attentively, (t) writing on the board and (s) copying from the textbooks, (s) memorizing, reciting and receiving,
Teacher's role	
As a team member, partner, activities organizer, facilitator, guide	As an authority, dominant master, supervisor, authoritarian, director, boss, superior
Student's role	
Active, discovering, contributor of knowledge and information, input valued; Are encouraged to express, to communicate, to argue	Passive role, receiver of knowledge, performer under teacher's directions; be obedient; ready to accept and to show proper respect; Not encouraged to challenge
Note: t = teacher, s = student	

Because of their individual economic and political milieu Australia and China have different understandings about the nature, form and practice of education, particularly the learning and teaching. This in turn, influences different learning strategies and the assumptions of the expectations between teachers and students about their respective roles and responsibilities.

This is also why many Chinese students do not enjoy the classroom freedom, and the invitation to put forward their own initiatives or opinions. They prefer to follow a routine. As these students are used to traditional Chinese expectations and the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, they "tend to feel uneasy in a more egalitarian communicative learning environment and find it difficult to suspend their beliefs to engage in light-hearted learning activities on the one hand and critical self-expression on the other" (Hu, 2002, p.100).

A MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' ORIENTATION

The objective of this section is to translate the survey findings and feed-back received into practical outcomes to encourage an improved understanding between overseas students and academic staff.

Awareness

Many international students who are from Asian countries have already been socialised in their traditional culture. In these cultures conformity, collectivism, obedience, deference to authority and modesty are well accepted. Such students take time to adopt the new rules appropriate to a different cultural place in which individualism, personal initiative, assertiveness and differences are emphasised and encouraged.

The findings of this survey have clearly proved that most international students are lacking in awareness of the differences in academic culture, particularly knowledge of the expectation from Australian academics that the students be self-directed, self-motivated, critical thinking students.

Even those students who are more competent in the English language have not realised that successful communication “depends not only on phonetic and grammatical correctness, but also on an understanding of the context when, and where and how things should be said or whether they should be said at all.”(Ronowicz, 1995).

No doubt the lack of awareness and sensitivity to differences in culture, particularly in learning and teaching practice and teacher-student expectations, has an impact on almost every aspect of academic life for both the universities and the international students.

Effectiveness

Another issue revealed in the survey is the level of effectiveness of many current supporting programs offered by universities. This does not imply that these programs are not helpful, but the findings clearly suggest that further work needs to be done to improve international students' awareness of, and participation in, these services and in particular their willingness to use these services. An important aspect of this is for academic staff to be attuned to support programs as a teaching strategy.

As previously indicated, even those students who are aware of the existing supporting programs/services are reluctant to seek help when they have problems. The reason for this is that they must face language, psychological and cultural barriers. For many international students, especially those from Asian countries, openly asking for help or approaching staff or counselors for advice can be seen as a sign of ‘weakness’ and thus ‘loss of face’.

From this point of view, a language exchange program offered by some universities whereby they facilitate the pairing of local and international students for language learning is

more effective and accessible. It provides concrete help in the forms of friendship and advice. In students' eyes both sides involved are 'equal' ensuring that both students remain in their comfort zones.

Similarly there is some evidence that teaching effectiveness can be improved not only from greater awareness by students but also by improving the skills and training available to academic staff. The issues faced by international students are often similar to issues faced by local students from migrant backgrounds.

A Compulsory Orientation Program

Therefore new strategies with emphasis on improving the awareness of the cultural differences should be developed. This method will enhance the ability to communicate with students from other cultures and between staff and international students. Some of these strategies require self-examination, a more conscientious effort from both sides in communication and more commitment from both sides to develop their own approach to cross-cultural sensitivity.

Many international students, for various reasons, fail to attend orientation programs. However, given the importance noted by Hellsten (2002, p.3) that transition involves "the shifting...and unfamiliar learning environments" it is reasonable and in the interest of both the institution and the international students to make faculty/school based orientation programs a compulsory activity.

Therefore the following recommendations and a suggested model of a faculty-based orientation for international students in which international students are required to participate in a 2-3 day workshops has been developed (Figure 1). This proposed model is consistent with some existing orientation programs and pre departure information but is expanded and enhanced to facilitate international students' adjustment to the Australian learning environment. In summary, the model emphasizes the awareness of cultural differences in academic environments, active involvement in dealing with the differences and continuing follow up of these activities to identify strengths and weaknesses.

It has the intention of:

- expanding students' knowledge of the local academic culture and requirements,
- drawing their attention to the different expectations and study strategies,
- familiarising the students with and improving understanding of, academic requirements,
- enhancing appreciation of the value of the university support facilities and programs and encouraging students to be actively involved in them.

Stage One: Finding out the Differences

On gathering and working through the collected research data it was apparent that the initial orientation programs was essential and that all new international students need to be

involved to be aware of the differences in academic cultures. This face-to-face program delivery provides a good opportunity for international students to interact with staff and local students in a social setting.

To facilitate this, it is suggested that there be a two-step process:

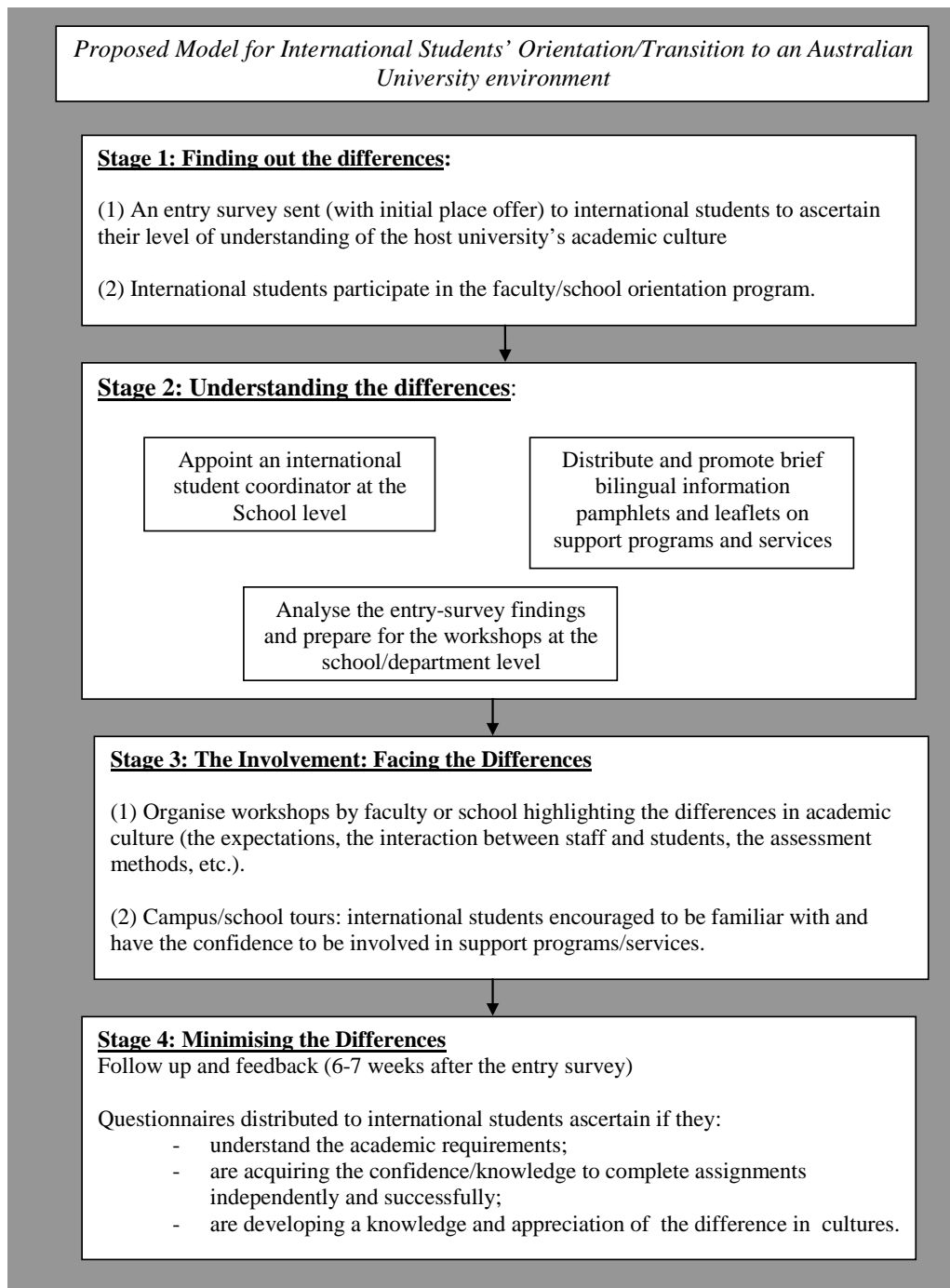


Figure 1. A model for improving international students' awareness of academic culture in an Australian university.

(1) With the University's place-offer and welcome letter, each international student will be required to complete a brief "university-entry-survey" and return it with their acceptance of the university's offer. The form will assist the University to find out students' pre-knowledge and understanding of the academic culture and tradition in Australian universities. (See the example in Figure 2.)

Suggested topics for the entry survey could include:

- Questions addressing the differences international students perceive between their home university and an Australian university in terms of curriculum, teacher-student relationships, teaching methods, learning requirements.
- Questions that speak to their understanding of class conduct and homework requirements. For example size of classes, interaction in classes, after class reading, tutorials and workshops.
- Questions relating to their understanding of the host university's assessment requirements and expectations in comparison to their home country.
- Questions that explore their knowledge of the support programs offered by the host university and their attitude towards using them.

(2) All the international students will be notified of the university's commencement orientation exercises and specifically requested to participate in (as a minimum) the program offered by their faculty/school.

Stage Two: Understanding the Differences and Improving the Awareness

A university may have a number of programs and facilities to ensure international students have a positive experience and are able to complete their study/degree within the appropriate period. This research has revealed that the awareness of these services is often very poor. Therefore, it is suggested that:

- (1) A coordinator for international students in each faculty/school is appointed. Their role will be to mentor and assist students to make the adjustment. Having a 'one-stop-shop' where the students form a relationship with a staff member overcomes some of the problems associated with their embarrassment at having to ask for help. The recommendation is that an academic or teacher holds this position.
- (2) The university produce, distribute and *promote* brief, bilingual information leaflets introducing university support programs and the services available to international students. Frequently these gap hereof pamphlets already exist but they are often lost in the plethora of information given to students on commencement. They need to be actively highlighted and promoted to students (and possibly issued more than once).
- (3) Information pamphlets illustrating the differences in learning-teaching strategy and skills in different academic environments should be published to introduce and explain the differences between foreign and local academic culture.

- (4) International student coordinators analyse the entry-survey findings and prepare general introduction/orientation seminars for international students in conjunction with faculty/school support units. These seminars will have a focus on the student's misunderstandings, expectations and questions.

Stage Three: The Involvement: Facing the Differences;

This stage addresses the development of the awareness of the services and the problem of overcoming the language/psychological barriers that dissuade students from using the services. This is of critical importance because, as the research survey has illustrated, the academic culture international students are accustomed to is very different from those in Australian universities.

International students are encouraged to be involved in the international student orientation program and workshops organized by individual faculty/school/department staff to experience the group activities and class learning-teaching process. At these faculty/school specific workshops, conducted by academic staff, besides introducing the general learning-teaching activities (such as lectures and tutorials, workshops, discussions, literature review exercises, presentations, group/team work, library research/study, assignment completion and assessment procedures), the following needs to be highlighted and illustrated:

- students are expected to work on their own, to read and construct their own ideas, especially at the postgraduate level;
- they should be independent and motivated learners;
- staff are there to facilitate students' work/study, not to give instructions about each step of the study.

In the workshop it would be wise to emphasize that students should be prepared for this. They should be encouraged to ask staff or fellow students if they are unsure of what is expected.

<p style="text-align: center;">International Student Entry Survey</p> <p><i>Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale 1 to 5, where 1 represents Strongly Disagree and 5 represents Strongly Agree</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Teachers are the authority in class.2. Students should be quiet in class and listen to the teachers at all times.3. A teacher is someone who has all the correct answers.4. It is more important to memorize what the teacher says in class than to have your own ideas.5. If you have an opinion that differs from the teachers you should speak out in class.6. Disagreeing with a teacher is a sign of disrespect.7. If you have difficulties in your study you can ask and get help from the university.8. The University has many supporting programs and services for international students.9. A university student should be a self-directed, self-motivated, critically thinking student.10. Students should always be obedient and accept whatever the teacher says.
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Figure 2. Draft Entry Survey – a sample of suggested questions.

Library tours and school tours should be included in the workshop activities. It is crucial for the international students to know all the facilities /services/supporting programs and international student coordinators in their faculty/school/department. For example, they must be familiar with and be confident to use the library, to search the catalogue and the internet for appropriate resources. Students should also be strongly encouraged to participate in the academic skills programs organized by academic support personnel where available.

Stage Four: Minimizing the Differences: Following up and feedback:

Six or seven weeks after commencement the international students will be required to respond to a follow up survey to determine whether they are now able to:

- fully understand the academic requirements of their course;
- confidently complete assignments independently and successfully;
- develop a knowledge and appreciation of different cultures;
- add to their repertoire, new learning skills and techniques;
- and have increased their confidence as independent and effective learners.

The international students' coordinator in each faculty /school/ department should carry out this survey. Faculty offices may then coordinate the implementation to acquire feedback from international students in different schools and across the university to determine how successful their commencement programs are, and to establish whether the new international students are fitting into their new academic environment and adjusting to the university learning-teaching requirements. This information will then inform the program for the next international student intake.

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The other dimension, touched on at the beginning of this report, is the misunderstanding between local staff and international students. This needs to be researched further especially from the staff's perspective as there is a need for both staff and students to further their understanding of each other's learning-teaching patterns.

Many members of staff accept that the concept of cross-cultural communication needs to be addressed particularly in the context of the increasing number of overseas students. They need to appreciate what they take for granted and understand their own cultural assumptions, as well as those of the international students whom they teach. They need to be aware and to recognize the cultural characteristics that appear to predominate in Asian students. Further, staff development needs to address the requirements of teaching in an international context and achieving success for the overall benefit of the university.

Therefore a new research project should be instigated to:

- provide a more theoretical, empirical and contextualized account of the reality of daily learning-teaching interaction between local staff and overseas students, particularly Chinese students;
- help overseas students learn more effectively and have better understanding of another culture;
- guide sustained future advancement of the export of Australian education.

CONCLUSION

International students deciding to study at an overseas university are a common phenomena. Many Asian students choose to attend western universities to complete their tertiary education, Australia being no exception. This experience is not always as positive as perhaps students and teachers may have expected. International students can encounter problems at almost every stage from the orientation program onward with some students never overcoming the initial stage of shock, annoyance and embarrassment; the consequences both psychologically and academically can be dire.

This study examines the issues and experiences encountered by Asian students (in particular Chinese students) when undertaking study at an Australian university and finds cultural differences, leading to misunderstanding, are often to blame for these unsatisfactory outcomes and frustrations. The study advances some reasons as to why this occurs.

Building on this knowledge the report concludes with a proposal for a model that could offer improved integration to newly arrived international students; a model that it is hoped will better prepare these students for life in Australia and at university and improve the academic interaction between teacher and student.

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DIFFERENCES IN TRAVEL BEHAVIORS BETWEEN BABY BOOMERS, GENERATION X'ERS, AND GENERATION Y'ERS

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ABSTRACT

Demographics are frequently the first criterion used in marketing decisions that involve product characteristics and features, personal selling strategies and advertising. For consumer marketers and researchers, it has been argued that no demographic characteristic is more important than age (Roberts & Manolis, 2000). Three potential important age cohorts, representing three separate generations are baby boomers, generation X'ers and generation Y'ers. The baby boomer generation is defined as members of the US population born between 1946-1964. Generation X is defined as members of the US population born between 1965-1976. Generation Y is defined as members of the US population born between 1977-1994. The data for this study was from a broader study, analyzing the travel behaviors of both current and future markets for the State of Texas. One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post-hoc test were performed to determine if there were significant differences in the level of importance of each of the information sources, as perceived by the three groups. The same methods were used to determine the differences on preferred activities and factors which influence trip decision. Analysis revealed that information sources were rated significantly different between the three groups. Respondents were additionally asked what activities they like to do while on a leisure trip, and ANOVA revealed significant differences between activities. Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of various destination attributes and results indicated that each group of respondents evaluated the importance of each factor differently.

KEYWORDS: *Baby Boomers; Generation X; Generation Y; Travel Behaviors.*

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past few decades, tourism marketers have recognized the need to target homogenous components of a heterogeneous market rather than the market as a whole. This strategy is called “segmentation.” (Pennington-Gray, Fridgen, & Stynes, 2003). Market segmentation is a technique used to identify different visitor types and groups with the goal of predicting who will respond favorably to a particular promotion program (Harmon, Webster, & Weyenberg, 1999).

Demographics are frequently the first criterion used in marketing decisions that involve product characteristics and features, personal selling strategies and advertising. For consumer marketers and researchers, it has been argued that no demographic characteristic is more important than age (Roberts & Manolis, 2000). Although such variables as education, income, gender, occupation, family lifecycle, social class, place of residence, and marital status have all been suggested to influence perceptions and images, age appears to be a major determinant of image and to have an affect on travel behaviors. For example, Nickel and Wertheimer (1979) studied the effects of age, education, occupation, income, marital status, and size of the family on consumer images of drugstores and found that age was the only variable affecting the process.

Three potential important age cohorts, representing three separate generations are baby boomers, generation X’ers and generation Y’ers. The baby boomer generation is defined as members of the US population born between 1946-1964 and comprises the largest single generation of American (Mitchell, 1995). Due to its massive size, this generation has had, and will continue to have an enormous influence on the U.S. economy (Roberts & Manolis, 2000). Generation X is defined as members of the US population born between 1965-1976 and consists of approximately 49.3 million consumers which comprises some 17 percent of the US population (Reynolds, 2004). Generation Y is defined as members of the US population born between 1977-1994 (Harmon, Webster, & Weyenberg, 1999), and include approximately 60 million U.S. citizens (Newborne & Kerwin, 1999). These three groups represent large segments of opportunity for marketers. The baby boomer generation is important because of its size (76 million), and dispensable income. Generation X is entering their peak-earning years and are future business travelers. According to D.K. Shifflet & Associates, generation X is already the most free-spending of leisure travelers and outspend baby boomers on trips involving a hotel stay. In 2004, generation X’ers spent roughly \$1,297 per trip per person, compared with baby boomers’ \$1,155 (McMahon, 2005). Generation Y has the biggest spending potential since teenagers currently spend an estimated \$153 billion a year on everything from computers to cars to clothes (Brand, 2000) and they have tremendous potential for becoming lifetime consumers (Wolburg & Pokrywczynski, 2001).

Literature from marketing shows that baby boomers want more input and control of the buying process and that marketing strategies need to tailor their message directly to the aging baby boomer generation (Kahle, 1995; Kass, 1996). Generation X is extremely sophisticated about media, although TV is the main source of advertising to this group, a condition that confounds the decision process for selecting the promotion medium that can best reach this target market (Freeman, 1995). Unlike previous age groups, Generation Y has been acculturated into an environment that provides more opportunities and reasons to shop than ever before. Additionally,

TV and the Internet, as well as the more traditional catalogue based shopping forms offer additional consumption opportunities. Generation Y'ers have been socialized into shopping as a form of leisure, and they spend more time in the mall than other generation groups. It has led researchers to believe shopping is an important activity for this group when choosing a destination (Martin & Turley, 2004).

Because each generation has its own character, it is important to consider how each generation behaves in terms of information search behavior, preferred activities, and their perception of destination characteristics. The literature reveals numerous studies on the travel behaviors of seniors and baby boomers. Yet, there is a lack of studies investigating generation X and Y, and few studies have made comparisons between baby boomers, generation X'ers and generation Y'ers (Bakewell & Mitchell, 2003; Harmon, Webster, & Weyenberg, 1999; Pennington-Gray, Fridgen, & Stynes, 2003). Opperman (1995) suggested that cohort analysis is needed to examine changes in travel behavior. Thus, the object of this study is to investigate and compare the differences in travel behaviors among the three most influential generation groups.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study was from a broader study, analyzing the travel behaviors of both current and future markets for the State of Texas. The most recent and relatively stable two years' (2005-2006) of data were merged and only variables relevant to the current study were used. The sample for analysis (n= 3,458) was respondents, age 25 or older, who had taken a leisure out-of-state trip in the last 24 months or was planning a trip in the next 24 months. Since respondents had to be age 25 or older to be included in the data utilized, only a portion of generation Y was sampled in this study.

One-way ANOVA and Tukey's post-hoc test were performed to determine if there were significant differences in the level of importance of each of the information sources, as perceived by the three groups. The same methods were used to determine the differences on preferred activities and factors which influence trip decision.

FINDINGS

The sample for this study consisted of 37.4 percent males and 62.6 percent females and more than half of the respondents (52.3%) had an annual household income of \$35,000 to \$99,999. More than three quarters (78.3%) of the respondents were Caucasians, two thirds (67.4%) were employed full time and a majority (70.0%) were married. Baby boomers accounted for 62.4 percent (n=2,158) of the respondents, Generation X'ers accounted for 28.4 percent (n= 982), and Generation Y'ers accounted for 9.2 percent (n=318) of the sample.

Respondents were asked to rate the importance of 11 information sources when planning an out-of-state leisure trip among destinations where 1 means not at all important and 5 means very important. ANOVA was used to test for differences between means of the responses to the importance of information sources across generational subgroups. Analysis revealed that 9 of the

11 information sources were rated significantly different between the three groups. To examine individual differences between groups, Tukey's post-hoc test was utilized. Results found that Generation X and generation Y evaluated phone access to travel counselors, travel packages including transportation and lodging, and price discounts and coupons more important than baby boomers. Generation Y evaluated a central reservation number for flights, hotels, and car rentals more important than baby boomers. Generation Y evaluated a calendar of events and information from friends and relatives more important than baby boomers. Baby boomers evaluated newspapers more important than Generation X. Generation Y evaluated TV/Radio broadcasts more important than baby boomers.

Respondents were additionally asked what activities they like to do while on a leisure trip, and ANOVA revealed significant differences between activities. To examine individual differences between groups, Tukey's post-hoc test was utilized. Results found that fewer baby boomers participated in amusement/theme park activities than both generation X and Y and there was significantly more baby boomers participating in visiting museums than both generation X and Y. There were more baby boomers participating in golfing and tennis than generation X. There were more baby boomers participating in hunting and fishing than both generation X and Y. There was significantly more generation Y participating in night clubs and dancing activities than baby boomers. There were more baby boomers sightseeing in cities and visiting historical places than both generation X and Y.

Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of various destination attributes on a 5-point scale. Results indicated that each group of respondents evaluated the importance of each factor differently. To examine individual differences between groups, Tukey's post-hoc test was utilized. Results found that baby boomers evaluated beaches, amusement park/ theme parks, spectator sports such as baseball, basketball, and football as less important destination attributes when choosing a destination than generation X and Y. Generation Y thought having big cities in a destination was more important for them than Generation X and baby boomers. Generation Y evaluated activities like tennis and golf and weather more important than baby boomers. Baby boomers evaluated good highway as more important for them than generation X. Baby boomers evaluated historical sites and western image more important than generation X and Y. Baby boomers evaluated museum and pretty scenery more important than generation X. Generation Y evaluated shopping opportunities more than baby boomers.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

This study explored the differences in each group's use of different sources of information, participation of activities, and the importance of characteristics for a destination to possess. The findings of this study may provide insightful information for destination marketing organizations to target the preferred visitors more effectively and efficiently based on age differences. It is very important for destination marketing organizations to understand how baby boomers, generation X and Generation Y respond differently to promotions and behave differently in the tourism context. To target baby boomers more effectively, destination marketing managers should place more advertising messages on newspaper and emphasize on the aspects of museum, hunting/fishing, and historical places since research results revealed that

more baby boomers participated in these activities and also showed importance on these attributes when choosing a leisure vacation destination. If generation X is the preferred market, destination marketing managers should place more advertising strategies at travel counselors, travel packages, price discount/coupons and emphasize the uniqueness of its beautiful beaches, amusement/theme parks, and spectator sports since results showed these attributes were more essential to generation X when choosing a leisure vacation destination. To target generation Y more efficiently, promotion messages should be focused more on calendar of events, a central reservation numbers for booking hotels, flights, and car rental, word of mouth, and TV/radio broadcast and stressed the importance on night clubs, big cities themes, and shopping opportunities.

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A COMPARISON OF THE COGNITIVE DESTINATION IMAGE OF RESIDENT AND NON-RESIDENT TOURISTS BASED ON IMPORTANCE-PERFORMANCE APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

State tourism marketing organizations have generally focused their marketing and advertising efforts on out-of-state markets rather than in-state markets. In the post-September 11 environment and the following economic down-turn, reduced travel activities and dramatic increases in fuel prices many destination marketing organizations began to develop and implement promotion campaigns targeted toward their own residents (Knopf & Andereck, 2006). Thus, destination marketers now have a need to know whether in-state residents perceive the importance and performance of destination characteristics differently than out of state tourists and how to tailor advertising messages to each of these groups of visitors. Therefore, the local tourism segment has become a more salient market for many tourism destinations. Monthly household telephone surveys were conducted on Texas travel marketing awareness and literature conversion from January-December 2006. This study is based on this dataset and only variables relevant to the current study were used. The analytic framework of importance-performance analysis (IPA) was used to measure the perceived destination image (cognitive dimensions). To detect whether resident and non-resident tourists had different perceptions on each cognitive image factor, ANOVA was performed to identify significant differences in image factors. Significant differences ($p < .05$) between resident and non-resident tourists were found in the importance of destination image factors. ANOVA further revealed differences in perceived performance of destination image of residents versus non-resident tourists. Results showed that residents perceived all five of the image factors (quality of experience, attractions, culture & museum, entertainment, and nature based outdoor activities) performed better than non-resident tourists.

KEYWORDS: *Cognitive image; Destination; Importance-Performance Analysis; Non-resident; Resident.*

INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism has been utilized as a driving force for regional development. Successful tourism can increase a destination's tourist receipts, income, employment and government revenues (Chen & Tsai, 2007). In order to receive these benefits, destinations need to attract tourists to their destination in hopes that they will recommend the destination to others.

Further, unlike other tangible products, tourists are not able to "test drive" and try a destination before making a choice (Eby, Molnar, & Cai, 1999; Gartner, 1989). Therefore, the decision involves greater risk and information search, and depends on tourists' mental construct of what a potential destination has to offer relative to their needs (Cai, 2002). As a result, destination image is a critical stimulus in motivating the tourist. It is likely to be a critical element in destination choice process, irrespective of whether or not the image is truly representative of what a place has to offer (Um & Crompton, 1990).

State tourism marketing organizations have generally focused their marketing and advertising efforts on out-of-state markets rather than in-state markets. In the post-September 11 environment and the following economic down-turn, reduced travel activities and dramatic increases in fuel prices many destination marketing organizations began to develop and implement promotion campaigns targeted toward their own residents (Knopf & Andereck, 2006). Thus, destination marketers now have a need to know whether in-state residents perceive the importance and performance of destination characteristics differently than out of state tourists and how to tailor advertising messages to each of these groups of visitors. Therefore, the local tourism segment has become a more salient market for many tourism destinations.

Previous research shows near home visitors are much more likely to have visited the vacation site during the previous 12 months, while distant visitors stayed longer and spent more at the destination (Etzel & Woodside, 1982). Research has further indicated that near home visitors are more likely to become repeat travelers if they are satisfied. Fakeye and Crompton (1991) tested the image differences of visitors to the Lower Rio Grande Valley based on their origin of residence and found out that short-distance visitors rated infrastructure, food and friendly people higher than respondents who traveled longer distances.

Most destination image formation research has incorporated sociodemographic variables as conventional consumer characteristics influencing perceptions of objectives, products, and destinations (Friedmann & Lessig, 1986; Stabler, 1990; Um & Crompton, 1990; Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). Fisk (1961) and Sheth (1983) also recognized that sociodemographic characteristics as determinants of consumers' cognitive image formation.

Little research has investigated differences between the perceived importance and performance of destination characteristics of residents versus non-resident tourists. The purpose of this paper is to present results of inquiry into the perceptual differences between out-of-state tourists and in-state residents on an overnight or longer trip within or to Texas.

METHODOLOGY

Monthly household telephone surveys were conducted on Texas travel marketing awareness and literature conversion from January-December 2006. A total of 2,412 Non-Texan households and 804 Texan households were interviewed each month on an ongoing basis. This study is based on this dataset and only variables relevant to the current study were used. The survey sample was designed to select respondents, age 25 or older, who had taken a leisure trip in the last 24 months or was planning a trip in the next 24 months. The analytic framework of importance-performance analysis (IPA) was used to measure the perceived destination image

(cognitive dimensions). Respondents were asked to rate the importance of cognitive attributes related to the state of Texas (26 items were the same on both surveys) using a 5-point scale anchored at 1 = not important and 5 = very important. In a separate section, respondents were asked to indicate the perceived performance of each across the same attributes. With the use of this data, an importance-performance analysis (IPA) could be conducted, via exploratory factor analysis using the shared 26 cognitive attributes for Texans and Non-Texans.

FINDINGS

The overall demographic profile of the respondents indicated that 44.5 percent were between 42 and 60, and those aged 61-years and older comprised 28.1 percent of the sample. Most respondents were married (71.0%) and approximately half (49.2%) reported a yearly household income of \$50,000 or more. More than three fourths (78.3%) of the respondents were Caucasian, followed by African American (6.7%), and Hispanic (4.6%). For Non-Texan tourists' demographic profile of the respondents indicated that 45.4 percent were between 42 and 60, and those aged 61-years and older comprised 28.3 percent of the sample. Most respondents were married (70.9%) and approximately half (49.2%) reported a yearly household income of \$50,000 or more. More than three fourths (79.9%) of the respondents were Caucasian, followed by African American (6.9%), and Hispanic (2.9%). For Texans demographic profile of the respondents indicated that 41.7 percent were between 42 and 60, and those aged 61-years and older comprised 27.5 percent of the sample. Most respondents were married (71.4%) and approximately half (49.1%) reported a yearly household income of \$50,000 or more. Almost three fourths (73.5%) of the respondents were Caucasian, followed by Hispanic (9.7%), and African American (6.0%). The groups did not differ significantly on four sociodemographic variables included in the survey. However, Texan population had slightly higher percentage of Hispanic residents. On the whole, the data suggest that the likelihood is low that differences emerging from database comparison would be an artifact of socio-demographic influences.

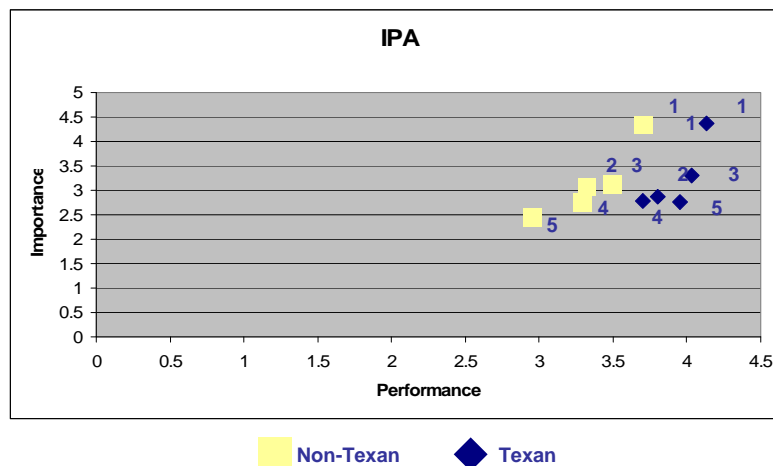
An exploratory factor analysis was performed on cognitive image items. Principal component analysis and varimax rotation procedures were used to identify orthogonal factor dimensions. The latent root criterion of 1.0 was utilized for factor extraction and factor loadings of .40 were utilized for item inclusion (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1992; Nunnally, 1978). All 26 cognitive items from the questionnaire met this cut-off point. Factor scores were computed by taking the average of items within each factor. The factor analysis of the 26 cognitive items from the questionnaire produced five factors and explained 53.1% of the variance. The factors were labeled as quality of experience (factor 1), attractions (factor 2), culture & museum (factor 3), entertainment (factor 4), and nature based outdoor activities (factor 5), for detailed attributes in each factor, could be found in Table 1.

To further detect whether resident and non-resident tourists had different perceptions on each cognitive image factor, ANOVA was performed to identify significant differences in image factors. Significant differences ($p < .05$) between resident and non-resident tourists were found in the importance of destination image factors. Residents tended to evaluate quality of experience, culture & museum, and nature based outdoor activities image factors more important than non-resident tourists. Non-resident tourists significantly evaluated attractions more important than residents.

ANOVA further revealed differences in perceived performance of destination image of residents versus non-resident tourists. Results showed that residents perceived all five of the image factors (quality of experience, attractions, culture & museum, entertainment, and nature based outdoor activities) performed better than non-resident tourists (Figure 1).

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis (Cognitive destination image attributes).

Factor	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance(%)	Communalities
1. Quality of Experience		6.34	24.4	
Value for money	.74			.57
Good highways	.70			.54
Pretty scenery	.51			.50
Safety	.73			.54
Friendly people	.65			.49
Weather	.60			.44
2. Attractions		2.4	9.1	
Western image	.65			.67
Wildlife	.55			.60
Ranches	.56			.52
Historical site	.61			.50
State parks	.52			.46
3. Culture & Museum		2.0	7.8	
Museum	.70			.70
Cultural event	.73			.58
Large cities	.53			.56
Festivals	.50			.52
Multicultural experience	.61			.51
Local food	.42			.50
4. Entertainment		1.9	7.2	
Shopping opportunities	.50			.54
Spectacular sports	.70			.53
Amusements/theme parks	.58			.44
Activities like golf & tennis	.58			.37
5. Nature based outdoor play		1.2	4.6	
Lakes and boating activities	.77			.77
Good campground	.57			.59
Fishing	.67			.56
Beautiful beaches	.56			.50
53.1%				

**Figure 1. Non-Texan vs Texan IPA.**

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

This study attempts to provide important implications for destination marketing organizations and tourism service providers on the perceived destination image between residents and non-residents to assist with the development of tourism marketing campaigns for the two markets.

This study tried to provide important implications for both tourism related public and private organizations on segmentation marketing. Selecting a segment to attract is the first step for any tourism managers, as previous research shows in-state residents tend to have more opportunities to revisit and become lifetime visitors, but out-of-state visitors have greater potential to stay longer and spend more which brings more profits to local economy. Destination managers need to understand how their preferred target visitors perceive the destination and what factors they think are important when choosing a destination and how they perceived the performance of each image factor after the trip.

The key point is that segmentation research based on travelers' origin of place can help direct tourism marketing efforts and resource management in a period when travel costs are a major factor in destination choice.

Texas tourism development and policy makers have a need to know how to allocate their resources in order to best attract tourists both within and out-of-state. To attract Texas residents more effectively, resources should be more focused on quality of experience, culture & museum, and nature based outdoor activities image factors. To attract non-Texan tourists more effectively, resources should be more concentrated on attractions. Since residents perceived all five image factors performed better than non-resident tourists, the good work should be kept to continuously satisfy the in-state residents. On the other hand, more works need to be done to out-of-state tourists, therefore, non-resident tourists would satisfy with their trip and revisit Texas again.

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ANTECEDENTS OF VISITORS' LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

Loyalty has become one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of destination. The current research related visiting times and length of stay as antecedents of visitors' attitudinal loyalty measured both by revisit intention and willingness to recommend. The structural equation modeling was utilized to examine the relationships posited in a conceptual model. Among eight relational hypotheses tested, five were supported. They were visiting times affecting return likelihood, visiting times affecting expected timing of future visit, current length of stay at the destination affecting willingness to recommend, return likelihood affecting expected timing of future visit, and willingness to recommend affecting expected timing of future visit. The unique contribution of the study is the finding that the time interval between repeat visits gets shorter as the frequency of visitation increases, and the more likely the visitor is to return, the shorter the interval will be.

KEYWORDS: *Visiting Times; Length of Stay; Revisit Likelihood; Recommendation; Timing of Future Visit; Loyalty.*

INTRODUCTION

Investigations into consumer loyalty and brand loyalty in marketing literature could be traced back to more than forty years ago. The degree of loyalty has become one of the critical indicators used to measure the success of marketing strategy (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Empirical research in tourism has demonstrated a variety of benefits of cultivating visitors' loyalty. It has

been found that attracting previous tourists costs less than gaining new customers (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). Repeat visitation tends to elicit favorable information through word of mouth (Oppermann, 2000; Petrick, 2004; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). Repeat visitors are more likely to stay longer at the destination than first-time visitors (McKercher & Wong, 2004; Oppermann, 1998; Wang, 2004). It has also been observed that repeat visitors look for the specific experiences with high quality and hereby will spend more money than first time visitors (Alegre & Juaneda, 2006; Lehto, O'Leary, & Morrison, 2004; Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999).

Although repeat visitation/purchase is an important indicator of loyalty, researchers caution that it cannot be simply defined as repeat purchase (Chen & Hsu, 2000). Based on various operational definitions of brand loyalty, Oppermann (1999, 2000) suggested three approaches to measure loyalty applying in tourism domain: behavioral, attitudinal, and composite. Behavioral approaches were based on consumers' behavior, often based on actual purchasing behavior or, in some cases, on reported purchasing behavior. Since behavior measures couldn't distinguish between intentionally loyal and spuriously loyal, attitudinal approaches were advocated. Positive attitudes, intent to purchase, distance between acceptance and rejection (of brands) regions were attitudinal measurements for loyalty. Composite measures of loyalty integrate both behavioral and attitudinal dimensions (Oppermann, 1999, 2000). However, this approach has limitations in that not all the weighting or quantified scores may apply to both the behavioral and attitudinal factors, and they may have differing measurements (Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Therefore there have been more applications of behavioral and attitudinal dimensions in tourism loyalty research than that of composite dimension. From the behavioral perspective, some researchers used visiting times to determine visitors' loyal level (Cai, Wu, & Bai, 2003; Oppermann, 2000). Oppermann (2000) applied the behavioral approach in his study to explore loyal levels of visitors to Australia. Cai et al (2003) revealed that visitors' perceptions on a destination were different along with various loyal levels.

From the attitudinal perspective, repeat intention and willingness to recommend to other people are most often referred to as consumer loyalty in tourism literature (Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Hanefors & Larsson, 1998; Oppermann, 1999; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Previous research has investigated factors that are determinants or antecedents of revisit intention. They include satisfaction (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigne, Sanchez, & Sanchez, 2001; Grandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2000; Jang & Feng, 2007; Lucio, Maria, Miguel, & Javier, 2006; Mazursky, 1989; Petrick, Morais, & Norman, 2001), quality (Baker & Crompton, 2000; Bigne et al., 2001), visiting times (Cai et al., 2003; Gabe, Lynch, & McConnon, 2006; Mazursky, 1989; Oppermann, 2000; Petrick et al., 2001), previous experience (Kozak, 2001; Petrick et al., 2001), novelty seeking (Grandhi-Arora & Shaw, 2000; Jang & Feng, 2007), perceptions or image (Bigne et al., 2001; Cai et al., 2003; Castro, Alrmario, & D.M., 2007; Lucio et al., 2006; Petrick et al., 2001), and length of stay (Zhang, 2000).

The current research related visiting times and length of stay as antecedents of visitors' loyalty measured both by revisit intention and willingness to recommend. Different from many extant studies that operationalized visiting times as a nominal variable such as first-time and repeat, the current research defined it at intervals. Moreover, in addition to length of stay, the study introduced the timing of future visit as a second temporal construct. Time-frame plays a

role in identifying appropriate time intervals during which a purchase may or may not take place (Oppermann, 1999), and has important implications for visit flows (Darnell & Johnson, 2001). Yet, previous research has rarely addressed temporal issues related to destination revisit (Jang & Feng, 2007; Oppermann, 2000). Jang and Feng (2007) addressed it only partially by splitting the tourists' revisit intention into short-term, mid-term, and long-term.

This study was designed to achieve three objectives: 1) to examine the relationship between visiting times and visitors' loyalty; 2) to investigate the influences of length of stay on visitors' loyalty; and 3) to explore any relationships between the timing of future visit and the two attitudinal measures of loyalty: return likelihood and willingness to recommend. The objectives are illustrated in the conceptual model as in Figure 1, and delineated through eight hypotheses.

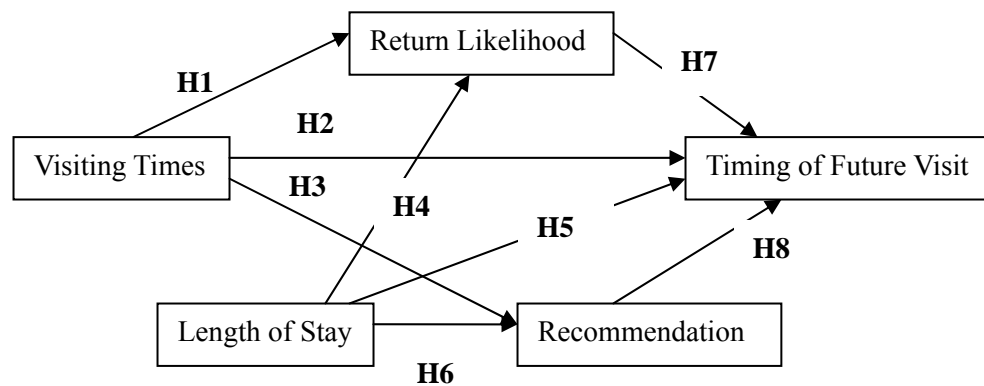


Figure 1. The hypothetical model for visiting times, length of stay and loyalty.

- H1: Visiting times affects visitors' return likelihood.
- H2: Visiting times affects visitors' proposed timing of future visit.
- H3: Visiting times affects visitors' willingness to recommend to friends and family.
- H4: The time visitors stayed in the destination affects visitors' return likelihood.
- H5: Visitors' length of stay at the destination affects visitors' proposed timing of future visit.
- H6: Visitors' length of stay at the destination affects visitors' willingness to recommend to friends and family.
- H7: Visitors' return likelihood affects visitors' proposed timing of future visit.
- H8: Visitors' willingness to recommend to friends and family affects visitors' proposed timing of future visit.

METHODOLOGY

The data used for the current study was drawn from a visitor profile study conducted for a rural destination in the U.S. across four seasons from 2005 to 2006. The destination is known as a wine country along the Pacific. Adult visitors from outside the host community were qualified as respondents. The data was collected through personal interviews at a variety of interview sites.

A sample of 763 respondents with the purpose of pleasure was drawn from the dataset for this study.

The variable of “willingness to recommend to family and friends” was gauged on the scale of 1-10 (1 = the least, 10 = the most), and a five-point Likert scale was utilized to measure the “likelihood of return in the future” (1 = the most unlikely, 5 = the most likely). It is an important issue to measure the timing of future visit. In tourism setting, since there are no accepted definitions of time-frame, we defined the rule to deal with the raw data (1 = within three months, 2 = within six months, 3 = within one year, 4 = within two years, 5 = within three years, and 6 = over three years).

A progressive procedure of statistical analyses was carried out. The frequency analysis was firstly applied to examine the profile of the respondents. To test the conceptual model, structural equation modeling (SEM) was utilized. Following the suggestion by (Kline, 2005) about SEM model testing, the study applied the testing statistics of Chi-square, goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA).

RESULTS

Sample Profile

The profile of the sample is provided in Table 1. There were more male visitors to this destination than female visitors. About 70 percent of them had a bachelor’s degree or higher. More than 50 percent reported a household income at and above \$100,000. The largest age group was 45-54 years old. They made up about 27 percent, followed by the group aged 35-44 at nearly 20 percent. About 35 percent visited the place for the first time. Those who had visited the area between two and five times made up about one third. Nearly 31 percent came to the area for the sixth time or more.

Table 1. Profile of respondents.

<i>Variables</i>	Percentage (%)
Gender	
Male	55.1
Female	44.9
Education	
Left high school before diploma	1.3
Earn a high school diploma	10.0
Associate's degree	8.1
Bachelor's degree	37.6
Master's degree	21.5
Doctorate	8.9
Household Income	
Under \$20,000	2.8
\$ 20,000-49,999	6.6
\$ 50,000-99,999	24.4
\$ 100,000-149,999	27.8
Over \$150,000	23.6
Age	
18-24	3.8
25-34	16.8
35-44	19.1
45-54	27.3
55-64	17.6
65 and over	10.1
Visiting Times	
First-time	35.5
2-5 times	33.6
over 5 times	30.9

Model

The results of empirical test of the conceptual model are shown in Figure 2, Tables 2 and Table 3. Figure 2 illustrates the linkages between constructs that are statistically significant. Table 2 includes the fit indices of the model. The p-value is 0.287 (higher than 0.05), and RMSEA is 0.013 (lower than 0.05) indicate that the null hypothesis could not be rejected. The model fitted the data.

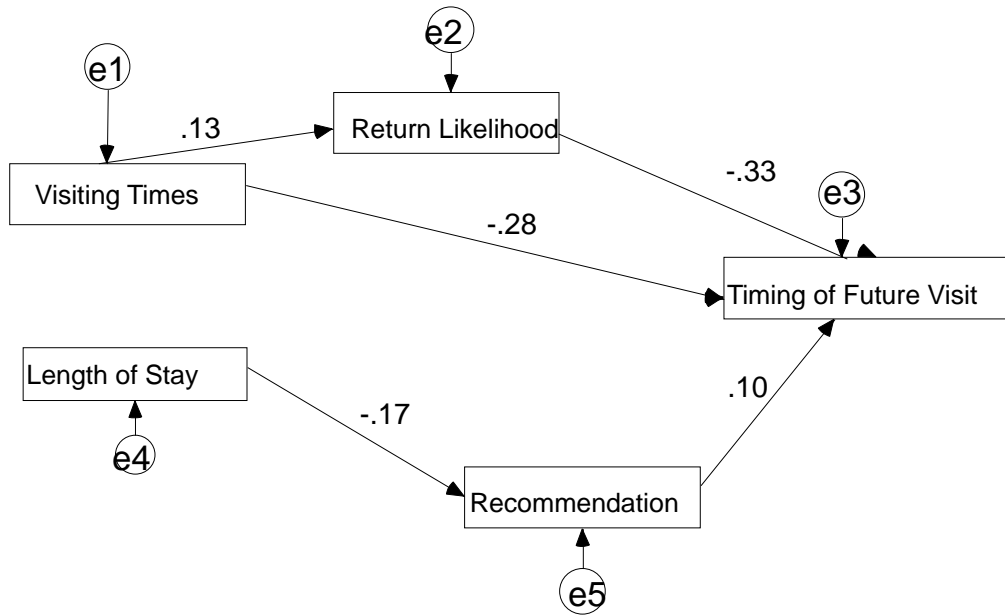


Figure 2. The Empirical Model.

Table 2. Goodness-of-fit indices for structural model.

χ^2	<i>P</i>	<i>GFI</i>	<i>AGFI</i>	<i>RMSEA</i>
1.134	0.287	0.999	0.991	0.013

Table 3 summarizes the results of hypotheses testing. Five out of eight hypotheses (paths) were found to be significant, including the effects of visiting times on return likelihood (t-value=3.616), length of stay on recommendation (t-value=-4.867), return likelihood on timing of future visit (t-value=-10.082), recommendation on timing of future visit (t-value=3.154), and visiting times on timing of future visit (t-value=-8.493).

Table 3. Results of the structural equation modeling for structural model.

	<i>Paths</i>	<i>Standardized estimates</i>	<i>t-statistics</i>	<i>Hypothesis</i>
Return Likelihood	← Visiting Times	0.13	3.616*	Supported
Recommendation	← Visiting Times	0.048	1.340	Rejected
Return Likelihood	← Length of Stay	0.001	.036	Rejected
Recommendation	← Length of Stay	-0.173	-4.867*	Supported
Timing of Future Visit	← Return Likelihood	-0.332	-10.082*	Supported
Timing of Future Visit	← Recommendation	0.105	3.154*	Supported
Timing of Future Visit	← Visiting Times	-0.276	-8.493*	Supported
Timing of Future Visit	← Length of Stay	0.062	1.883	Rejected

*indicates significance at α level of 0.05

CONCLUSION

This study utilized the structural equation modeling to examine the relationships posited in a conceptual model. No significant relationship was found between visiting times and visitors' willingness to recommend. Frequent visitation did not necessarily increase the likelihood that visitors would pass out positive word-of-mouth. However, the study found that length of stay affected willingness to recommend, but not return likelihood.

This study found that visiting times significantly influenced return likelihood. Frequent visitation to the area would result in a greater intention to return. This finding supports the notion that repeat visitors are more likely than first-timers to choose the same destination in their future holiday decisions (Kozak, 2001; Petrick et al., 2001). The study found that visiting times significantly affected timing of future visit. In other words, the time interval between repeat visits gets shorter as the frequency of visitation increases. Furthermore, the more likely the visitor returns, the shorter the interval will be. The reverse relationship reveals the intensity of the loyalty. This unique finding contributes to the literature on visitor loyalty.

It is interesting to find that length of stay significantly and negatively affected willingness to recommend, while no influences on return likelihood and timing of future return. This indicates that longer visitors stay at the destination, more unwilling they would like to distribute the favorable word of mouth. Basically destinations endeavor to keep visitors longer to gain more benefits. However, the result of this study implies that longer stay will result in a less favorable word of mouth, and no benefits go to return likelihood. This finding cautions the destination marketing organizations to pay attention to favorable image communications with visitors when they try to keep them staying longer.

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AN EXAMINATION OF VIRTUAL DESTINATION IMAGE FORMATION MODEL: TELEPRESENCE PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Web-mediated virtual destination image needs to be conceptualized so that destination marketers can effectively form destination image by using the Web as a strategic marketing communication tool. Despite the importance of the Web arises among travelers, few destination image studies have been applied to the Web environment. The main purpose of this study is to conceptualize virtual destination image and empirically develop a Virtual Destination Image Formation (VDIF) model by adopting the concept of telepresence. Destination image studies ignored the existence of telepresence defined as “feel like being there,” although any medium can produce telepresence. Therefore, this paper assumes that telepresence can mediate online and offline information to virtual destination image constructs: namely, virtual cognitive image, virtual affective image and virtual overall image. The VDIF model evolves from the Integrated Information Response (IIR) model to explain how external marketing stimuli, such as offline and online information can influence travelers’ attitude and behaviors, depending on the extent to which telepresence can be accepted as reliable information. Despite the propositions of the hierarchical impact of offline, 3D-based and 2D/text-based virtual information on telepresence and attitude formation process including conation, which is adopted from the IIR model, the VDIF model proposes structurally woven attitude formation among quadricomponents of the VDIF model. It is anticipated that the findings will contribute to Electronic Destination Marketing Organizations’ (eDMOs) marketing activities in terms of Web content design.

KEYWORDS: *Offline information; Online information; VDIF model; Telepresence.*

INTRODUCTION

For the last three decades, the concept of destination image has been highlighted among both tourism marketers and travellers (Pike, 2002) because destination image is a critical influence on the travelers’ destination choice process (Cai, 2002) and acts as criteria to position

and differentiate one destination from other competing destinations (Ahmed, 1991). On the other hand, considering that potential travellers usually have a limited knowledge of tourist destinations they have not previously visited, images fulfill an important function as destinations with strong, positive, distinct and recognizable images have more probability of being chosen by travellers (Ross, 1993). Therefore, the destination marketing of DMOs mainly focuses on promoting a favourable destination image by providing travellers with vicarious experience before an actual visitation (Chen & Kerstetter, 1999; Coshall, 2000). Such an important role of a destination image leads to examining the types of destination image forming from different types of information. One is organic image forming from a direct experience or non-touristic information (e.g. TV reports or documentaries, friends' experiences). The other is induced image from an indirect experience obtained by being exposed to touristic information, such as travel brochures, publicity, advertisements, and travel posters (Gunn, 1972; Fakeye & Crompton 1991; Jenkins 1999; Li et al., 2003). It has been proven that destination image is strongly influenced by an 'actual experience' like a previous visit (Andreu, Bigne, & Cooper, 2000; Hu & Ritchie, 1993). Although the actual visitation or previous experience, resulting from an mediated interaction with an real entity through experiencing visual auditory, taste, smell, haptic sensations (Gibson, 1966), is considered to be the most credible and influential information sources to a destination image change (Gartner, 1993), the intangible and inseparable nature of tourism make it impossible for travelers to experience a destination at hand (March & Woodside, 2005). That is, the experiential products like travel can be assessed only by use of the product (Kempf & Smith, 1998).

Unlike offline information which is unilaterally exposed to travelers, the Web allows them to virtually interact with a destination through three-dimensional (3D) virtual tour (Cho & Fesenmaier, 2001). The experience within a computer-mediated environment may be little differentiated from that within our actual lives because a virtual experience can provide more real-life experiences which may lead to successful creation and communication of destination image (Cho et al., 2002). The ease of use, interactivity and flexibility of web-based interfaces suggests an allied and important role for WWW technology in destination marketing and indications are that tourism Web sites are constantly being made more interactive (Hanna & Millar, 1997). Three-dimensional interactive Website has been adopted by online marketers to attract the online consumers to visit the site, purchase online, be satisfied and become a repeat visitor (Mathwick, 2002). The interactive nature of Web sites has been ascribed to enhancing attitude toward the site and online purchasing (Fiore and Jin, 2003; Wu, 1999). According to Wu's (1999) study, interactivity was highly correlated to attitude toward two Websites whose components were cognitive, affective and behavioural intention. Interacting with a Website produces telepresence which is meant to feel like being there (Steuer, 1992). The level of telepresence is determined by the extent to which image interactivity is achieved (Fiore et al., 2005). In other words, telepresence relies on how closely the computer-mediated experience simulates the consumer's real-world interaction with a product (Shih, 1998). Despite any medium can produce telepresence at some extent (Shih, 1998) and telepresence is proved to be a mediating variable between information, attitudes toward a Website and purchase intention (Suh & Chang, 2006), traditional destination image studies have not applied the concept of telepresence to examining the effect of information on destination image formation models. It is assumed that travel information is directly associated with a cognitive image without a mediator (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989). As a result, the priori relationship has been mainly examined by

contemporary scholars (Beerli & Martin, 2004; Baloglu, 2001). However, telepresence needs to be examined by adopting both offline and online information as antecedents since previous studies provided empirical findings that telepresence mediates Web-based information to attitude and behavioral intention (Suh & Chang, 2006) by comparing the level of Image Interactivity Technology (IIT) consisting of Web site features that enable creation and manipulation of product or environment images to simulate (or surpass) actual experience with the product or environment (Fiore & Jin, 2003). In addition, some studies explored the effect of virtual information on attitude model comprising of cognitive, affective and conation by comparing 2D-based Web information with 3D-based Web information (Li et al., 2001; 2002). It is contended that virtual experience can have a greater impact on three common states of an experience (i.e. cognitive, affective and conation) than unmediated indirect experience (Li et al., 2001) because virtual experience is much closer to direct experience, regarding interactivity. Richer and more interactive 3D-based Web information (e.g. virtual tour, IIT) than any other information should be more effective on attitude than two-dimensional Web information (e.g. static photo) and print advertisements (Klein, 2003). According to Integrated Information Response (IIR) model initiated by Smith & Swinyard (1982; 1988) based on Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) Expectancy-Value (EV) model, Indirect experience from advertising is less effective on attitude and conation than direct experience from a product trial (Smith & Swinyard, 1982). They assumed that constructs of IIR model are hierarchically interrelated such as advertising→ low possible message acceptance→lower cognition→ lower affect→ trial, as well as direct experience→ high possible message acceptance→ higher cognition→ higher affect→ commitment. Taking into account that travelers cannot experience a destination before trip, 3D-based Web information could be highest credible information because consumers more strongly feel being in a destination as status of telepresence than any other information. As a result, the highest telepresence could lead to highest beliefs, affect and behavioral intention while offline information would provide online travelers with the lowest telepresence. The following sequences could be suggested: lowest telepresence→ lowest cognition →lowest affect →lowest purchase intention; and 2D-based Web information→ lower telepresence→ lower cognition → lower affect → lower purchase intention. However, Bogazzi (1982) argued that cognition is directly associated with overt behavior. Telepresence empirically proves to have a direct relationship with online purchase intention (Fiore et al., 2005). Therefore, the hierarchical structure of the modified IIR model should be presumed to have a structural relationships among components of the modified IIR model, named Virtual Destination Image Formation (VDIF) Model. This paper primarily aims to develop the VDIF model based on the concept of Virtual Destination image which has never been defined by previous authors. The theoretical model of a Web-mediated destination image should be conceptualized in order to verify the causal relationships among constructs of the VDIF model; virtual experience, offline information, telepresence, attitude, and conation components.

THE PROPOSED HYPOTHETICAL VDIF MODEL

Figure 1 illustrates the hypothesized VDIF model. Each construct of the model was selected based on the literature review. Previous studies suggested that offline and online information could generate telepresence (Shih, 1998; Fiore et al., 2005); telepresence structurally influence components of attitude model and behavioral intention as a mediating variable (Suh &

Chang, 2006); cognition directly and indirectly influences affect, overall affect and virtual conation (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The proposed VDIF model is modified from Smith & Swinyard' IIR model which relies on the unilateral influential sequence between information source, attitude and behavior. In this study, information sources are used as antecedents by categorizing into three types: offline information, Web-mediated 3D-based information, and Web-mediated 2D/text-based information. The level of message acceptance is replaced with telepresence. It is assumed that telepresence could influence components of attitude hierarchically and structurally, despite IIR model assumes that there exist the hierarchical relationships between cognition, affect and conation. The VDIF model has adopted quadricomponents of the attitude model by including global affect/virtual overall image since the Integrated Model of Attitude and Affect (IMAA) model, consisting of cognition, affect and holistic affect, proves to be superior to EV-based dimensional attitude (cognition-affect) and a single holistic affect, in terms of predictability of attitude (Agarwal & Malhotra, 2005). In addition, the structurally interwoven relationship between the components of attitudes and behavior intention is derived from findings of previous destination image studies. Therefore, this study examines the hypothetical causal relationships: offline information, virtual information as antecedents, telepresence as a mediating construct, image components and virtual conation as consequences. The theoretical background of this proposed model is discussed in the following section.

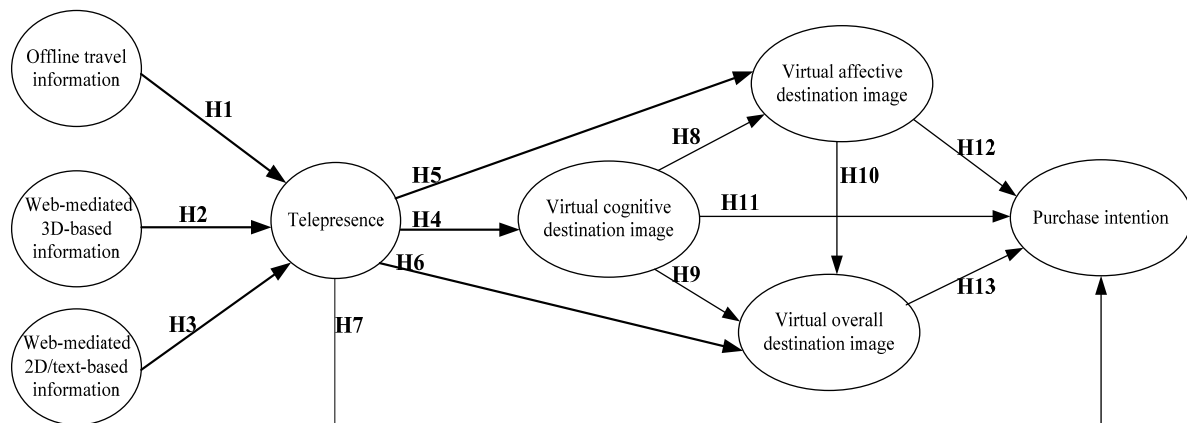


Figure 1 Hypothesized VDIF model

A DEFINITION OF VIRTUAL DESTINATION IMAGES

Even though the importance of online destination images formed by virtual experience which affects the travel destination choice process (Cho & Fesenmaier, 2001), few studies have defined VDI as a primary concept. In order to define a virtual destination image, it is necessary to reflect on two facets of image: a destination image and a virtual image, according to a conventional image defined within the tourism context, image dynamic structure concerns with the structural relationships between cognitive, affective and overall destination image, while

telepresence plays a central role in creating a virtual image. Integrating two concepts allows defining virtual destination image mediated by telepresence. Although traditional definitions of a destination image have been introduced based on the tourism researchers' different perspectives (Crompton, 1979, Dichter, 1985). It is generally accepted that the holistic destination image arises from the interrelation between cognitive and affective aspects (Gartner, 1993). Previous studies have examined the woven structure of a destination image and found its components structurally interrelated across cultures (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Hyun & Han, 2005). In addition, considering the degree of telepresence mediates the relationship between virtual information, offline information, attitude and behavioral intention, this study has modified the definition of a destination image proposed by Dichter (1985) and suggests that 'Virtual Destination Image (VDI)' is defined as *"a virtual overall or total impression which is formed as a result of the interaction between virtual cognitive and affective components online individuals hold regarding in a mediated environment by experiencing the level of telepresence determined by information typology"*.

INFORMATION TYPOLOGY AS DETERMINANTS OF TELEPRESENCE

Telepresence is defined as the experience of presence in an environment by means of a communication medium (Steuer, 1992) or an illusion of being there in a mediated environment (Li et al., 2002). In particular, although virtual experience may substitute for the term telepresence, this terminology cannot embrace all types of mediated environments by communication channels. As Cho et al. (2002) mentioned, virtual experience results from Web-mediated environment, defined as an experience in a virtual environment using a computer-mediated environment and is based upon the concept of telepresence (Cho et al., 2002). In addition, telepresence needs to be distinct from the term presence because presence is generally considered as a shortened version of telepresence (Lobbard & Snyder-Duch, 2001). Klein (2003) noted that presence is referred to the natural perception of an environment. Regarding the unmediated perception, presence takes place naturally in our daily lives (Steuer, 1992). Therefore, the term telepresence is only described as the extent to which consumers feel their existence in the mediated environment by a medium (Shih, 1998). The degree of one feels telepresence has two types of determinants by the configuration of the technology that allows users to interact with the environment. One is user control or interactivity. The other is media richness or vividness. The former refers to the degree to which users of a medium can influence the form or content of the mediated environment. The latter refers to the ability of a technology to produce a sensorially rich mediated environment (Li et al., 2002; Shih, 1998). The definition of vividness means the intensity with which a mediated environment is able to present information to the senses (Li et al., 2001).

Vividness consists of two dimensions; breadth and depth. Sensory breadth refers to the number of sensory dimensions simultaneously presented by a communication medium such as the auditory. The haptic, the touch, the taste-smell and the visual senses (Klein, 2003). Television presenting the audio and visual systems has a greater breadth than radio using only the audio system. The result of experiencing multi-sensory systems improves vividness (Steuer, 1992). On the other hand, sensory depth refers to the resolution within each of these perceptual channels (Klein, 2003). For examples, 3D moving animation increasingly improves the effect of vividness

because 3D moving animation has a greater sensory depth than text and pictures. Interactivity is the ability to select the timing, content, and sequence of a communication act within a mediated environment which is a form of user control (Li et al., 2002). Interactivity has three components; speed, range and mapping (Steuer, 1992). Speed refers to the assimilation rate of input can be assimilated into the mediated environment. Real-time interaction, as speed of interaction, response time, or immediacy of response is the most valuable representation (Li et al., 2002). For instance, Internet chatting or computer conferencing is in real-time interaction whereas some media are not interactive at all, such as film or books. Range refers to the number of possibilities for action at any given time. This terminology relates to the amount of change that can be effected on the mediated environment. Given an example, television has a limited range of choices: turn on or off the programs or volume up or down. In contrast, the Web enables consumers to engage many controls, such as changing the color of a product, rotating, zooming-in and -out. Mapping refers to the ability of a system to map its controls to changes in the mediated environment in a natural and predictable manner. Successful mapping relies on how the mediated action can replicate as closely as possible humans' experiences, for example, second-life provides online users actual life environments. A member of second-life can move, dance, drive a car and even marry to someone on the Web environment. Therefore, the more sensory presentations vary, the more interactivity increases, the easily mental imagery become vivid, making perceivers instantly see things that are yet unseen (Stern et al., 2002). Depending on the characteristics of determinants of telepresence, previous studies (Cho, 2002; Schlosser, 2003; Li et al., 2001) suggested media typology; offline information (e.g. TV or video), Web-mediated 2D/text-based information (e.g. static photos), and Web-mediated 3D-based information (e.g. virtual tour or second-life). Shih (1998) proposed that the more users are able to interact with the visual and auditory-based medium, the more users can feel immersed in the virtual environment. Highly vivid and interactive 3D-based Web features (e.g. virtual tour) may result in higher degrees of telepresence (Coyle & Thorson, 2001; Fiore et al., 2005). This is in contrast with less vivid and interactive 2D photos and text-based Web features (Fiore & Jin, 2003). That is, the types of Web features determine the level of telepresence. Choi, Miracle & Biocca's (2001) study showed that 3D-based nonverbal messages on the Website have greater effect on the degree of telepresence than textual format cues. Even though Kim & Biocca's (1997) study indicated that unmediated visual stimuli did not influence telepresence, all media can evoke feelings of telepresence to a certain degree (Nelson, Yaros & Keum, 2006). Cho (2002) proposed TV-based environment produces the lowest virtual experience. Web-based environment produces relatively high virtual experience and 3D-based virtual reality-based environment produces the higher virtual experience. Three hypotheses were proposed.

Hypothesis 1: Offline travel information significantly influences telepresence

Hypothesis 2: Virtual direct information significantly influences telepresence

Hypothesis 3: Virtual indirect information significantly influences telepresence

TELEPRESENCE AS A MEDIATING CONSTRUCT

The web-based Internet has ability to provide both web-based indirect experience rendered by text-based and two-dimensional images on the Web (Li et al 2002) and Web-based direct experience provided by interactive 3D virtual environments (Li et al, 2001). This denotes

that online users can choose preferred photos by clicking as well as directly manipulate the object by rotating, changing clothes, or zooming at the same time (Scholsser, 2003). It is likely that the tailor-made web-based information may much more effective on beliefs and attitudes of online users. In most cases, a virtual experience from interactive media such as 3D virtual environments should be richer than indirect experience given by print advertisements, television commercials (Klein, 2003; Palmer, 2002) or even two-dimensional images on the Web (Li et al., 2002). Regarding the richest media including both 3D-animation and interactivity, which approximates direct experience (Chen, Griffith & Shen, 2005; Fiore et al., 2005), Scholsser's (2003) study released the finding that 3D-based interactive information has superior effect on attitudes to Web-based video. Griffith and Chen's (2004) study supported possibility of different effect of virtual information by discovering that degree of digitalization (high, medium and low) differently influences attitude and intention. As Klein (2003) found that the more interactive and richer information increases from 2D/text-based information to 3D-based full-motion video and audio, the higher telepresence and then higher beliefs and attitudes to a product, telepresence produced by online information (2D-graphic/text-based or 3D-based interactive) seems to be more effective on attitudes than that by offline information. Furthermore, Li et al. (2002) found that a 3D-based multimedia experience more favourably influenced cognition, and affect aspects than 2D-based experience, except that the result showed there was no different influence on conative response. As a result of the causal effect between 2D or 3D-based web environment and telepresence, consumer perceptions such as beliefs and attitudes can be more strongly affected by the degree of telepresence than by television or print advertisement (Klein 2003). As Klein (2003), Griffith & Chen (2004), Scholsser (2003) and Cho et al. (2001) demonstrated, the level of digitalized information determine the levels of telepresence, which influences the attitude and behavioural intention. Moreover, Fiore et al. (2005), Hopkins et al. (2002) and Suh & Chang (2006) confirmed the mediating role of telepresence between information and cognitive responses and Web purchase intention.

Hypothesis 4: Telepresence significantly influences a virtual cognitive image

Hypothesis 5: Telepresence significantly influences a virtual affective image

Hypothesis 6: Telepresence significantly influences a virtual overall image

Hypothesis 7: Telepresence significantly influences a virtual conation

VIRTUAL DESTINATION IMAGE AND VIRTUAL CONATION

Image or attitude plays an important role in predicting travelers' behavior because the decision makers act upon his/her image, beliefs and perceptions of the destination rather than his/her objective reality of it (Chon, 1990). Besides, since the favorable pre-trip destination images are recognized as a pre-taste of a destination, which leads to a destination choice (Fakeye & Crompton, 1992). The image construct has both cognitive evaluations referring to the beliefs or knowledge about a destination's attributes, and affective evaluations relevant to feelings toward or attachment to the destination. Affective evaluations depend on cognitive evaluation of objects and the affective responses are formed as a function of the cognitive responses. An overall image of a place is formed as a result of both cognitive and affective evaluations (Gartner 1993; Holbrook 1978; Russel & Pratt 1980; Stern & Krakover 1993). Furthermore, to establish the hypothesized relationship between VDIF and conation, the empirically proven findings

should be adopted from traditional image formation studies (Gartner, 1993; Dann, 1996; Baloglu 1997; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Hyun et al., 2005; Hyun & Han, 2005). There is considerable criticism that destination image studies are based on atheoretical approach and lack a conceptual framework (Echtner & Ritchie 1993). Baloglu & McCleary (1999) claimed that previous studies have focused largely on static structure by examining the relationship between image and behavior rather than its dynamic nature by examining the influences on its structure and formation without previous experience. Therefore, many recent studies have attempted to reveal the mechanism of image formation by examining the structurally causal relationships between destination image structure (i.e. cognitive, affective, and overall image) and behaviour intention by using motivations, demographics, visit experience and promotions as antecedents (Walmsley & Jenkins, 1993; Baloglu & McCleary 1999; Stern & Krakover 1993; Chen & Kerstetter 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004). Stern & Krakover's (1993) study found that appraisive (affective or feelings) perception plays an intervening role between designative (cognitive or perceptual) perception and the composite image. Moreover, Baloglu & McCleary (1999), Beerli & Martin (2004), and Hyun & Han (2005) commonly found that cognitive image directly affects overall image while cognitive image indirectly affects overall destination image, which is intervened by affective image. Hyun et al.'s (2005) study examined whether three groups responded differently to destination image components: low, medium and high familiarity group. Medium familiarity group shows both the direct and indirect effect of cognitive image on overall image.

Meanwhile, the hierarchical VDIF model provides other theoretical underpinnings that cognition influences affect; and that affect influences global affect. Baloglu (1997) tested the traditional attitude theory (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the extended theory supported by Bagozzi (1982) in the context of tourism. The former hypothesizes that cognition, affect and conation sequentially have causal relationships like the traditional IIR model (Smith & Swinyard, 1982) whereas the latter adds one more proposition to the traditional attitude theory that cognition has a direct causal effect on conation. His study demonstrated that the attitude model varies depending on previous visit experience. For non-visitors, the fact that cognitive components influenced the affect corresponds to both the traditional attitude model (Fishbein and Ajzen, 1975) and the extended attitude model (Bagozzi, 1982). However, the finding that affect did not influence behavior does not correspond to both models. For non-visitors, future visit intention is influenced by cognitive components rather than the affect (feelings). On the other hand, for visitors who had previous experience, cognition influenced revisit intentions directly and indirectly through the affect. Furthermore, Hyun & Han (2005) found that all destination image components influenced conation. As the IIR model proposed, it is presumed that affect and global affect influence conation. Six hypotheses were proposed.

Hypothesis 8: A virtual cognitive image significantly influences a virtual affective image

Hypothesis 9: A virtual cognitive image significantly influences a virtual overall image

Hypothesis 10: A virtual affective image significantly influences a virtual overall image

Hypothesis 11: A virtual cognitive image significantly influences a virtual conation

Hypothesis 12: A virtual affective image significantly influences a virtual conation

Hypothesis 13: A virtual overall image significantly influences a virtual conation

QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN AND MEASURES

To measure travel information, this study adopts offline travel information measures and online travel measures. Offline travel information construct consists of 12 items, while online travel information construct includes 11 items. Offline travel information measures are based on previous literatures (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Beerli & Martin, 2004; Murphy, 1999; Fodness & Murray, 1999). Online information measures are selected from the first page of the Tasmania Website. A seven point Likert-type scale was used as the response format allocating values ranging from 1 being “Extremely unfavorable,” to 7 being “Extremely favorable.” Two measure for telepresence are based on those from Coyle & Thorson’s (2001) and Cho’s (2002) studies and were modified to apply to the research site (1= extremely disagree, and 7= extremely agree). To measure virtual cognitive image and virtual affective image, 9 attributes were selected from 26 empirical studies. The two steps were conducted to extract 9 attributes. Among measures used 26 empirical studies, items over 0.7 factor loadings were selected. 9 common constructs were labeled by adopting names of destination image attributes suggested by Echtner & Ritchie’s (1993). Since the VDIF model is developed from the Smith & Swinyard IIR model, three different questions were developed to apply to virtual cognitive image (i.e. beliefs) and virtual affective image (i.e. evaluation about beliefs) and virtual overall image (i.e. global affect). These are: (1) “Based on experiencing the Tasmania Tourism Website, to what degree do you think Tasmania has the following attributes? (1= Extremely unlikely, and 7= Extremely likely); (2) If you are considering visiting Tasmania, how would you evaluate each of image attributes of Tasmania as given on the Tasmania Website (1= Extremely bad, and 7= Extremely good); (3) Please indicate the level of feelings you have about Tasmania, having surfed the Tasmania Website, I FEEL. 7-point six differential semantic items were used to measure for overall destination image by adopting from Beerli & Martin (2004), MacKenzie & Lutz, (1999), Smith & Swinyard (1983) and Baloglu & McCleary (2004). Three indicators measured virtual conation as the ultimate dependent construct (1= Extremely disagree, and 7= Extremely agree), which were used by Chen et al. (2005), Griffith & Chen (2004) and Smith (1993).

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF THIS STUDY

Based on priori propositions, the VDIF model was proposed. Offline information, Web-mediated 3D virtual information and 2D/text-based virtual information were used exogenous constructs while telepresence, virtual cognitive image, virtual affective image, virtual overall image and virtual conation were used as endogenous constructs. The proposed model was tested using AMOS procedure of structural equation modeling (SEM) (Byrne, 2004). Although zero item-level skewness and kurtosis was basically desired for normality, which leads to the maximum likelihood estimation (Fabrigar et al., 1999), more relaxed criteria are used to select the items representing normality: skewness is below 2; and kurtosis is below 7 Noar (2003). In the presence of misspecification in practice, a one-step approach in which the measurement and structural sub-models are estimated simultaneously, will cause interpretational confounding (Anderson, 1984). Therefore, two step approach was used for SEM analysis: developing a good measurement model through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and testing a structural model through path analysis two step approach minimizes the potential problems of interpretational

confounding; allow the model with a larger number of constructs to be estimated and require only two observed indicators to sufficiently define the unobserved construct (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). It is acknowledged the advantage of SEM with observed constructs for parameter estimation and hypothesis testing in causal models (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Since the proposed model was theoretically hypothesized, the use of SEM is a necessary requirement to evaluate theory in marketing. The self-selected web survey has been chosen as one of non-probability sampling methods. The banner-type online survey is designed at the right of the top on the Tasmania Tourism Website. A total of 3,586 visitors clicked the Web survey. 355 respondents completed the online Web survey, representing 9.9% response rate. 27 of the total responses were screened out because of missing data. 328 usable responses were used for data analysis. Before CFA, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted using principal components analysis and varimax method for extracting the number of factors by simply reducing the number of measures (Fabrigar et al., 1999). Communalities of measures can be accepted at the level of at least .40 (Stewart, 1981). The eigenvalues-greater-than-one (or latent roots) rule was adopted for factor extraction. Factor loadings of .50 were utilized for item inclusion (Hair et al., 1998). All EFA procedures were conducted with SPSS 15.0. The result of EFA showed KMO-MSA scores of the model exceeded .90 which is considered meritorious (Hair et al., 1998) indicating appropriateness for factoring. All factor loadings were larger than .50 demonstrating a good correlation between the items and their factor. The number of factors initially proposed (8 factors) was identified as 9 factors: Virtual affective natures (Factor 1), virtual overall image (Factor 2), offline travel information (Factor 3), virtual affective artifacts (Factor 4), informative 3D information (Factor 5), purchase intention (Factor 6), virtual cognitive artifacts (Factor 7), telepresence (Factor 8) and entertaining interactive information (Factor 9). Nine Factors were labeled based on highly loaded items and the common characteristics of items they included (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999) after removing cross-loaded measures over other factors and low factor loadings through CFA. Reliability α of at least .70 is usually considered reliable (Peterson, 1994). Reliability α of all factors ranged from .724 to .911, which provides the evidence of high internal consistency.

MEASUREMENT MODEL AND A STRUCTURAL MODEL

CFA of the measurement model was undertaken to identify the dimensionality, construct validity and construct reliability. 9-construct one factor model was estimated to identify unidimensionality. Items were forced to load on their respective factors and were not allowed to cross load. Modification indexes (MIs) is useful to evaluate threats to unidimensionality (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

Table 1 EFA and CFA of Constructs Consisting of VDIF Model

Factor (α)	EFA loadings	Eigen-value	CFA loadings	Composite α	AVE
<i>Factor 1: Virtual Affective Natures (.911)</i>		14.94		.855	.667
National parks/wilderness activities(COG7)	.799		×		
Historic sites (COG9)	.745		×		
Scenery/natural attractions (COG2)	.717		×		
National parks/Wilderness activities (AFF6)	.689		.917***		
Hospitality/friendliness(COG6)	.665		×		
Scenery/natural attractions(AFF1)	.641		.852***		
Historic sites (AFF8)	.600		.658***		
Good value for the money (COG5)	.561		×		
Your previous travel to Tasmania	.531		×		
<i>Factor 2: Virtual Overall Image(.920)</i>		3.388		.923	.707
Gloomy-exciting	.798		.760***		
Disagreeable-agreeable	.797		.839***		
Distressing-relaxing	.789		.900***		
Unfriendly-friendly	.782		.862***		
Artificial-authentic	.757		.836***		
Sleepy-arousing	.636		×		
<i>Factor 3: Offline Travel Information (.863)</i>		3.356		.824	.485
Magazines or newspapers	.752		×		
Movies or TV shows	.702		×		
Travel documentaries or programmes	.696		.653***		
Travel guidebooks	.678		.617***		
Travel brochures	.665		.736***		
Advertising in TV, radio or press	.585		×		
People who are from Tasmania	.574		×		
People who have travelled to Tasmania	.549		.754***		
Word of mouth from friends or relatives	.505		.716***		
<i>Factor 4: Virtual Affective Artifacts (.879)</i>		1.997		.833	.625
Nightlife and entertainment(AFF7)	.763		×		
Local infrastructure/transportation(AFF2)	.757		.826***		
Sport activities/facilities(AFF3)	.726		.813***		
Nightlife and entertainment(AFF6)	.615		.730***		
Good value for the money(AFF4)	.591		×		
Hospitality/friendliness(AFF5)	.529		×		
<i>Factor 5: Informative 3D information (.835)</i>		1.838		.736	.549
Interactive map	.706		.780***		
3D virtual tours for Hobart harbour	.650		×		
Online travel info(itinerary ideas, things to do & see, what's on)	.636		×		
Travel video	.618		.700***		
Interactive trip planner	.587		×		
e-brochure	.564		×		
<i>Factor 6: Purchase Intention (.884)</i>		1.501		.839	.638
Purchasin travel itinerary packages online	.811		.896***		
Booking travel products online	.776		.807***		
Purchasing Tasmania-related packages offline	.700		.677***		
<i>Factor 7: Virtual Cognitive Artifacts</i>		1.350		.787	.650
Different customs/cultures(COG1)	.658		×		
Sport activities/facilities(COG4)	.633		.779***		
Local infrastructure/transportation(COG3)	.599		.832***		
<i>Factor 8: Telepresence (.906)</i>		1152		.895	.810
I felt like I wan in Tasmania, during surfing the I	.739		.871***		
I feel that I visited Tasmania rather than I simply saw Tasmania	.706		.929***		
<i>Factor 9: Interactive Entertaining Information (.724)</i>		1.084		.723	.567
Screensaver	.797		.755***		
E-postcard	.773		.751***		

EFA model fit: KMO=.905; Bartlett's test=10101.144***; Total variance explained= 66.536

CFA model fit: $\chi^2=621.745$; df=288; p=.000; GFI=.877; AGFI=.838; TLI=.919; CFI=.933; RMSEA=.060

Note: *** p<.001; ×= removed measure due to cross-loading over other factors and low factor loadings (<.50)

Byrne (2001) stipulated a threshold of an MI of 10 which is included in the output file of the AMOS. Large MIs indicate that factor cross-loadings and error covariance are present (i.e. a loading on more than one factor) (Byrne, 2004). If items significantly load on multiple factors, the factors are not easily interpretable (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Cross-loaded items of both intended and unintended should be deleted (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Consequently, 19 cross-loaded items were removed. Regarding the overall fit of the models, Chi-square must be interpreted with caution in most applications. If sample size is over 200, χ^2 has a greater tendency to indicate significance (Hair et al., 1998). For nonsignificant level ($P > .10$), the recommended level shows acceptable fit of the model by testing null hypothesis that samples and fitted covariance matrices do not differ from each other (Hu & Bentler). However, the null hypothesis was rejected by showing that the chi-square was significant ($\chi^2_{(288)} = 621.745$, $p = .000$). Therefore, to complement chi-square statistic measure, the use of multiple criteria is encouraged as ad hoc indexes of fit (Byrne, 2001) because of no existence of best index (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). This study considers both absolute fit indices and incremental fit indices (Bollen, 1989). The former assessed how well a priori model reproduces the sample data. The latter assessed the proportionate fit by comparing a target model with a more restricted, nested baseline model (Hu & Bentler, 1999). In this study, two types of goodness of fit indices showed that the overall measurement model was acceptable in that the proposed model fit the collected data with a sample size of 328: The overall fits of the models at least marginally meet the criteria indicating that the models offered good fit to the data: Goodness-of-fit index (GFI) = .877; Adjusted goodness-of-fit (AGFI) = .838; Tucker-Lewis index (TLI) = .919; Comparative fit index (CFI) = .933; Root mean square (RMSEA) = .060. Next, measurement fit of models were evaluated. Every estimate loading of a measure on a construct was significant. All factors showed that AVE exceeded .50 except for factor 3 (.485) which is marginally acceptable. Composite α was over .70. Convergent validity was established. On the other hand, since squared correlation (R^2) between two constructs was less than AVE of each construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981) or the square root of the AVE exceeded the correlations between constructs, discriminant validity was achieved (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Based on these valid and reliable constructs, path analysis was undertaken to test hypotheses. No violation of multicollinearity was detected by being proven to be discriminant among them (Table 1). Since chi-square is influenced by the sample size, other model fit indices are used to supplement the model evaluation. The chi-square (859.625 with 304 of DF) was significant. However, other model fit indices indicated a marginally acceptable level (GFI = .836; AGFI = .796; TLI = .872; CFI = .889; RMSEA = .075). As a result, nine-construct structural model can be accepted as a final model in this study.

FINDINGS OF THE VDIF MODEL

The hypothesized structural model was tested by path analysis as the second-step approach, which included a test of the overall model as well as individual tests of the causal relationships among the unobserved constructs. As shown in Figure 2, the result supported the relationship between virtual informative 3D information (standardized $\beta = .508$) and telepresence, and the relationship between entertaining interactive information ($\beta = .218$) and telepresence at a significant level of 0.01. Therefore, telepresence was positively affected by virtual information whereas offline information did not produce telepresence. In addition, it was found that telepresence had causal relationships with virtual cognitive artifacts ($\beta = .512$, $p < .01$), virtual

affective natures ($\beta=.358$, $p<.01$), virtual affective artifacts ($\beta=.166$, $p<.01$) and purchase intention ($\beta=.298$, $p<.01$) except for with virtual overall image. This result implies that telepresence can mediate virtual information to virtual image components and conation. Among components of virtual destination image, virtual cognitive artifacts had causal relationships with virtual affective artifacts ($\beta=.708$, $p<.01$) and virtual affective natures ($\beta=.398$, $p<.01$).

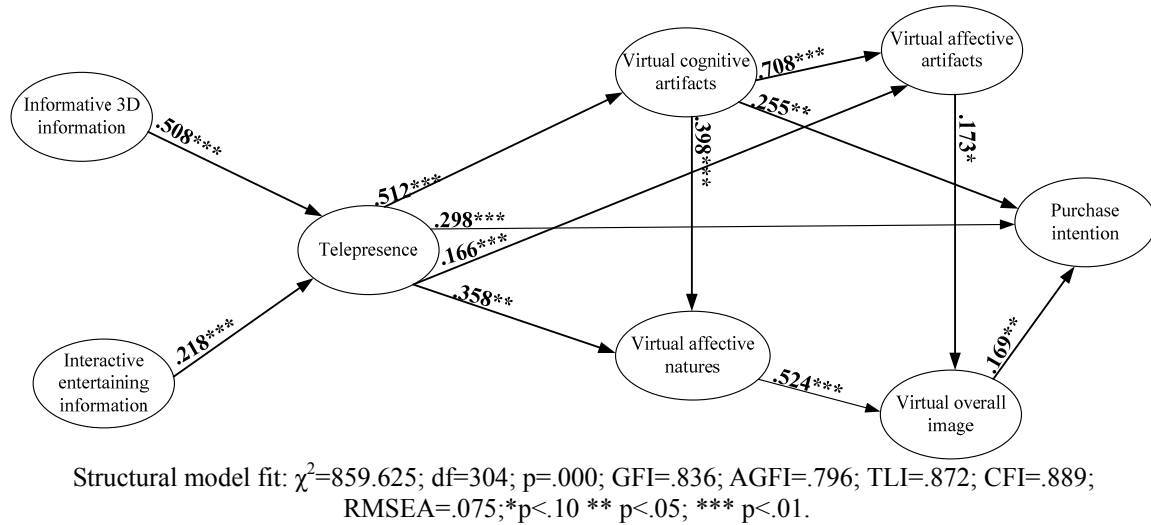


Figure 2. Results of testing hypothesized model.

Virtual overall image was influenced by virtual affective natures ($\beta=.524$, $p<.01$) and artifacts ($\beta=.173$, $p<.10$). Purchase intention virtual conation was influenced by virtual cognitive artifacts ($\beta=.255$, $p<.05$) and virtual overall image ($\beta=.169$, $p<.01$). As a result of causal relationships between cognition, affect, global affect and conation, it is indicated that they have structural causal relationships rather than hierarchical ones by showing that telepresence and cognition had direct effect on virtual conation.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The empirical findings of this study provide substantial evidence that the proposed VDIF model including offline information, virtual information, telepresence, virtual cognitive image, virtual overall image and virtual conation is an acceptable model. Despite destination image has been focused for the last three decades, traditional image studies has ignored the possibility of the existence of telepresence produced by all media (Nelson et al., 2006). Web-mediated destination image formation model has not been examined, followed by the definition of virtual destination image. Concerning the importance of destination image as a main marketing objective of destination promotion and the Web which has gained a large attention from destination marketers, this study can provide important Web-based destination marketing strategies for destination marketers as well as theoretical contributions to establishing the destination image formation theory.

The primary findings of this study have significant managerial implications for the Tourism Tasmania organization. First, the exploratory factor analysis showed that virtual travel information is differently perceived by online visitors to a destination Website. Online visitors perceived 3D-based information and 2D/text-based information as the similar information whereas screensaver and e-postcard are perceived as the other type of information. This information typology indicates that destination Web marketers consider designing additional entertaining features combined with 3D and 2D Website features to produce high level of telepresence. Unlike offline travel information, virtual information proven to be main external stimuli to make visitors feel like being in Tasmania. However, destination Web marketers need to plan how to maximize promotional effect of offline destination information on online visitors through the support of online travel information (Singh et al., 2001) because offline information such as DMO promotion accounts for a large part of promotional budget. Secondly, the destination image attributes projected by the Website is mainly comprised of natures (i.e. historic site, national park/wilderness, scenery/natural attractions) and artifacts (i.e. local infrastructure/transportation, sport activities/facilitates and nightlife/entertainment). Visitors believe the Tasmania Website primarily has artifact-based virtual image attributes whereas they feel both natures and artifact image attributes as a result of the evaluation of the destination Website. The more online visitors feel like being in Tasmania on the Web, the more positively they respond to cognitive artifacts (.512), compared to affective artifacts (.166) and affective natures (.358). This implies that online visitors should be allowed to experience cognitive artifact attributes such as nightlife, leisure sport facilities (e.g. golf course) and nature attributes such as wild animals or aboriginal heritages through 3D interactive Web features or high quality 2D-graphic photos in order to appeal to visitors' access to the Tasmania Website. Thirdly, telepresence is the most important factor on purchase intention among directly associated factors. This suggests that interactive 3D and 2D-graphic dominating Website needs to be developed. Virtual cognitive image directly and indirectly influenced virtual conation. In particular, when destination marketers promote virtual images to increase purchase intention on their Websites, affect and global affect should be highlighted regarding their mediating roles between cognition and conation. Finally, since virtual affective natures more positively influence virtual overall image than virtual affective artifacts. The destination Website should provide scenery-based information rather than travel activity-focused information to form more positive global attitude toward a destination Website. This denotes that Tasmania is positioned as nature-based destination whereas a variety of experiential travel activity-based packages should be provided in order to attract them to visit a destination. From the theoretical point of view, this study adopted telepresence as a part of destination image formation model to examine whether telepresence plays a mediation role in the model. Telepresence has turned out to be a crucial mediating factor between travel information sources, virtual destination images and virtual conation. However, telepresence is produced only by virtual information. Future scholars are recommended to verify whether telepresence can be generated by offline information by applying to a traditional image model. Virtual destination image model is based on Smith & Swinyard' IIR model which assumes the hierarchical effect of information on attitude and behavior. As this study proposed that the VDIF model has structural relationships caused by telepresence, the VDIF model supported the same flow of Bagozzi's (1982) extended attitude model which adds the direct effect of cognition on conation to traditional hierarchical attitude model (cognition→affect→conation). In addition, another theoretical contribution of the VDIF model is to develop the extended IIR model which recognizes the existence of telepresence.

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MOBILE-MEDIATED VIRTUAL TOURISM: CONCEPT, TYPOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Virtual tourism evolves from the concept of virtual experience mediated by mobile technologies. The main purpose of this paper is to conceptualize and classify virtual tourism in terms of virtual experience in the mobile context. The authors first define virtual experience by vividness and interactivity as two dimensions in typology. Such virtual experience is then classified into several categories ranging from verbal-based to animated interactive experience in a mobile-based experiential space. Finally, practical discussions are provided with examples to illustrate various mobile services that facilitate virtual experience and the application of the mobile-mediated virtual experience to tourism with consideration of the destination marketing organization's innovativeness and consumers' needs for mobile usage.

KEYWORDS: *Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs); Mobile-Mediated VE Applications; Mobile Technologies; Virtual Tourism (V-Tourism); Virtual Experience (VE); VE Typology.*

INTRODUCTION

Travel products are generally perceived as risk-taking and experientially-demanding. This perception characterizes the intangibility of travel products as opposed to tangible manufactured products that allow direct consumption and experience easily after their purchases (March & Woodside, 2005). This is due to another characteristic of travel products, inseparability, which requires simultaneous consumption and production between the traveler and travel service providers. Such requirement makes it difficult for one to “pre-immersed a trial” because one can personally consume a destination only after embarking the trip and arriving at the destination. To reduce the perceived risks and difficulties, travelers access various information media, such as TV, brochures, newspapers, word-of-mouth, and previous vacation experiences. Among these traditional information channels, word-of-mouth and previous vacation experiences are widely accepted as the most reliable and influential information for describing a destination because they are acquired from the direct experience (Gartner, 1993). This implies that travelers need information that vividly describes a destination (Nelson, Yaros & Keum, 2006) and are highly interactive to virtually experience the destination. This sub-optimal reality is at least close to a direct experience before the trip actually takes place.

Virtual experience can create such vividness and interactivity through real-time contact with a destination and/or three-dimensional (3D) technology, thereby immersing travelers in the destination. Also, in a post-trip phase, virtual experience can enable travelers to recall good memories by providing rich informed videos transferred from the destination. To achieve such rich and vivid experience for travelers through virtual experience, both the traditional Web presence and mobile technologies can be utilized. In addition, mobile technologies (e.g., using mobile phones) are superior to the wired technologies (e.g., using laptop computers) because of the better mobility of mobile devices. The launch of 3G standard such as HSDPA (High-Speed Downlink Packet Access) enables travelers to download any sizable video streaming to their mobile devices as fast as do laptop computers at anywhere. Furthermore, video telephony service makes possible for face-to-face communications with travelers who are visiting a destination. Thus, people are equipped to experience highly-virtualized sightseeing tour through video mobile devices on a real-time basis.

Taking into account the advantages of mobile technologies for virtual experience over the Web, it is required how mobile applications can support mediated experience-based virtual tourism, named “V-Tourism.” Hence, this paper focuses on developing the concept of V-Tourism and its supportive mobile applications, which will provide a foundation for disseminating mobile tourism services by destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to travelers as real-time virtual information. This paper attempts to describe roles of mobile technologies in V-Tourism through important research questions as follows:

- What types of virtual experience exist?
- How can current or future mobile technologies support each level of virtual experience?
- How do DMOs meet the modern mobile travelers’ requirements by providing the most effective mobile services to mobile travelers, depending on their innovative capacity?

VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE (VE)

“Virtual experience (VE)” needs to be precisely defined because it is sometimes blurred by the meaning of “virtual reality (VR).” The distinctive conceptualization is necessary to provide a sound classification of various types of virtual experience. Steuer (1992) attempted to define virtual reality as human experience perspective rather than technological hardware, most researchers acknowledged this term as a medium by defining a virtual reality as a real, simulated, virtual, or mediated environment in which a perceiver experiences telepresence (Li, Daugherty, & Biocca, 2002).

“Virtual” denotes concepts, activities, and organizations that are realized or carried out mainly in an electronic medium and tends to be used in reference to things that imitate their real-life equivalents (Griffith & Chen, 2004). Experience can be defined as “personal observation of interaction with objects, entities and/or events in one’s environment” (Lombard & Snyder-Duch, 2001). Accordingly, Cho and Fesenmaier (2001) defined virtual experience as “the experience in the virtual environment or virtual reality that refers to a simulation or representation of a particular environment using media.” Meanwhile, telepresence and virtual experience are interchangeably used because Steuer (1992) defined telepresence as “the experience of presence in an environment by means of a communication medium” or “an illusion of ‘being there’ in a mediated environment.”

Virtual experience can be created by the use of 3D product visualization through the new media (e.g., mobile devices) even if it is considered to be similar to indirect experience (Heeter, 2000). However, VE has much closer nature to direct experience than indirect experience with regard to interactivity. Thus, VE should possess advantages of direct and indirect experience for consumer learning (Li, Daugherty, & Biocca, 2001). In other words, direct and indirect experience can be simulated with VE as a form of mobile-based 3D or 2D formats. For example, Fiore, Kim and Lee (2005) contend that both direct and indirect experiences can be realized by using interactive 3D-based technologies which allows consumers to rotate, zoom-in and out the product. Indirect information obtaining from text-based and 2D plain photos can be enriched by increasing vividness (e.g., changing color). Experiential information from direct experiences may be persuasively imitated by virtual world (e.g. Second Life), which enables consumers to walk on the street and talk to neighbors in a simulated environment. VE is even advantageous over direct experience when attributes of animated products capture consumers’ involuntary attention and frame a different perception of the product. As Fasolo, Misuraca, McClelland, and Cardaci (2006) note, products that are animatedly presented with interactivity on the Web improve consumers’ choice intention because interactivity increases their tangibility (Koernig, 2003).

COMPONENTS OF VIRTUAL EXPERIENCE

As shown in Figure 1 below, telepresence as a human virtual experience is rendered by vivid and interactive technologies. To understand the concept of telepresence, it is helpful to discuss what makes up such virtual experience. VE typology is determined by two dimensions: vividness and interactivity. The authors include more sub-categories than those in the Steuer’s model to make VE typology more distinctive and complete. For example, mapping as a way of

interacting for telepresence includes observation self, functional self, and intelligent self. This expansion allows a more complete and better understanding of VE construct.

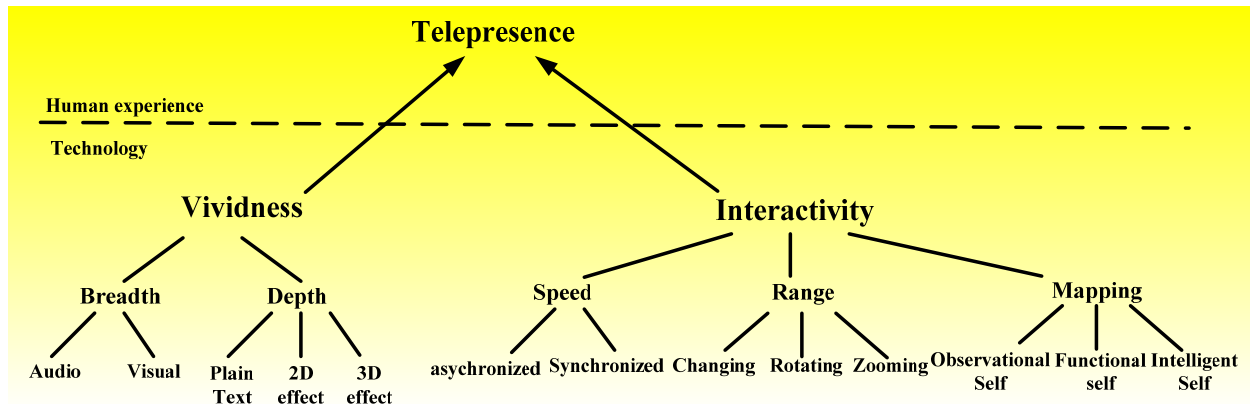


Figure 1 Expanded Typology of Virtual Experience (Adapted from Steuer, 1992)

Vividness is defined as “the intensity with which a mediated environment is able to present information to the senses” (Li *et al.*, 2002). Vividness can be explained by sensory breadth and depth.

- “Sensory breadth” (number of communication channels) refers to the number of sensory dimensions simultaneously presented by a communication medium, such as the auditory, the touch, the taste-smell and the visual senses (Klein, 2003). For example, television addresses both the audio and visual systems whereas radio addresses only the audio system thus TV has greater sensory breath. As a result of experiencing multi-sensory systems, vividness can be improved. However, modern technologies are still working on realizing accurate touch, taste and smell senses.
- “Sensory depth” (quality within each channel or quality of information) refers to “the resolution within each of the perceptual channels” (Steuer, 1992, p. 81). For example, better quality of music is desired when one listens to music through CDs. If a greater quantity of data is encoded to represent a far wider auditory bandwidth that can accommodate diverse musical instruments and various voices, then much greater depth can be provided to satisfy sensory enjoyment.

Steuer (1992, p. 84) defines interactivity as “the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time.” According to the definition by Li *et al.* (2002), it is “the ability to select the timing, content, and sequence of a communication act within a mediated environment which is a form of user control.” Interactivity can be explained by three components: speed, range, and mapping.

- “Speed” refers to the rate at which input can be assimilated into the mediated environment. Real-time interaction is the highest valuable representation as it provides the fastest speed of interaction, the shortest response time, or the immediacy of response. While some media are not interactive at all such as conventional films or books, the

- “Range” refers to the number of possibilities for action at any given time. This terminology is related to the amount of change affected by the mediated environment. For example, conventional television has limited range of choices to turn the programs on or off and volume up or down. This leads the consumers to perceive their experience as more mediated by the TV. In contrary, the mobile devices such as the newly launched iPhones enables the consumers to control more in direct experience, such as changing, rotating, and zooming-in and out photos or videos. This will allow the consumer to perceive the environment as less mediated and give more controls to the consumer (Klein, 2003).
- “Mapping” refers to the ability of a system to map its controls to changes in the mediated environment in a natural and predictable manner. Successful mapping relies on how the mediated action can imitate as closely as human’s. For example, just watching the hotel room at 3D environment (observational self), turning a steering wheel on an arcade video game that makes the virtual car on the screen move accordingly (functional self), and opening the window in a hotel room, saying “hello” to a room attendant and receiving his response of “how are you, Sir” (intelligent self).

MOBILE-BASED VE TYPOLOGY AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS

Modality refers to the mode of information presentation (i.e., text, audio, picture or video) that correspond to human senses used for interpreting the given material (Dijkstra, Buijtsels, & van Raaij, 2005). Multi-modality (e.g., TV) can evoke more effective communication than unimodality (e.g., only text-based information) (Jacoby, Hoyer, & Zimmer, 1983). However, the communication effect varies according to consumers’ needs. Task-directed consumers prefer the text-based facts to 3D-based interactivity whereas experiential-oriented consumers prefer 3D-based interactive features to text (Schlosser, 2003). When travelers go through the entire decision-making process, they need both types of information to make the best choice: experiential and goal-direct information (Sánchez-Franco & Roldán, 2005). Goal-directed travelers want utilitarian benefits from text-based information to obtain the rational facts from the information search so that their planned purchases can be successfully realized. They use experiential information as supplementary information. For example, they use 3D and interactivity-based information to confirm their choice. Therefore, it is important to understand that mobile travelers are motivated differently when classifying mobile-based virtual information.

As seen in Figure 2, Virtual Experience (VE)¹ is classified into five categories, depending on the form of product presentation: **1** = verbal-based VE; **2** = pictorial-based VE; **3** =

¹ M (Mobile); MMS (Multimedia Message Service); MPM (Mobile Photo Message); SMS (Short Message Service); LBS (Location-Based Service); MVM (Mobile Video Message)

non-interactive 3D VE; **4** = interactive-based 2D/3D VE; and **5** = animated-based VE. In addition, existing mobile applications are conceptually positioned in each category. This classification scheme is based on understanding and comparing various mobile applications in terms of their vividness and interactivity. For example, virtual tour in Category 5 is considered to be more interactive and feature-rich than SMS in Category 1.

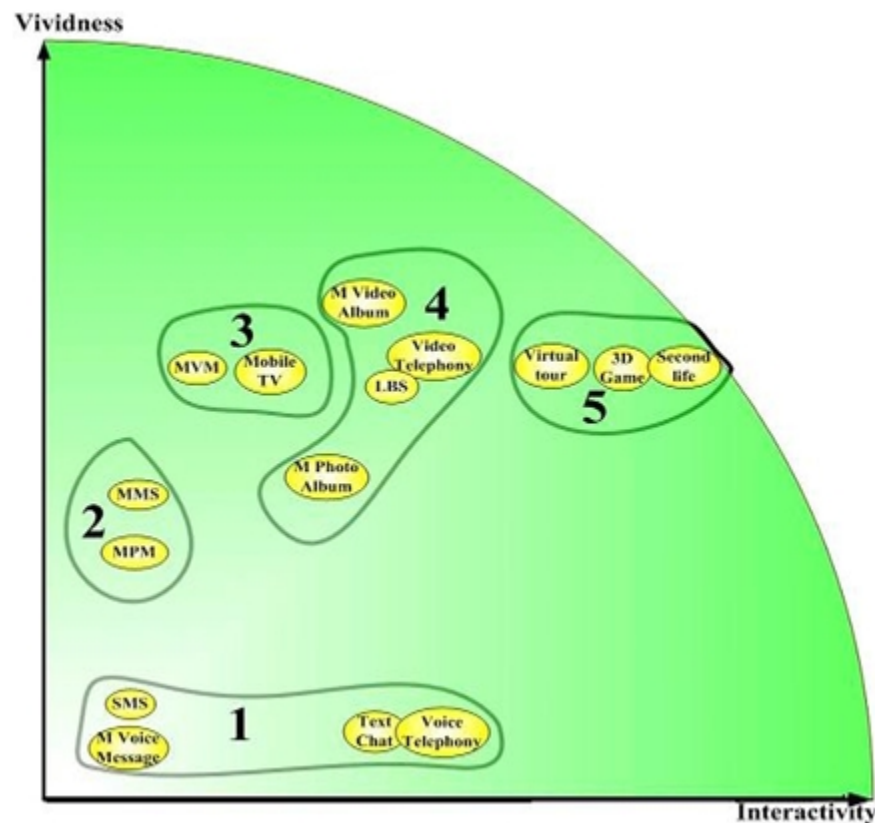


Figure 2 Typology of Virtual Experience

Verbal-based VE

Verbal-based VE is defined as experience formed by written or spoken signals in a mediated environment. Vividness of verbal-based VE is the lowest because it only stimulates one sensory such as auditory or reading a text. However, the level of interactivity varies, depending on synchronized speed. For example, text messages unilaterally are received or sent through SMS, whereas mobile text chatting can be done at a real-time basis. Mobile voice messages are asynchronized communication, whereas voice telephony is used for two-way communication at a high level of interaction.

Still Pictorial-Based VE

Still pictorial-based virtual experience can be described as experience formed by still 2D-based photos or pictures sent or received by mobile phones. Vividness of this type of VE is

higher than verbal-based VE but interactivity is lower than verbal-based VE. For example, Mobile Photo Message (MPM) and Multimedia Message service (MMS) include graphics, text and sound. However, this message is just sent or received without real-time communication.

Non-Interactive 3D-Based VE

Non-interactive 3D-based VE is the experience formed by watching 3D-based video streaming. Vividness is higher than verbal and still photos-based VE because video streaming provides sound and 3D movement. However interactivity is still synchronized. Mobile video messages (MVM) and mobile TV can provide highly rich multimedia applications, but mobile users cannot manipulate video clips on the mobile phones.

Interactive 2D/3D-Based VE

Interactive 2D/3D-based VE is experience formed by simply uploading and downloading 2D photos or 3D videos through mobile phones at a real-time basis. Examples are Video telephony, MCC (Mobile Created Content) and LBS (Located-Based Service)-based map service.

Video telephony and videoconferencing enable mobile users to conduct face-to-face communications with each other. MCC results from the interactions among mobile users who create and share video and/or photo contents.” For example, CNN (Cable News Network) iReport allows users to interact directly with the TV station by providing stories, pictures, and videos through the mobile device (See Figure 3).

Animated-Based VE

Animated-Based Second Life VE is an immersive experience formed by directly interacting with an animated 3D virtual world. Vividness is lower than interactive 2D/3D-based VE because animated 3D environment is artificially created rather than real-life 3D environment. However, interactivity of this VE is higher than any other VEs. In addition, animated-based VE approximates human beings’ behaviors more than other VEs do. Three types of animated VE can be classified as observational self (e.g., virtual tour), functional self (e.g., 3D games) and intelligence self (e.g., online simulation games such as the supply game and second life).

Figure 4 shows a swimming pool in a resort hotel as an example of observational self which can be depicted as experiencing 3D life only by watching an object. 3D environment is presented by 360° rotating, and scrolling up and down. Mobile 3D games can be classified at “functional self” which can be described as experiencing 3D life by imitating only limited human’s movement. For example, the mobile 3D golf game provides walking and hitting only (see Figure 5).



Figure 3. A Snapshot of iReport.

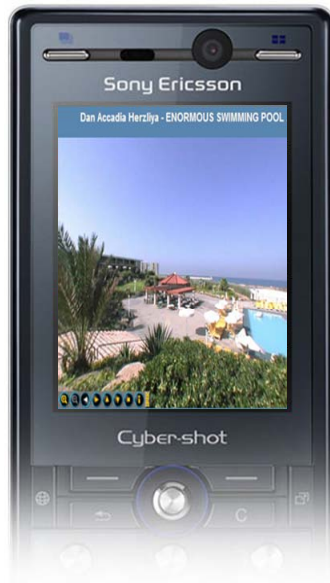


Figure 4 Virtual Tour in front of a Resort Swimming Pool



Figure 5. Mobile 3D Golf Game.

However, the 3D mobile game, “Supple,” is different from the golf game (see Figure 6). The game, powered by breakthrough artificial intelligence technology, is about building relationships, shopping, making money and getting ahead at work. In “Supple,” characters really speak and are engaged in dialogs with a lot of fun. This is named as “intelligent self” which can be described as “living in 3D digital life world as animated selves.” These animated selves imitate human-like behaviors, such as walking, touching, and speaking to one another. As shown in Figure 7, the Second Life is another 3D virtual world entirely built and owned by its residents. Since opening to the public in 2003, it has grown explosively and today is inhabited by a total of 9,595,369 residents from around the globe (Linden Research Inc., 2007).

APPLICABLE ISSUES OF V-TOURISM TO DMOS

Destination marketing organizations (DMOs, such as National/Regional/State Tourism Organizations) are mainly responsible for boosting the local economy through destination promotion and product development, and cooperation with local businesses, as well as making destination visitors satisfied with their travel experiences. To achieve such goals, it is inevitable to adopt various information technologies (ITs) which will result in cost reduction and efficient marketing operations. In particular, considering the emerging markets such as increased individual tours and the fast-growing IT-savvy consumer markets (e.g., mobile consumer and Generation Y markets), DMOs should make a conscious effort to gain competencies in adopting and understanding the mobile platform for tourism purposes. However, DMOs seem to lag behind the advanced mobile technologies that will likely create value for a destination by various mobile means to enhance travel experiences. This lack of investment in preparing for mobile or virtual tourism may be due to either situational or fundamental factors such as short of internal

resources for innovation (e.g., adequate finance and/or highly-skilled employees), limited supportive roles constrained by other budgetary prioritizations, or simply immature IT infrastructure for mobile application. Only few DMOs can provide mobile travelers with virtual-oriented tourism because better-equipped mobile services (e.g., HSDPA) have not been established yet.



Figure 6. Animated 3D-based Mobile Supply Game.



Figure 7. Animated 3D-based Second Life.

Even with possible limitations, DMOs need to envision how to maximize their current innovative competencies in adopting mobile or “virtual” technologies. Since DMOs’ innovative levels vary, different strategies for implementing mobile services should be taken into consideration. Various mobile technologies are presented in Figure 8 based on different level of DMOs’ innovativeness and mobile user typology. DMOs at the low innovative level should focus on developing simple mobile applications: verbal-based VE (Category 1) and still pictorial-based VE (Category 2). Verbal-focused mobile applications are preferred by both utilitarian and hedonic travelers. Text-based SMS and text chat can be persuasive for utilitarian. Mobile text chat can be also preferred by hedonic travelers. Even though Category 2 requires higher innovative level than Category 1, DMOs in 2G mobile infrastructure, can provide MMS

and MPM. Hedonic mobile travelers enjoy pictorial-based VE more than utilitarian mobile travelers do.

2.75G (e.g., EDGE and EGPRS) and 3G (e.g., WCDMA, UMTS and HSDPA) provide Categories 3, 4 and 5 with a high-quality streaming (e.g., 3D videos and video telephony). If DMOs have well-established IT infrastructure, three categories of virtual experience can be all provided through mobile applications. Category 3 is non-interactive 3D VE which consists of mobile video message and mobile TV. Those mobile applications can create richer experience for hedonic mobile travelers compared to Categories 1 and 2. Mobile applications in Category 4 can attract more utilitarian mobile travelers than hedonic because pictures or videos taken can be considered as personally meaningful messages to mobile travelers rather than just entertaining ones. Therefore, these applications (e.g., UCC) may be more attractive to the utilitarian than the hedonic. Category 5 can make mobile travelers more immersive to the virtual world and entertained than any other groups. Hedonic mobile users are more likely to prefer entertaining experience (e.g., Second Life virtual world) to cognitive-oriented one (e.g., text-based messages).

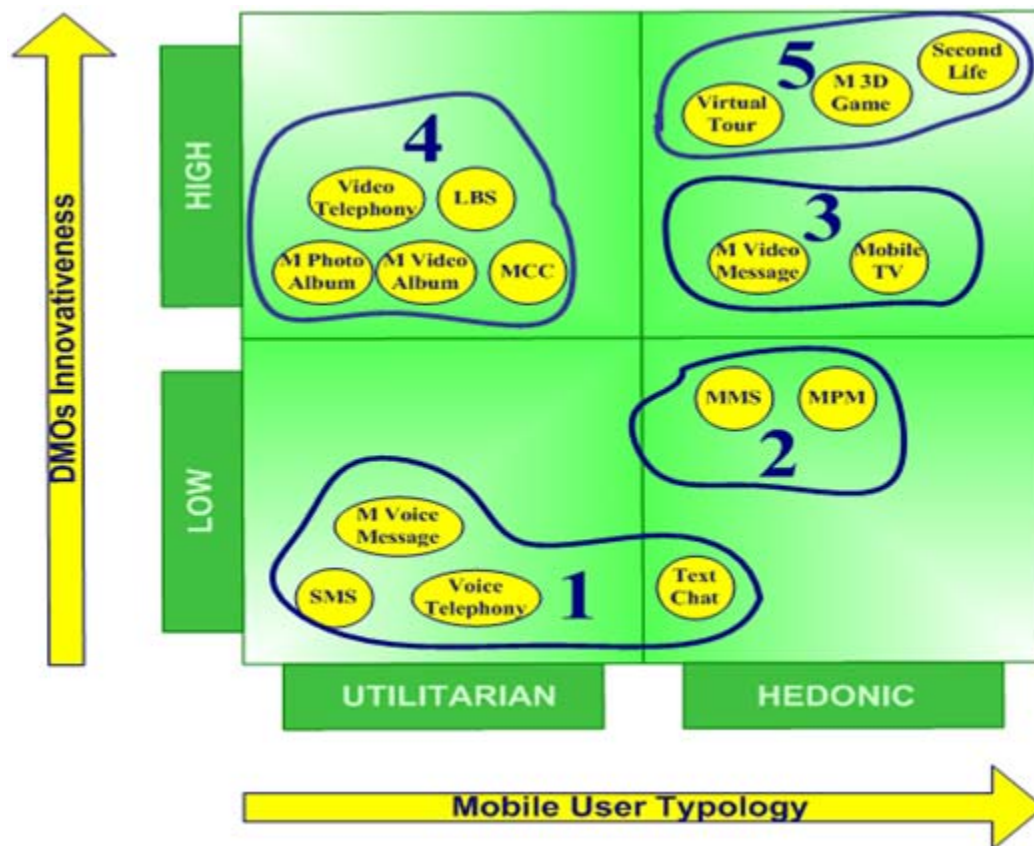


Figure 8. Customized Mobile Applications by Innovation Level of DMOs and Mobile User Typology

Regarding the destination choice process of mobile travelers, DMOs need to understand how to apply their own mobile strategies to augment the value-added travel experience for

mobile travelers. In terms of VEs discussed in this study, V-Tourism requires that tourists make a destination choice based on the extent to which virtual travel experience can be achieved by using IT-based applications. Therefore, the applicable issues arise: what roles VEs play and how mobile applications can add the value to tourists' travel experience pre-trip, en-route, and post-trip. Figure 9 summarizes various V-Tourism situations across three phases of touring a destination.

V-Tourism				
VEs	Tour	Pre-Trip Phase	En-route Phase	Post-Trip Phase
Verbal-Based VE		Destination Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMS Pushing Advertising Alert 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Chatting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voice telephony • Receiving SMS
Pictorial-Based VE		Destination Information Search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downloading Photos from mobile communities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receiving Multimedia Message Service
Non-Interactive 3D-Based VE		Destination Information Search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downloading videos from mobile communities 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downloading Video streaming
Interactive 2D/3D-Based VE		Destination Information Search <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Created Content (e.g Mobile Blogs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LBS-based Navigation • Video Telephony 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MCC
Animated 3D-Based VE		Destination choice alternatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual Tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile 3D Games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animated Second life

Figure 9 V-Tourism Destination Choice Process

- Pre-trip phase: Verbal-based VE helps tourists be aware of the destination through SMS promotion messages. Then, tourists actively seek travel information through UCC by watching destination photos and videos uploaded by other travelers. If more reliable information is needed, mobile travelers can have a mobile chat with others who visited the destination in mobile travel communities. When comparing alternative destinations, 3D based virtual tour can provide a pre-taste for a destination.
- En-route phase: When mobile travelers arrive at the destination, LBS-based navigation is a necessity to find roads, attractions or restaurants. Mobile travelers can enjoy the destination through real-time video mobile phones. During a break, their boredom can be forgotten by playing mobile 3D games.
- Post-trip phase: All VEs can reinforce mobile travelers' experience by stimulating their memories. DMOs can continue to provide customized special events or promotions

through voice telephony, SMS or MMS. Travelers leave their memories on UCC communities. If they want to experience a previous travel, 3D-virtual Second Life world allows them to meet and talk in a host community.

SUMMARY & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The concept of virtual experience is generally confined to mediated 3D environment. However, the current study expands use of virtual experience to various mobile-mediated presentation formats (e.g., text, photos, 3D and animation) on a real-time interaction basis. Some mobile travelers can virtually experience a destination by listening to mobile narratives. Others can feel like being in the destination through mobile text chat in mobile communities. Mobile-mediated virtual experience can be classified with five categories as follows: verbal-based VE (e.g., SMS, mobile text chat and mobile voice message), still pictorial based VE (e.g., MMS and MPM), non-interactive 3D-based VE (e.g., mobile TV and mobile video message), interactive 2D/3D-based VE (e.g., MCC, LBS and video telephony) and animated-based second life VE (e.g., virtual tour, mobile 3D games and animated Second Life).

Based on these categories, the authors explored how DMOs can confront with a variety of VEs. The innovativeness of DMOs can be influenced by situational determinants such as readiness of IT infrastructure, budget availability, and human resources. Nevertheless, DMOs need to approach mobile travelers by optimizing their current innovative competencies. If DMOs have a lower level of innovation with 2G mobile-based infrastructure available, verbal-based VE or pictorial-based VE can be provided for mobile travelers through SMS or MMS. On the other hand, DMOs that are highly innovative with 2.75G or 3G mobile capabilities can provide non-interactive, interactive, and animated 3D virtual experience to different mobile segments according to their needs.

Regarding V-tourism process, value-added mobile services through DMOs' innovative capacity should be strategically considered to enhance mobile travelers' awareness of a destination, satisfy travel experience, and create destination loyalty. Therefore, the authors recommend further research as follows:

- Measurement development for five VE constructs through content analysis, Delphi studies, and cross-culture confirmatory studies.
- Developing mobile-mediated VE communication model to examine the mobile travelers' responses to VEs.
- Examining pricing sensitivity to use of mobile services so that the mobile business model can be practically developed.
- Designing optimal combination of mobile applications within travelers' acceptable price ranges, which allows DMOs to fully utilize mobile/virtual channels for marketing purposes.

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AFFECTIVE IMAGE CONGRUENCE BETWEEN DESTINATIONS AND THEIR SLOGANS

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ABSTRACT

In an effort to position their brands with a desirable image and to increase awareness among tourists, marketers of tourist destinations have been trying to create and promote their destination slogans. Numerous branding researchers have noted that slogans can be a very efficient element in branding a product with a core image of its destination. This study examines similarities and differences between images, the emotive feelings towards a destination and its slogan. Russel and Pratt's four affective adjectives were used to measure emotive feelings. Multi-dimensional Scaling analysis was utilized to visualize the relative locations of destinations and their slogans, and emotive distances between them. This study provides several practical implications for destination marketers for effectively positioning their brand images and increasing brand awareness. The study enriches the existing body of literature on affective destination image and on branding slogans.

KEYWORDS: *Affective image; MDS (Multi-dimensional Scaling); Destination Slogans.*

INTRODUCTION

Destination marketers have been actively creating campaign slogans to build brand equity, to distinguish themselves from competing destinations and to connect emotionally with their targeted consumers, '100% New Zealand', 'I love NY', and 'Amazing Thailand' are some examples of such attempts. As an important area of brand management, promotional advertising slogans are a powerful tool for destinations at various levels, that is, countries, states or cities.

Destination marketers have spent significant amounts of their budgets creating and promoting slogans.

Slogans are defined as ‘short phrases that communicate descriptive or persuasive information about a brand’ (Supphellen and Nygaardsvik, 2002). Slogans can be “an extremely efficient, shorthand means to build brand equity” (Keller, 1993). According to Keller, a slogan can be a useful ‘hook’ or ‘handle’ for consumers to understand the meaning of the brand and can facilitate brand differentiation by giving a brand an identity. He noted that brand elements should carry a stable, clear and distinctive theme in order to provide strong support for a brand. In this sense, slogans can be regarded as one of the most efficient brand elements when destinations brand themselves with cohesive and impressive slogans. Some destination slogans are dynamic and have generally been deemed very effective for branding destinations, while others do not generate nearly as much impact and fall short of expectations. Supphellen and Nygaardsvik (2002) noted that destination brands are much more complex than consumer brands, in the sense that they originate from a mixture of personal experiences with people, culture, social, political and economic conditions. Hawes, Taylor, & Hampe (1991) indicated that destinations’ promotional campaigns are typically organized around a central advertising theme or slogan. For example, “What Happens Here, Stays Here.” is a destination slogan created by the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. It is an attempt to capture the emotional theme of the city’s way of life as a place where all types of vice might take place (Greco, 2004).

Hence, the main focus of this study was to measure personal experiences with destination slogans by soliciting consumers’ emotional responses to such slogans. In order to examine whether a particular slogan effectively presents an implicative image of its destination, the study evaluates the current image of slogans and destinations with a consistent measurement scale. This study tests and compares consumers’ emotive responses towards a destination slogan and the affective components of a destination image. The test is unique in that most studies of destination image deal typically with cognitive/perceptual image. By contrast, this study examines destination slogans with the same measurement as with those of affective image, thus revealing the congruence of emotional dimensions between destinations and slogans.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Destination Image

An integral component of brand is brand image. Brand image plays a significant role in building strong brand equity for destinations. Brand image has been defined as ‘perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory’ (Keller, 1993). During last few decades, destination image has become one of the most prevalent subjects for academicians as well as practitioners. According to Beerli and Martin (2004), there exist a general concurrence about the connotation of the role of destination image in the process of decision making and product choice, resulting in increasing number of tourists visiting destinations. Despite the importance of destination image, establishing an exact concept of the image in tourism area is awkward due to the ‘holistic’ characteristics of a “destination product”.

The destination image has both cognitive and affective components. The former refers to the individual's knowledge or belief about destination and the latter involves the individual's emotional feelings toward the destination. This notion is supported by theories from environmental psychology. According to Proshonsky, Fabian, and Kaminoff (1983), people develop both cognitive and affective responses and attachments to environments and places. Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) reviewed previous studies in environmental psychology and confirmed this proposition and indicated that previous researchers focused either the cognitive or affective (Russel, 1980; Russel and Pratt, 1980; Russel, Ward and Pratt, 1981) components of image.

Echtner and Ritchie (1991) noted that most of previous destination image studies were conducted by researchers with a solid preference of cognitive components. Echtner and Ritchie concluded that the less tangible components of destination image or the difficult-to-measure psychological characteristics were often excluded in destination image studies. In their study, the authors proposed a model which includes holistic environmental aspects in measurable setting. The authors presented the common/unique dimension of destination image, also dividing those into two different attributes which are functional and psychological respectively. The study attempted to represent both affective and cognitive factors by combining common-unique attributes with functional-psychological. For instance, the common functional attributes include price, climate or types of accommodation while the common psychological attributes include friendliness of locals, beauty of landscape. The unique functional attributes can include icons or special events of destination, while an example of the unique psychological attributes can be feelings associated with religious places or historic places.

In addition, researchers such as Dobni and Zinkhan (1990), Gartner (1993) and Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) also noted that measuring simply objective attributes or features of destinations is inadequate to study complexity of destination image and may cause some problems for conceptualizing and measuring images. Ross (1994) found that the only affective variable used in most of previous destination image studies is 'friendliness of locals'. Jenkins (1999) argued that it is problematic that researchers were obligated to look at the attributes singularly although destination images are 'holistic' representations of a place. Also, several researchers acknowledge the interrelation, as a result of image formation, between rational and emotional images of tourists toward destinations, namely cognitive (perceived) image and affective (emotional) images (Holbrook, 1978; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Beerli and Martin, 2004). It is commonly believed that affective evaluation depends on cognitive evaluation and the affective response is a function of the cognitive response.

Affective Image Components

Despite the insufficient attention to the affective/emotional components, several researchers have attempted to identify affective components to overcome difficulties of measuring psychological characteristics of destinations. The affective structure developed by Russel and his colleagues (Russel 1980; Russel and Pratt 1980; Russel, Ward, and Pratt 1981) has been dominantly adapted to these tourism studies. The researchers' Circumplex Model of Affect (Figure 1) proposed that 28 affective responses to environment such as happy, satisfied, bored, afraid, angry etc. can be classified into four different dimensions being divided by two

basic orthogonal scales; pleasant-unpleasant and arousing-sleepy. Also the model presented two other pairs of variables; exciting-gloomy and relaxing-distressing, which are orthogonal scales in between pleasant and arousing scales. The structure proposed by Russel and his colleagues was initially proposed to measure affective responses to physical environment and affective components were separated from perceptual or cognitive components to better understand the assessment of physical environments. The authors dealt with affective responses in 323 places where people could perceive directly such as a shop, airport and bathroom etc. Due to the limitation of the study that environments used in their examination are not indirectly perceived spaces (large-scale places) but environments that are directly perceived, several researchers later on have tried to expand and adapt this affective structure to larger-scale environment.

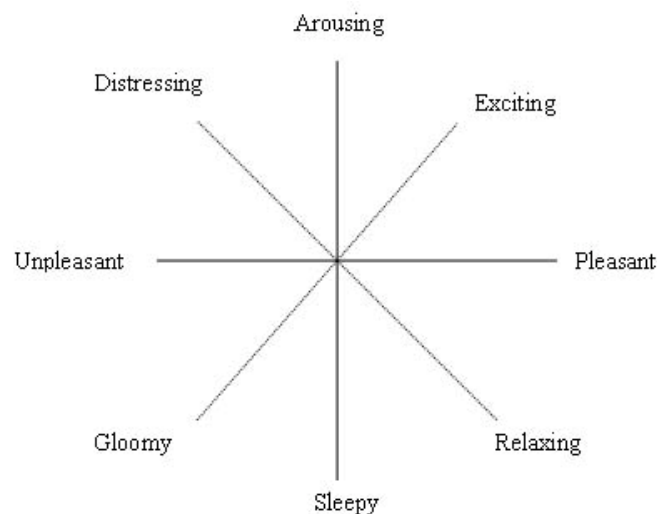


Figure 1 A Circumplex Model of Affect (Russel and Pratt, 1980)

Hanyu (1993) confirmed Russel and his colleagues' dimensions by identifying affective dimensions such as pleasure, arousal and excitement based on their empirical evidences derived from a destination image study in Tokyo. Walmsley and Jenkins (1993) found that destination image of New South Wales was narrowed down to two constructs by repertory grid analysis, and the constructs were equivalent to Russel's two dimensions of pleasure and arousal.

Based on extensive literature review, Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) posited that two dimensions of pleasure and arousal are steady and reliable over a series of disciplines. They also examined whether Russel and his colleagues' proposed affective response structure is applicable to environments of tourism destinations and explored the usefulness of the approach in studying affective images of tourism destinations. Baloglu and Brinberg analyzed 11 Mediterranean countries with proposed affective structure using Multi-dimensional Scaling analysis and confirmed that this structure can be converted to tourism destination image study.

Branding Slogans

The importance of slogan has captured attention both from marketers and researchers for a long period of time. Marketers put in considerable amount of financial resources to create and

to promote brand slogans (Mathur and Mathur, 1995). Slogan is regarded as a core element contributing to both brand awareness and brand image, and thereby brand equity (Keller, 1998). Researchers treat the effectiveness of slogan as a key factor of successful branding. According to Reece, Bergh and Li (1994), the primary purpose of using slogan is to recap the brand's core image and to give a continuous message for promotional activities. Dahlen and Rosengren (2004) also found that previous studies describe slogans as valuable ingredient in establishing strong brand equity. Pryor and Brodie (1998) noted that effective slogans induce positive evaluations and belief toward products among consumers.

In addition, brand image effect is considered as consumers' perception about a brand associated with their memory. Supphellen and Nygaardsvik (2002) concluded that slogans should be associated with the most desirable image to build brand equity with strong and distinctive brand image. Hence, in order to improve brand awareness, slogans need to be associated with brand image. In other words, slogans exist within brand that is uniquely connected with a certain claim (Reece et al., 1994; Law, 2002). According to Harris, Trusty, Bechtold, and Wasinger (1989), consumers tend to memorize better an inferred statement than the exact phrase. This phase is extended to brand slogan study conducted by Dahlen and Rosengren (2004). Those authors argues "slogans are more easily recalled than brands" They also found that it may has negatively affect on brand if a weak slogan is assigned to a strong brand and has positive effect if a strong slogan is given to a weak brand when the slogan transport a brand equity.

Destination Slogans

The importance of destination slogans has been emphasized by a number of tourism researchers. However, literatures specifically on destination slogans are quite limited. Supphellen and Nygaardsvik (2002) developed 'a simple normative model' to test country brand slogans and used it to examine a new slogan created for Norway. This study is sensational in terms that the researchers not only focused on slogan identification for brand awareness test, they also tried to examine perceive fit between destination and slogan with a perspective of consistence in destination image. Supphellen and Nygaardsvik (2002) noted that the similarity between the content of slogan and stated purpose of destination brand is important and expected to strengthen the association of destination image.

Other destination slogan studies have dealt with unique selling points (USPs) of state-level slogans (Richardson & Cohen, 1993; Lee, Cai & O'Leary, 2005). USP was initially developed as criteria to test advertising slogans. Richardson and Cohen expanded USP to evaluate 46 states' slogans with seven levels; from level 0 (No proposition) to level 4b (Unique selling proposition) and found that it is difficult for state slogans to present USPs because states contain cultural and geographical diversity stemmed from different composing elements. Recent study of Lee et al. (2006) adapted criteria of USP with content analysis for state slogans of 50 states in the U.S. in an attempt to define the USPs and market positioning strategy through online marketing. The researchers identified that most of slogans belonged to following categories; "1) Buy us because we are good, 2) Common attribute-based, 3) Unique attribute-focused" and they concluded that slogans are carriers that deliver a steady theme/image of destination and also one of the best ways to effectively deliver characteristics and personality of destination to tourists.

They also indicated that tourism slogan is one of the easiest and most effective brand builders in building the brand equity with brand awareness and brand image.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected through an online survey. Male and female college students from a major mid-western university were invited to participate on voluntary basis. The subjects were asked to evaluate their emotional feelings towards a number of destinations and slogans. The advertising slogans of five cities and five corresponding states in the USA were tested as samples. Tourism destinations in the USA were based on the rank, 'Top 100 Metro Areas Tourism GMP from 2000 to 2002', provided by the DRI-WEFA company. The report includes the top 100 cities with ranking criteria based on Tourism Gross Metro Product. The rationale behind selecting popular destinations was to control the level of subject awareness of sampled destinations by providing slogans that have been exposed sufficiently to subjects through their prior travel experience and exposure to promotional channels such as media. Slogan samples were collected from the official websites of destination's Convention and Visitors Bureau or from the encyclopedia website, '[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List of U.S. state slogans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_slogans)'.

Three experts in tourism marketing examined the sampled pairs of cities, states, and their slogans, in order to select five cities, their corresponding states and slogans from the pool of the samples yielded. After careful thought, 5 pairs of city, state and their 10 slogans were collected (Table 1)

Table 1 City and State Slogans

<i>City</i>	<i>Slogan</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Slogan</i>
Las Vegas	<i>What Happens Here, Stays Here</i>	Nevada	<i>Wide Open</i>
Chicago	<i>City of the Big Shoulders</i>	Illinois	<i>Mile After Magnificent Mile</i>
Los Angeles	<i>LA's the place</i>	California	<i>Find Yourself Here</i>
Dallas	<i>Live Large. Think Big</i>	Texas	<i>It's Like a Whole Other Country</i>
Boston	<i>The Hub of the Universe</i>	Massachusetts	<i>Make It Yours</i>

Procedure

Participants in this experiment are likely to be aware of the sample destinations in the USA to some extent. Hence, the subjects consisted of American students, namely domestic as opposed to international students. In addition, participants were all undergraduate students, so as

to reduce demographic differences. A total of 265 domestic students attending a major mid-western university in the USA were recruited through e-mail invitations. Subjects were asked to participate in the web-based survey on a voluntary basis.

The survey design was modified after the pretest. First, the author combined two different groups into one, so as to avoid possible bias which may occur as a result of the different characteristics of the two respondents groups. In order to combine two survey questionnaires into one, the author assigned a random order to question sections and sub-questions (Figure 2).

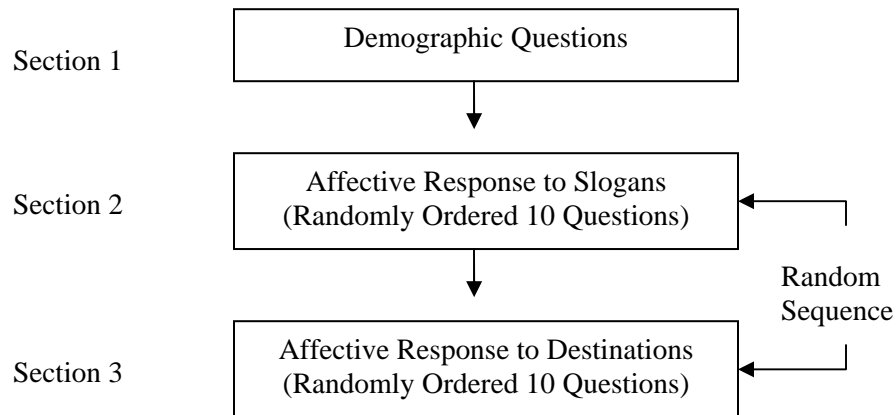


Figure 2 Survey Design.

Respondents were assigned two different sequences of question sets. On the main page of the survey website, responders were guided automatically either to the ‘Section 1-2-3’ or ‘Section 1-3-2’ sequence. HTML code was generated for this random binary division. The purpose of the random binary sequence was to minimize the difference in the size of data set, which may occur, depending on number of lost data from the two different groups. The aim of the random sequencing was to minimize the effect of cognition overload, bearing in mind that measures used for affective response to both destination and slogan are identical.

In Section 1, four demographic questions were given, to confirm whether a respondent is an undergraduate student and a domestic one, and to ask for age and gender. In Section 2, respondents evaluated their emotional/affective feelings towards 10 randomly-ordered destination slogans. The purpose of the random ordering was to equalize possible effects of cognition overload. On each question page, respondents marked, on 7-point Likert-type scales, Russel and Pratt’s (1980) four adjectives Unpleasant (1)-Pleasant(7), Exciting (1)-Gloomy(7), Sleepy(1)-Arousing(7), and Relaxing(1)-Distressing(7). The reason for reversing the order for the Exciting-Gloomy and Relaxing-Distressing scales was to avoid respondents answering with similar points for all items, based on their overall feelings. Previously, the affective scales used for the pretest all had negative feelings on the left side (1 point) and positive feelings on the right (7 point). In addition, respondents were able to proceed to the next question only after they had answered all questions. In Section 3, respondents gave their emotional/affective feelings towards 10 randomly-ordered destinations with the same scales and design used in Section 2.

Multi-dimensional Analysis

The data sets were analyzed using Multi-dimensional Scaling, specifically, the (MDS) ALSCAL statistical analysis tool from SPSS. MDS is a useful analytical tool that generates distances and relative locations on one, two, or three-dimensional scales. A total of 10 slogans with four adjectives (pleasant-unpleasant, relaxing-distressing, arousing-sleepy, and exciting-gloomy) were analyzed, so as to reveal each slogan's relative location and to measure the relative distance between slogans and destinations. For this analysis, the technique from Baloglu and Brinberg (1997) was administered. First, all scores were reversed, so that positive scales had smaller values while negative scales had larger values. A mean score for each of the 10 slogans and 10 destinations was computed with 4 different scales. The two-dimensional chart was then generated by estimating converted data sets, showing relative locations of each of the 10 slogans in a two-dimensional space. Also, MDS yielded relative distances among all stimuli, namely slogans and destinations.

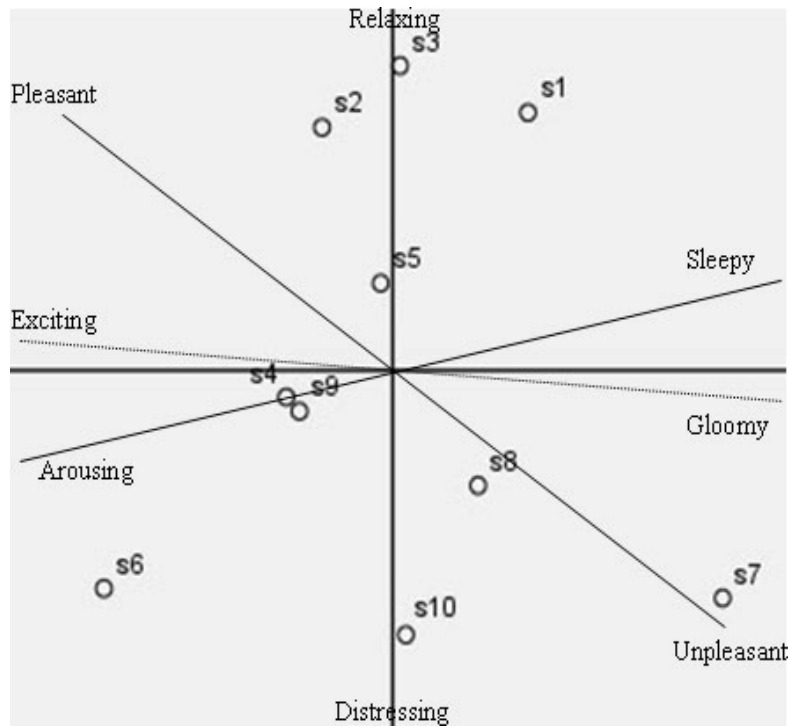
ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The data initially consisted of survey questionnaires obtained from 265 domestic undergraduate students at a major mid-western university. After eliminating 51 incomplete or blocked (subjects who didn't fulfill the demographic criteria) questionnaires, 214 usable questionnaires were subjected to analysis. The median age was 21 and the gender composition 48.6% male and 51.4% female.

Affective Image of Destination Slogan

The data were analyzed by means of the MDS ALSCAL program in terms of a perceived map layout of destinations and slogans. First, the mean values of each of the four affective scales formed the input data for the MDS analysis. Each of the four mean values was analyzed to estimate relative distances and locations between slogans (stimuli) and also to plot on two-dimensions by the MDS.

Figure 3 shows the MDS outputs. As shown in the figure, the affective locations of slogans have the same circular order as the structure developed by Russel and Pratt (1980). Moreover, the angle between relaxing-distressing and exciting-gloomy was very close to 90°. However, the angle between pleasant-unpleasant and arousing-sleepy was not close to 90°. Overall, the result of the multidimensional scaling indicated that Russel and Pratt's A Circumplex Model of Affect could be applied roughly to measure the affective image of destinations slogans. As illustrated in Figure 3, destination slogans fell into different locations along with affective scales. 'What happens Here, Stays Here' was located between arousing and distressing, which means that respondents felt emotionally that the slogan was arousing and slightly distressing (rather than relaxing). 'Find Yourself Here' was closely located to relaxing, indicating that respondents felt that the slogan was very relaxing and slightly exciting and less sleepy than arousing.



(S1: Wide Open, S2: Mile after Magnificent Mile, S3: Find Yourself Here, S4: It's like a Whole Other Country, S5: Make It Yours, S6: What Happens Here, Stays Here, S7: City of the Big Shoulders, S8: (The City)'s the place, S9: Live Large. Think Big, S10: The Hub of the Universe)

Figure 3. Slogans on the two-dimensional MDS Scale.

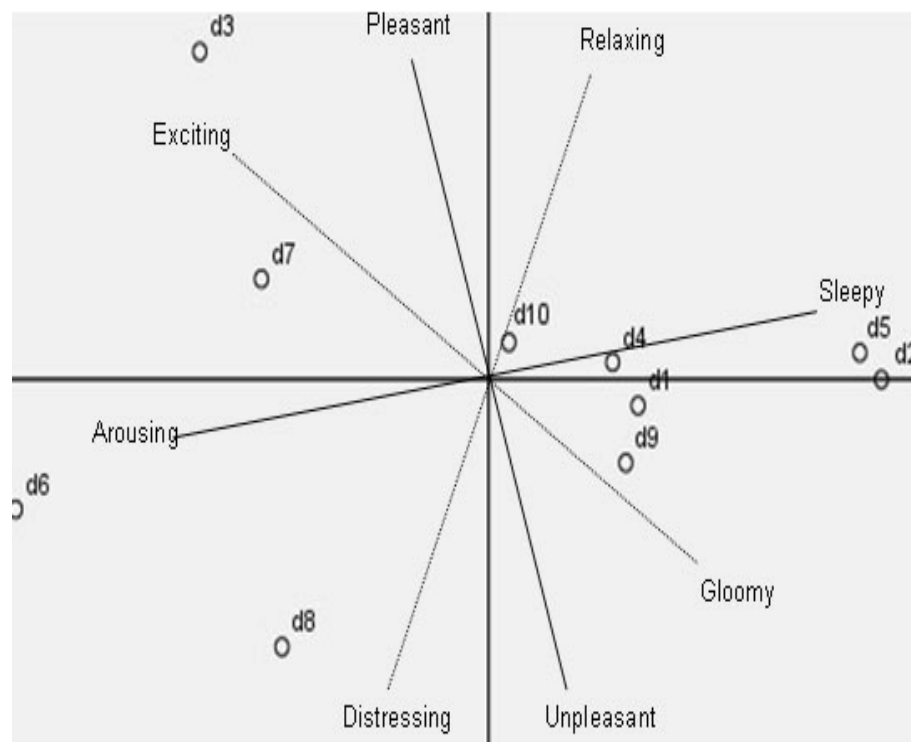
Giving the arousing-sleepy scale as a standard line, slogans on the upper side of the dimension are evaluated positively, while slogans on the lower side are negatively perceived. Slogans 'What Happens Here, Stays Here' (Las Vegas), 'It's Like a Whole Other Country' (Texas), 'Live Large, Think Big' (Dallas) and 'Mile after Magnificent Miles' (Illinois) were perceived relatively positively, while the slogans 'City of the Big Shoulders' (Chicago), 'Wide Open' (Nevada) and 'LA's The Place' (Los Angeles) were perceived relatively negatively. A Kruskal stress value (S-stress) of .00555 and the squared correlation coefficient (RSQ) of .99987 were configured. S-stress indicates the degree to which the derived estimates deviate from the original data, and RSQ indicates the squared correlation between the original data and derived distances (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997).

Affective Image of Destination

The affective image of destinations was evaluated using the same analytical method as that of slogans. As shown in Figure 4, the affective space of the destinations was strikingly identical to Russel and Pratt's A Circumplex Model of Affect. The angle between pleasant-unpleasant and arousing and sleep was very close to 90°, and the angle between exciting-gloomy and relaxing-distressing was significantly close to 90°. Also, the circular order of four adjectives was consistent with the Circumplex Model of Affect, which re-confirms that Russel and Pratt's affective scale can apparently be applied as a measure of affective image of tourist destinations.

The relative locations of destinations in Figure 4 can be interpreted as meaning that these destinations on the upper side of the arousing-sleepy scale (e.g. California, Chicago etc.) have a positive affective image, while those on the lower side (e.g. Los Angeles, Dallas etc.) have a relatively negative image.

It is interesting that respondents' negative feelings about destinations were mostly located closely to the gloomy scale, while negative feelings about slogans varied among four different negative feelings. This suggests that destinations that tourists felt negative about are perceived essentially as gloomy. A Kruskal stress value (S-stress) of .01412 and the squared correlation coefficient (RSQ) of .99907 were configured. An S-stress of .01412 can be regarded as moderate, and an RSQ of .99907 shows a very strong explanatory power.



(d1: Nevada, d2: Illinois, d3: California, d4: Texas, d5: Massachusetts, d6: Las Vegas, d7: Chicago, d8: Los Angeles, d9: Dallas, d10: Boston)

Figure 4. Relative locations of 10 destinations.

Distance of Affective Images

The MDS ALSCAL program was also used to generate relative distances (Euclidean Distance) between slogans and destinations. Figure 5 shows perceptual distances of feelings between destinations and slogans in two-dimensional space. The S-stress was .0187 (perfect-very good) and RSQ was .99945. Table 2 shows the distances between each of the slogans and the

corresponding destinations. The distance between Las Vegas and its slogan was measured, as they are closest to each other in terms of affective image, followed by Dallas and Texas.

Table 2. Distance of Affective Image between Slogan and Destination.

	Euclidean Distance
s1-d1	1.109
s2-d2	1.735
s3-d3	2.105
s4-d4	0.936
s5-d5	1.216
s6-d6	0.709
s7-d7	4.139
s8-d8	1.853
s9-d9	0.810
s10-d10	1.714

(S1: Wide Open, S2: Mile after Magnificent Mile, S3: Find Yourself Here, S4: It's Like a Whole Other Country, S5: Make It Yours, S6: What Happens Here, Stays Here, S7: City of the Big Shoulders, S8: (The City)'s the place, S9: Live Large. Think Big, S10: The Hub of the Universe; d1: Nevada, d2: Illinois, d3: California, d4: Texas, d5: Massachusetts, d6: Las Vegas, d7: Chicago, d8: Los Angeles, d9: Dallas, d10: Boston)

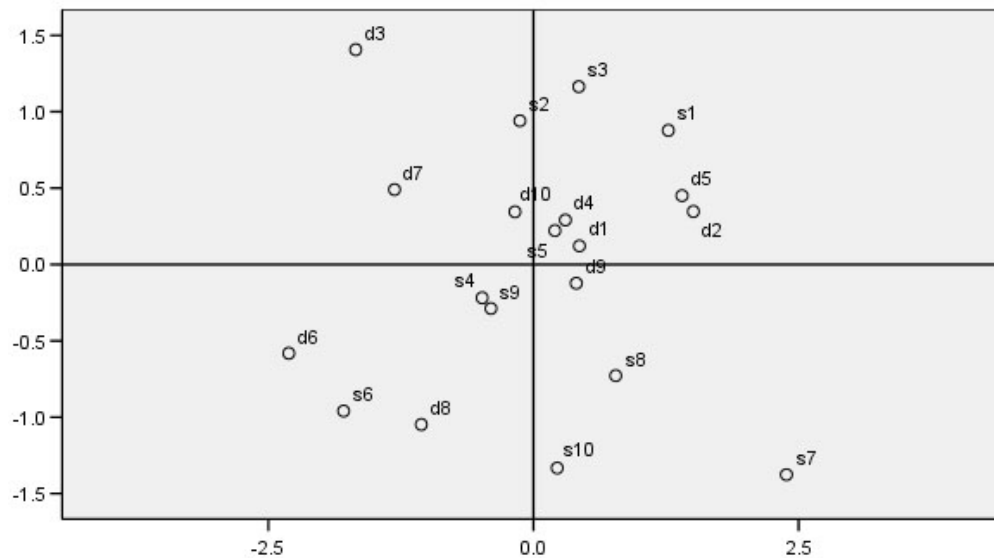


Figure 5. Distance of affective image; destinations-slogans (Euclidean Distance).

DISCUSSION AND LIMITATION

The results present affective image positions of 10 destinations in the USA and their slogans, based on Russel and Pratt's four affective scales. The perceptual map generated by using multi-dimensional analysis shows that those destinations and slogans have affectively distinctive locations and that the affective image of destination and slogan falls into four scales, each representing different emotions (pleasant-unpleasant, exciting-gloomy, arousing-sleepy, and relaxing-gloomy).

The findings from this study enrich current insights into destination brand management, and provide new opportunities and ideas for destination marketers. The results show that affective images of American destinations and their slogans have distinctive positions, suggesting that destination marketers can identify their current image for the destination and slogan and position themselves with a desirable image and increased awareness. The affective image mapping using multidimensional analysis and affective scales provide insights to destination marketers, through a visual comparison of the perceptual position of their current destination image with those of their competitors. This approach should be useful in identifying images that destinations pursue or avoid. For instance, if a destination does not have distinctive brand components, but attempts to build a desirable brand image and awareness, the marketer can investigate affective images for their destination and competing destinations, so as to locate new market segments to penetrate, or methods of improving the penetration of existing segments. In addition, destinations marketers can understand image gaps between the destination and its slogan by analyzing perceived distances on Russel and Pratt's (1980) four affective scales. As indicated earlier in this paper, promoting slogans that carry similar themes relating to the particular destination is highly effective in raising brand awareness. This result suggests the appropriate focus for marketing/branding campaigns. Another practical contribution is that the study identified destinations with negative evaluations, and the affective perspectives were mostly positioned on gloomy scale. This implies that tourists have negative feelings towards a certain destination in the USA, particularly when they regard it as gloomy.

There are several limitations that need to be considered both in interpreting the results and in conducting future studies. First, this study used a student sample in order to ensure homogeneity and to control for possible noise such as travel experience, occupation, marital status, and income. Compared to the general consumer population, undergraduate students tend to be younger and have less travel experience. Second, the survey was conducted at particular area in a mid-west city in the USA. This could mean that subjects have a biased awareness of images among the specific sampled destinations. Future research could integrate these differences in awareness by conducting surveys in different places where subjects are familiar with each sample destination.

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MOTIVATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED FESTIVAL ATTENDEES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the motivations of the attendees to a community-based festival in the rural Midwest of the United States. Six motivational factors were identified from the visitor data collected at the festival. They were escape, novelty, nostalgia and patriotism, excitement, family togetherness, and socialization. Among them, escape was the most dominant motivation. When these motivation factors were examined in relation to the attendees' socio-demographic characteristics, some differences were observed. Females and males were motivated differently by the motivation of novelty, and nostalgia and patriotism. The desire of family togetherness was more important for visitors aged between 25 and 34, and for visitors with a high school diploma. The motivational factor of socialization was more important for older visitors than their younger counterparts.

KEYWORDS: *Festival Motivation; Rural Community; Escape, Socio-Demographic Characteristics.*

INTRODUCTION

Festivals and special events are known to play important role in destination development as attractions, image makers, animators of static attractions, and catalysts for other developments (Getz, 1991). In addition to the economic benefit from an increasing number of tourists, festivals and special events could also expand the tourist season of the destination (Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell, & Harris, 2002), provide cultural or educational opportunity, foster a feeling of

community pride (Mill & Morrison, 2002), help preserve sensitive natural or social and cultural environment, and contribute to sustainable development (Backman, Backman, Uysal, & Sunshine, 1995). According to a recent survey conducted by International Festival and Event Association (IFEA), the special events industry is estimated to include some one million regularly re-occurring events with significant economic impact globally (IFEA, 2006).

Festivals are growing diverse and competitive (Getz, 1997; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). From a marketing point of view, the festival must meet the needs and satisfy the expectations of the intended audiences. The dramatic growth in festival and special event tourism has been accompanied by a small but emerging literature on event-goers (Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). However, most of the studies have addressed the growth, economic impact and logistics of planning events and festivals (e.g., Chang, 2006; Gursoy, Kim, & Uysal, 2004) while the studies conducted on festival visitors and their motivation are sporadic (Li & Petrick, 2006). Crompton and McKay (1997) argued that there are at least three reasons for investing effort into better understanding the motivation of festival visitors: to design offerings based on the motives and expectations of festival visitors, to monitor visitors' satisfaction and retain repeaters, and to understand visitors' decision processes. Understanding the motivation of festival attendees will enhance festival production and marketing (Getz & Cheyne, 1997). The purpose of the current study is to explore the motivation of attendees to a community-based festival in rural area, based on a visitor survey conducted in Indiana in 2006.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first academic study on festival attendees' motivation was conducted by Ralston and Crompton in 1988 (Li & Petrick, 2006). In a profile study of visitors attending the Dickens on the Strand in Galveston, Texas, a set of 48 motivation statements generated from literature on leisure motivation were adopted. The statements covered the domains of stimulus seeking, family togetherness, social contact, meeting or observing new people, learning and discovery, escape from personal and social pressures, and nostalgia. Ralston and Compton attempted to identify market segments defined by origins, age, income, and family group type that shared similar motivations. But it was found that discrete segments did not exist, leading to the conclusion that the motivations dimensions were generic across all groups (Ralston & Crompton, 1988, in Getz, 1991).

Thereafter, there has been an emerging, yet small, body of literature on event and festival attendee's motivation. Some common motivation factors were identified across different festivals and events. Those factors included escape (e.g., Mohr, Backman, Gahan, & Backman, 1993; Schneider & Backman, 1996; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993), family togetherness (e.g., Formica & Murrmann, 1998; C. K. Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004; Yuan, Cai, Morrison, & Linton, 2005), and socialization (e.g., Chang, 2006; Formica & Uysal, 1996; C. Lee, 2000). Most of the studies adopted the scale developed by Uysal, Gahan, and Martin (1993); and a fairly consistent and practical research framework has been established (Li & Petrick, 2006). Nicholson and Pearce suggested that the tourism research community should take a more systematic and comprehensive approach that goes beyond the study of individual events to examine the broader characteristics of event tourism motivation per se, and to explore issues of greater generality

(Nicholson & Pearce, 2001). A comparative study was therefore conducted by Nicholson and Pearce with four events in New Zealand – two food and beverage festivals, an air show, and a country and music festival.

Despite the progress in the investigation of event goers' motivation, previous studies have been largely focused on mega events (e.g., C. K. Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004), or regional events (e.g., Yuan, Cai, Morrison, & Linton, 2005), while the community-based festivals in rural area, or the "home-grown" festival, remained unexplored. The term "home-grown" festival was borrowed from the typology developed by O'Sullivan and Jackson. According to the size of population, spatial geography, major theme, organizing drivers, key management group, and primary purpose for holding a festival, three types of festival were identified by O'Sullivan and Jackson. They are "home-grown" festival, "tourist-tempter" festival, and "big-bang" festival. The "home-grown" festival is essentially small scale, bottom-up and run by one or more volunteers for the benefit of the locality. It takes place in rural or semi-rural area with the primary goal of providing cultural and entertainment benefits for locals and visitors (O'Sullivan & Jackson, 2002).

Community-led in nature, the "home-grown" festivals are at great disadvantage in promoting themselves to potential and existing market, therefore requires a deliberate scrutiny to better satisfy the needs and wants of their target market. The purpose of the current study is to explore the motivation of visitors to a community-based festival. The specific research questions are: 1) What are the travel motivation of attendees to community-based festival? 2) How are the socio demographic characteristics influencing their motivation?

METHODOLOGY

Data for the current study were collected through on-site interview from a community-based event in Indiana from June 30th to July 4th, 2006. The festival was run by a group of volunteers since 1981. With very limited financial support from local government, the festival was primarily funded by donations and participation fee from vendors. The festival provides visitors with a variety of activities including firework and concert being the highlights. Adult visitors from outside the host community who were attending the festival were qualified as respondents. Most of the visitors were from within a 50 miles radius. A total of 280 usable questionnaires were collected during the course of the festival.

The survey instrument consisted of four parts. The first part collected demographic information of visitors to the festival. The second part included travel and trip characteristics of visitors. The visitors were also asked whether this is their first trip to this festival. The third part of the questionnaire was the media usage and information searching. The final part of questions measured visitors' motivations and perceptions. The questions on visitors' motivations about the festival were used in the current study. A set of thirty motivation items were initially generated from a review of previous studies pertaining to tourists' motivations to travel in general (Ralston & Crompton, 1988) or to attend festivals in particular (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Getz & Cheyne, 1997; Li & Petrick, 2006; Mohr, Backman, Gahan, & Backman, 1993; Nicholson & Pearce, 2001; Schneider & Backman, 1996; Scott, 1996; Uysal, Gahan, & Martin, 1993; Yuan,

Cai, Morrison, & Linton, 2005). Respondents were asked to evaluate each statement by rating it on a one to ten scale, with ten being the most appropriate.

RESULTS

Sample Profile

The socio-demographic and trip-related characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1. There were more female respondents than males, and more than 70% of the respondents were over 35 years old. Less than half of the respondents had a bachelor's degree or above and over 40% of them reported an annual household income of US \$60, 000 or above. Most of the respondents were day trippers came from within 50 miles of the host community, which differentiated community-based festival from mega event in that it attracts more day trippers from nearby communities (Getz, 1991). Over 66% of the visitors were attended the festival for multiple times.

Table 1. Socio-Demographic and Trip-Related Characteristics of the Respondents.

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender		Distance of Travel (miles)	
Male	44.5	1-9	27.7
Female	55.5	10-19	26.6
Education		20-39	23.6
Left high school before diploma	1.8	40-49	4.5
Earn a high school diploma	41.3	Over 50	17.5
Associate's degree	19.6	Number of Visits	
Bachelor's degree	23.2	First time	33.7
Master's degree	5.2	Multiple times	66.3
Doctorate	1.8	Length of Stay	
Household Income		Day trip	81.0
Under \$20,000	8.7	Overnight	19.0
\$ 20,000-39,999	8.7		
\$ 40,000-59,999	15.5		
\$ 60,000-79,999	15.8		
\$ 80,000-99,999	11.7		
Over \$100,000	12.8		

Motivation Construct

Table 2 shows the results of descriptive analysis of travel motivation. It was found that visitors were mostly motivated by festival specific reasons with seeing the firework, and celebrating the Independence Day with others being the top two reasons. Other important motivations included spending time with my family together, for a change of pace from everyday life, and having a change from daily routine.

The results from the exploratory factor analysis are shown in Table 3 with the reliability

test for each factor. Two rounds of factor analysis were conducted and the motivational item of sampling local food was deleted due to the low loading on either factor. This process resulted in a six-factor solution. These factors were labeled as escape, novelty, nostalgia and patriotism, excitement, family togetherness, and socialization, with escape being the dominant motivation for community-based festival attendees.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Travel Motivation.

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>
To see the firework	261	7.64
To celebrate the Independence Day with others	265	7.46
To spend time with my family together	262	7.42
For a change of pace from everyday life	264	7.37
To have a change from daily routine	264	7.33
To be with my friends	262	7.33
To enjoy the festival mood	264	7.29
To see the entertainment	263	7.18
Because I enjoy attending any festival	263	7.11
To get away from the demands of life	263	7.11
Because I thought the entire family would enjoy it	264	7.00
To sample the local food	263	6.99
To be with people who are enjoying themselves	264	6.98
To be with people who enjoy the same things I do	263	6.95
Thinking about good times I've had in the past	263	6.66
It offers excitement	262	6.58
To relieve boredom	264	6.50
To increase family kinship	260	6.48
Because it is stimulating and exciting	264	6.41
To relieve daily stress	263	6.38
Reflecting on past memories	263	6.30
To enjoy the festival crowds	259	6.28
To see new and different things	262	6.24
Because the festival is unique	263	6.10
Because of the variety of things to do and see in the festival	264	6.04
To experience new and different things	265	5.92
I am curious	263	5.84
To visit a place I can talk about when I get home	260	5.74
To see the rising of the Stars and the Stripes	255	5.70
To observe other people attending the festival	261	5.44
To participate in the games on the festival	257	5.16
To experience local customs and cultures	262	4.94
To increase my cultural knowledge	264	4.61

Escape refers to the desire of getting away from the demand of life and releasing daily

stress. The component of novelty indicates respondents' needs of experiencing new and different things. The nostalgia and patriotism refers to the desire of thinking about and reliving old good times. Some festival specific items were also loaded on this factor. Excitement represents the motivations of looking for exciting and stimulating experiences. Family togetherness represents visitors' desire of staying and doing something together with their family. Socialization refers to the motivation of staying with, or observing other people. All factors had a reliability of over 0.7.

Table 3. Motivation Factor of Community-Based Festival Attendees.

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Load- ing</i>	<i>Eigen- Value</i>	<i>Variance Explained</i>	<i>Alphas</i>
<i>Escape</i>		4.896	15.299	0.907
To get away from the demands of life	0.793			
To have a change from daily routine	0.790			
To relieve daily stress	0.750			
For a change of pace from everyday life	0.742			
To relieve boredom	0.699			
<i>Novelty</i>		4.587	14.334	0.905
To increase my cultural knowledge	0.777			
To experience local customs and cultures	0.741			
To experience new and different things	0.666			
To see new and different things	0.662			
Because of the variety of things to do and see in the festival	0.551			
Because the festival is unique	0.511			
I am curious	0.504			
To visit a place I can talk about when I get home	0.493			
<i>Nostalgia and Patriotism</i>		3.614	11.294	0.837
Thinking about good times I've had in the past	0.679			
To celebrate the Independence Day with others	0.637			
To participate in the games on the festival	0.630			
To see the firework	0.626			
Reflecting on past memories	0.586			
To see the rising of the Stars and the Stripes	0.478			
<i>Excitement</i>		3.071	9.597	0.852
To enjoy the festival crowds	0.709			
To see the entertainment	0.562			
Because I enjoy attending any festival	0.549			
Because it is stimulating and exciting	0.515			
To observe other people attending the festival	0.490			
To enjoy the festival mood	0.484			
It offers excitement	0.419			
<i>Family Togetherness</i>		3.003	9.384	0.868
To spend time with my family together	0.819			
Because I thought the entire family would enjoy it	0.760			
To increase family kinship	0.712			
<i>Socialization</i>		2.369	7.402	0.751
To be with people who are enjoying themselves	0.734			
To be with people who enjoy the same things I do	0.701			
To be with my friends	0.400			

Socio-demographic Influences.

Community-based festival attendees' motivations were examined in relation to their socio-demographic characteristics (Table 4). With few exceptions, the six motivational factors were common across different age, gender, income, and education groups of respondents. Age was found to be a significant indicator of the motivational factor of family togetherness and socialization. Visitors aged between 25 and 34 found the pursuit of enjoying family time very important when they made decision to attend the festival. For the motivation of socialization, the older the respondent, the more important this motivational factor was. Males and females were motivated to the festival differently with regard to the factor of novelty and nostalgia and patriotism. Males were motivated more by novelty reasons than females, while nostalgia and patriotism was more important for female visitors. Respondents with distinct educational background were also motivated to the festival differently for the factor of family togetherness. Visitors with a high school diploma considered enjoying family life as more important than other educational group. Income was found to be significant indicator for the motivational factor of socialization with visitors had an annual household income of US \$20,000-40,000 considered this as a more important desire than other income groups.

Table 4. Motivation and Socio-Demographic Characteristics (F).

<i>Motivation</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Education</i>	<i>Income</i>
Escape	0.001	0.994	0.385	1.225
Novelty	2.840**	0.993	1.016	1.506
Nostalgia and patriotism	2.946**	1.004	0.868	0.728
Excitement	0.012	1.083	1.058	1.452
Family togetherness	0.134	4.123*	1.031**	0.406
Socialization	0.042	2.238*	0.520	2.322*

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.1$

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this study were to explore the travel motivation of attendees to community-based festival, and to identify the influences of socio-demographic characteristics on their motivation. Six motivation factors were extracted from thirty-three measurement items. They are escape, novelty, nostalgia and patriotism, excitement, family togetherness, and socialization. The results revealed that escape was the dominant motivation for community-based festival attendees. The festival attendees' motivations differed to some degree by their socio-demographic characteristics.

The findings of this study contributed to the understanding of the market demand for festivals staged by rural communities. They should be useful for community leaders and festival organizers to effectively market the festival and better serve the needs of attendees. The findings should also afford the festival organizers to achieve synergy by working together with the area's

destination marketing organizations. The understanding of visitors' motivations is essential to identify the target market for the festival and the community and to develop positioning strategies. When such understanding is overlaid with visitors' socio-demographic characteristics, accessibility to the market demand will be greatly improved. The study was based on data collected from visitors attending one festival in the rural Midwest of the United States. As such, the practical use of the findings should be limited.

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THE ROLE OF POSTCARDS IN DESTINATION IMAGE DEVELOPMENT: AN EXAMPLE FROM ALANYA, TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

Traditional postcards are still used in many places around the world, both as souvenirs and greeting cards. The paper aimed to evaluate and analyze the content of contemporary postcards and the impressions they portray in developing an image of the popular seaside destination of Alanya, Turkey. The study sampled 15 postcard racks in a variety of sales outlets in the destination area, using an observation technique coupled with camera photography. The participant observations concluded that there was limited communication between the sellers and the buyers. The postcards displays were outside the stores and in most cases, buyers were informed the price of the postcards with a sign displayed on the rack. A content analysis of the postcards concluded that the postcards provided ambiguous multiple meanings for Alanya. The array of postcards analyzed had little impact on the development of the destination image and offered an unclear or even confusing meaning for Alanya. This was attributed to the fact that the majority of the postcards were associated with other well-known attractions or destinations in Turkey. In addition, the postcards portrayed other non-authentic representations of Alanya like a camel superimposed on several pictures, caricatures, or nonspecific photographs that may not necessarily be unique to Alanya or even Turkey. To enhance the destination image, it is necessary that local authorities, tourism industry leaders and operators work together in developing exclusive images of the specific destination. Their input should also be coordinated with the constituencies involved in the production, selling, and buying of postcards.

KEYWORDS: *Destination Image; Postcards; Qualitative Research; Turkey.*

INTRODUCTION

The traditional popularity of postcards can be attributed to their broad visual communication appeal. The glossy images of lakes, waterfalls, mountains or any other tourist attraction are designed and produced to be sent through the mail. Sending a postcard is an act of reinforcement of popular perceptions of place and an insight into both past and present geographies (Kuhlken, 2007).

A postcard is typically a rectangular piece of thick paper intended for writing and mailing without an envelope, and consequently at a lower postage rate than a letter. A postcard is usually printed by a private company, an individual, or an organization. The U.S. Postal Service defines a post card as a rectangular card, at least 3.5 inches high by 5 inches long and 0.007 inches thick (U.S. Postal Service, 2007).

Historically, the United States government prohibited private companies from calling their cards “postcards,” so they were referred to as “souvenir cards.” The first postcard in the U.S. was created in

1893 to promote the World's Columbian Exhibition in Chicago. Shortly thereafter, the U.S. government allowed printers to publish 1-cent postcards and writing was allowed only on the front side of these cards with the entire back dedicated to the address. In 1908, more than 677 million postcards were mailed in the U.S. (Wikipedia, 2007).

Post card printing went through various eras. The "linen card" era was between 1930-1945, when post cards were primarily printed on papers with a funny story or humorous content. The "photo chrome" era began in 1939, where the images on the postcards were generally based on colored photographs with glossy appearance (Wikipedia, 2007).

In 1894, British publishers were given permission by the Royal Mail to manufacture and distribute picture postcards that could be sent via post. Early postcards were pictures of famous landmarks, scenic views, photographs, or drawings of celebrities. With the popularity of train travel, the British seaside resorts have become popular tourist destinations that generated its own souvenir industry. In the early 1930s, cartoon-style provocative postcards became widespread with sales reaching 16 million a year. In the early 1950s, the newly elected conservative government decided on a crackdown on these postcards that were perceived as immoral. In the liberal 1960s, the stimulating postcards were revived and until today are considered a form of art (Wikipedia, 2007).

The hobby of collecting postcards has resulted in additional value being added to postcards, regardless their historical origin. Deltiology, the formal name in the U.S. for collecting postcard, is currently the third largest collectable hobby in the world, surpassing only by coin and stamp collecting (Shiloh postcards, 2007).

Taken from the Greek word, *deltion*, meaning a small picture or card (Kuhlken, 2007), Deltiology specialists divide postcards into five categories: (1) view cards that offer views of towns, resorts, buildings, streets and so on. (2) greeting cards, where holidays and special occasion greetings are printed on the view card (3) historical cards that are printed to commemorate events such as war, expositions, parades, coronations, etc. (4) art cards that depict original art or "Old Master" art reproductions and (5) photographic cards of destinations, people, or just objects. In many cases, the photos are altered through various techniques and become into original photographic art creations (Shiloh postcards, 2007).

Some argue, however, that the popularity of sending postcards from vacation destinations is declining due to the development of alternative visual and vocal means of communication that travelers can use from the vacation destination, in most cases instantly. A recent survey commissioned by the tour operator company *Thompson Holidays* indicated that "wish you were here" is more likely to be sent by a cellular phone text message than jotted on a postcard. The survey also indicated that more than 50% of respondents said that they intended to send fewer postcards in future, while 25% of respondents complained that postcards take too long to arrive. In addition, 14% claimed they had no time to write a card and 10% preferred to call rather than write (BBC News, 2003).

Despite the decline in prominence of traditional postcards, they continue to be a popular form of souvenir for travelers as well as economical means of communication. Available at any tourist destination along the way, at interstate stops, airports, hotels, attractions, drugstores, kiosks, or street vendors, postcards provide an icon of a "culture in a hurry" and have become commonplace signals that someone we know is traveling or just thinking about us (Kuhlken, 2007).

Today's postcards feature multiple interpretations of destination images. They also represent sequential snapshots of both the landscape's and society's changes over time. Contemporary postcards communicate information about trends and cultural shifts and have also been used as vehicles for diffusion of new ideas and of artistic styles of expression (Kuhlken, 2007).

With the growing advance of electronic communication a new form of postcards emerged, often referred to as e-cards. These e-cards offered for free by web sites and tourist destination management organizations for e-mail. More recently, a number of software companies started developing a range of video postcards that will allow users to send personal video messages from any location. Users will receive a personalized electronic mail with a connection to their attraction's web page (Attraction Management (editorial), 2006).

In spite of the advance in technology, traditional postcards are still used in many places around the world, both as souvenirs and greeting cards; Postcards are fun to send and to receive, and therefore show little sign of disappearing from popular culture. It is therefore necessary to take a closer look at the role of contemporary postcards in the context of destination image development and to investigate their marketing and promotion impact on current and potential tourists to the destination area they represent. The goal of this paper is to evaluate and analyze the content of contemporary postcards and the images they portray in developing the image of a popular tourist destination.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Postcard Research in the Context of Tourism and Travel

The role of postcards within the context of tourism has been examined in the literature, mainly from sociological, anthropological, political, and historical perspectives. Most studies applied content analysis and looked at the past and present representation of destinations. For example, Burns (2004) analyzed several colonial era postcard pictures from Arabia and pointed out to the visual discourse on power and the interrelationship between history and politics. He concluded that the postcard unambiguous presentations actually provided vague multiple meanings (Burns, 2004).

Some studies looked at the human representation in postcards and the messages associated with these images. Thurlow et al. (2005) studied the image of ethnic minorities in South Africa and Finland and concluded that the postcards communicated "intense exoticization and commodified cultural representation." Mellinger (1994) examined photographic postcards of African Americans during the 1893-1917 period. The analysis revealed that photographers used specific iconographic strategies to culturally sketch black bodies' distinctiveness. Further analysis of the messages written by the senders suggested images of the mystical U.S. Old South or making an attempt at humor.

Markwick's study (2001) of postcards from Malta concluded that while certain stereotypical images of Malta were sustained, the image presented in postcards has diversified the destination's image. This was justified because tourists attempted to penetrate "backstage realities." The coexistence of these two groups of images indicated the increasingly sophistication and complex motivations of contemporary tourism (Markwick, 2001).

The study concluded that the meaning communicated by the postcard images may be complex and multifaceted and require methodical "unpacking" to reveal and understand the messages. The meanings may be subject to questioning and/or misrepresentation. Furthermore, the images or motifs represented in the postcards may also be subject to change as they are related to trends in the evolution of the tourist destination. As tourists' motivations and desires become more sophisticated and complex, consumers demand the production of images that expose more of the intimate and even controversial realities of local life (Markwick, 2001).

Yüksel and Olcay (2007) argued that in spite of the popularity of vacation postcards, there is no or limited research assessing the effectiveness of postcards in generating favorable affective image and attitudes toward a destination. Their study concluded that strong associations were evident between postcard-induced emotions and desire to travel to the destination.

Other studies looked at the commercial impact of producing postcards. Larsen's (2006) study of the Danish island of Bornholm concluded that "producing" and "consuming" a tourist destination through pictures may vary between tourists and commercial photographers. Postcards offered for sale are questionable as commercial photographers and tourists picture the Island differently (Larsen, 2006).

Cohen (1993) suggested five dimensions of postcard analysis: (1) Beautiful images, structured to elicit serious appreciation by the viewer according to aesthetic criteria familiar to them (2) Exotic images, designed to elicit serious consideration on the premise of that which is unfamiliar to the viewer (3) Cute Images, a portrayal of familiar traits of sweetness or prettiness designed to elicit ludic sense of enjoyment (4) Comic images, designed to generate laughter and cheerfulness through exaggeration or dissimilarity and (5) Neutral images, "Common in most journalistic and scientific representation"

Most of the postcard research applied content analysis of limited number of postcards or empirical research of tourist perceptions regarding a limited amount of postcards. However, review of the literature reveals no or limited research evaluating and analyzing the supply of postcards offered for sale at tourist destinations and the images they attempt to portray.

Destination Image

A destination image is the sum of perceptual beliefs, ideas, and impressions based on information processing from a variety of sources over time resulting in a mental construct (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; Gartner, 1993). A wide range of factors may influence the individual perception of a specific destination.

Font (1997) suggested three components of image development: input, process and output. The input phase consists of the identity presented by a tourist destination and is impacted by elements such as marketing and advertising, personal experiences and expectations and external information factors like television, radio, newspapers or personal communication.

In the process phase of image development, all information sources are arranged, rationalized and evaluated in order to receive a harmonic image of a destination. The output phase is the subjectively perceived destination image of an individual or of individuals (Font, 1997).

Postcards may be regarded as an input source for developing a destination image, not only for remote recipients but also for tourists who visit the destination area. Browsing through a large number of postcards may develop, enhance, or even change tourists' image of the destination just by being exposed to new features and messages that they have not been previously seen.

The goal of this study is to explore the content of postcards offered for sale as image makers in a seaside resort. This would allow to draw conclusions if there is a contemporary trend in postcard production, evaluate and develop a new typology of postcards, as well as make recommendation regarding the production and selling of postcards to enhance the destination's image.

ALANYA AND THE ANTALYA REGION

Alanya is a seaside resort located in the Province of Antalya in the southern part of Turkey. Tourism is the major source of the region's economy and in 2005 7 million tourists visited the Antalya province, 35 % of the total tourist arrivals in Turkey. In addition to the abundance of beaches and seaside resorts, the tourism sector has also began developing other recreational and leisure activities like hunting, trekking, winter sports, health, as well as meeting and convention tourism. The greatest number of tourists visiting the Antalya Province are German (38%), followed by Russians at (22%), Dutch (8%) and Austrians (4%) (Antalya Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 2007; Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007a).

The Alanya resort area provides 745 tourist accommodation facilities with a total of 104,711 beds. In 2001, 752,340 tourists visited Alanya, generating 7.3% of turkey's tourism income. During the 2001 summer season, the accommodation occupancy level was 83.7% (Alanya Belediyesi'ne aitir, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Alanya, Turkey and used an observation technique coupled with camera photography of postcard racks around the city and the resort area. Unlike any quantitative approach, the study aimed to discover information about the unknown "social world" of decision makers in the postcard experience: photographers, producers, vendors, tourists, or even local residents.

This method corresponded with the nature of tourism and hospitality - a qualitative experience. The verbal and non-verbal interaction between buyers and sellers of postcards provide more information to better understand people's needs and aspirations (Ryan, 1995).

The study sampled 15 postcard racks in a variety of sales outlets. The data collection used judgment and opportunistic sampling with those vendors who provided the permission to take pictures of the postcard racks (Ryan, 1995). The study analyzed 100 picture postcards in the attempt to explore the role of postcards as image makers in the seaside resort of Alanya. Examples of these postcards are featured in the figure section of this paper.

Since this study was exploratory in nature, no formal hypotheses were developed. The analysis employed the following objectives (Ryan, 1995):

- Assess the verbal and non-verbal communication between buyers and sellers of postcards
- Evaluate the themes that emerged in the postcards and their frequency.
- Analyze the content of the postcards as to their meaning

FINDINGS

The verbal and non-verbal communication between buyers and sellers of postcards

The observation revealed that Alanya postcards offered for sale were part of the tourist souvenir portfolio and were readily available for purchase. The largest selection and the best prices were offered by small souvenir shop or kiosk vendors. Other commercial outlets where postcards were sold included hotels and resorts, commercial attractions, open market stores, or other tourist establishments. In most cases, similar postcards were featured by the different shopping outlets.

There were two types of postcard displays: (a) Rectangular display of postcards where all postcards could be browsed at one time and (Figures 1 and 2) (b) Traditional circular postcard racks, where postcards were arranged in a circle display and shoppers could browse the postcards while moving the rack from side to side (Figure 3).



Figure 1.



Figure 3.



Figure 2.



Figure 4.

In some instances, the price tag on top of the postcard rack indicated an intense competition in the postcard market (Figures 1 and 2). This may also be interpreted as a message to the buyers that there is no need for verbal communication or negotiation in the buying exchange transaction. Most of the postcard racks were located outside in the main tourist walkways.

Furthermore, in many cases, the vendors offered “packages” where a certain number of postcards were offered for sale for a reduced price. Some vendors offered 30 postcards for a Euro, probably estimating that the merchandise would be sold as souvenirs as well as for sending them to friends and relatives.

Postcards’ themes and their frequency

The majority of the postcards displayed were not photographic description of the Alanya. The postcards that featured Alanya enhanced the identity of the destination by superimposing the name “Alanya” on the picture (Figure 4).

The majority of the postcards feature photographs of other well-known tourist attractions in Turkey like the Blue Mosque in Istanbul (Figure 5) or Cappadocia (Figure 6). Ironically, competing

near-by resorts were also displayed on many postcard racks, including the province capital, Antalya (Figure 7).

While most of the well-known destinations were rather far (one or two-day drives) from the seaside resort studied, the vendors most likely wanted to broaden their selling opportunities by featuring Turkey's unique attractions rather Alanya's.



Figure 5.

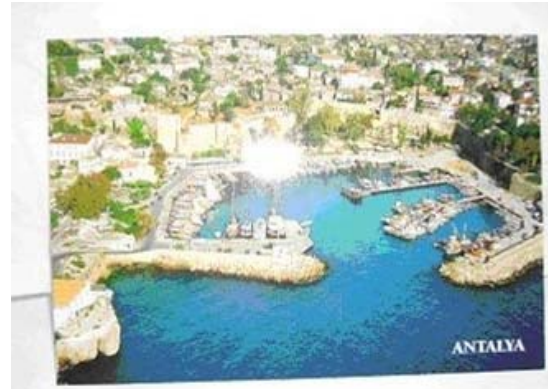


Figure 7.

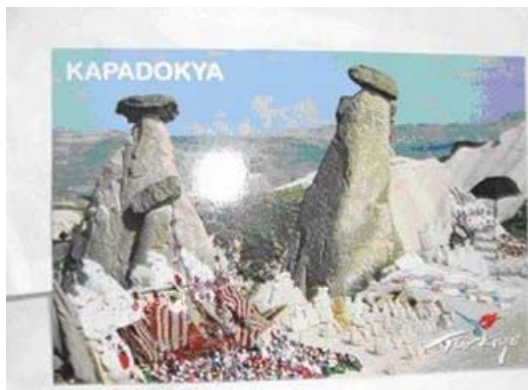


Figure 6.



Figure 8.

Postcards' content and their meaning:

The wide variety of postcards provided examples of Cohen's (1993) suggestion of five dimensions in postcard analysis: Beautiful images (Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7), Exotic images (Figure 9 and 14), Cute Images (Figure 10), Comic images (Figures 11, 12, 13), and Neutral images (Figure 8). The following are additional observations.

The Postcards' Educational Message

It appears that some postcards aimed to educate or inform the tourists about Turkey in general. For example, one postcard featured a global map indicating Turkey's location on earth. Another postcard was an illustration of the map of Turkey featuring the geographical location of its major tourist attractions with icons of each attraction (Figure 7). In several postcards, the word "Türkiye" (the name Turkey in Turkish) and the Turkish flag were placed over the pictorial section of the postcard.

Some postcards communicated a written message on the pictorial section of the postcard. The messages were not necessarily written in English, but rather in the language of the region's major tourist origin markets. For example, the message on a postcard caricature (Figure 11) was written in German, whereas a postcard featuring archeological artifact (Figure 14) featured messages in four languages.

We may conclude there is a strong nationalistic cultural message in many postcards with a strong emphasis of the postcard designers to educate the buyers as well as the recipients of the postcards about Turkey, in general. The name in Turkish coupled with the flag that were superimposed on some postcards might be an endeavor of a patriotic message. Please note that these types of postcards were not specifically featuring Alanya.



Figure 9.



Figure 11.



Figure 10.



Figure 12.

The Role of Symbols in Developing a Destination Image

Additional analysis of the postcards revealed repeated icons that were featured on the postcards. None of these icons were linked directly to the seaside resort of Alanya. First, the name Turkey, written in script, was featured on a number of postcards with a red and blue tulip (Figure 8). The Turkish origin of the tulip symbol is probably unknown to both vendors and the tourists. Contrary to popular belief which associates the origin of the tulip in Holland, it is actually native to Turkey and obtained its botanical name (Tulipa) from its similarity to a Turkish turban (tulpend). The tulip was introduced to Holland in the 16th century by the botanist Clusius (Tiptoe through the Tulips, 2007).

The second symbol that consistently repeated in several postcards was the camel, superimposed on a photographic background (Figure 9) or simply featured with certain humorous greetings (Figure 10). Traditional lifestyles and cultures in many regions of the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia were developed around the camel (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007). However, some argue that the Arabs, more than any cultural group appreciated and developed the full potential of the camel, and therefore, the camel may not be a strong icon associated with Turkey.

However, Turkish culture is linked to the camel through the camel wrestling contests that are usually held during the winter in the Aegean region and have become winter festivals (Republic of Turkey, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007b). The camel is a symbol of a vanishing world; however, it continues to intrigue the Western world probably because when it was introduced in countries outside the Middle East, it left a lasting impression and a large number of stories (Da Cruz and Lunde, 1981).

The camel's exotic symbol is therefore featured in many postcards, suggesting an association with Turkey. However, there is no direct historical or cultural linkage of the camel to the seaside resort of Alanya. This is an example of "staged authenticity" where some unrealistic messages or symbols are communicated through postcards to cater specifically for tourists' needs and wants.

The Meaning of Caricature Postcards

Several postcards offered for sale were caricature postcards. Most of the caricature postcards were associated with transportation of large groups of people, in most cases with traditional Turkish traditional clothing. For example, the "magic carpet" postcard (Figure 11) featured a dozen of people on an ascending carpet flying over a small Turkish village with the mosque in the background.

The magic or flying carpets have been linked to the Arabian Nights, a collection of Persian, Arabian and Indian folk tales handed down through several centuries. In the legends, the magic carpets are ordinary rugs until a magic spell turns them into a method of escape (Phrase Finder, 2007). It is difficult to assume why an escaping magic carpet is part of the postcard portfolio in the seaside resort of Alanya. The postcard is probably an attempt to blend the tourists with exotic Middle Eastern fantasy (magic carpets) that may not necessarily be directly linked to Turkey.

The Motorcycle postcard (Figure 12) featured a family with four children seated on a motorcycle, indicating an unsafe travel, especially when a baby is placed between the handles of the motorcycle. The message is probably an antithesis to western culture of transportation, featuring or placing Turkish culture as different or more free spirit.

The word "caricature" originates in Italian and means a "loaded portrait". A caricature is a portrait that exaggerates or distorts the essence of a person or thing to create an easily identifiable visual likeness. Caricatures can be insulting or complimentary and can serve a political purpose or be drawn solely for entertainment (300Bucks.ca, 2007). The various caricature postcard offerings were probably an attempt to create a fantasy and humorous atmosphere. The content of the postcards were not linked to the seaside resort of Alanya or specifically to the Turkish culture.

This is another example of "staged authenticity" where some unrealistic messages or ideas are communicated through postcards to cater specifically for tourists' needs and wants.

The Role of Authenticity in Generic Representation:

While the role of authenticity in the postcards have previously discussed (Figures 10-14), it is interesting to mention that some postcards featured generic pictures like a seaside resort or other vista

pictures that may not necessarily represent Alanya or even Turkey. The pictures featured in the postcards could have been taken anywhere in the world.

The small island featured in Figure 13 is an example of generic representation of Alanya or Turkey, but the legitimacy of the picture's origin is questionable. To confirm the viewers' doubt about the authenticity of the picture, the name Turkey was printed in large bold letters in the bottom of the picture. Figure 14 also portrays a generic archeological artifact that symbolizes eternal love. The postcard message is in four languages, yet, the origin of the archeological object and its association to the resort town of Alanya is not clearly marked on the postcard.



Figure 13.

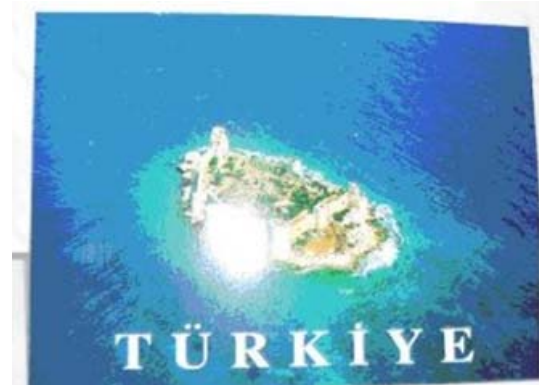


Figure 14.

CONCLUSIONS

Qualitative techniques are better at understanding people's needs and aspirations. The study was an addition to the body of literature on postcard research; however, it adopted an observation technique to study the role of postcards in developing a destination image. The observation technique may provide information or trends that may generate a justification for action (Ryan, 1995). Therefore, the validity of the observation should be examined.

The observation technique used to study postcard images may have some weaknesses. First, although attempts were made to sample postcards at various geographical areas and vending outlets throughout the destination area, not all postcards printed on the destination were observed, photographed, and analyzed. Second, the qualitative research methodology is subjective and may cause some bias in the interpretation of the facts, information, and messages displayed in the postcards under study. Finally, the interpretation of the postcards may vary from one subject to another. The variation may be associated with socio demographic characteristics of the buyers and recipients, as well as their cultural and psychological background.

The implications of this exploratory study may suggest that postcards are still popular sale item by many vendors at certain tourist destinations, both as souvenirs, as well as greeting cards to friends and relatives. A content analysis of the postcards offered for sale by a variety of vendors concluded that the postcard provided ambiguous multiple meanings for the seaside resort of Alanya. This was also found in previous content analysis of postcards, though not on a large scale as this study (Burns, 2004). The array of postcards analyzed had very little impact on the development of the destination image and offered an unclear or even confusing meaning for Alanya.

The majority of the postcards analyzed were associated with other well-known destinations in Turkey, as well as other non-authentic representations of the tourist icons like a camel superimposed on several postcards, caricatures, or standard photographic representations that may not necessarily be attributed exclusively to Alanya or even Turkey.

The participant observations also concluded that there were limited communication between the sellers and the buyers, as the postcard display was minimized for money exchange as tourists, in most cases, were informed on the rack the price of the postcard or a collection of postcards.

While the current postcards may provide cognitive satisfaction for the tourists and economic value for the vendors, decision makers, both in the local public and private sectors should consider enhancing the image of Alanya as a tourist destination through postcards.

To enhance the destination image through postcards, it is necessary that local authorities, tourism industry leaders and operators work together in developing exclusive images of the specific destination. Their input should also be coordinated with the constituencies involved in the production, selling, and buying of postcards.

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THE CENTRAL ROLE OF THE DMO WEBSITES IN TOURIST INFORMATION PROVISIONING

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ABSTRACT

A still unelucidated aspect in tourism marketing is the complementary role of various online and offline sources of tourist information in persuading tourists to visit the destination or focus on specific attractions. This paper examined the differences between destination marketing organizations' (DMO) website users and nonusers regarding their information search and visitation behaviors and the role of complementary marketing media. It was found that a combination of website visitation and local/state travel guides results in higher tourist visitation/impact than when using exclusively offline information sources. In addition, an extended technology acceptance model (TAM) was found to successfully predict tourists' usage of DMO websites.

KEYWORDS: *DMO Websites; Electronic Commerce; Information Search; Internet.*

INTRODUCTION

Initially designed as a novel communication tool (Law, 2000), the Internet rapidly expanded into a very efficient marketing environment (Hoffman & Novak, 1996), used extensively for both information search and travel arrangements (Lewis & Semejin, 1998). If in the beginning, the tourism industry viewed the Internet with skepticism, soon it realized its potential for information provisioning and trip arrangements (Smith & Jenner, 1998). Now, tourism is viewed as one of the largest domains online, and it has been predicted to increase during the next decades (Leong, 2003). In 2005, for example, the Travel Industry Association of America (2006) reported that approximately a third of U.S. travelers booked transportation online and approximately a fourth booked hotel reservations online, marking an increasing trend from the previous years.

Realizing the importance of the Internet, every destination marketing organization (DMO) designed websites that tourists can use as first encounters with the destinations. Due to the Internet's power to dilute some of the intangibility associated with tourism products, many tourists moved their information search and purchasing online, primarily to diminish the perceived risks associated with their purchases (O'Connor & Frew, 2002), or simply for its

convenience, value, and the diversity of searchable products (Yoon, 2002). As a result, a new way to distribute tourist information has emerged that continually changes the way tourists search for the information necessary to support their purchasing decisions (Kim, Ma, & Kim, 2006).

Traditionally, tourists search for information to support purchasing decisions (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998) or simply to learn more about specific attractions within destinations (Moorthy, Ratchford & Talukdar, 1997). However, despite tremendous progress in understanding how tourists search for information available on the Internet (So & Morrison, 2003, Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998), the circumstances under which tourists are influenced by the information available from DMO websites in conjunction with complementary marketing media (i.e., travel guides, magazines) are not completely elucidated. Thus, the goal of the study is to examine the role of the DMO's website in influencing tourists' visitation decisions in the context of using complementary marketing media. To this end, a few specific objectives have been pursued, to examine (1) if there were any significant differences between DMO's website users and nonusers in terms of information search, decision-making, and visitation behavior, (2) if any combination of marketing media results in higher tourist impact on the destination, and (3) if the DMO's website usage can be predicted by website characteristics such as usefulness and ease of use.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Information provisioning on DMO websites

Both mainstream business and tourism literature recognizes that the Internet has noteworthy advantages (i.e., many-to-many communication framework, convenience, and ubiquity) over the traditional marketing environments (Hoffman & Novak, 1996), and thus, it can be used as an alternative to traditional marketing (Burke, 1997). In recent years, the Internet generated tremendous changes in the most industrial value chains, predominantly resulting in eliminating intermediaries in favor of more direct relationships between suppliers and consumers (Hadaya, 2006). The tourism industry has undergone structural transformations (Buhalis & Daimezi, 2004), ranging from changing the relationships among various partners in the value chain (Lau, Li, Lam, & Ho, 2001) to the almost total replacement of the traditional travel agents with new travel websites. However, the elimination of most intermediaries did not coincide with an elimination of their roles (i.e., information provisioning, assistance with travel arrangements). In this new context, these roles have been assumed by the new travel websites, that is, the information provisioning roles have been largely assumed by the DMOs' websites, while the travel arrangement roles have been assumed by the online merchants.

Today's Internet environment offers tourists unprecedented access to a wealth of information, with relatively low search costs in relation to the traditional marketing media (Harrison, Waite, & Hunter, 2006). As tourism is an information intensive industry (Poon, 1993) and the Internet allows for information to be distributed efficiently (Watson, Berthon, Pitt & Zinkhan, 2000), the shift to the Internet proved beneficial for the DMOs. However, despite extensive empirical evidence outlining the advantages of distributing tourism products on the

Internet (Frew & Dorren, 1996), the traditional marketing media (i.e., travel guides, magazines, brochures) were not completely abandoned (Lau, et al., 2001). Thus, the tourism marketing environment can be characterized by an incomplete understanding of online consumer search strategies, information duplication, and overload across various online and offline marketing media (Pan & Fesenmaier, 2000).

As marketers have a better chance of addressing the needs of their target markets if they had a thorough understanding of consumer behavior (Card, Chen & Cole, 2003), scholars dedicated great interest to understanding tourists' behavior online (Lohse, Bellman, & Johnson, 2000). A first direction was to create a profile of Internet users. In general, online tourists were relatively young, college educated, stayed in hotels more often than nonusers, and incurred higher tourists expenditures (Bonn, Furr, & Susskind, 1999). Apparently, this demographic profile has been consistent over time for a variety of product domains (Donthu & Garcia, 1999), including tourism (Buhalis, 2003; Kim, Lehto, & Morrison, 2007). To achieve a deeper understanding of consumer behavior, many other authors addressed issues such as estimating a customer base (Berthon, Pitt, & Watson, 1996), transition from traditional to online commerce (Murphy, Forrest, Wotring, & Brymer, 1996) consumers' evaluation of websites (Jeong, Oh, & Gregoire, 2003; Law & Chung, 2003), differences between the two main information search strategies (i.e., goal-directed search, browsing) (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998; Pan & Fesenmaier, 2006), and use of available information in online travel purchase decisions (Chen & Schwartz, 2006).

Differences between Website users and nonusers

Extensive effort has been directed at understanding the differences between Internet users and nonusers in a variety of contexts. In a number of pioneering studies, Bonn, Furr and Susskind (1999) and Weber and Roehl (1999) examined the behavior of travel website users and found that Internet users were different than nonusers in terms of age, income, and educational level. Despite increasingly larger adoption of the Internet by all demographic segments of tourists, more recent research still revealed a difference between the demographics of Internet users versus non-users (Card, et al., 2003; Heung, 2003; Kim & Kim, 2004; Kim, et al., 2007; So & Morrison, 2003).

Differences between Internet users and nonusers were found not only in the demographics, but also in their behaviors. For example, the Internet users have a higher propensity to take future trips than the nonusers (Heung, 2003). Even within the users' segment, information search behaviors were different in that information that tourists are looking for on DMOs' websites varies across the size of the destination (i.e., state versus city) and tourism consumption stages (before, during, or post-trip) (Choi, Lehto, & O'Leary, 2007),.

Choice and evaluation of marketing media

As a fundamental characteristic of tourism is its information intensity, providing the appropriate information to tourists is paramount in today's highly competitive tourism industry. As the goal of all DMOs is to attract more tourists to their respective destinations, and as information search is viewed as one of the most important steps in tourism decision making

(Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998), most DMOs strive to provide tourists with the most accurate, up-to-date, and easy to access information, for which the Internet seems to be the perfect tool. Lau et al. (2001) and Buhalis (2003) argued that, as a result of Internet adoption, the DMOs expected to reduce their traditional marketing efforts by concentrating on online marketing. However, Lau et al. (2001) concluded that, despite the increasing popularity of a number of branded travel websites, the DMOs still rely heavily on conventional marketing media, such as travel guides, magazines, newspapers, and highway signs.

An important issue in tourism marketing is the choice of marketing media (Kim, Hwang, & Fesenmaier, 2005). There is a multitude of marketing media available to DMOs, including travel guides, ads in magazines, newspaper articles, and inserts, TV and radio ads, and the Internet. Each of the marketing media has its own strengths and weaknesses with respect to delivering the message to its intended audience Batra, Myers, & Acker (1995). These various marketing media can stimulate different types of cognitive and affective processes, and thus, can impact different dimensions of psychological effects such as top-of-mind awareness, awareness, and intention to purchase (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). While the literature about the generic advertising effectiveness is relatively rich (Kinnucan & Miao, 1999), the literature focusing solely on the issue of marketing media allocation is scarce.

Research on the comparison of various marketing media influence on consumers' purchases is vast in the mainstream marketing literature. Grass and Wallace (1974) found that television has been more effective than print advertising for consumer products due to the amount of attention elicited by each medium. Tsao and Sibley (2004) identified three separate methodologies to compare the effectiveness of different marketing media, each one supported empirically by other authors: (1) the emergence of a new marketing medium could generate a decline of the effectiveness of other, typically older, marketing media (Lee & Kuo, 2002), (2) the emergence of a new marketing medium could not influence the effectiveness of the other media (Stempel, Hargrove, & Bernt, 2000), and (3) only a certain number of functions of the older media could be displaced by the new media (Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984).

Despite its popularity in mainstream marketing, research on comparing the various marketing media is not abundant in tourism. For example, Woodside and Ronkainen (1982) investigated the difference in effectiveness between newspapers and magazines and found that newspapers outperformed magazines. Recently, however, with the emergence of novel marketing media, the overall effectiveness of marketing paradigm has shifted toward a more dynamic approach. Advertisers want more results and they can actually monitor better the effectiveness of their advertising efforts. Among these novel channels, the Internet became a unique advertising environment, with great influence on tourists' purchasing decisions.

Technology Acceptance Model

As DMO websites are more technologically-intense marketing media relative to the offline marketing media for a large number of U.S. travelers, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989; Davis et al. 1989) has been used to predict tourists' usage of DMO websites. The TAM was developed from the Theory of Reasoned Action as an application to a technology-driven environment (Pavlou, 2003). In the TAM, there are two main constructs that

may ultimately predict users' intentions to use: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The model assumes that people tend to use a new system to the extent that they believe it would eventually help them perform the job better, which refers to perceived usefulness. However, some new systems are just too hard to use, and the benefits of using the systems are counterbalanced by the difficulty of using them, which refers to perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Assuming that effort is a finite resource that a person may allocate to different tasks, Davis argued that a system perceived as easier to use than others would be more likely to be accepted by users. In the context of the tourism industry, usefulness (Christou & Kassianidis, 2002) and convenience (Law & Chen, 2000) were cited as factors that determine tourists' usage of electronic commerce tools.

DMO websites are characterized mainly by usefulness (i.e., allowing tourists to find the information they are looking for) and ease of use (i.e., tourists consider the websites easy to navigate). In general, websites that have been successful in attracting potential tourists have been characterized by information quality, interactivity, and attractiveness (Chu, 2001). However, recently, in an effort to make the tourists' visit online more pleasant, playfulness features have been designed. Thus, the newest generation of DMO websites allows tourists to have fun while interacting with the website. Finding the needed information is indeed more fun if the website visitors engage in games, trivia, or interactive features (Kim & Morosan, 2006).

The original TAM proved to be deficient in capturing all the specific contexts of technology adoption (Moon & Kim, 2001) as it was viewed only from an extrinsic motivation perspective. To compensate, the original model was augmented with constructs such as playfulness (Chung & Tan, 2004), enjoyment (Yu, Ha, Choi, & Rho, 2005), cost (Wu & Wang, 2005), or trust (Yu, et al. 2005). In a tourism context, however, relying only on the traditional TAM constructs alone (usefulness and ease of use) to examine adoption of DMO websites could be incomplete, as today's websites are characterized not only by functionality, but also by other characteristics, such as information accuracy. Information quality is essential to consumers, and the way information is presented online, in terms of content and organization, can facilitate or impede its utilization (Rosen & Purinton, 2004). Thus, the original TAM was augmented by adding information quality.

In most TAM-related studies, behavioral intention was used as a dependent variable and was defined as consumers' intent to use the new technology/medium (Bruner & Kumar, 2005). Although an objective measurement for the actual behavior would be ideal, in reality it is hard to obtain. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that there is a strong positive relationship between the intention to use and actual use. In most studies, the behavioral intention was used as a surrogate for actual behavior and was defined as consumers' intent to use the new technology/medium. Another important outcome of intentions to use the website is users' intention to recommend the website to others, which was added to the extended TAM model.

METHODOLOGY

The data collection instrument was designed to include four sections. A first section focused on the influence of travel information provided by various marketing media on travelers'

decisions to visit the destination and their information search patterns (i.e., requests for information from the DMO). The responses were measured with five-point semantic differential scales, ranging from 1 (not at all helpful) to 5 (very helpful). A second section focused on respondents' travel behavior, gauging the number of trips to the destination, trip duration, party composition, overall expenditures, purpose of trip, and actual visitation to the destination. The third section measured travelers' usage of the DMO's website, by using a five-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree to 5-strong agree. The instrument ended with a brief demographic section, used to generate a demographic profile of respondents.

Extensive piloting and refinement of the instrument was conducted with faculty and staff from a large Midwestern university. Upon finalizing the instrument, an online survey was conducted in March 2007 with tourists who had requested information from a Midwestern DMO in 2006. An initial invitation email was sent to a number of 3,138 initial respondents, selected randomly from the DMO's database. After two reminders, a final number of 720 responses have been recorded. Upon removing the records containing heavily missing values, a total of 691 valid responses have been collected, accounting for a response rate of 22%.

RESULTS

The influence of complementary marketing media on DMO website users and nonusers

Of the total of 691 respondents, most were mature tourists, with 42.4% were married with children. The most predominant segment being between 45 to 54 years old (38.4%) followed by tourists between 55 and 64 years old). The largest segment had an annual household income between \$50,000 and \$79,999, the respondents were relatively evenly spread across most of the income segments (Table 1). A chi-square analysis was performed to test if website users were different than nonusers in terms of their demographic profile,. However, significant demographic differences between website users and nonusers were only found in age ($\chi^2 = 22.8$, $p < 0.01$), but not in their household type (i.e., single versus couple with children) or annual income.

Table 1. Demographic profile of respondents by visitors/non-visitors of the DMOs website.

<i>Demographic variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Age		
18-24 years	17	2.5
25-34 years	59	8.7
35-44 years	114	16.8
45-54 years	261	38.4
55-64 years	161	23.7
65 years or more	67	9.9
Marital status		
Single	94	13.8
Couple without children	233	34.3
Couple with children	288	42.4
Divorced/separated/widowed	64	9.4
Annual household income		
Less than \$29,999	46	7.8
\$30,000 to \$49,999	104	17.5
\$50,000 to \$79,999	161	27.2
\$80,000 to \$99,999	98	16.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	120	20.2
More than \$150,000	64	10.8

The differences between users and nonusers in terms of information search patterns and influence of travel information on their decisions were examined by employing a series of one-way ANOVA and chi-square analyses (Table 2). The analyses revealed that the website users were not influenced by most of the marketing media, except for the local and state travel guides. With respect to the local and state guides, a significantly higher number of website visitors have been persuaded to either visit the overall destination, or to visit certain advertised attractions within the destination ($p < 0.01$). Nonusers were rather influenced by magazines and road signs to visit the overall or specific attractions within the destination. The destination also used newspapers and newspaper inserts in its marketing efforts, but no significant differences were found between their influence on the website users and nonusers.

Table 2. Influence of various media on travelers' decisions to visit the destination.

	<i>Website Users</i>	<i>Website Nonusers</i>	<i>F-value</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Influence of various media on travelers' decisions to visit the overall destination.				
Magazine	2.64	3.03	6.00	0.01
Local Travel Guide	4.00	3.52	17.16	0.00
State Travel Guide	3.55	3.08	10.40	0.00
Highway signs	1.91	2.44	11.22	0.00
Newspaper	2.56	2.62	1.31	0.72
Newspaper Insert	2.23	2.38	0.95	0.33
Influence of various media on travelers' decisions to visit specific places within the destination.				
Magazine	2.47	3.00	11.77	0.00
Local Travel Guide	3.91	3.46	14.67	0.00
State Travel Guide	3.39	2.97	8.35	0.01
Highway signs	1.93	2.20	3.48	0.06
Newspaper	2.47	2.57	0.39	0.54
Newspaper Insert	2.47	2.57	2.40	0.12
	Users (%)	Nonusers (%)	Chi-square	P-value
Requested additional travel information from the DMO	392 (79)	127 (65)	14.47	0.00

A chi-square analysis was performed to determine if there were significant differences in terms of requests of information between DMO website users and nonusers. Significant differences ($p < 0.01$) existed between users and nonusers in terms of travel information requests from the DMO. These results seemed to suggest that the information search efforts undergone on the website transferred into additional search effort offline. Thus, despite the DMO website provided a wealth of travel information, apparently, its users needed even more information and they requested it offline. It was not determined whether they simply needed additional information or they wanted a free, high-quality printout of the information that they had already conveniently found on the DMO website.

Differences in travel behavior between DMO website users and nonusers

A chi-square analysis revealed that visitation of the destination was significantly different between the two groups (website users and nonusers) (Table 3). It appeared that website users converted more easily (78%) than nonusers (63%) to being actual tourists, as outlined by the significant difference between the two groups ($p < 0.01$). As one purpose of advertising was to increase the length of stay of travelers, the respondents were asked to indicate if they have

increased their length of stay as a result of advertising that they came in contact with during the trip. The difference between the two groups was significant ($p < 0.01$) with website users likely to increase their length of stay more than the nonusers.

Table 3. Differences between website users and nonusers in terms of visitation.

	<i>Website Users (%)</i>	<i>Website Nonusers (%)</i>	<i>Chi- square</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Visited the destination	387 (78)	123 (63)	15.60	0.00
Visited advertised attractions	222 (54)	54 (38)	10.04	0.01
Dined in advertised restaurants	327 (76)	95 (62)	11.05	0.01
Participated in advertised events	120 (30)	34 (25)	1.47	0.13
Visited advertised shops	290 (70)	83 (56)	9.13	0.01
Engaged in advertised activities	74 (19)	21 (15)	0.83	0.22
Increased length of stay	57 (12)	9 (5.3)	6.88	0.01
	<i>Website Users</i>	<i>Website Nonusers</i>	<i>F-value</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Number of visits to the destination	2.23	2.01	3.50	0.06
Trip duration	2.91	2.23	26.70	0.00
Trip expenditures	4.59	3.30	23.07	0.00

The DMO's website included a variety of targeted advertising for a number of local attractions, restaurants, events, shops, and outdoor activities. shown in Table 3, of the five types of attractions advertised on the website, only three of them showed significant differences between the two groups ($p < 0.01$). Apparently, website users had a higher propensity than nonusers to visit advertised attractions, dine in advertised restaurants, and visit advertised shops. However, the differences in participation in advertised events and outdoor activities were not significant between the two groups. This non-significant difference could be attributed to the academic character of the destination that made it relatively more popular for outdoor events and activities than other destinations.

To examine the differences in travel behavior between the two groups in terms of number of visits to the destination, trip duration, and trip expenditures, a one-way ANOVA test was performed, with the number of visits to the destination, trip duration, and trip expenditures as independent variables, and website visitors as the dependent variable. The results indicated that, while there were no significant differences between the two groups in the number of visits to the destination, there were significant differences ($p < 0.01$) between the two groups in terms of trip duration and expenditures. Apparently, website users had a tendency to stay longer than the nonusers at the destination. Perfectly explainable by the increased duration of stay at the destination, the expenditures of website users were significantly higher among the website users compared with the nonusers.

Predicting usage of DMO website users

One of the preoccupations of the DMOs is to encourage travelers to use the destination's website, and thus, gradually, reduce the costs generated by advertising printing and placement. Under these circumstances, assessing the persuasive power of the DMOs website is paramount. According to the TAM framework, to ensure that the website enjoys high rate of usage, the website has to be useful, easy to use (Moon & Kim, 2001), and display accurate information. To test these proposed relationships, a multiple regression model has been developed. The model only included the travelers who visited the website in 2006. In this model (Figure 1), the website's Information quality, Usefulness, and Ease of Use were independent variables while Intentions to return to the website was the dependent variable. Further, an additional relationship was tested, between Intentions to Return and Intentions to recommend the website to others.

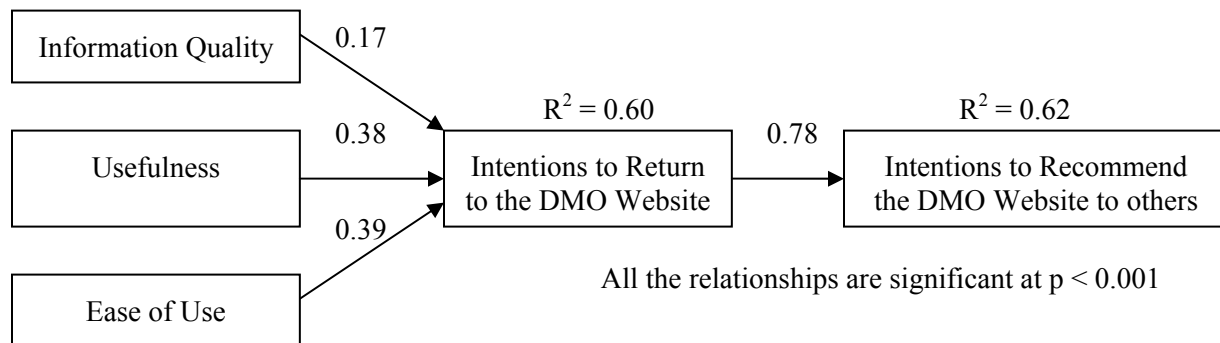


Figure 1. The proposed regression model.

The regression model showed that website Accuracy, Usefulness, and Ease of Use confirmed the proposed relationships, significantly predicting Intentions to Return to the website, explaining approximately 60% of the variance in the Intentions to Return ($R^2 = 0.60$, $p < 0.001$). Based on the regression coefficients, it was found that the strongest predictors of Return to the website were Ease of Use ($\beta = 0.39$) and Usefulness ($\beta = 0.38$), followed by Accuracy ($\beta = 0.17$). This relationship between Intentions to Return to the website and Intentions to Recommend the website to others was strong ($\beta = 0.78$), explaining approximately 62% of the variance in Intentions to Recommend the website to others ($R^2 = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study revealed that the website users were more likely to be influenced by the state and local travel guides, not only in motivating the decision to travel, but also spend time and money at specific advertised attractions. By contrast, the nonusers were more likely to be influenced by magazines and road signs. Therefore, it appears that the website users prefer to search for detailed pieces of information, available both online and in the comprehensive travel guides. These users tend to be exposed to a variety of detailed information on the websites, and in order to be influenced by offline marketing media, they would have to be exposed to information with the same level of detail. At the same time, nonusers tend to be influenced very easily by brief exposure to limited information or advertising (magazines and road signs).

Many industry experts voiced their concerns about information duplication between printed materials and the Internet. Some industry leaders even suggested that the print materials will eventually be eliminated in favor of tourism websites. Despite these opinions, this study provided evidence that website visitors are likely to adopt DMO websites but they also are likely to be influenced by travel guides from state or local agencies. Thus, the industry should still consider printing and distributing the existing printed materials, possibly to a lesser extent of newspapers articles or inserts, which have an apparent limited influence on tourists, especially on website visitors.

Interestingly, website nonusers have been more effectively persuaded by magazines and road signs to visit the destination. Not knowing exactly tourists' degree of awareness of the destination but considering the persuasive power of magazines and road signs, it could only be concluded that either the quality of this brief advertising is high, or tourists have a high degree of familiarity with the destination. This case can put the destination in an advantageous position, as it has to allocate fewer resources (comparative to the website or travel guides) to persuade Internet nonusers to still visit the destination.

It is important to note the high conversion rate of website visitors and the large, significant difference between the conversion rates of users and nonusers. In this context, a high percentage of users that converted to being actual tourists strengthen the result that the DMO website is a preferred tool for potential tourists who search for information about the destination. An additional analysis of website visitors revealed that most of them searched for information mostly to obtain general information about the destination. That is, the users can be relatively easily influenced, as most of them would have not made a decision with respect to specific trip details at the time of contact with the DMO's website. Also, the website users tend to be easily persuaded to increase their length of stay compared to the nonusers. One plausible explanation could be a certain level of exposure to various attractions encountered during their website visitation, which, in turn, could lead to a higher chance of visiting those attractions. From an economic impact perspective, increasing the length of stay results in a whole array of benefits for the destination, gravitating around increased expenditures, and thus, generating a higher economic impact.

Another important characteristic of website users refers to the types of activities that they engage in during their visit to the destination. As users tend to visit more advertised attractions, shops/stores, and restaurants, apparently, they can be characterized by one common factor: convenience. This is further illustrated by a lack of significant differences in engagement in advertised activities or participating in advertised events. It was therefore concluded that website users are characterized by a need for convenience both during the trip preplanning and during the actual visit to the destination. Thus, DMO could provide a variety of detailed information, conveniently marked by suggestive navigational cues, to increase users' interest in remaining on the website and searching.

Most importantly, this study indicated that, overall, the DMO website users are "better" tourists than the nonusers, supporting the conclusions of So and Morrison (2003). That is, website users tend to have a higher number of visits to the destination, increased trip duration,

and expenditures, overall, generating a greater economic impact. Although it is not clear what specific sections of the website tourists visit and what actually persuades them to behave this way, the results indicate simply that exposure to the information presented online can increase tourists' impact on the destination. Thus, the DMO can optimize its efforts to encourage tourists to visit its website, in an effort to create a strong impact on the economics of the destination. One direction could be to use the travel guide as an invitation to visit the website, and then to use the website as a tool to persuade tourists to visit the destination.

Today's tourists expect convenience, especially in online interactions when searching for travel information. The regression analysis seems to provide additional evidence that a good website is highly efficient for a destination, both in terms of immediate visitation, illustrated by visitors' intentions to return, and in terms of providing word-of-mouth, illustrated by visitors' intentions to recommend the website to others. The model indicated that the website's ease of use and usefulness are strong predictors of users' intentions to return to the website and further to recommend the website to others. At the level of the destination, this could translate into a variety of tools to keep tourists on longer visits on the website while trying to persuade them to visit advertised attractions within the destination.

Due to the large likelihood of website visitors acting on the information available on the website, new opportunities for the DMOs can arise in the area of selling advertising space on the DMO's website. As travelers respond to advertising for convenient attractions, specific service providers from the destination can set up banners or other advertising tools to generate more traffic to their specific attractions. Such efforts can have tri-fold benefits: (1) the destination will enjoy a higher economic impact from the increased spending at the destination, (2) the particular merchants who advertise online could increase their revenues, and (3) the DMO will also increase its revenues from online advertising. This practice is not new in the tourism industry, as several comprehensive DMO websites have already pursued efforts in this direction, as illustrated by the large number of merchants advertising online.

By providing a unique perspective on DMO websites' influence on tourists' visitation decisions, this study brings an important contribution to the tourism body of knowledge by providing evidence that, indeed, by encouraging potential tourists to visit websites, the DMOs can increase the economic impact of these tourists to the destination. In addition, combining the websites with certain existing offline information sources (i.e., travel guides), the DMOs can increase its persuasive power. Therefore, the main implication for DMOs is to increase visitation of their websites and provide a wealth of information that would serve as a basis for tourists' visitation decisions.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has a few limitations. First, as no investigation was performed to determine the specific stage of decision making process, it was difficult to conclude what are some specific functions of the DMO's website that would help tourists gain maximum benefits from each step of the decision-making process. Thus, further research should consider the various steps in the decision-making process, with a special emphasis on the information search phase and

evaluation of various visitation alternatives. Once the specific website functions that pertain to various decision-making steps are identified, more specific design directions can be provided to address travelers' specific needs online.

Another drawback is the limited number of demographic characteristics collected from the respondents. Despite no significant differences were found between the two groups in terms of age, household income, and marital status, an examination of the differences in education, online experience, and familiarity with the DMO's website could put the differences between the groups in a different perspective. For this reason, with all the caution necessary to not overload the survey instrument, further research should address group comparisons on more demographic characteristics.

A final limitation is not providing a larger number of website characteristics to be evaluated by the users. Despite an overwhelming body of literature supporting the benefits of the technology acceptance model and its derived theories, more insight could be gained by adding more constructs to the model. For example, some of the constructs that could have an effect on the website usage and possibly recommendation of website to others could be the websites' degree of interactivity (Moon & Kim, 2001), users' experience (Hackbarth, Grover, & Yi, 2003), and trust in the online environment (Wober & Gretzel, 2000), as demonstrated in other disciplines (Moon & Kim, 2001) or national economies (Straub, Keil, & Brenner, 1997).

Overall, this study clearly indicated that the importance of the website in tourism marketing should not be ignored. The website plays a significant role in persuading tourists to visit the destination and to spend more time and money at the destination. One way to increase the efficiency of the website is to direct attention to specific attractions and to accentuate their visitation online. This way, users will have a chance of being aware about those attractions and will typically find time to visit them. While one of the most ardent questions at the DMO level is whether or not they should give up their print advertising in favor of the website, the study clearly points out that this is not opportune yet. Apparently, website users tend to be influenced by the state or local travel guides, while the nonusers tend to be influenced by the magazines and highway signs.

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COLLABORATIVE DESTINATION BRANDING

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ABSTRACT

Collaboration has become a key research paradigm in community based tourism literature. Despite this popularity, very little research has been done to apply it to destination branding. This research delineated a conceptual model of collaborative destination branding. The model is based on a review of theoretical constructs of interorganizational collaboration process and the integration of two product brand building models. It suggests that collaborative branding begins in a context of environmental forces and evolves sequentially through problem-setting, direction-setting, implementation, evaluation, and outcome phases. Based upon a case study on a New Zealand's national branding project, this paper attempted to better describe and explain the nature and dynamism of collaborative destination branding.

KEYWORDS: *Collaboration Process; Double Vortex Model; Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Model; Integrative Perspective of Destination Branding; Collaborative Destination Branding.*

INTRODUCTION

Given the enormous economic and competitive pressures, destination marketing organizations (DMOs) face the need by communities for development of strategies to create destination brands (DMAI, 2004). In addition to the demand from community, they expect return on investment (ROI) through successful destination branding, thus allowing them to grow their marketing budget (Longwoods International, 2007). However, it has been often observed that a

destination brand recognized for its creative slogan generated little return on investment in tourists' spending. One of the reasons is that the brand is often created by focusing the interests of critical stakeholder groups such as hotel and restaurant that are main financial sources for DMOs' marketing activity. It results loss of unique market position and long-term benefits to all community stakeholders. Thus, it is important for DMOs to recognize that destination brand should be rooted in a shared vision of a diverse group of community, not a homogenous group (Bramwell & Sherman, 1999; Reed, 1997) and as a result, community can reinvent its purpose and provide genuine experience to visitors.

However, DMOs are hampered by a variety of political pressures in reconciling local and regional interests and promoting an identity acceptable to a range of public and private sector constituencies (Kotler et al., 1993). Moreover, they have to confront the culture crash between the public and private sectors, both of which possess highly differentiated value systems (Morgan, 2003). Therefore, DMO and communities have not established an entirely satisfactory partnership in developing destination management (de Araujo & Bramwell, 1999). Within this context, doubt has been cast over how destination can establish a brand identity with longevity through achieving a balance between applying cutting-edge advertising and involving support from a diverse array of community stakeholders.

Drawing from the challenge, the aim of this paper is to delineate a conceptual model of destination branding in collaboration between DMO and community stakeholders, which strikes a balance between the projected brand by community and the perceived by consumers. This can potentially result in the recreation of a sustainable destination brand. During three decades, role of community members in image study (Lawson et al., 1998; Prentice & Hudson, 1993; Ryan & Montgomery, 1994; Schroeder, 1996) and their attitudes towards tourism impact (Ap & Crompton, 1993; King, Pizam & Milman, 1993; Pearce et al., 1996) have been a growing body of research in community related tourism literature. Based on these research outcomes, collaboration approach is evolved and applied in destination tourism planning and development. However, in spite of the practical importance of community involvement in destination branding, little investigation has been undertaken into the process of branding with incorporating community effort. Meanwhile, the concept of destination branding was not studied and practiced as vigorously in destination marketing as in the general marketing field (Cai, 2002). Furthermore, the several theoretical paradigms to approach the collaboration issues have not fully explained the nature of networks among the destination tourism organizations (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2006) and never been applied to destination branding.

Therefore, the main objective of the study is to build a theoretical model of collaboration process in destination branding. It is designed for a better understanding of the strategic importance of collaboration and guiding community-based collaborative initiatives. This theoretical model will be built upon two generic models of brand building and the framework of inter-organizational collaboration process. Specifically, collaboration process proposed by previous studies (Gray, 1985, 1989; Jamal & Getz, 1995; McCann, 1983; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007) are summarized and modified. Next, Double Vortex (de Chernatony & Riley, 1998) and Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) models (Keller 2003) are reviewed from the organizational and consumer-oriented perspectives, respectively. Lastly, a successful

case of community-based destination branding is examined and compared to the proposed process.

COLLABORATIVE DESTINATION BRANDING

Collaboration in Destination Tourism

When reviewing academic research concerning communities and tourism, Jafari (1990) suggests that the review should begin in the 1970s. In fact academic research in this area began with a cautionary perspective that highlighted the negative impacts of tourism on host communities. Later, the general founding from the studies in early 90's show different perspective that community is very positive about tourism and strongly supportive of its continued growth. Ap and Crompton (1993) and King, Pizam, and Milman (1993) present similar evidence that despite very high levels of tourism development and contact with tourists, local residents remain very positive in their reactions and attitudes.

These pioneering studies generated a second tradition of research into how communities perceive tourism and its impacts (Pearce et al., 1996). The most researched topics are economic dependency or personal benefits gained from tourism, distance from place of residence to tourist areas, levels of contact with tourists, respondent demographics, community attachment, use of outdoor recreation facilities, general economic conditions of a community, perceived ability to influence tourism decisions, knowledge of tourism, political self identification, and influence of a tourism public relations campaign (Pearce et al., 1996). However, there are three major concerns in these research areas. Firstly, there are definitional and measurement issues with the concepts of tourists, tourism, and community (Burr, 1990). The second problem is that of describing and profiling the perceived impacts of tourism (Pierce et al., 1996). The final and most important concern is the lack of theory (Ap, 1990). Dann et al. (1988) concluded that atheoretical nature of much tourism research is a major limiting factor in its development. Any emerging theory in this area needs to have power to explain and integrate some of the existing research findings and to have substantial credibility in the broader realm of social science (Pierce et al., 1996).

Recognizing these issues, a third generation of topics in community based tourism was more focused on developing theoretical foundation. Burr (1991) argued that there are four theoretical approaches to the community relevant literature in tourism. These approaches are labeled as the human ecological approach, the social systems approach, the interactional approach, and the critical approach. The main issue for understanding the community-tourism relationship centers on how community members communicate and interact, how they are influenced in their opinions, and how this dynamic process of influence might be successfully managed for successful destination tourism (Pearce et al., 1996). As evident, it is paramount to advocate an interactional perspective which emphasizes on interaction and communication among dynamic community stakeholder groups.

The principles of community-based tourism from the interactional perspective were first articulated by Murphy in his seminal text on community-based tourism (Murphy, 1985). He

argues that community involvement in tourism planning and development can result in a shared vision and that destination distinctiveness can be created by focusing on the community's heritage and culture in the development of the tourism product. Walsh, Jamrozy, and Burr (2001) posit that community participation in the destination tourism planning, development, and implementation phases enhances attractions that have local identity and meaning. Simpson (2001) concludes that residents who concur with tourism goal and objectives set for their region will be equally happy with the outcomes that result, which in turn helps to achieve sustainable tourism and a sense of place. These understandings of community involvement and participation based on the interactional perspective offer strong application of collaboration in managing tourism and recreation related issues at the destination level.

Table 1. Summary of Studies on Collaboration in Community Based Tourism

<i>Division</i>		Discussion
Case Study	Selin & Beason (1991)	Showed lack of cooperative relations between the U.S Forest Service, chambers of commerce, and tourism associations adjacent to An Arkansas National Forest.
	Reed (1997)	Discussed about a citizen-based tourism planning process in Squamish, Canada.
	Williams, Penrose, & Hawkes (1998)	Describes a framework of decision-making processes in the case study of Cariboo-Chilcotin, Vancouver Island.
	Bramwell & Sharman (1999)	Examined the framework of local collaborative arrangements for the Hope Valley in Britain's peak District National Park.
	Araujo & Bramwell(2002)	Explores the effects of the collaboration process in Northeast Brazil.
	Vernon, Pinder, & Curry (2005)	Evaluates a collaborative policymaking process adopted by a British district council.
	Aas, Ladkin, & Fletcher (2005)	Examines a collaborative approach to the relationship between heritage management and tourism development in Luang Prabang, Laos.
Conceptual Study	Jamal & Getz (1995)	Applies the theoretical constructs of collaboration to tourism destinations and offers insight into interorganizational collaboration process for community-based tourism destinations.
	Selin & Chavez (1995)	Proposes an evolutionary tourism partnership process model through integrating emerging theory from organizational behavioral field.
	Beldona, Morrison, & Anderson (2003)	Presents a proposed model of the interplay with relational factors of trust, role clarity, interdependence, social bonding, communication, geographic proximity, information exchange between CVBs and hotels.
	Wang & Fesenmaier (2007)	Based on the case study of Elkhart County, Indiana, proposes an integrative theoretical framework with explaining the nature and dynamism of collaborative destination marketing.

As a result, collaborative relationship is becoming the next key research paradigm in community based tourism literature with the topics of partnership, stakeholder involvement, and shared decision making (See Table 1). However, the typically ambiguous, complex, and dynamic structure of collaborations presents some challenges that require practitioners to engage in a continuous process of nurturing (Huxham & Vangen, 2000). Consequently, researchers have been more attracted by collaboration issues in community based tourism due to the needs from

community practitioners. Recognizing this need, modified collaboration process is presented in this study for more manageable application to destination branding.

Definition of Collaboration

There have been many researchers (Gray, 1985; Gunn, 1988; Inskeep, 1991; Woody & Gray, 1991) who initially pointed out the importance of collaboration to deal with organizational problems. The interdependent problems among stakeholders are not resolved unilaterally by any single organization—solutions and require the collaborative efforts of several organizations (Gray, 1985, 1989; Wood & Gray 1991). In tourism setting, Gunn (1988) and Inskeep (1991) suggest interactive tourism planning system with all other planning for social and economic development. They point out that the ‘go-it-alone’ policies of many tourism sectors of the past are giving way to stronger cooperation and that no one business or government establishment can operate in isolation. However, achieving coordination among the government agencies, the public and the private sector, and private enterprises is a challenging task and needs development of new mechanisms to incorporate the diverse elements of the tourism system (Jamal & Getz, 1995). To resolve this issue, organizational collaboration has been adapted in recent studies on community-based development, partnership, and decision making in tourism (Reed 1997).

Definition of collaboration is discussed alongside various terms. According to Gajda's terminology (2004), collaboration includes joint ventures, consolidations, networks, partnerships, coalitions, collaborative, alliances, consortiums, associations, conglomerates, councils, and task forces. Woody and Gray (1991) define collaboration as occurring “when a group of autonomous stakeholders of a problem domain engage in an interactive process, using shared rules, norms, and structures, to act or decide on issue related to that domain”. In tourism planning context, Jamal and Getz (1995) put forward the definition of collaboration in community-based tourism planning as “a process of joint decision making among autonomous key stakeholders of an inter-organizational community tourism domain to resolve planning problems of the domain and / or to manage issues related to the planning and development of the domain”. Stakeholders are the actors with an interest in a common problem or issue and include all individuals, groups, or organizations directly influenced by the actions taken to solve a problem (Gray, 1989). These definitions indicate the most straightforward aspect of collaboration that occurs at inter-organizational domain rather than at the individual or organizational level (Lawrence, Philips, & Hardy 1999) and yields optimum balance of interests (Reed, 1997). These features can be found in the following decision making process where collaboration develops.

Collaboration Process

Gray (1985; 1989) who supports collaborative decision making proposes the most comprehensive three-stage model that inter-organizational collaboration develops. This model has been applied to the area of destination tourism in two ways. The studies by Jamal and Getz (1995) and Araujo and Bramwell (2002) are the most representative cases that borrow the model in deductive way without modification. On the other hands, the articles by Selin and Chavez (1995) and Wang and Fesenmaier (2007) extended the model by adding more steps into the basic three stages in tourism marketing setting and then named it as evolutionally partnerships model and marketing alliance formation, respectively. Unlike the former scholars, they employed

inductive logic through reviewing existing case studies and interviewing participants. Although the later two studies change terminologies and add more steps, the original three stages posited by Gray are all mirrored in the modified models. Therefore, it is meaningful to review how the basic model has been tailored and evolved in the later two studies.

In the first and last stages of the models, they commonly extend the Gray's model by adding the preconditions and outcomes steps, and form a continuum model. Preconditions include various environmental forces that influence actual collaboration relationships such as crisis, competition, and organization network. Noticeably, Wang and Fesenmaier separate evaluation step from implementation stage that includes it in the other models. Outcomes occurring in the last step indicate the visible and tangible benefits as well as any changes resulted from implementation of collaboration plan. While Selin and Chavez classify the outcomes into programs, impacts, and benefits derived, Wang and Fesenmaier view them from strategy, learning, and social capital oriented perspectives. The rest of steps are commonly found in all the models even though some of them use different terminology for specific steps such as assembling, ordering, and structuring (Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007) instead of problem setting, direction setting, and implementation, correspondently. In this way, the basic three-stage model has been extended or described differently depending on the cases and researchers who applied it.

Drawing from the body of literature in inter-organizational collaboration, process and actions for facilitating community-based destination branding are summarized in Table 2. The first stage consists of antecedents which shape collaboration relationships among stakeholders. Interviews with several DMOs' representatives quoted by Selin and Chavez (1995) and Wang & Fesenmaier (2007) reveal that the important societal environment conditions are crisis, competition, and organization networks and supports. The second stage is problem-setting where interdependent key stakeholders and common issues are identified. The following third stage is to identify and appreciate a sense of common goal and objectives. In the fourth stage, suitable organization for institutionalizing working relationship and assigning goals and responsibility for each stakeholder is formed as well as putting selected idea into action. After these operational stages, evaluation is taken to assess whether predefined vision, goal, objectives, and each stakeholder's responsibility have been achieved. Finally, integrated from the categorizations by Seline and Chavez (1995), and Wang and Fesenmaier (2007), outcomes can be grouped into programmatic results, improved relationships, and capital-oriented.

Although interorganizational collaboration process has been conceptually (Jamal & Getz, 1995; Selin & Chavez, 1995; Wang & Fesenmaier 2007) and empirically (Aas, Ladkin, & Fletcher, 2005; de Araujo & Bramwell, 1999, 2002; Vernon, Essex, Pinder & Curry, 2005) adapted to the studies on planning, development, and management of community-based tourism, there has been little effort to apply it to the area of destination branding. Therefore, the framework presented in Table 2 provides criteria for reviewing the procedures employed in collaborative destination branding.

Table 2. A Collaboration Process for Community-Based Tourism

<i>Stages</i>	Actions
Stage I. Antecedents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crisis - Competition - Organization network/ support
Stage II. Problem-Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Define purpose and domain - Identify convener - Convene stakeholders - Define problems / issues to resolve - Identify and legitimize stakeholders - Build commitment to collaborate by raising awareness of interdependence - Addressing stakeholder concerns - Ensuring adequate resources available to allow collaboration to proceed with key stakeholders present
Stage III. Direction-Setting	Collect and share information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appreciate shared values, enhance perceived interdependence - Ensure power distributed among several stakeholders - Establish rules and agenda for direction setting - Organize subgroups if required List alternatives - Discuss various options - Select appropriate solutions - Arrive at shared vision or plan/strategy through consensus
Stage IV. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formalizing legal structure for institutionalizing process - Assign roles and responsibility - Discuss means of implementing and monitoring solutions, shared vision, plan or strategy - Implement strategy/action tool - Design monitoring and control system to collaboration decisions.
Stage V. Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assess predefined values/goals/objectives - Evaluate detail plan /strategy - Evaluate responsibility - Documentation - Follow-up - Benchmark
Stage VI. Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programmatic results : strategy, competitiveness, products - Improved relationship: learning knowledge, trust, bonding - Capital-oriented: human capital, financial, and social capital-oriented outcomes

Note: Based on Araujo & Bramwell (2002), Gray (1985; 1989), Jamal & Getz (1995), Selin & Chavez (1995), Wang & Fesenmaier (2007)

Integrative Perspective on Destination Branding

In destination marketing literature, the importance of tourist's image on destination has been universally acknowledged and it led to a growing body of research on destination image (Gallarza et al, 2002). Image is a core component of the destination branding, but it should be considered as one step not branding itself to form a brand identity of community (Cai, 2002). Compared to the image study that has been investigated for more than 30 years, branding studies have just become an active area of destination marketing research and a debate remains on whether already accepted general branding principles can be transferred to destinations (Gallarza

et al, 2002). Therefore, it is meaningful to explore different strategies in product branding and investigate an appropriate approach for destination branding that is beyond of the realm of destination image. In reviewing how to build destination brand equity which is attributable to added brand values to both traveler and community (Cai, 2002), the most debatable issue is whether the building process should be based on organizations' or consumers' perception (de Chernatony & Riley, 1997). In this study, Double Vortex model and Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) model are compared to each other finding order to generate a optimal approach to destination branding.

First of all, the two models are rooted in different perspectives. CBBE model (Keller, 1993), the most comprehensive to date in the literature of product branding, mainly reinforces the continuous cognitive steps that consumer experiences in the process of accepting a brand. The steps include awareness, performance and imagery, judgment and feelings, and resonance dimensions. These dimensions logically represent how consumers think, feel, and act with respect to that brand. It assumes that building a strong brand in consumer's mind should involve each of the dimensions. However, a corporate brand represents an organization and reflects its heritage, values, culture, people, and strategy (Aaker, 2004a). Although corporate branding dwells on developing brands at an organizational level (Knox & Bickerton, 2003) which requires managing interactions with multiple stakeholders (Balmer & Gray, 2003; Knox & Bickerton, 2003, Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Aaker, 2004b), the firm's heritage and stakeholders' value are often excluded in building corporate brand as a basis for differentiation (de Chernatony & Riley, 1997). With this criticism, de Chernatony and Riley (1997) proposed Double Vortex branding model (Figure1). It considers the perceptions of brand managers and consumers simultaneously. The main logic is that brand is conceived inside organizations but their success is decided by consumer's perceptions. Inside the firm (the left vortex in Figure 1) managers build brand by reflecting stakeholder's vision as well as the vision, mission, and value of the firm, and then blend it with the firm's culture and heritage. This strategic driver is then implemented through incorporating the seven resources that needed to develop brand. On the other hands, the right vortex shows how consumers respond to the brand projected by the firm. It assumes that consumers may not perceive all of information and they would consider the cognitive steps explained in Keller's model as a whole rather than separated ones. Their perceptions on the brand could be considered in terms of the confidence they have in the brand. That is, the more confidence is likely to increase, the more favorably consumers react to the brand. Finally, the overall outcome of response should augment the value of the brand to all stakeholders. Therefore, it can be said that Keller's model more focuses on consumer based product and Double Vortex model pays more attention to organization, especially stakeholders, in branding.

A second point is that Double Vortex model takes into consideration external factors which are "time" changes and consumer's "experience". As a firm's strategies enter new environments, and consumers gain more experiences, the implementation trajectory of a brand changes. However, Keller's model is more static than Double Vortex model because it places emphasis on the consumer's cognitive process without consideration of such external factors.

Further, Double Vortex model proposes different process from that of CBBE model. In Keller's model, brand awareness is the first stage that consumers recognize or recall the brand. After that, consumers recognize brand attributes (performance) and shape image (imagery) on it.

Then they give emotional meaning (feeling and judgment) to the brand. Brand loyalty which is the ultimate goal of branding can be finally formed through brand resonance. However, Double Vortex misses the brand awareness step and starts from consumer perceptions on brand image (imagery), followed by rational performance (performance) and emotional match (feeling and judgment) simultaneously. In Keller's brand building blocks, feeling and judgment come after brand performance, not on the same stage. In this sense, CBBE model provides more logical flow in understanding consumers' brand experience.

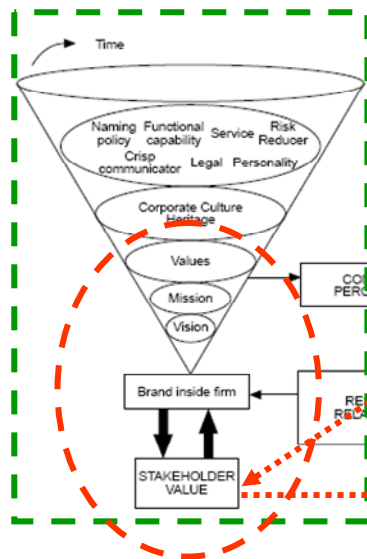


Figure 1.

Double Vortex (de Chernatony & Riley, 1997)

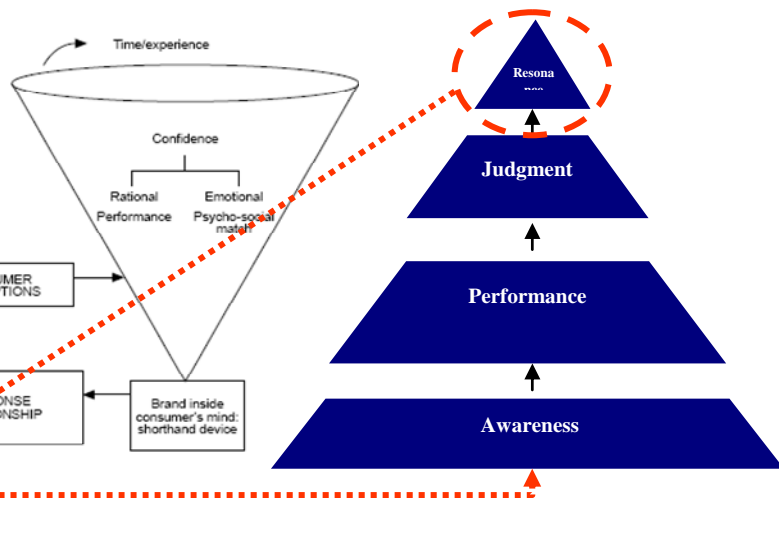


Figure 2.

CBBE Model (Keller, 2003)

Even though the two models use dissimilar expressions on the same steps and locate them in the different stages, they show commonality in the ultimate goal and the interpretations given to the specific steps. As mentioned earlier, imagery of CBBE model can be understood as consumer perception in Double Vortex model. “Emotional psycho-social match” is similar to “feeling and judgment” in CBBE model. “Brand resonance” can run parallel to “response relationship” of the Double Vortex model because they are interpreted as the stage where consumers are positively bonded to the brand.

For successful destination branding, the organizational and the customer-based perspectives of brand equity should be linked through interdisciplinary approach. The application of Keller's four steps with respect to destination branding makes it possible for this study to go beyond the image-oriented approach that has been used extensively in destination marketing literatures. However, in order to close the gap between the projected and the perceived destination brand, solely adopting Keller's model may not be the optimal solution because stakeholder's perspective is excluded in the four blocks. Therefore, incorporating CBBE model with Double Vortex model would produce a more consistent destination brand identity.

As described in Figure 3, stakeholders' value should be the source of the value, mission, and vision of destination brand. Then, the brand is blended with community culture and heritage and based upon tourism resources available in a community. Next, through experiencing the whole process of awareness, performance and imagery, feelings and judgment, and resonance, travelers can form a positive relationship with destination brand. As a result, travelers' loyalty to the destination brand corresponds with the stakeholders' value, which bridges the gap between the perceived brand identity by visitors and the projected by community.

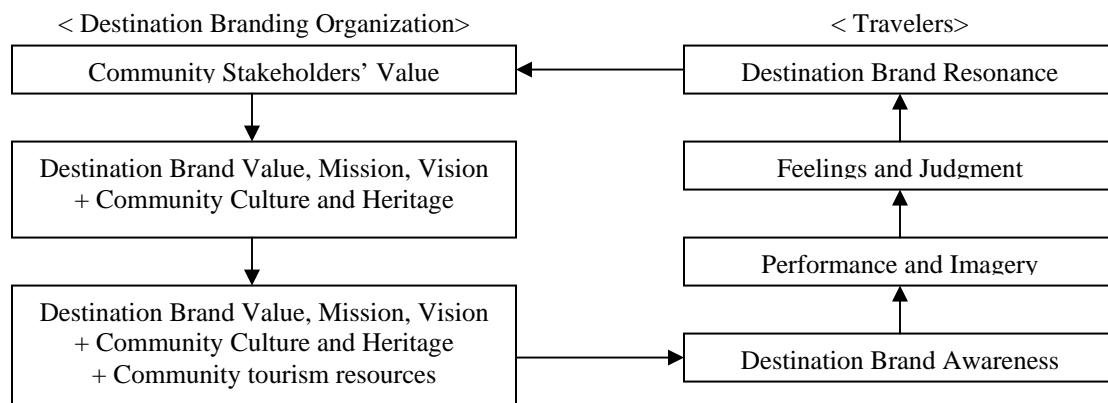


Figure 3. Integrative Perspective on Destination branding

Collaborative Destination Branding Process

The integrated perspective on destination branding can be operated through a collaboration process. The model presented in Figure 4 shows how each step of the collaboration process in Table 2 can be parallel to destination branding in Figure 3. Its main theoretical foundation is from Double Vortex (Chernatony & Riley, 1997) and CBBE models (Keller, 1993) and collaboration process based on the frameworks of Araujo and Bramwell (2002), Gray (1985, 1989), Jamal and Getz (1995), Selin and Chavez (1995), and Wang and Fesenmaier (2007). The following discussion is on the components in the recursive typology outlined in this framework: recognizing preconditions, identifying problems in current branding, defining directions based on stakeholders' value, implementing travelers based branding strategies, evaluating on the results of implementation, and analyzing outcomes.

Precondition often vehicles collective action through partnership. For example, unexpected events such as SARS and Tsunami and increasing tourism market competition prompt tourism organizations to design inter-agency plans in the national and regional levels to prepare for the crisis that disrupts resident's lives and causes serious economic damage in tourism destination. Once a need to resolve the problems influenced by or directly resulted from antecedents is aroused, the various community interest groups appreciate the interdependencies that exist among them and begin to realize the necessity of collective action against the problems. The problems in current destination branding can be identified through brainstorming among community stakeholders in public forum or workshop. Consensus on common interest domain will be generated through addressing stakeholders' concerns on the community slogan, logo,

advertising and promotion channels, perceived destination image, and tourists' reactions in the relationship with them. After problems are identified, stakeholders establish vision, goal, and objectives that they can expect from destination branding. Based on the stakeholders' branding direction, ideas and strategies for marketing program to build brand equity can be streamlined.

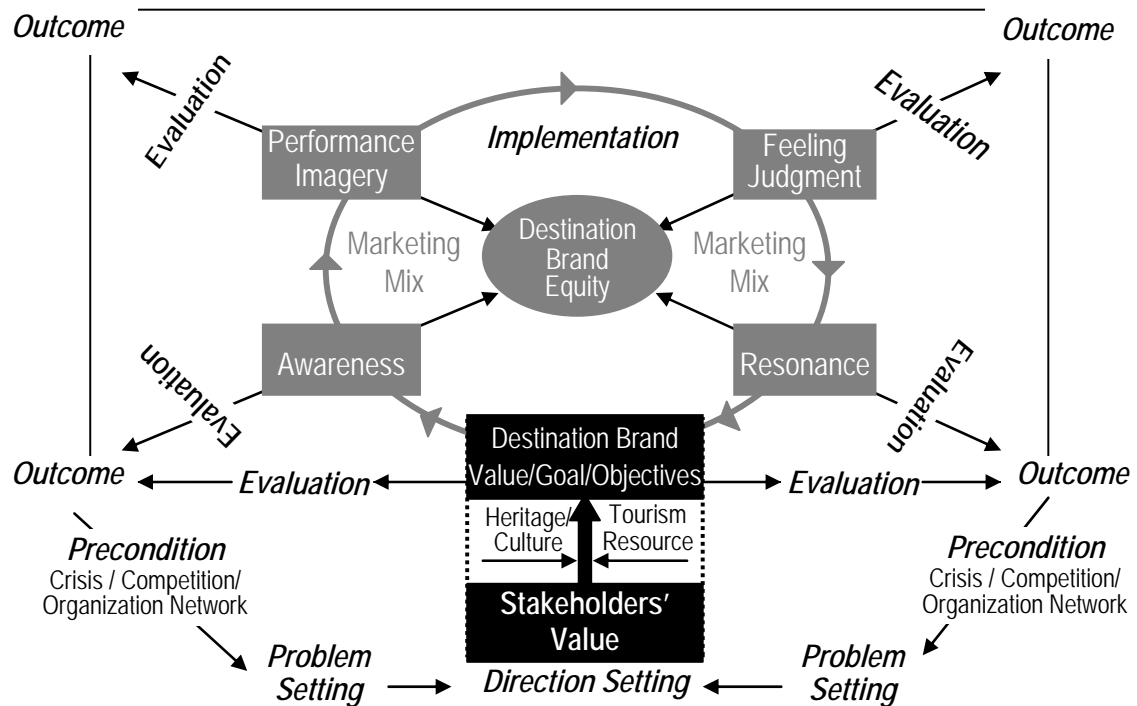


Figure 4. Collaborative Destination branding

Evaluation mechanism is also established at this stage. The next important procedure is implementing the marketing programs designed for the each step of brand awareness, brand performance and imagery, and consumer judgment and feelings, and brand resonance. The ultimate goal of implementing the action plan is to establish genuine brand equity for a destination. Stakeholders can participate in this step through assigning their roles and clarifying responsibilities. To monitor the ongoing progress and ensure compliance to collaboration decisions, stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation step. Through sharing opinions and feedbacks on the each step, participants can revise branding strategies to increase travelers' awareness and generate more positive emotional responses from travelers. Moreover, evaluation makes it possible to recognize what travelers really expect and need from the experience in the destination, and finally increase their revisit intention and word of mouth effect for future visit. In addition, participants can evaluate whether predefined directions and their responsibilities have been followed through and then present the results in writing to refer to if necessary. Upon the completion of the implementation of the branding strategies and evaluation, outcomes are assessed in terms of program, relationship among participants, and capital-oriented. The driving Issues from the outcomes can be a starting point to identify problems while considering the environmental influence. This whole dynamic collaboration undergoes a cyclical process.

Based on the case studies by Morgan et al (2003) and Lodge (2002), this study introduces New Zealand's national branding project to illustrate practically how the presented collaborative destination branding process can be carried out through a real case. In fact, Tourism New Zealand has been able to create a powerful travel destination brand through stakeholder partnership and a differentiated branding strategy delivered by collective action.

AN EMPIRICAL EXAMPLE

Preconditions: Early 90's New Zealand was faced with sharply declining exports to European market, especially to the UK. At the same time, there had been two years of drought which had hit the sheep-meat and wool markets severely. The temporary failure on farming and product exports impacted on foreign currency revenues and the confidence of the people. Recognizing this economic crisis, members of the New Zealand Market Developing Board (NZMDB) began to pool up budget to raise general awareness levels of the country. However, the board faced not only a limited network integration across all partners and organizations but also high market competition. The major competitors are Australia, Canada, South Africa, Ireland, Vietnam, Cuba, and the South Pacific. Moreover, political influence in the operational activities of the New Zealand Tourism Board interrupted tourism marketing policies. Realizing these challenges, the existing the New Zealand Tourist Board was replaced to Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) throughout 1999-2000 to create national brand with emphasizing stakeholder commitment.

Problem setting: In order to take the national branding campaign forward, TNZ had to bring over a number of public and private sector stakeholders. The private operators and service providers joined through the Inbound Tour Operators Council of New Zealand and the Tourism Industry Association. Regional public sector bodies from 12 regional councils, 26 regional tourism organizations, and numerous district tourism organizations also began to assist the national campaign. Besides, the primary travel suppliers Air New Zealand and Qantas on the international stage are affiliated with TNZ for a global campaign. However, sensitive relationship among the stakeholders became a challenge in designing the destination brand. The main challenge was how to create a brand for the country while guiding and encouraging both public and private investments in the development of the product. TNZ assumed its role as both guide and facilitate the whole campaign process, and emphasized the importance of better communications with stakeholders. In order to identify the challenges in positioning current national brand, TNZ initiated a series of project that surveyed the local stakeholder groups, regional economist, and visitors as well as potential travelers. The identified problem in brand personality was that the outside world saw New Zealand as being a boring agricultural country and aggressive Maori warriors.

Direction setting: TNZ projected the specified goal for securing partnerships among stakeholders. It was to enhance relationships with the private and public stakeholders by refining channels of communication and developing new media for the exchange of information. The detail objectives were developing an external communication plan, a global corporate database, a tourism trade website, and an intranet with the website. Eventually, the nation brand was decided as "New Pacific Freedom" through reflecting the surveyed stakeholders' value and travelers'

perceptions on New Zealand. The value behind the brand was contemporary and sophisticated, innovative and creative, free spirit that was combined with the landscape of New Zealand. The short term slogan was “100% Pure New Zealand”.

Implementation: the brand was launched market between July 1999 and February 2000 with the simple message “100% Pure New Zealand”. The positioning strategy was combining its brand essence with a point of difference. First, TNZ focused on brand awareness with showcasing the diverse landscape, peoples, cultures, and destination activities on TV commercials and magazines. The next step was to form a positive image by targeting interactive travelers who are young in body, love travel, seek new experiences, and enjoy the challenge of new destinations. They could be influential opinion leaders in transferring the existing boring image to projected brand personality. These travelers are very web-wise, so the web-based marketing was implemented. After the award-winning TNZ website in September 2001, TNZ’s effort to forward to the stage of emotional benefits (feelings) was successful. The strategies were encouraging the average visitors to the website to stay longer and capitalizing on The Lord of the Rings trilogy which gave the nation celebrity value. The branding of New Zealand is currently getting to the stage of resonance with working on a refined positioning strategy.

Evaluation and Outcomes: The evaluation was taken up with passion. A video was made of the branding project with reference to the whole procedure. A recommendation was agreed to apply the strategy as pertinently to the USA and other markets as it had been demonstrated to work in Europe. With all successful branding strategies which were founded on the value of stakeholders and market researches, New Zealand became the best niche players in the global market. Moreover, it subsequently generated the grounds for growing self-confidence in New Zealand, the basis for pride in not only how revenue can be earned but also in the very culture and mind-set of the people. Central government politically intervened the marketing policies in the beginning period finally endorsed the branding strategy and supported it through many events. As a brand guardianship task, the New Zealand tree fern, a country-of-origin device, was also collectively developed.

CONCLUSION

Collaboration approach to destination branding at community level is a complex task for DMOs due to general lack of financial and human resources, biased interest relations among groups, and insufficient understanding of the communities on tourism and destination marketing (Aas et al., 2005; Araujo & Bramwell, 2002; Bramwell & Sharman, 1999; Reed, 1997; Selin & Beason, 1991; Williams et al., 1998). Recognizing those challenges, this study has a potential theoretical significance in the destination branding literature. The study proposed a model of collaborative destination branding. The established models of inter-organizational collaboration process were analyzed and interpreted in the context of destination branding. The model incorporated Double Vortex (de Chernatony & Riley, 1997) and CBBE (Keller, 1993) models to introduce integrative approach in identifying authentic destination brand equity, drawing on the perspectives of stakeholders and travelers. Finally, the New Zealand’s successful national branding project was examined to emphasize the dynamic nature of collaboration in destination branding.

Despite the tremendous interest in collaboration approach to destination tourism, it appears that partnership is presently beginning stage in destination branding field. In addition, there are many forces that create conflict among stakeholder groups and cause ineffectiveness of the collaboration initiative such as a lack of fund and resources, unwillingness to share interest, unequal power relations, strong government involvement, and insufficient capability of local stakeholders in decision making and activities. The New Zealand's collaborative branding project demonstrated similar challenges but it was successfully carried out by the participants who was unified in their goals and objectives and were determined to make it work. The case suggests that attracting and reassuring investors should be premised on legislative supports from government as well as innovative organizational system. Also, convening organization is recommended to have independent authority and communication channels to collect stakeholders' opinion and ideas.

The lack of a shared core value from stakeholders makes it difficult to create a consistent brand that can appeal to a destination's market. Desirable and sophisticated travel markets increasingly want evidence that there is a mind behind the destination brand and its offers. A collective and conscious vision from the community should be the source to keep the promise set out by the brand. Prospective tourists need this to ensure their visit will be well managed. A destination brand is thus considerably more than slogan and icon. It is evidence of the collaborated will among stakeholders to offer a competitively attractive proposition. In this sense, the proposed model can be the guideline to practice collaborative destination branding within a systematic process.

Although the New Zealand's national branding project cannot be considered as a perfect case that exhibits detail actions supposed to occur in each step of the collaboration process, it verifies the important role of stakeholders in identifying the shared value on the brand. To validate the projected model, further empirical studies should be conducted in the future. Finally, quantitative approach to test the effectiveness of the collaborative destination branding is also encouraged.

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AVOIDING UNINFORMED RESPONSES IN DESTINATION IMAGE QUESTIONNAIRES

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ABSTRACT

Since the first destination image studies were published in the early 1970s, the field has become one of the most popular in the tourism literature. While reviews of the destination image literature show no commonly agreed conceptualisation of the construct, researchers have predominantly used structured questionnaires for measurement. There has been criticism that the way some of these scales have been selected means a greater likelihood of attributes being irrelevant to participants. This opens up the risk of stimulating uninformed responses. The issue of uninformed response was first raised as a source of error 60 years ago. However, there has been little, if any, discussion in relation to destination image measurement, studies of which often require participants to provide opinion-driven rather than fact-based responses. This paper reports the trial of a 'don't know' (DK) non-response option for participants in two destination image questionnaires. It is suggested the use of a DK option provides participants with an alternative to i) skipping the question, ii) using the scale midpoint to denote neutrality, or iii) providing an uninformed response. High levels of DK usage by participants can then alert the marketer of the need to improve awareness of destination performance for potential salient attributes.

KEYWORDS: *Destination Image; Non Response; Uninformed Responses; Don't Know.*

INTRODUCTION

Since the first destination image studies were published in the early 1970s (see Matejka 1973, Mayo 1973, Hunt 1975), the field has grown into arguably the most popular in the tourism literature. While reviews of this literature show no commonly agreed conceptualisation of the destination image construct (see Chon 1991, Echtner & Ritchie 1991, Gallarza et al 2002), researchers have predominantly used structured questionnaires for measurement. Consumers are commonly asked to rate the perceived performance of a destination across a list of attributes using Likert-type scales. However, there has been criticism that many such attribute lists have been developed without an exploratory stage. For example, Pike's (2002) analysis of 142 destination image studies published between 1973 and 2000 found 114 had used structured questionnaires. Less than half of these had used a qualitative method at the questionnaire design

stage. A potential problem with selecting the attribute list from the literature or expert opinion is that more items are likely to be irrelevant to participants for a particular travel context. A consequence of using an irrelevant attribute is an uninformed response, which occurs when a participant who does not know the answer makes a guess. This might take place either because the participant does not wish to appear uninformed, or is not provided with a 'don't know' (DK) option.

The issue of non-response most commonly refers to those individuals in the target sample who choose not participate in a survey. However, this paper is concerned with non-responses by participants to individual scale items. The issue of non-response to individual questionnaire items is rarely addressed in any detail in marketing research texts (see for example Cooper & Schindler 2006, Lukas et al. 2005, Malhotra et al. 2002, McDaniel & Gates 2006, McMurray et al. 2004, Zikmund 2003) and tourism research texts (see for example Jennings 2001, Ritchie et al. 2005, Ryan 1995, Veal 2006). Rather, response bias is generally addressed in terms of acquiescence bias, extremity bias, interviewer bias, auspices bias and social desirability bias. Questionnaire design-related issues addressed concern the optimal number of response alternatives, balanced/unbalanced scales, even/uneven scales, and order bias.

This paper reports the trial of a non-response option for individual scale items in two destination image questionnaires, for which there has been little, if any, previous discussion in the literature. This appears to be an important research gap, given the intangible nature of destination marketing. On the supply side, the destination marketer seeks to cut through the noise of the almost limitless number of competing places and stimulate the development of positive induced images in the minds of the target segment. On the demand side, consumers who have had no experience at the destinations under consideration in the travel decision process often make choices on the basis of perceptions rather than fact. Structured questionnaires that seek to tap these perceptions, but which do not provide a (DK) option for participants, appear to make at least two key assumptions. First, it is assumed the consumer is aware of the extent to which the destination provides each of the attributes in the questionnaire. Second, it is assumed that each of these attributes is relevant to the consumer for a specific travel situation. This research was interested in exploring the extent to which participants would utilise such a DK option.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of questionnaire scaling is to place an individual's perceptions along a continuum, to permit people with differing opinions to respond differently (Likert, 1932). Typically, participants are asked to rate the extent to which a destination provides an attribute, such as 'good accommodation' and 'pleasant climate' for example, using a Likert-type scale anchored at 1 (strongly disagree) and either 5 or 7 (strongly agree). This then begs the question: *How should a participant respond if they don't understand the attribute, they don't know if a destination features this attribute, or they don't care?* Advocates for the use of a scale mid-point argue such an inclusion provides a valid option for those without an opinion (Onwuegbuzie & Weems, 2004). A respondent's mid-point score in a seven-point scale may be viewed as either a 'don't know', or just enough for the brand to be viewed as satisfactory (Howard and Sheth, 1969). However, the researcher does assign a value and will analyse this as a meaningful

response. Without an explicit DK option, many participants will express an opinion about things they have no knowledge or experience (Hawkins, Coney & Jackson, 1988).

Schneider (1985) proposed two possible motives for a participant providing an uninformed response; they do not wish to appear uninformed or they want to help the researcher by providing information. One way to reduce uninformed responses is to offer participants an explicit DK option. The purpose of such a non-response option is to provide those who either don't know or don't have an opinion with an alternative to skipping the question, using the scale mid-point, or providing an uninformed response. The issue of uninformed response was first raised 60 years ago by Gill (1947), who found 70% of participants in a survey held a strong opinion regarding the fictitious Metallic Metals Act. In recommending the DK option, Chapman (1993) cited the case of an MBA program survey that found one university rated 14th best in the USA when in fact they did not offer such a program.

An explicit DK option is justified because it is likely some participants have never before thought about a particular issue or have formed an opinion (Poe et al, 1988). It is preferable that a participant state they don't know, rather than leaving the item blank or making a guess. Thus, the issue of response quality must be considered alongside response rates, since uninformed responses pose a threat to survey research (Hawkins, Coney & Jackson, 1988). Hawkins et al found evidence to suggest questionnaires without a DK option have a higher uninformed response rate than those with such an option.

A potential problem is that a DK option provides an easy out for participants, including false negatives (Gilljan & Granberg 1993). A false negative is a person who does hold an attitude but chooses not to express it for some reason. This is counter to the false positives who provide an uninformed response. Both are sources of error. Using a DK option means a trade-off between error and sample size. In other words, too few responses or too many that are meaningless (Schneider & Johnson, 1994).

Although destination image has arguably been the most popular field in the tourism literature since the 1970s, there is no common agreement on conceptualisation of the construct. However, most definitions cited have been variations of that proposed by Crompton (1979, p. 18): "the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination". To operationalise this often means asking questions of participants that require opinion-driven rather than fact-based answers. In some instances this requires such an opinion about a place they might not have previously visited, or about an attribute about which they have either no knowledge or no interest. Unfortunately for the marketer, images held by a consumer may only have a tenuous and indirect relationship to fact (Reynolds, 1965). However, whether an individual's perceived images are correct is not as important as what the consumer actually believes to be true (Hunt, 1975). This proposition continues to underpin consumer behaviour research today, often referred to as *perception is reality*. This originated from Thomas' theorem: "What is defined or perceived by people is real in its consequences" (Thomas & Thomas, 1928, p.572, in Patton 2002).

Pike's (2002) finding that most destination image studies did not use a qualitative method in the selection of scale items supports claims that many researchers have arbitrarily selected

attributes without first consulting members of the target market (see Dann 1996, Pearce 1982). It has been claimed that often the attributes used in destination image surveys have been “chosen at random” (Pearce, 1982, p. 149). In this regard Dann (1996, p. 43) strongly supported the call for researchers “to bring the tourist back into their investigations”. One implication of not bringing the traveller into destination image questionnaire design is that some attributes used may either be of little relevance to participants, for a specific travel situation for instance, or be worded in unfamiliar terms. There has been little research reported on the differences in destination attribute importance for different travel situations, even though intuitively it might be such difference exist to a traveller contemplating a weekend golf trip with friends in comparison to a family summer holiday.

Even though scale item non-response and uninformed responses represent a potential source of bias, there has also been little reported in the tourism literature. Exceptions include Hollenhorst, Olson and Fortney (1992) who reported providing a DK option in their investigation of perceptions of state park cabin accommodation. The 114 structured destination image studies from 1973 to 2000, tabled by Pike (2002), were revisited to analyse the extent of DK usage. The only paper to report using a DK option was Chacko and Fenich’s (2000) investigation of convention destination images. Their questionnaire requested participants to omit any attribute or city with which they were unfamiliar. The purpose of this paper is to report the use of a non-response scale category in destination image questionnaires, to explore the extent to which participants would make use of such an option. To recap, the rationales for this are:

- Most destination image studies use structured questionnaires, with a battery of attribute rating scales.
- Less than half of the studies reviewed by Pike (2002) used a qualitative stage in the development of the attribute list. This runs the risk of including attributes that might be irrelevant to participants for a particular travel situation.
- Participants are often asked to rate attributes and/or destinations with which they are not familiar.
- Since destination image papers in the tourism literature have generally not explicitly discussed non-response options for scale items, the extent of uninformed responses is unknown.

METHOD

This section reports the trial of DK options in two destination image research projects. In both cases the images of near-home destinations were analysed in the context of short break holidays by car.

Study 1

A mail questionnaire was distributed to a systematic random sample of 3000 households in Auckland, New Zealand, to investigate the images held of a competitive set of five leading near-home destinations. Other aspects of this study have been published previously (see Pike 2002b, 2003, Pike & Ryan 2004). A total of 763 completed questionnaires were received,

representing a useable response rate of 26%. The questionnaire contained 165 items. The destination image questions consisted of a battery of 20 attributes, 18 of which were selected from an extensive review of the destination image literature, depth interviews with tourism practitioners (n = 11), and personal interviews with consumers using Repertory Grid Analysis (n = 25). Two additional attributes that were not elicited during the qualitative stage, 'hot pool bathing' and 'Maori culture' were added to represent the two main strengths of Rotorua, which was the main destination of interest. These attributes feature strongly in the destination's *Feel the spirit...Manaakitanga* branding campaigns (see www.rotoruanz.com).

Participants were first asked to rate the importance of each attribute on a seven point scale, (1 = not important, 7 = very important) and then in a separate section to rate the performance of each of the five destinations across the same attributes (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). In both sections participants were advised to use the '0' (don't know/no opinion) non-response option provided along side the rating scale if they were either unsure or had no opinion for that item. For the purpose of analysing item non-responses, it was decided to use the same list of attributes for each destination, in spite of the fact that not all destinations featured all attributes. Since the destinations represented a mix of coastal and inland regions, the attributes 'snow sports' and 'good beaches' for example, are not available at all of the destinations. Therefore the inclusion of all attributes in this way, along with the use of two attributes not elicited from consumer or expert opinion, were tests of the suitability of the DK option. This '0' non-response option was carefully separated from the rating scale, in an effort to avoid participants considering the it as part of the rating continuum. The '0' option was coded as a non-response in SPSS and excluded from analysis. Systematic non-responses were coded separately and also excluded from analysis.

Results

The use of the non-response option for the attribute importance items was not high. This was pleasing, given that participants were simply asked to express the level of importance they place to features of a domestic short break that had been rigorously developed as representing salient attributes. This indicates participants were familiar with the attributes. As shown in Table 1, of the 20 attribute importance items, three featured a '0' non-response rate of over 10%: 'snow sports' (16%), 'Maori culture' (12%) and 'fishing' (12%). These attributes were in the bottom four in terms of importance, with means well below the scale mid point. While 'snow sports' and 'fishing' featured in the qualitative stage, it would be expected that these attributes would appeal to niche segments. Therefore it was not surprising that most participants rated these attributes as unimportant, and that some held no opinion.

'Maori culture' was not elicited from either consumers or practitioners, as a salient destination attribute, during the exploratory stage. As indicated, this attribute was added for political reasons, since the destination branding strategy features this theme, and so the result was not unexpected. The effect of transforming the 12% non-response to the scale mid-point (4) would not significantly impact the scale mean. Nevertheless, the non-response data is of interest in relation to the low rating of the attribute. That so many participants opted to use the DK option for such a high profile attribute indicates possible irrelevance. Following Rappaport (1982), who found more women making use of the DK option, the 'Maori culture' variable was transformed

to a categorical variable. However, there were no significant differences in the use of the DK option by demographic characteristics.

Table 1 – DK response rates for attribute importance

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>DK use</i>
Fishing	17	662	3.23	2.11	12.2%
Snow sports	19	634	2.74	1.90	16.4%
Maori culture	20	663	2.41	1.63	12.3%

The destination performance non-response take up was much higher, with several scale items attracting over one third of participants. Table 2 highlights the destination performance items that attracted over 10% '0' non-response rate. The mean performance ratings are also shown in brackets. Clearly most of the items rated means below the scale mid point. However, for each of the five destinations there was at least one attribute where the perceived performance was above the scale midpoint. These attributes represent potential strengths, and so while a DMO might not be concerned about non-response for perceived weaknesses, there should be some concern that such a high level of participants were unable to rate the performance of a destination strength. It is suggested this then provides additional useful information to the destination marketers. Chi-square tests did not indicate any significant patterns of DK usage by demographic characteristics.

Table 2 – Destination performance items with >10% '0' non response

<i>Destination</i>	<i>Attribute</i>
Rotorua	Wineries (37%, 2.6), snow sports (33%, 1.6), good beaches (25%, 1.6), fishing (14%, 4.7)
Bay of Islands	Wineries (32%, 3.0), snow sports (31%, 1.3), hot pool bathing (30%, 2.9), Maori culture (19.3%, 4.3), value for money (10%, 4.6)
Coromandel	Snow sports (34%, 1.3), wineries (30%, 3.1), Maori culture (29%, 2.6), hot pool bathing (17.4%, 3.8), fishing (10%, 5.9)
Mount Maunganui	Snow sports (35%, 1.5), Maori culture (34%, 2.6), wineries (33%, 3.3), fishing (15%, 5.3), adventure activities (12%, 4.4), friendly locals (11%, 4.3)
Taupo	Wineries (37%, 2.6), good beaches (24%, 1.9), Maori culture (23%, 3.9), snow sports (14%, 4.7), hot pools (11%, 5.4)

A summary of key results was presented to the regional tourism organisation (RTO) at each of the five destinations. The data represented the first information on short break holiday positioning for each RTO, and thus had practical marketing implications. For example, at the Taupo meeting the opportunity to promote wine tourism was discussed, and in this sample 37% of participants were unable to express an opinion about wineries at this destination. Without this, the mean perceived destination performance (2.6) could be misinterpreted. Also, at the Rotorua

meeting, there was considerable discussion about the political ramifications of the 'Maori culture' result, given this attribute's promotional prominence.

Study 2

During 2003 a longitudinal investigation was undertaken in Queensland, Australia, to analyse the perceived positions of a competitive set of near-home domestic destinations. The destination of interest was the Coral Coast. The Coral Coast is an emerging destination, which launched a new brand campaign at the time of the research, to overcome the state tourism organisation's focus group findings the destination suffered low awareness in its most important market, Brisbane. One of the aims of longitudinal project was to provide destination image benchmarks, for which the effectiveness of the new brand campaign could be assessed over time. Other aspects of this study have been previously reported (see Pike, 2007). Two questionnaires were distributed three months apart. The first was distributed to a systematic random sample of 3000 households in Brisbane. A total of 523 completed questionnaires were received, which represented a useable response rate of 19%. This was considered reasonable given participants were advised a second questionnaire would be sent to them at a later date. The first questionnaire contained 53 items, including a battery of 37 destination attributes. These were selected from the results of the New Zealand study, and supplemented with attributes from the Australian destination literature. Participants were asked to rate the importance of each attribute using the same seven point scale as the New Zealand study. Again, a '0' non-response option was provided along side the rating scales.

Three months later, a second questionnaire was mailed to the 486 stage one participants who agreed to participate in stage two. This resulted in 308 completed questionnaires, representing a useable response rate of 63%. The second questionnaire contained 97 items. Participants were asked to rate the perceived performance of five destinations across a reduced set of 13 attributes. Both the list of destinations and the attributes were selected from the results of the first questionnaire. Participants were again advised to use the '0' non-response option provided along side the rating scale. The DK option was coded as a non-response in SPSS and excluded from analysis.

Results

In the first questionnaire, none of the 37 attribute importance items attracted a DK usage of over 10%. The highest usage was recorded for 'golf' (8%), 'vegetarian eating places' (8%), 'opportunity for four wheel driving' (6%), 'eating places for children' (6%), 'wineries' (6%), 'opportunity to visit friends/relatives' (5%), and 'activities/attractions for children' (5%). As in the New Zealand study, this indicated participants were familiar with the attributes selected as being salient for a short break to a near-home destination.

In the second questionnaire, the DK usage varied between the destinations. For example, for the two most popular destinations, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast, there was no DK usage over 3% for destination performance attributes. For two of the other destinations, Northern New South Wales and Fraser Coast, there was no DK usage over 7%. However, for the destination of interest, the Coral Coast, over half of the attributes attracted DK usage over 10%,

as shown in Table 3. Importantly, ‘good value for money’ and ‘suitable accommodation’ were ranked first and third in terms of attribute importance. For these potentially determinant attributes, along with two other important attributes the practical implication is that the Coral Coast has a performance gap. The level of DK usage signals a lack of awareness, which would not be apparent had the participants used the scale mid-point as a neutral option. The DK option therefore provides the destination marketer with additional information.

Table 3 – Coral Coast DK usage

<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Mean importance</i>	<i>Mean Coral Coast performance</i>	<i>DK usage</i>
Good value for money	6.0	5.5	13%
Suitable accommodation	5.9	5.2	11%
High levels of service	5.4	4.9	14%
Good cafes	5.0	4.7	13%
Friendly people	5.0	5.4	12%
Lots to see/do	4.8	5.0	10%
Opportunities for walking	4.1	5.4	10%
Opportunities for fishing/boating	3.4	5.7	11%

CONCLUSIONS

Participants in both the New Zealand and Queensland studies were familiar with concept of short break holidays by car, indicating a mean of four such trips each year. Also, since the destinations represented those most popular and within a short drive (up to 4 hours) of participants, it is to be expected they would be more familiar with these places and their attributes than a set of long distance international destinations. Even so, the high take up of the non-response option highlights how many of the participants were unfamiliar with certain destination attributes. The New Zealand study showed as many as one third of participants used the DK option for several scale items. It is suggested the ‘0’ non-response data provides additional useful information to destination marketers. For each of the five destinations in the study there was at least one important attribute, representing a destination strength, where up to one third of participants were not able to provide an informed response. As indicated, this had practical implications for the destination marketers.

Conceptually, the results highlight the importance of exploratory research in questionnaire design. For example, ‘Maori culture’, one of two attributes not elicited at the exploratory stage of the New Zealand study, attracted a high non-response take up. This was also the lowest rating in importance (mean = 2.4). The role of questionnaire scaling is to place an individual’s perceptions along a continuum, to permit people with differing opinions to respond differently (Likert, 1932). The purpose of a non-response option is to provide those who either don’t know or don’t have an opinion, with an alternative to skipping the question, using the neutral scale mid-point, or providing an uninformed response. Even though the issue of

uninformed response represents a source of error, little has been previously reported in the tourism literature. This is an important consideration in destination image research, given participants are often asked to provide perceptions of a destination that they may either never previously visited or have not done so recently. In these two projects, participants were required to provide opinions about high profile near-home destinations, and yet there was a high usage the DK option. It is suggested from the results that there is a case for the inclusion of a DK option when analysing the image of an international, distant or emerging destination, for which participants might not be expected to hold in-depth opinions. More research, using experimental designs, is required to enhance destination marketers understanding of the potential for uninformed responses.

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AN EXAMINATION OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION AT RURAL FESTIVALS IN INDIANA: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

The present study provides a qualitative analysis of stakeholder involvement and participation in rural festivals. Examination of key issues such as: resident involvement, participation, and resident attitudes regarding festivals along with DMO involvement, and participation in festivals was conducted. Findings support the current literature of the importance of stakeholder involvement and participation for continued rural festival success. Resident involvement and participation with local festival contribute to festival acceptance and success.

KEYWORDS: *Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs); Festival; Rural Tourism; Qualitative Analysis; Stakeholder Involvement; Stakeholder Participation.*

INTRODUCTION

Festivals provide an excellent way to incorporate community involvement with resident interest in tourism planning. A festival is a celebration of the culture of a specific region, typically but not exclusively, rural. Festivals are a way of celebrating culture, highlighting a cultural asset, or celebrating a season or time of year (Getz, 1991; Kim, Uysal & Chen, 2002).

The festival starts small with local individuals handling all aspects of the event. Since most festivals are “home grown,” with residents from the community actively organizing and participating in the events, residents are often open to festival involvement and participation (Lewis, 1997). A festival as a tourism initiative has a greater opportunity for success if it comes from within the community, with stakeholders assessing their own resources and assets (Rusher, 2003).

The purpose of this research was to examine the perspective of several stakeholders: the festival organizer, residents, and destination marketing organizations (DMOs). By examining key issues such as: resident involvement, participation, and attitudes regarding festivals, DMO involvement, and participation in festivals it can be determined to what extent key stakeholder involvement and participation in rural festival currently exists. This outcome of this research contributes to the body of knowledge and understanding of rural festival tourism information.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the last 20 years, tourism researchers have examined social aspects of tourism, including the community issue of resident attitudes towards tourism. Widely believed, tourism must have support of the host community (Fagence, 2003; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; Lankford, 1994; Long, Allen, & Perdue, 1988; Murphy, 1985; Morrison, Pearce, Moscardo, Nadkani & O’Leary, 1986). However, research has unequivocally found that support is not always there. In fact, support only constitutes one pole on a continuum of host community’s attitudes. The other pole is opposition. Depending on the stage of the destination life cycle, distribution of resident attitudes on the “love-hate” continuum varies. Tourism scientists agree on some factors that underlie different attitudes. These factors include attachment to the community (Mc Cool & Martin, 1994), level of knowledge about tourism and the local economy (Davis, Allen, & Consenza, 1988), level of contact with tourists (Atkis, Peristianis & Warner, 1996), residents’ perception of tourism (Bachleitner & Zins, 1999), and perceived ability to influence tourism planning decisions (Lankford, 1994).

Stakeholder involvement is especially true for fairs and festivals (Jago, Chalip, Brown, Mules & Ali, 2003; Rusher, 2003). All stakeholders must be involved from the inception and planning processes to ensure maximum acceptance and success (Reid & Arcodia, 2007; Blain, Levy, & Ritchie, 2005; Lankford, 1994). Festival stakeholder identification has been presented in several ways: primary and secondary stakeholders (Reid & Arcodia, 2002), functional role categorization (Spiropoloulos, Gargaliano & Sotiriadou, 2006), festival producers and marketers (Larson, 2002), and festival network theory (Getz, Andersson, & Larson, 2007).

Getz, Andersson, and Larson (2007) identify seven major stakeholders in a festival network: festival organizations, facilitators, supplies and venues, allies and collaborators, regulators, and the audience. The festival network provides a comprehensive list of all stakeholders involved at the micro and macro level. However, the incorporation of macro stakeholder involvement is beyond the scope of this specific research. Spiropoloulos, Gargaliano, and Sotiriadou (2006) embraces the functional perspective of the stakeholder in tandem with the ethnic origin perspective. This stakeholder identification, although perfect in certain applications

is limited in scope to ethnic festivals and not ideal for the purpose of this research. Reid and Arcodia (2002) categorize stakeholders into primary and secondary. Primary stakeholders are defined as people whom without their direct support the event would cease to exist such as employees, volunteers, sponsors, suppliers, spectators, attendees and participants. Secondary stakeholders are defined as entities that without support and assistance can impede the success of the festival. Researchers vary in their definition of stakeholder but are in agreement that a level of involvement and participation ensure success for an event as well as the rural community (Reid & Arcodia, 2002; Jago et al., 2003; Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier & Van Es, 2001).

Community support and involvement are important for the success of tourism initiatives, specifically for rural destinations (Jago et al., 2003; Fagence, 2003; Lewis, 2001). With intense resident involvement comes integration into local economies and culture (Selwood, 2003). Participation in festival events gives residents an opportunity to socialize with tourists (Rusher, 2003; Lewis, 2001). Using local talent for leadership roles inherently provides for growth within the community and use of proprietary assets, as well as maintaining control from a local base of support (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001). With residents of a community supporting a tourism initiative and utilizing support from local agencies, the tourism initiative has the greatest potential for success (Felsenstein & Fleischer, 2003).

DMOs should act as a unifying force for the interests of all stakeholders, while maintaining impartiality and fostering the continued growth of the destination. An integral part of the tourism industry, DMOs are vital to the success of tourism in the region that organization represents (Blain, Levy & Ritchie, 2005). The DMOs are responsible for successfully promoting area attractions to visitors (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003; Ritchie & Ritchie, 2002). DMOs also maintain current promotional materials to assure a sustainable tourism economy (Sainaghi, 2006). DMOs such as convention and visitor's bureaus (CVB) are often the interface between a tourist and a destination. The interface can be direct or indirect contact. Direct contact reflects telephone communication or assistance through a DMO tourist information office. Indirect contact consists of printed marketing brochures or information gathered from a DMO website and the links connected to the site. The DMO itself has little or no control over actual product, such as festivals, but the DMO interfaces with stakeholders assists in sending a unified message to the audience (Ivars Baidal, 2004; Morgan, Pritchard & Piggott, 2003).

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted the approach of content analysis of rural festival cases. Qualitative research is not a single method approach to research. As a situational and holistic approach, qualitative research encompasses the concerns of society and observations of life or attempts to understand a basic phenomenon (Patton, 2002). Content analysis is a research technique requiring data analysis that is objective, systematic, and quantifiable (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Objectivity means a group of analysts comes to the same conclusions after independent evaluations of the same materials. Systematic denotes a method of analysis that significantly reduces bias as much as possible.

The purpose of the case studies was to examine the data gathered in relation to literature reviewed. The case studies focused on stakeholders involved with individual festivals in rural Indiana. Data gathered from the case studies were evaluated and synthesized. Three festivals were chosen for the case analysis. To gather the needed data, 6 in-depth interviews with festival stakeholders were conducted, with two coming from each festival. Case study research allows one to identify consistencies and themes among interviews to see if there are common themes and concurrence of data (Yin, 2003). The case studies focused on three stakeholders involved with individual festivals in rural Indiana. Survey questions among the six interviewees were compared for commonalities and recurring themes. Perspectives of the festival organizers and area DMOs were examined to identify consistencies among the interviews, and understand and synthesize the data for common themes and concepts to see if they correspond to current literature. Interview questions for the case studies were posed in several areas: (1) resident involvement and participation, (2) resident attitudes regarding festivals, and (3) DMO involvement and participation in festivals.

Selection of festivals was determined by several factors. One factor was geographical location. The geographical distribution maximized coverage of views on festivals and had a different DMO for support. Such distribution ensured that several expert opinions on the subject matter were represented. Another factor was the number of years a festival occurred. A longer running festival has established methods of operations and more insight into issues and challenges experienced over the years of operation. The state of Indiana was divided into three regions: northern, central, and southern. Festivals were selected from each region to facilitate geographical representation. These three regions also could be viewed in a *terroir* division: industrial, agricultural, and scenic. The northern division of the state holds a large portion of the state's industrial business. The central portion of Indiana is flat and well suited for agricultural production. The southern section of the state has been known for its rolling hills, scenic roadways, and natural caverns. Each festival had an association with a particular DMO. These were the DMOs approached for interviews. Interviews of the DMOs were used to triangulate the findings with the festival organizers and compared to current literature.

From each of the three areas, a specific festival was chosen. Criteria used to select the festival were as follows. The festival must have been in the respective geographical location described above and have been in existence for over ten years. Ten years was determined as an indication that a festival had been established and had a sufficiently strong customer base. A decade gave ample time for the festival organizers to have set specific rules and guidelines for consistency from year to year. Both the festival organizer and respective DMO must have consented to an interview for a complete data set.

Interviews for case studies were designed to gather insight from the experts. Festival organizers and DMOs gave their educated perspectives on the festival from inception to completion. Two groups representing three of the stakeholders were interviewed from each case study: festival event organizers and the DMO liaisons from the respective counties of the festival locations. In all cases the festival organizer was a long time resident of the community and able to speak to the issues regarding resident involvement and participation. Each festival event organizer was the logical contact regarding the history, planning, components, and focus of the event. Event organizers answered the questions posed or referred the researcher to the most

appropriate resource for answers to the questions. The DMO liaison answered the marketing support questions and gave feedback about the relationship between the DMO and festival organizers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Case I: Pierogi Festival

Information from the *Pierogi Festival* case study was obtained through interviews of two individuals, the Lake County DMO and the *Pierogi Festival* organizer. The vice president of the Lake County DMO was interviewed regarding the level of involvement and participation by the DMO for the festival. The organizer of the twelfth annual *Pierogi Festival* has been in charge of the festival for eight years and a member of the community for over thirty years. The organizer was interviewed as to the level of involvement, participation, and the residents' attitudes towards the festival.

Whiting, Indiana, with a population of 4936, boasts of its rich ethnic heritage and annually celebrates the *Pierogi Festival*. The town of Whiting is located in Lake County. The festival's origin dates back to when ethnic members of the community began a celebration of their culture. The *Pierogi Festival* exemplifies preserving and sharing of traditions such as learning how to make pierogi, a tradition previously learned at grandmother's knee. Initially intended just for locals, outside attendance was an afterthought. Years after the festival's inception, the town decided to market the festival to visitors. Steeped in local tradition, the festival is a "hands-on" effort by many townspeople because of the town's small population.

Community support and involvement are an integral part of the festival's success. Resident participation provides Whiting citizens a stake in the festival's success and a resultant appreciation of the influx of visitors on festival weekend. The *Pierogi Festival* has tremendous resident participation which is evident in many ways. All signage for the festival is hand-drawn and painted by residents, a hometown touch members of the community pride themselves on. Additionally, citizens also participate in the parade's precision lawnmower team and babushka brigade. The festival organizer feels these elements make the festival unique and differentiates the Pierogi festival from others, thus giving them a competitive advantage.

Unlike the unsolicited, active resident participation, Lake County DMO involvement was done on an "as needed" basis. In one incidence a DMO committee representative was asked to be Mr. Pierogi, the "larger than life" walking, talking Pierogi. Mr. Pierogi is a festival celebrity and the embodiment of the festival community spirit. The ability of the DMO representative to step into the role of Mr. Pierogi is a prime example of stakeholder involvement and participation contributing to the success of a festival. In addition to on-site occasional support during the festival the DMO regularly provides expertise and assistance with brochure layout and design. Brochure layout and design is a task a DMO performs on a regular basis. Festival organizers have one annual brochure to layout and design, leaving little margin for error. In this instance, a DMO assumes a leadership role in providing assistance and guidance for the brochure layout, design, proofing, map acquisition, and logo usage. The festival organizer acknowledges that,

without the support and guidance from the DMO, the *Pierogi Festival* would not be as successful. The DMO offers access to new markets for advertising as well as the financial support needed to increase the awareness of the festival through marketing. A mutual respect between the DMO and festival organizer exists.

Case II: Feast of the Hunters' Moon

Data for the *Feast of the Hunters' Moon* case study was collected through interviews with the Tippecanoe County DMO and the festival organizer of the *Feast of the Hunters' Moon*. The town of Lafayette, Indiana, located in Tippecanoe County, with a current population of 56,397, was founded in 1824 and annually hosts the *Feast of the Hunters' Moon*. The event is a historical reenactment celebration of the outpost trading that occurred between the French and Native Americans at Fort Quiatenon, a military outpost for the French, established in 1717 to prevent British expansion. The *Feast of the Hunters' Moon* is in its 39th year and began with a group of historical society members who held seminars for member education. Initially, educational gatherings were used to keep history, knowledge, traditions, and traditional methods alive. The society began offering admission to the public. The *Feast* began on less than an acre of land and has expanded to 20 acres of exhibits and reenactment areas. Every year the *Feast of the Hunters' Moon* enlists the assistance of 1,000 community volunteers to host this event.

Analyzing residents' participation with the Feast of the Hunters' Moon gave insight into the success of the Feast. The interviews confirm the need for resident involvement and participation to ensure a successful event. The Feast of the Hunters' Moon utilizes over 1,000 volunteers to set up, facilitate, and break down the props needed for the event. The festival organizer uses a link on the web site to solicit volunteers year-round. Volunteers come from the local community, Purdue University, not-for profit organizations, and "feast groupies" who show up from year to year to help in any way they can.

The Tippecanoe DMO offers its expertise at every opportunity with regard to involvement and participation. The protocol of the DMO is assistance to ensure a successful festival. DMO staff allocations for festival organizational boards are based on festival needs and staff members' expertise. When asked about staff members working at the festival, the DMO was supportive of employees volunteering. The office uses the credo "Whatever it takes!" to get the job done and believes that, as members of the community, employees should support the festival by working the event. Willingness of the staff to participate is evidence of a strong sense of community pride and commitment to supporting festival events. Similar to the Lake County DMO, the Tippecanoe County DMO considers itself a resource and mentor for festival organizers, especially with promotional assistance or brochure layout.

A unique aspect of planning the annual *Feast of the Hunters' Moon* is the date selection for the festival. Date selection requires stakeholder involvement, participation, and communication. Festival organizers, city officials, and the local university annually negotiate the festival date based on the university's home football game schedule to avoid a conflict of dates. A date conflict would stretch the resources of the town, potentially cannibalizing both events, with a struggle for volunteers, parking, busses, police coverage, and attendance.

Based on the overwhelming support of the volunteers and assistance of the community with scheduling implications, the attitude towards the festival appears to be very positive. The historical society, which sponsors the *Feast of the Hunters' Moon*, gives more to the community than they take. The give and take relationship is appreciated by residents; residents do not feel that their town is being invaded by outsiders who will leave nothing in return. This kind of symbiotic relationship allows a festival to prosper within the community.

Case III: Lanesville Heritage Festival

The sources of information for the *Lanesville Heritage Festival* case study came from the DMO of Harrison County and the festival organizer. The town of Lanesville is located in Harrison County, Indiana, with a population of 600, annually hosts the three-day *Lanesville Heritage Festival*, which boasts attendance over 70,000 people. A grant of \$500 began the *Lanesville Heritage Festival* 31 years ago and the small town celebration has grown since inception. The festival is a living agricultural history lesson with engines, tractors, and threshing machines. It is truly an educational experience regarding history, culture, and machinery.

The festival organizer for the annual Lanesville Heritage Festival has been a member of the community his entire life, assisting with the festival for 28 years and festival organizer for the last sixteen. As a small town heritage celebration, the organizer is committed to running a successful festival. Fifteen different committees cooperate for event success. Volunteers travel from a three-state area to help with the festival and make it a success each year with the assistance of 350 volunteers. In terms of resident participation, the festival enlists help from people as far away as Kentucky. When the organizer was asked why residents were not volunteering, the organizer emphasized the residents were participating in volunteering at the festival but probably with a school or church affiliation.

Contrary to existing literature regarding communication and involvement among local organizers (Ritchie and Ritchie, 2002) and despite the lack of communication with the DMO and support from an outside agency (Crockett & Wood, 2002) the *Lanesville Heritage Festival* is a huge success. When the festival organizer was asked if he had a contact at the DMO, the organizer seemed insulted. He was very proud of the fact that the festival is self sufficient. The festival organizer, with his small-town persona, exemplified the *Heritage Festival*. His philosophy is that, in a small town, one learns to rely on his neighbor to get a job done. The implication of the contradiction to the literature must be examined. Without additional research, a definitive answer is not known. Possibly due to the longevity of the festival operating for more than thirty years, at some point a festival can become self sustaining. The *Lanesville Heritage Festival* may be one such example. The festival is highly organized by long time members of the community. With little change from year to year, perhaps outside assistance and guidance is not needed to operate the festival "as is." However, if changes to the festival were considered, help from an outside agency, such as the DMO may need to be enlisted for guidance and mentorship.

The Harrison County DMO takes an "as needed" approach to involvement and participation of festivals. Like Lake and Tippecanoe Counties, the Harrison County DMO considers itself a resource to the community and, if requested, will assist in festival planning and

staging. The DMO of Harrison County views its role as a resource for training, education, and assisting festival organizers to host a successful event. The DMO takes a hands-on approach with newer festivals, making sure newer festival organizers hold successful events. With such commitment and dedication as that of the Harrison County DMO, festival organizers believe they can succeed. Such an approach assures that festival organizers will be more confident to take on greater challenges and market the event to tourists.

CONCLUSION

The case studies provided valuable information regarding what the specific stakeholders have in common as well as information they do not possess. Festival organizers are members of and advocates for the community. Organizers receive no formal training for hosting and marketing a festival. Organizers understand volunteers are integral to the success of festival events; however, organizers do not seem to understand the value of community pride gained through volunteerism. Each DMO interviewed believed in the need for involvement during the planning and staging of the festival; however, assistance was provided in varying degrees. All three DMOs advocated their office as a resource for assistance and showed a willingness to help in whatever capacity was necessary to ensure a successful festival.

Analysis of residents' participation and attitudes provides more insight into the success of a festival. A festival allows residents the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise and share their knowledge. Festival participation fosters a sense of pride and community spirit that appeals to residents. The case studies reinforce the fundamental need for resident participation and involvement to assist in festival success. Residents were very supportive of festivals within the community and advocated involvement and participation. Planning and staging as two factors for success in the case studies presented in multiple ways such as volunteerism, contribution of artwork and signage, and not for profit group participation. Education among community stakeholders, specifically local residents, festival organizers, and DMOs, underscoring the importance of stakeholder involvement and participation in rural festivals would be the first step to ensuring continued residential support and a successful rural festival.

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EMPLOYABILITY IN TOURISM – A SURVEY AMONG GRADUATES FROM MCI TOURISM DEGREE PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

Employability is the latest buzz-word in the world of labour market issues (Verhaar & Smulders, 1999; Gaspers & Ott, 1998). Many studies have been carried out relating to employability of graduates (Cassidy, 2006; Raybould & Sheedy, 2005; Zinser, 2003; Cotton, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Verhaar & Smulders, 1999; Gaspers & Ott, 1998; Bagshaw, 1996). Today's challenging world means that it is no longer sufficient for graduates to have fond knowledge of an academic subject. Increasingly, it is necessary for students to gain those skills which will enhance their prospects of employment, i.e. the retrieval and handling of information, communication and presentation skills, problem solving and planning skills, and social skills and competences (Fallows & Steven, 2000). The purpose of the paper is to discuss employability and skills requirements for graduates and to present a survey carried out among MCI graduates to assess the required skills of the market from a graduate's point of view.

KEYWORDS: *Employability; Skills; Graduates; Tourism Business Studies; Curricula; Higher Tourism Education.*

INTRODUCTION

The job market has considerably changed during the last years for employers with permanence being no longer a significant feature (Fallows & Steven, 2000; Bagshaw, 1996). Employers are looking for flexibility, they want employees with vision – who will recognize

innovations before they arrive – plus high motivation to incorporate the new ideas into the mission of the company, and they still expect the hard work and loyalty. Businesses need highly trained graduates with academic, technical, and social skills to meet the demands of the competitive markets (Zinser, 2003). It has for instance been noted that when employers recruit graduates they are typically seeking individuals not only with specific academic skills and knowledge in a certain subject, but with the ability to be proactive, to see and respond to problems creatively and autonomously (Fallows & Steven, 2000). This means they want a high standard of training and development. “As a result of education and business partnerships, there is general consensus that career and employability skills should be taught in ... [higher education], since many students leave education without the required skills” (Zinser, 2003, p. 402). Universities are therefore encouraged to embed key skills in their curricula, yet there is often little support on how to identify skills needed in the industry. Basically, there are two ways in doing so: either the skills requirements for graduates are surveyed from an employers’ point of views or from the point of view of graduates, which was done in the survey discussed here.

The growing world-wide competition of tourism regions, changing demand patterns, the claim for better products and offers, the decreasing attractiveness and increasing uniformity of offers consistently lead to new challenges for the tourism industry. The most recent global and regional developments bring about a change in vocational needs required from new recruits in the tourism industry and ask for revised training programmes to be introduced by future decision-makers (Hofstetter, 2004). Several studies have been conducted in terms of job requirements in tourism-related fields, and a number of qualifications have been identified (Weiermair, 1999): communicative skills, empathy, motivation, decision-making abilities, planning abilities and improvisation abilities. The purpose of any teaching programme in tourism must be to explain the true nature of the tourism phenomenon through seminars, trainings, workshops, and academic curricula.

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 introduction of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) 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 8-semester degree’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.

An empirical study was carried out in January 2007 among graduates of the Management Center of Innsbruck (MCI) who completed the degree program in Tourism Business Studies. The survey aimed at assessing graduates' perception of skills and competences conveyed in the education program and their relevance for the tourism market. The long-term goal is to assess the key skills and career or employability skills that graduates need in the industry and – in case of lacking skills – to further develop these skills in individual modules of the curriculum.

EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

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 (Zehrer et al., 2006). There is a plethora of taxonomies of competences. 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 (Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003). If competences are classified, literature distinguishes among several types and approaches of competences, which can basically be summarized as follows.

- *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.
- *Leadership Competences* are abilities to show inspiration for a shared vision, to enable others to act or to encourage them.

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 skills for the purpose of precisely matched assistance and job placement. Employability skills are not job specific, but are skills which cut horizontally across all industries and vertically across all jobs from entry level to chief executive officer. Employability skills refer to those skills required to acquire and retain a job (Saterfiel & McLarty, 2000). Cotton (2001) reports that the literature surrounding employability indicates that whilst employers may be satisfied in general with the level of technical skill of new graduates, they are not convinced by their competence in non-technical abilities or employability skills. The emphasis on skills required by employers varies depending on the type of job role to be carried out within an organisation. However there has been some

consensus of opinion on the importance of “transferable” or “employability” skills for employees, particularly for those in management positions. These skills refer to certain personal abilities of an individual, which can be taken from one job role to another, used within any profession and at any stage of their career. Thus for graduates to be attractive to employers it is important that they are able to show evidence of having these skills (Raybould & Sheedy, 2005). Mallough and Kleiner (2001) identify internal and external employability skills, whereas the study at hand is paying attention to selected internal skills of graduates.

Table 1. Internal and external employability skills

Internal employability skills
<i>Management Skills</i>
decision making, problem solving, trouble shooting, and conflict resolutions.
<i>Computer and Other Technical Skills</i>
ability to utilise computers as an analytical, decision-making and or processing tool
<i>Communication Skills</i>
public speaking, mediating or negotiation, speaking foreign languages, and most important listening skills.
<i>Organisational Skills</i>
setting priorities and following through on responsibilities.
<i>Specific skills</i>
selling, assembly, financial or sales forecasting, writing add copy, or budgeting.
<i>General skills</i>
attention to detail, reliability, courtesy, quality of work, ability to work with others, punctuality, and co-operation.
<i>Psychological skills</i>
respect of people or ethical conduct
<i>Interaction and Networking</i>
social clubs, community work or recreational activities.
<i>Educational and Vocational Training</i>
Knowledge and skill in a particular field including specialised training.
<i>Skills gained from the educational process</i>
reading for information, applied mathematics, listening, writing, locating information, applied technology, teamwork, and research.
<i>Interviewing and Resume Skills</i>
transferable skills, experience, special training and education, job-related interests, and objectives.
External employability skills
<i>Economic conditions</i>
<i>The chosen industry</i>
<i>Demand for particular positions</i>
<i>Job function</i>

(Source: Mallough & Kleiner, 2001, p. 118-120)

The skills learned by students during their academic career can be placed into the two broad skill categories of technical and non-technical. Technical skills refer to subject-specific or content-specific knowledge and competence relevant to, or within, a particular discipline such as tourism marketing or entrepreneurship. Technical skills then are those skills necessary for competent functioning within a particular discipline, while non-technical skills are those skills which can be deemed relevant across many different jobs or professions (Cassidy, 2006; Sherer & Eadie, 1987). Because of their relevance to professional functioning, non-technical skills are commonly referred to as employability skills and include basic skills such as oral communication, reading, writing and arithmetic, higher order skills such as learning skills and strategies, problem solving, decision making, and affective skills and traits such as dependability and responsibility, a positive attitude, interpersonal and intercultural skills (co-operation, team work), self-discipline and self-management and ability to work without supervision (Cotton, 2001). Besides the differentiation among technical and non-technical skills, employability skills are equally divided among internal and external skills (see Table 1).

Employability indicates that whilst employers may be satisfied in general with the level of technical skills of new graduates, they are not convinced by their competence in non-technical abilities or employability skills. Cotton (2001) found that employers ask for employees who possess generic employability skills, which they value over specific occupational (technical) skills, and which they consider essential for entry-level job applications. It can therefore be concluded that these skills included within the term “employability skills” are representing a requirement for employment rather than desirable, and that employers see the responsibility for the development of such skills lying with educational institutions.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

For analysing the assessment of graduates with regard to employability skills and competences conveyed during their MCI study, an empirical survey was carried out in January 2007. The research question which authors want to answer with the survey is the following: To which extend were MCI graduates employable? An e-mail containing a link to a standardized online questionnaire was sent to all graduates of the degree program since its beginning in 2001, i.e. 138 graduates received the questionnaire. The questionnaire was answered by 88 graduates which equals a response rate of 64%. 80% of the graduates are younger than 30 years. Only 5 percent are between 30 and 39 years. 61% are residents of the Tirol, 26% of other provinces in Austria (primarily Salzburg, Upper Austria and Styria), 4% are from Germany and 3% from Switzerland.

Motivation for Studying the MCI Tourism Program

MCI graduates were asked about the reason to choose the MCI tourism program. Authors were interested in the question why the program was chosen as it is directly related to the topic of employability. It can be assumed that students chose the program for particular reasons which they thought will contribute to their employability in the tourism field. The following results can be shown.

The majority of respondents (92%) argued that their choice was due to the special focus of the program. 70% indicated that they were attracted by the practice orientation, which relates to the managers and experts from business and science guaranteeing a synergetic combination of science and practical experience. 38% of respondents argued that the semester schedule is an attractive characteristic, as the winter semester takes place from September to December and the summer semester from mid March to mid July. This enables students to take advantage of opportunities during their semester breaks (high season) to acquire professional experience as well as to work in professionally relevant jobs in tourism and leisure. This might directly increase or benefit their employability.

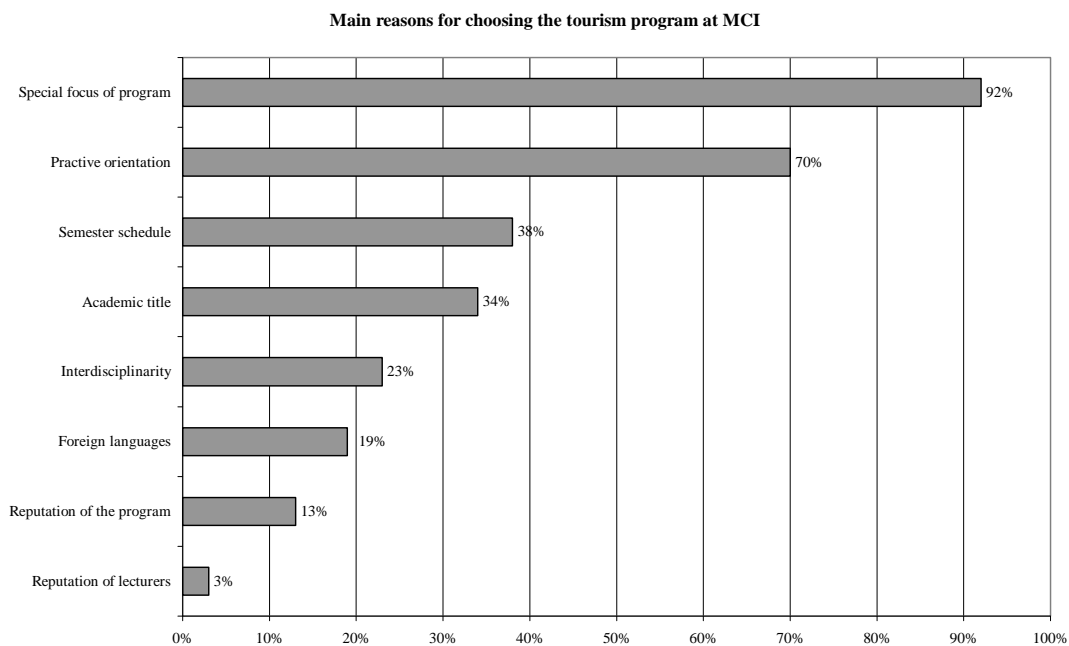


Figure 1. Main reasons for choosing the program.

Goals and Their Fulfilment

The importance of goals at the beginning of the study was rated according to a 4-point Likert scale from 1=very important to 4=very unimportant, so was the degree of performance of the program (scale ranged from 1=very high to 4=not at all). This question does have a relation to the matter of employability, as goals for studying a program (i.e. income increase) directly impact the level of employability and the type of position gained after having completed the studies.

On the basis of the values obtained, an importance grid was drawn. Initially, the importance grid is a graphical representation of respondents' ratings of attributes' importance plotted against the provider's performance on the same issue. Those attributes which show the highest discrepancy between high importance and low performance provide a starting point for a change. Basically, the importance grid is a measurement instrument distinguishing among

explicit (self-stated and specified by the customer) and implicit (determined indirectly by a multiple linear regression of the single satisfaction of the attributes against the overall satisfaction score) importance. To provide boundaries between the quadrants normally the arithmetic mean or median is used for the explicit, and the arithmetic mean for the implicit importance (Vavra, 1997; Fuchs, 2002). Quadrant I indicates a high degree of fulfilment and high importance of goal, quadrant II implies a high degree of fulfilment but a low importance of goals in the eyes of the graduates, quadrant III indicates low degree of fulfilment and low importance and quadrant IV symbolizes high importance but low degree of fulfilment.

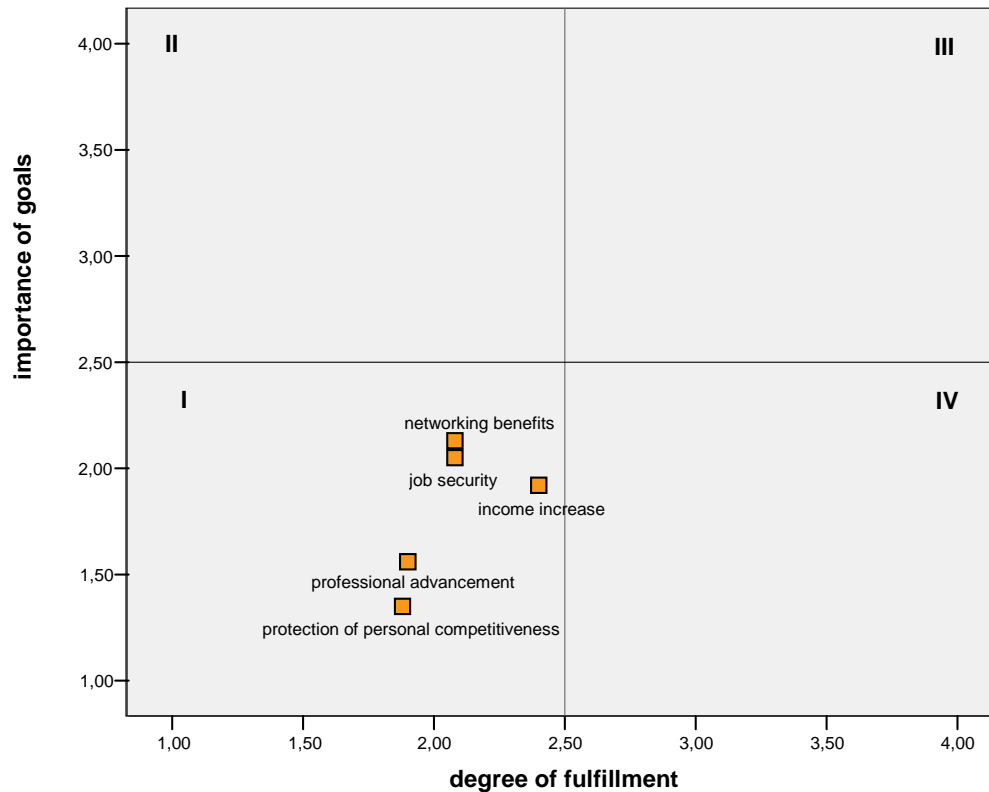


Figure 2. Importance Grid – Goals.

The importance grid shown in figure 3 has been adopted to present the importance of goals and the degree of performance of the program to reach the goals in the eyes of the graduates and shows a good result. As far as the professional advancement is concerned, it is of big importance for graduates (mean 1.56) and has been fulfilled through the program quite satisfactorily (mean 1.9). 89% of respondents rated the professional advancement as the most important or important issue and 80% of these expectations were fulfilled after having completed the degree program. Income increase was regarded as important (mean 1.92) and was fulfilled by a mean value of 2.4. The increase in income is rated to be very important or important by 83%, with 57% of fulfilment after graduation, i.e. that this aim has only been partly fulfilled. As far as the protection of the personal competitiveness is concerned, it was rated as very important (mean 1.35) and was fulfilled by a mean value of 1.88. This goal was seen to be a very important or important goal by 97% of respondents and in 89% of cases the expectations of graduates was fulfilled. Another goal was job security, which was labelled by an importance mean of 2.05 and

fulfilled by a mean value of 2.08. This result shows that 68% rated job security to be the most important or important goal and for 72% of respondents this expectation was achieved. The improvement of networking effects was seen to be important (mean value 2.13) and was fulfilled by a mean value of 2.08. The networking benefits were rated to be very important or important by 67% with 69% of the respondents arguing that this goal was fulfilled.

Skill and Competence Development

Similarly to the question on the goals and their degree of fulfilment, authors also asked graduates on the competences and skills they regarded to be important and the degree of their fulfilment during the studies. The importance of competences was rated according to a 4-point Likert scale from 1=very important to 4=very unimportant, so was the degree of performance of the program (scale ranged from 1=very high to 4=not at all). The reason for this question has directly to do with employability, as a person with sound competencies on the professional, methodological and social level does have better employability opportunities than a person who is lacking them.

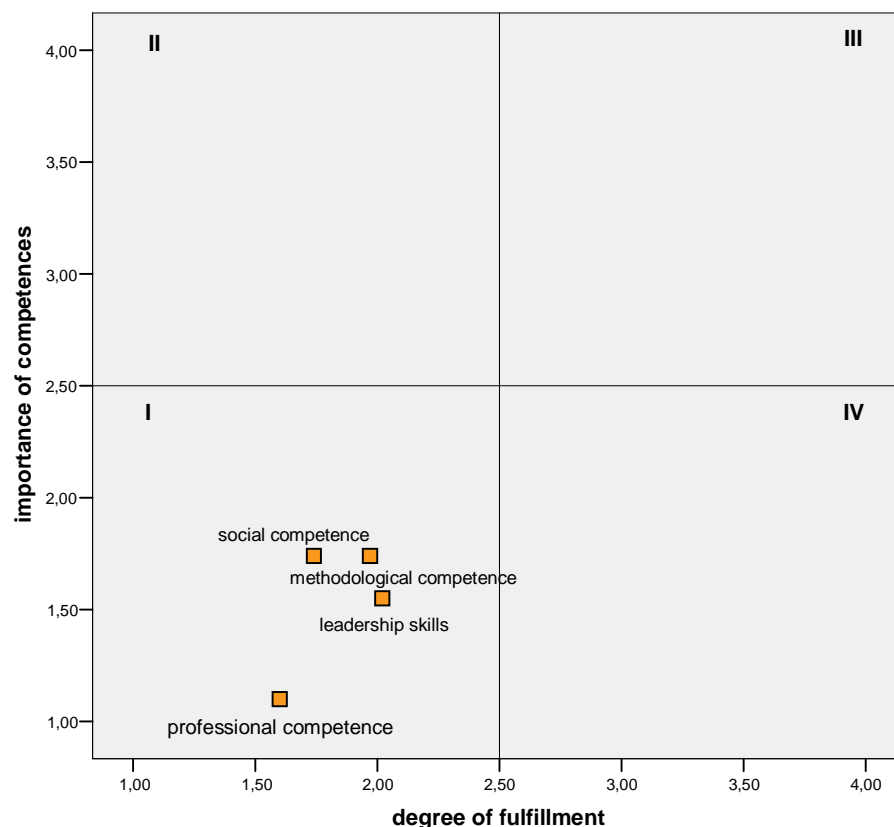


Figure 3. Importance Grid – Competences.

The professional competence shows a high degree of importance (mean 1.1) and a high degree of performance (mean 1.6). Nearly all respondents (98%) indicated that the professional competence is the most important or important skill to acquire during the studies. 94% responded

that the professional competence was fulfilled to a large extent. The high quality of the professional education can therefore be supported. The methodological competence shows a mean value of 1.74 for importance attributed to it and a degree of fulfilment of 1.97. The methodological competence was rated as the most important or important goal by 85% of respondents. This expectation was fulfilled by 83% of respondents. As far as the social competence is concerned, graduates rated importance with a mean of 1.74 and the degree of performance with 1.74. The social competence was the most important or important goal for 83% of the former students with 90% of fulfilment. The leadership skills show a mean value of 1.55 for importance and 2.02 for degree of fulfilment. While 90% of graduates indicate that originally this competence was most important or import to them, 82% believe this goal has been fulfilled by the content conveyed by the MCI tourism program.

Employability Skills

Finally, employability skills of the tourism degree program for the personal development and job recruitment were assessed in an overall question. This question directly asked graduates on their view of how the listed employability skills affected their employability in the tourism field. Authors added the exact measurement for each question/figure. The support of employability skills by the degree program was rated according to a 4-point Likert scale from 1= very important to 4=very unimportant, so was the importance for the job.

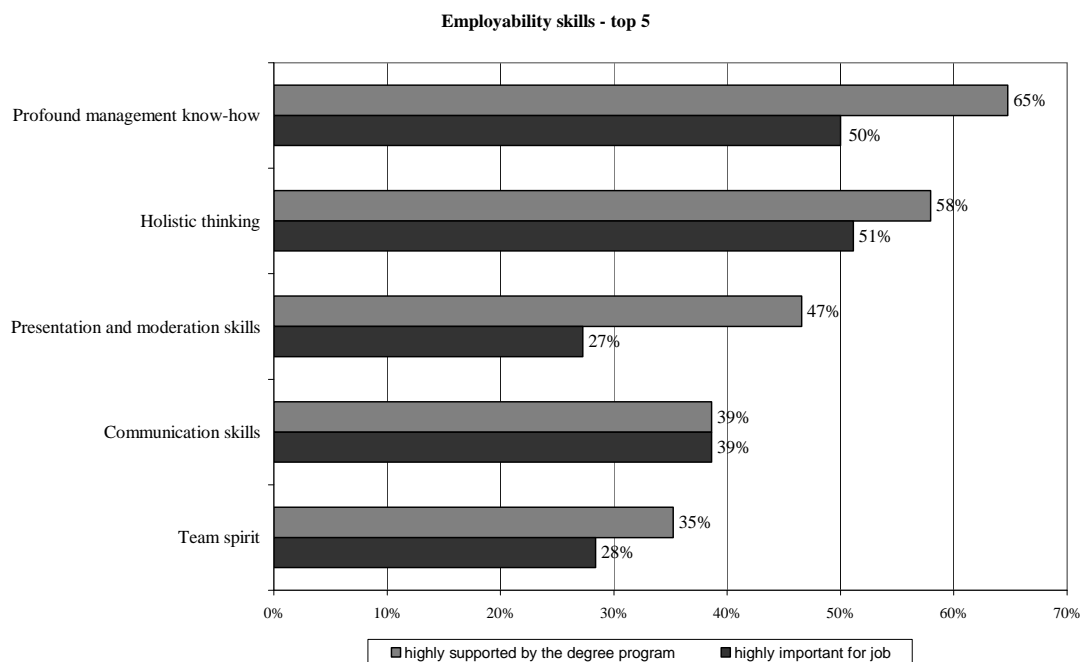


Figure 4. Employability skills – top 5.

Respondents rated a list of fourteen competences and skills with the most important ones being listed in figure 5. The most important competence obtained in the study is profound management know-how (65%), holistic thinking (58%), presentation and moderation skills (47%), communication skills (39%) as well as team spirit (35%). Holistic thinking and profound

management know-how are of high importance for the job and have largely been conveyed in the tourism program.

The First Job – Working Department and Gross Income

75% of respondents indicate that the length of finding a job was two months, 17% searched for an occupation between 3 and 4 months and only 8% needed more than 5 months to find a job. Around 70% of graduates are working in the tourism field with 33% in the hotel sector, 18% in national tourism organizations, 13% in tourism consulting, 12% in the event and congress sector and 10% in regional tourism organizations. Another 19% of respondents are employed in the services industry, particularly in the consulting and training field and 10% in other branches of industry.

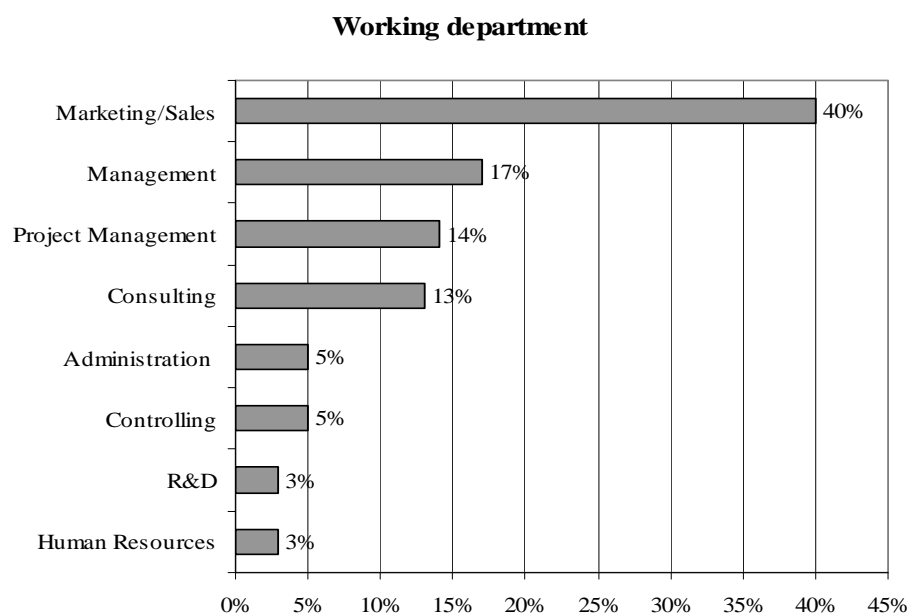


Figure 5. Working departments of graduates.

When it comes to the particular working department the majority of graduates (40%) is working in the marketing and sales department, 17% are working in management, 14% in project management and 13% in consulting departments.

36% of respondents are working in a company with 11-50 employees, 25% in companies with 51-200 employees. I.e. 61% of all graduates of the degree program in tourism at MCI are currently working in medium sized enterprises. About 25% of graduates are working in small-sized companies and 14% in big companies with more than 200 employees. The majority of jobs in SMEs might rely on the fact that in many European countries, tourism companies are characterized by their small and medium-sized structures (Smallbone et al., 1999). Most hotels are family-run.

The gross salary right after graduating was EUR 20,000-30,000 per year for 41% of respondents. More than 23% of graduates earned EUR 10,000-20,000 per year and 20% EUR 30,000-40,000. 7% of respondents had a gross income of EUR 40,000-50,000 per year, and 3% even EUR 50,000-70,000. Solely 2% earn more than EUR 80,000 per year. Those 4% who earned less than EUR 10,000 per year were particularly those who had a part-time job.

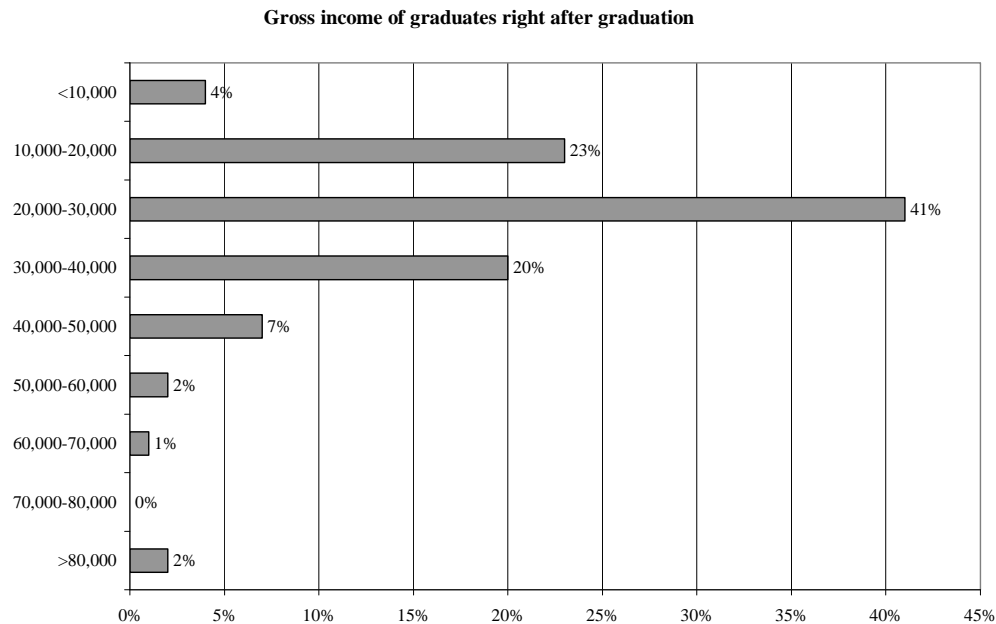


Figure 6. Gross income of graduates.

CONCLUSIONS AND OUTLOOK

The strengths of the tourism degree program at MCI are particularly seen in the focus of the program as far as content is concerned (92%), its practice orientation (70%) and the flexible teaching schedule (38%). Important goals for graduates like their own competitiveness, professional and social competences and personal development are largely fulfilled or even excelled in the eyes of the respondents. The majority of the graduates were attracted to MCI by their personal environment (40%) and by PR and advertisements (40%), as well as through internet (24%). Employability skills and competences are very well conveyed according to graduates, especially profound management know-how, team spirit, presentation and moderation skills, holistic thinking and communication skills. Nearly 70% of graduates are working in the tourism field; about 19% are employed in the services industry. Basically, the graduates testimonialized a good image for the tourism degree program at MCI. This is also reflected in the high acceptance of graduates in the working field of tourism, where 75% of respondents found a job within two months after graduation.

In conclusion it seems that the general consensus from higher education institutions is that the current and future employment market requires graduates to be equipped with a range of employability skills. Applicants need to be able to demonstrate their core transferable skills in

addition to their academic success. Graduates need to provide personal and professional skills relevant for the world of work to improve their chances of employment success. The surveyed degree program seems to fulfil nearly all requirements, goals, skills and competences the graduates had been conveyed during their study at MCI. Also after graduation it can be said that the majority of the students were employable:

- Most of the graduates found a job within 2 months (75%).
- Most of the graduates work in the field of tourism (70%) and within a department which was taught during their studies (marketing and sales, management, project management and consulting).
- Most of the graduates are satisfied with the salary they earn.

Of course, authors must admit that only one study program in the field of tourism management has been studied, which could lead to a bias in answering the research question. Therefore, it might be thought about a follow-up study which compares the MCI program to other tourism-related degree programs.

Altogether, it is a big challenge and responsibility for education institutions to convey and promote these skills in a sustainable way in order to guarantee a high quality program and good job opportunities for their graduates. Furthermore, employers who are demanding the skills also do have a certain responsibility. In a market economy, employers are often reluctant to invest in employee development due to perceived uncertainty about the return on this investment of time and money. And the general question of course is, if graduates fulfil the needed requirement also in the eyes of the employers. Therefore, authors intend to undertake a follow-up survey where the employer's perspective will be applied in order to verify revealed results obtained by the study among MCI graduates of the tourism program.

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RURAL TOURISM RESEARCH IN CHINA: 1997-2006

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ABSTRACT

The paper identifies five thematic threads of rural tourism studies in China. The themes are characterized by three methodological approaches: 1) supply-side view on rural tourism, 2) policy-oriented research, and 3) uniformity description method. The analysis is based on the review and synthesis of 325 research articles published between 1997 and 2006 in China. The findings contribute to the understanding of China's rural tourism industry and current state of academic research on issues that are unique to China but bear global significance. The implications of the findings are discussed in the context of international trends, emerged new issues and graduate education.

KEY WORDS: *China; Research methods; Rural tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

The global attention to the WTO's revised prediction of China becoming the World's number one destination in the next decade overshadows the phenomenal growth and structural changes of the country's domestic tourism market. Accounts for more than 90 percent of the tourist traffic in China, the leisure travel patterns on the Mainland exhibit some trends that challenge the extant understanding of the country domestic tourists as mass sightseers congregating at popular scenic spots designated by the government tourism authorities. One such trend is the increasing tourist flow from urban to rural. Tourism researchers within China began to examine the phenomenon of rural tourism more than 10 years ago. Yao (1997) wrote an

essay outlining some “superficial” issues of rural tourism. An academic seminar on the subject was held in 1998 (D. Liu, 2006). Since then more than 400 articles on rural tourism have appeared in academic journals published in Chinese within China. Only recently, academic inquiries on China’s rural tourism begin to appear in English journals outside China, with the notable contribution by Ying and Zhou (2007).

The objective of this study is to provide an integrated analysis of rural tourism research conducted by researchers in China in the past 10 years, from 1997 to 2006. The study aims to delineate the major thematic threads, examine their methodological approaches, as well as implications. The study also intends to offer a platform to facilitate the collaboration between tourism researchers and educators in and outside China. The study integrated 325 research articles published between 1997 and 2006. They were drawn from the CNKI, a database of academic journals published in China and of good standing.

THEMATIC THREADS

Five thematic threads emerged from the integration of the research articles. They include: 1) definitions of rural tourism, 2) rural tourism planning and development, 3) pragmatic challenges and solutions, 4) policies and impacts, and 5) practices and theories outside China.

Definitions of Rural Tourism

In the tourism literature published in English, a variety of terms are used to describe tourism activities in rural areas, such as agritourism/agrotourism, farm tourism, green tourism, ecotourism, and alternative tourism (Greffé, 1994; Lesley & Derek, 2001; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). One of the significant contributions to the definition of rural tourism is by Lane who saw rural tourism as represented by a continuum from countryside on the urban fringe to the remote peripheral regions (Lane, 1994). However, it is recognized that no uniform definition is universally applicable. Different forms of rural tourism have developed in different regions. Therefore its definition varies from nation to nation (Lane, 1994; Michael, 2004; Oppermann, 1996).

A variety of definitions have been offered throughout the Chinese research community. Most of the early debates (1997-2000) focused on the applicability of existing definitions. The introduction of alternative terms, such as agritourism, green tourism, ecologic tourism, and folklore tourism, further complicated definitional confusion (Gan & Chen, 2000; Wang, 1999). The term agritourism dominated the early stage of the discourse, primarily influenced by the convention in other East Asian destinations as Japan, Korea, etc (He & Li, 2002). As a result, there was a tendency to use the terms rural tourism and agritourism interchangeably. Recent debates (2001-2007) shift more towards a localized approach, which is to identify essential elements of rural tourism and define their scopes (C. Liu & Lv, 2006; Wu *et al.*, 2002; Xiao *et al.*, 2001). Li and Shi (2006) analyzed over 20 conceptual definitions of China’s rural tourism. Surveying a wide range of academic papers, the Chinese definition of rural tourism can be generalized to include four basic elements.

- Spatial location: Rural tourism takes place in distinctively rural setting. As a developing country, the demarcation between urban and rural is more distinctive than that in developed countries, especially in terms of economic disparity and spatial characteristics of landscape. Rural tourism development tends to flourish in three types of spatial locations. They are suburban destinations of metropolises, service districts of natural scenic spots such as national parks, and farming and minority-inhabited communities (Z. Li, 2000; Xiao et al., 2001).
- Attractions: Rurality as an attraction for tourists to pursue leisure activities was first examined by (Xie, 1999). Li (2000) expand the attraction to include natural scenery and traditional folklore and culture phenomena (Z. Li, 2000). With the rapid urbanization process and pursuit of modernity by rural residents, however, the front line of rurality is retreating, and authenticity of rurality even in the remotest areas is becoming disputed.
- Hosts: The role of hosts in rural tourism is played by farmers and peasants (Gao, 2004). Researchers are united in their concern over the enclave phenomenon in those local governments and farmers alike rent out their land and facilities to urban entrepreneurs and business operators from outside the community. Zou (2005) considered such practice as the most serious threat. As the outsiders of the enclave take over the role of host, locals become marginal beneficiaries of rural tourism economy.
- Guests: Similar to Gartner's (2004) observation in North America where rural tourism is predominantly domestic, China's rural tourism is largely driven by the demand of domestic market. Among the three spatial locations, the visitors to the suburban destinations of metropolises are mostly from the nearest urban centers. Service districts affiliated with natural scenic spots primarily serve the domestic tourists bound for the scenic spots. However, minority-inhabited communities attract more international visitors than the two other types of locations.

The discourse of what is rural tourism in China will continue, as dictated by the academic tradition of pursuing definitional precision. Yin (2004) called for "the unification of terms in systematically studying the theories and methods of rural tourism." It remains to be seen if this is a wishful thinking.

Rural Tourism Planning and Development

Characterizing the transitional nature of China's political and economic landscapes, tourism planning for rural areas has been sanctioned by governments and businesses alike. Academics make up the majority of the consulting community of tourism planners. Academic inquiries in this regard are predominantly case driven, typically based on the outcome of a planning project conducted by the researchers themselves. Most of the cases describe the procedure to evaluate rural tourism resources and prescribe how a rural community should make the best use of its resources to develop a rural tourism infrastructure, therefore demonstrating a strong supply-side orientation (Pan, 1999). A few case studies approach the planning from the view of landscape (Xiong, 1999).

The cases studies of tourism planning cover a diverse spatial spectrum, ranging from a

province to a village (He, 2004; Yin, 2004). The regions that generated most cases in the past 10 years include Jilin, Shandong, Shanghai, Anhui, Shaanxi, Yunnan, Sichuan, Chongqing, Guangdong and Shanxi Provinces, etc. More recently rural tourism case studies begin to offer and debate development models. While supply-side orientation remains the foci, these models integrate the examination of the market demand and its underlying social and cultural factors (Meng *et al.*, 2006; W. Zhang, 2006). Presumably, these case studies reflect the evolving practices of tourism planning in rural areas.

Pragmatic Challenges and Solutions

This stream of work accounted for more than 38 percent of research articles on rural tourism as of 2004 (Yin, 2004). Yet, issues identified by researchers as impeding tourism development in China's vast rural areas were relatively small in number. Long and Zhang (2006) grouped these issues into six categories. A closer scrutiny of these issues led to the identification of four major challenges associated with rural tourism development.

- Urbanization of rural tourism. Rural destinations become urbanized with standardized facilities and highly commercialized tourist activities, resulting in a superficial expression of modernity. Local scenes and rural characteristics deteriorate.
- Un-planning. Despite of vigorous planning efforts by governments and businesses, plans get shelved. The infrastructure lags behind. Developments of rural tourism are at best fragmented undertakings with little coordination.
- Resources and Resource Management. While rural areas in China are faced with the lack of financial resources to jump start a tourism economy, a greater challenge is the lack of human resources to manage rural destinations, attractions and facilities.
- Commoditization. The rural tourism activities are highly commoditized. The contacts between tourists and locals are transactional, with the former to exchange their money for accommodation, food, and souvenirs provided by the latter. Offerings to tourists are uncharacteristic of local flavors. Crude copycats are a norm.

Research articles are scarce in offering theoretical understanding of the underlying causes of these challenges. Even fewer suggest pragmatic solutions. Few scholars struggled to put forward "root causes" that have broader ideological and social implications. However, they fall short of specifics.

Policies and Impacts

Research on rural tourism policies adopted by various levels of governments has identified four orientations. They are 1) poverty reduction or quality-of-life improvement through tourism employment, 2) protection and conservation of rural tourism resources, 3) pursuit of "a society of harmonies", and 4) more spatial opportunities for the leisure needs of urban residents.

The studies of rural tourism impacts are overwhelmingly positive and attentive to reporting economic benefits to rural communities. Presentations of negative impacts begin to appear. For example, Cheng (2006) made an observation of deterioration of ecosystems and indigenous traditions in areas with highly developed rural tourism. Migration of indigenous people to make room for rural tourism growth has also been briefed in some literature. This coincides with the phenomenon that outsiders take over the role of host, and locals become marginal beneficiaries of rural tourism economy (Zou, 2005). One study reported that 80 percent of the locals have moved out their original village which has become a primary attraction in Lijiang (Lin *et al.*, 2005).

Practices and Theories Elsewhere

As early as 1998, tourism researchers in China attempted to introduce the practice of rural tourism in other countries, initially as part of China's overall effort to align various tourism sectors with international standards (Wang, 1999). A 1998 study (W. Liu *et al.*, 1998) reported rural tourism development in Israel. Since then, numerous researchers have examined the variety and best practices of tourism in rural areas of Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Spain, France, the United States, and Canada (Fu, 2006; Jin *et al.*, 2006).

While relatively small in number, there has been a growing body of research articles that examine the theoretical discourse of rural tourism by scholars outside China. The early stage of rural tourism research in China (1997-2000) did so by focusing on the debate on the applicability of non-Chinese definitions to the Chinese context. Over the years, Chinese scholars have explored the theoretical issues pertaining to sustainable development, community-based tourism, ecotourism, and host and guest relationship. More recently, comparative studies begin to appear that attempt to establish theories that are more reflective of Chinese practices (He, 2005; C. Liu & Lv, 2006; Lv & Zhang, 2005).

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

The rural tourism research as classified in the five thematic threads is characterized by three conceptual and methodological approaches. They are: 1) supply-side view on rural tourism, 2) policy-oriented research, and 3) uniformity methods.

Supply-side View on Rural Tourism

Majority of the papers reviewed in this study took the supply-side view in examining the supply-driven activities of rural tourism. In fact, supply-side orientation is dominant in academic journals of tourism geography and planning, and accounted for more than 90 percent of academic papers on rural tourism before 2004 in China (Yin, 2004). Despite of the recognition that it is useful to discuss rural tourism under the framework of supply-demand pairs in tourism system (Lesley & Derek, 2001; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997), majority of the studies concentrated on the planning and allocation of rural resources to develop a tourism economy, and designing of products and services afforded by these resources. The consumers of rural tourism have not been the foci. More recent literature takes account of demand-side perspective by some descriptive

statistics from consumer survey, but maintains the supply-side orientation (e.g, Wang *et al.*, 2006).

Supply-side approach is composed of two different perspectives: resource based and accommodation oriented. The former embodies the influence of geography and emphasis on resources, development and planning, which fall onto the domain of geography (Aronsson, 1994; Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). The latter reflects the perspective of hospitality and management, always from the accommodation point of view (Grefe, 1994; Hummelbrunner & Miglbauer, 1994). In China, the former is the majority. A major reason of such a strong supply-side view on rural tourism is that scholars who have the academic background of geography are the mainstream of the rural tourism research community in China.

Policy-oriented Research

The topics of research papers are highly influenced by the central government policies and actions. Rural tourism as an academic discourse started immediately after the designation of 1998 as the “Year of Small-Town and Rural Tours” by China National Tourism Administration. The number of articles peaked in 2006 which was designated the “Year of Touring Rural Villages”. Since 2004, the political degrees on pressing rural issues by the Central Committee of Chinese Community Party have brought about waves of academic papers supporting the degrees. Some bear the titles that uses the same wording or closely mirror the meaning of these degrees (e.g., S. Shi, 2006; Sun, 2006).

Uniformity of Methods

There is a uniformity of methods used in the majority of the research articles. They are predominantly descriptive, based on observational data, and utilizing personal experiences in tourism planning projects.

Yin (2004) provided an excellent analysis of methods used rural tourism research by Chinese scholars between 1997 and 2003. Yin grouped the methods into five categories: descriptive method, quantitative analysis, comparative analysis, conceptualization, and literature review. Yin’s study found that descriptive method was employed in 76 percent of the 60 articles; two percent applied quantitative analysis; eight percent used comparative analysis and literature review; and six percent could be considered as conceptual papers. The predominant descriptive method included personal observation and experience. Few studies employing this method were theoretically founded or offered the development of models, either conceptually or empirically.

Apparently, Chinese tourism scholars recognize the lack of diversity in research methods. He (2004) posited that quantitative analysis would be trendy in China’s tourism research. Bao and Zhang (Bao & Zhang, 2004) called for the overall improvement of methods used in tourism research. Progress in this regard can be rapidly as more and more tourism scholars in China become integrated with the international research community, and academic publications in China begin to adopt international conventions. *Tourism Tribune*, the country’s leading tourism journal, did not require citations and reference list until 2000. It now does, and in addition includes English abstracts for refereed papers.

IMPLICATIONS

In the new era of globalization, rural tourism research converges with international trends. One hallmark of globalization is diversity. Because of the sheer size and diversity of the subject—rural China—this research offers lessons for emerging destinations all over the world.

China is one of the world's fastest-growing economies, with the increase of GDP at an average annual rate of 9.7 percent from 1979 to 2005. Accompanying this growth, however, some challenges also emerge that make sustainable tourism difficult to achieve. Meanwhile, development disparities between China's coastal and hinterland regions continue to increase (Chen, 2002). These hinterland regions are important because they possess broader rural area and cultural diversity. Thus, the development of rural tourism has to address different problems under such social and economic situations. For example, in Zhejiang province—a relatively prosperous area on the coast—the investors of rural tourism are primarily interested in marketing the authenticity of the area, when compared with more urban provinces (A. Liu, 2005). Similarly, Guizhou Province—with a gross domestic product much less than other provinces—is using rural tourism as an economic development and poverty alleviation tool (Yang, 2004). Comparatively, they are at different stages in the development of rural tourism. As demonstrated in the literature, approaches to rural tourism development can differ significantly from province to province. The literature also suggests that these differences may be more significant—or at least more conspicuous—in developing countries. To some extent, these issues are difficult to identify when researchers only take into account local development indicators.

As Sharpley and Sharpley (1997) suggest, a number of different tourism products or types of tourism development fall under the rubric of rural tourism. Throughout China, Nong-Jia-Le is a popular form of rural tourism, especially in suburban and exurban areas (Gong & Zhang, 2006; He, 2006; Ren *et al.*, 2006; Zheng, 2006). Nong-Jia-Le, loosely translated as the Happy Farmer's Home, is a model of rural tourism based on the idea that some potential tourists will be attracted to a nature-based, leisurely lifestyle. This Chinese form of agritourism might include a stay in a local farmhouse, complete with fresh air, green trees, organic food over the course of a one or two day stay. These are two primary examples of this model. One was developed in the suburbs of Beijing in the early 1990s, initially term "folk custom tourism." The other model emerged from Sichuan Province, located in the southwest China, named the aforementioned Nong-Jia-Le (Zou, 2005). Since the beginning of 21 century, it is the Nong-Jia-Le model that has gained wider currency.

Nong-Jia-Le is regarded as the most successful rural tourism model in China. It is actually a type of small business for rural areas, especially the suburbs and exurbs. For farmers and peasants, it requires only a relatively small investment and has low costs. For tourists, it provides an opportunity to enjoy the countryside's leisurely pace and scenery with little expenditure. All levels of government administration appear to support the notion of Nong-Jia-Le. In Sichuan, local governments have central mandates to facilitate bank loans necessary to support this development (Matuszak, 2006). In Shanghai, the first classification of quality levels of Nong-Jia-Le was approved in 2004 (Shanghai government, 2004). Tourists and vacationers attracted to Nong-Jia-Le are primarily from the cities. However, some sites are attracting visitors

from other provinces, and even from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea (Matuszak, 2006).

Ethnic tourism is another interesting niche market under the rural tourism domain. Ethnic tourism in China is closely related to the framework of poverty alleviation in remote ethnic regions. This form of tourism has attracted attention from international academics and policy makers because of its two-fold mission of preservation China's decreasing cultural heritage while at the same time providing sources of local revenue. Of course, the social and cultural consequences of this type of tourism are always an issue for planners. It has been reported that Guizhou province cooperated with the government of New Zealand to promote this type of tourism, as well as the governments of France, Austria, and Ireland (P. Shi, 2005). Zhang (2005) took part in an international development program for ethnic tourism along the Bala River as part of a training program for rural tourism. This program consisted of seven villages and more than 4,600 local ethnic residents. Unfortunately, however, it seems few Chinese scholars were involved in this program and in often case, the research results of this initial effort was left unreported.

Finally, the literature also demonstrates that research methodology is a challenge for Chinese rural research. For example, Lam and Xiao (2000) assert that one of the constraints of tourism education in China is that too many tourism programs are dominated by non-tourism-related disciplines, such as geography, business administration, social sciences, foreign languages, and other humanities. From the review of rural tourism research in China, we argue that the issues associated with rural tourism are interdisciplinary by nature. Among the articles reviewed here, on three of them held sociological and anthropological perspectives. Geography is also a major discipline cited in these articles, and tourism and geography have a very strong traditional relationship in the Chinese academy. An article (W. Li, 2002) observed that rural tourism is to some extent like a platform used to exhibit the poverty of rural communities, becoming a stage for urbanites to demonstrate their development superiority. Zuo (2005) discussed the relationships between rural tourism and post-modernity. Peng (2005) illustrated Chinese rural tourism in the scope of anthropological tourism. Though few, this work contributes fresh and diverse perspectives to the topic of rural tourism in China.

Scientific course design must be integrated into tourism education in China. For example, the major tourism coursework at Peking University, the country's top institution, has no real methodology coursework for graduate students, although teaching is emphasized. This literature shows that a more rigorous methodological approach is needed to understand complex rural tourism issues.

CONCLUSIONS

Many early works on rural tourism can be found in the academic literature (Barke, 2004; Beeton, 2004; Fleischer & Pizam, 1997; Gartner, 2004; Oppermann, 1996; Yague Perales, 2002). However, the discussions were mostly within the context of developed countries (Page & Getz, 1997). This article represents a summary of more than three hundred research articles published between 1997 and 2006 in China, and identifies five thematic threads of rural tourism studies in China. These thread include (1) definitions of rural tourism; (2) rural tourism planning and

development; (3) pragmatic challenges and solutions; (4) policies and impacts; and (5) practices and theories outside China. Further, this study also examined three methodological approaches characterized by the five themes, (1) supply-side views on rural tourism, (2) policy-oriented research, and (3) uniformity descriptions method.

This review shows that a country-based topic and research can contribute to academic literature beyond the boundaries of that country. To some degree, the challenges of rural tourism development in China are universal. Moreover, new emerging models for rural tourism development, such as Nong-Jia-Le and ethnic tourism development in remote areas demand more attention from Chinese academics. In respect to international tourism, this review demonstrates that there is much potential for global collaboration on China's rural tourism issues.

In conclusion, the findings contribute to a greater understanding of China's rural tourism industry and current state of academic research on issues that are unique to China but bear global significance. However, more research efforts must be done to verify the generalization from one country to other international development situations.

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SECTION II
ILLUSTRATIVE PAPERS
(POSTER PRESENTATIONS)

QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES IN EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

One form of educational travel is participation in undergraduate student field studies abroad programs. It is argued in this research that fieldwork, when carefully planned, provides a teaching tool in which critical inquiry through reflective thinking can be fostered among students. The purpose of the study was to define and measure the quality of student learning experiences in Morocco, where a fourth year undergraduate geography International Field Studies course was offered in September 2004. This research was both qualitative and quantitative. From a literature review, criteria were developed to evaluate learning experiences and specific aspects of reflective thinking in fieldwork that contribute to quality learning experiences. A questionnaire survey of 32 students provided a primary source of data that incorporated these criteria. Another source of data came from personal interviews that were video recorded with 8 students recruited from the course participants. Students were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the field course and the different opportunities for learning that it may have provided. It is further planned to use primary data sources from written journal transcripts gathered from 32 students that participated in the Moroccan field course. As part of the course evaluation, students were required to complete a journal that recorded their geographical observations and reflections on their learning experience. Preliminary data analysis reveals the benefits, role and value of learning experiences in fieldwork as perceived and evaluated by course participants. These findings will have wider implications for teaching and learning in the broader academic community.

KEYWORDS: *Educational Tourism; International Field Studies; Quality Experiences; Reflective Thinking.*

INTRODUCTION

Educational Travel

An educational tourist is ‘a person who is away from their home town or country overnight, where education and learning are either the main reason for their trip or where education and learning are secondary reasons but are perceived as an important way of using leisure time’ (Ritchie, 2005, p. 18). Approximately 20% of males and 25% of females in a New England sample of residents reported that they took educationally oriented vacations and the trend towards educational travel is a growing one (Gibson, 1998). Despite the size of this growing market, few tourism academics have focused on educational tourism perhaps because the market is highly segmented. A number of different types of tourism have education as a motivating factor and as the Canadian Tourism Commission (2001) observes, educational or learning forms of tourism can be viewed along a continuum ranging from ‘general interest learning while traveling’ to ‘purposeful learning and travel’. Ritchie (2005) aptly describes these segments as ‘tourism first’ and ‘education first’. This paper focuses on an example of an ‘education first’ type of tourism activity in the form of an undergraduate student geography field studies course in an international destination. While this course is in geography rather than tourism education, the study reveals learning outcomes, reflective thinking and insights about travel that are relevant for wider audiences. Students were tourists as well as field study participants and their reflections on how to be a ‘better tourist’ as well as their cross-cultural observations are important from the teaching and learning as well as the tourism practitioner viewpoint.

The Importance of Field Studies

Lonergan and Andresen (1988) define the ‘field’ as any place where outside the constraints of a four-walls classroom setting, supervised learning can take place via first hand experience (p. 64). This implies the outdoor field although other fields exist, for example, the archival field and the virtual field. Fieldwork fulfils a number of roles (Lonergan and Andresen, 1988, Tranter, 1986, Gold et.al 1999, Nowicki, 1999). These can be classified as educational, ethical and social. Educational benefits include: the development of observational skills and analytical skills, facilitation of experiential learning and encouragement to take responsibility for their own learning. Ethical benefits include the development of a respect for the physical and cultural environment, while social benefits include better communication between faculty and students and the fostering of leadership skills among students. The approaches to teaching field studies vary from faculty directed to student centered to student directed. It is the latter approach, when students are given a central role in the formulation of their own field studies that offers the greatest opportunity for critical thinking and inquiry. This approach is most appropriate for field courses of longer duration where upper level students are involved. In this course, students designed their own research projects on a specific topic and wrote field journals to record and reflect on their geographical observations whether or not they applied to their own research topic. While the use of field notebooks/ journals is a well-established tradition in geography (Lewis and Mills, 1995), this has not been the case in this course as part of course evaluation. The journal was used for the first time in 2000 on the first Morocco course taught by one of the authors.

Feedback is an important but often neglected component of the fieldwork learning experience (Gibbs, et al. 1988, Kent et al 1997) and ideally feedback should be two-way. Student assignments are usually graded but rarely are students given the opportunity to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of their learning experiences. Furthermore, the value of fieldwork in geography is often assumed and largely unevaluated (Gold et al. 1991, Fuller et al. 2000). As yet, there is no empirical study in geography that links field work to the perceptions of students about their own learning. Neither has there been research that utilizes content analysis of student journal transcripts to find evidence of critical thinking. This study is designed to fill this research gap.

Field studies are an integral part of the curriculum and learning experience in Geography, Environmental Studies, Geology, Biology and the Environmental Sciences. They have the potential to be used more widely in Tourism teaching. However, as financial constraints limit university department budgets some of the opportunities for learning in the field are increasingly under threat. This research will demonstrate the value of field work in providing opportunity for the potential of deep learning, reflection and critical thinking. Student perceptions are heightened as they negotiate their way in another culture and landscape, understanding first hand the geography of place. As a result of this research, colleagues will be further encouraged to incorporate field studies within course work both within geography and beyond. It is argued in this research that fieldwork, when carefully planned, provides a teaching tool in which critical inquiry can be fostered among students. Inquiry is a self-directed, question-driven search for understanding (Hudspith and Jenkins (2001). Critical thinking is integral to this process, as it involves both the evaluation of information and the generation of ideas. Information to be evaluated may be derived from a wide range of sources but it can include information derived from observational experience and reflection. Students who can evaluate information from a range of sources and generate independent ideas are demonstrating deep engagement with the knowledge that they are acquiring.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study focused on the learning experience provided by an International Field Studies: a capstone course for fourth year geography honors that was conducted in an international setting allowing students to experience a culture and environment with which they are unfamiliar. The purpose of the study was to define and measure the quality of student learning experiences in Morocco, where the course was offered in September 2004.

Specific objectives were to

- a) develop criteria to assess the quality of student learning experiences in international field studies
- b) assess the quality of student learning experiences in international field studies from their reflections, observations and personal comments on the type of learning that they enjoyed and were challenged by in this unusual setting.

METHODOLOGY

From a literature review, criteria were developed to evaluate learning experiences and specific aspects of critical thinking in fieldwork that contribute to quality learning experiences. A questionnaire survey of 32 students provided a primary source of data that incorporated these criteria. Questions were both qualitative and quantitative and designed to analyze student ratings and reflections on their learning experiences. This questionnaire was administered approximately eight months after field course took place and was completed by 17 students, giving a response rate of 53%.

A second source of data came from personal interviews with 8 students recruited from the course participants. Students were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the field course and the different opportunities for learning that it may have provided. These interviews were videotaped and saved for further analysis. Data from the questionnaire and the video transcript provided evidence for the environmental contexts (both physical and human) in which reflective learning was likely to occur as students reported on their past memorable experiences. These contexts were used to understand their reflections made in field journals completed on site.

The third part of the analysis that is yet to be completed for this research is qualitative and uses primary data source from written transcripts and spoken comments gathered from 32 students that participated in the Moroccan field course in 2004. Permission was sought from students to use their field journals as a data set, once all course grading was completed. As part of the course evaluation, students were required to complete a journal that recorded their geographical observations and reflections on their learning experience. In fact, the rich source material found in student journals in a previous course to Morocco conducted in September 2000 prompted this study. At that time, I was surprised by how much students had engaged all their senses (particularly smells) while on field location.

Data was analyzed using two methods. The qualitative portions of the questionnaires were transcribed and analyzed to determine what salient themes occurred throughout the data. The quantitative responses were entered into an Excel spreadsheet in order to evaluate student answers. These two techniques were used to understand of how field studies contributed to deep, reflective thinking.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

What is critical thinking and reflective thinking?

A literature revealed that critical thinking is a well established concept in the teaching and learning literature although its exact definition and empirical measurement remains still unclear. One definition that reveals the multi-faceted nature of critical thinking is proposed by Scriven and Paul (2003): ‘the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing and/or evaluating information gathered from

or generated by observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication as a rubric to belief and action.’ Observation, experience and reflection are important components of this critical thinking definition and highly relevant within the context of ‘hands on learning’ that is made possible in international field studies. Reflective thinking may be thought of as a sub component of critical thinking. Bourner (2003, p. 269) suggested that ‘when a person interrogates some past experience by asking searching questions of that experience they are thinking about it reflectively’.

Questionnaire Results

Data collected

Bourner (2003) identified twelve questions as tools to be used to facilitate reflective thinking. These questions formed the basis of the questionnaire administered to the students that took the field studies course and some were selected and modified for the context in the present study. Other questions were added that focused on their perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of field studies as well as their definitions of quality tourism experiences. Some rating questions were added but most of the questions were open-ended and qualitative.

The main qualitative questions were:

- What are the advantages of learning about geography in the field internationally?
- What are the disadvantages of learning about geography in the field internationally?
- Did anything that most surprised you happen on this field course?
- What was the most fulfilling part of field studies?....and the least fulfilling part?
- What does this suggest about your values?
- What happened that contradicted your prior beliefs
- What happened that supported your prior beliefs?
- How do you feel about field studies now compared with how you felt before you went on the course?
- What does the field experience suggest about you and your strengths?
- What does the field experience suggest about you and your weaknesses?
- What did you learn from field studies about how you react in unfamiliar settings?
- What might you do differently as a result of studying abroad?
- As a result of studying abroad has your image of Morocco changed?
- Has the field experience made you: a) more likely, b) less likely, c) no difference to travel in the future?
- What from this experience have you learned about being a better tourist?
- How would you define a quality learning experience?

Data Findings

Respondents repeatedly identified *Hands-On Learning* and *Cultural Experiences* and interaction with the local population as the advantages to International Field Studies. By doing

assigned research within the environment of the area to be studied, participants felt they were able to gain insights that would otherwise have eluded them.

“By entering into an international learning environment I believe that students become more aware of the real issues existing outside of Canada. It is a means of hands on learning, which is a far better way of learning.”

“Instead of using your imagination, you get to see geography (physical, cultural, economic, etc.) first-hand. You get to become a participant observer of all that you encounter.”

The question “studying in the field advanced my ability to participate in a quality learning experience”, measured on a Likert Scale, was strongly agreed to by 12 of the 17 respondents. The remaining 5 respondents simply agreed with the statement: “I feel that field studies enhanced my ability to have more quality learning experiences.” None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, when asked, in an open ended question, how they would define a “quality learning experience” over 20% of respondents described *Hands-On Learning* as an important factor.

Cultural Experiences of both a general and specific nature were constantly referred to throughout the survey. Regardless of the survey question, participants continually referred to cultural issues such as observations, beliefs, similarities, and differences. It was these experiences coupled with unfamiliar surroundings that most drastically impacted the respondents. When asked to rate the statement: “I feel that field studies enhanced my ability to have my senses stimulated.” 15 of the 17 respondents strongly agreed, with one respondent simply agreeing and one participant disagreeing. None of the respondents strongly disagreed.

“Nothing can replace actually visiting another country to experience its culture and way of life.”

“It helps one to get a better perspective of the environment / culture of other countries.”

The overriding themes identifying disadvantages to *International Field Studies* focused on the *Financial Cost* and the *Distracting Environment*. Over 1/3 of the respondents identified cost as a disadvantage to *International Field Studies*, however when asked to quantify cost versus value only one respondent disagreed with the statement: “I feel that field studies enhanced my ability to get value for money spent on education.”

“It is expensive, limiting the access for all students to participate.”

“It can be expensive at times, considering travel costs are on top of tuition fees.”

The *Distracting Environment* was identified as a disadvantage by 5 of the 17 respondents. When asked to quantify the statement: “I feel that field studies enhanced my ability to work

harder than in the classroom.” the respondents had a lower rate of agreement than any other quantified statement. Out of 17 respondents only 3 strongly agreed, 7 agreed, 6 disagreed and 1 strongly disagreed. Of the 12 statements given to quantify, this was the only quantified statement to receive a “strongly disagree” rating by any of the respondents.

“[It is] hard to separate the trip itself from the work that needs to be done.”

“It is hard to focus on specific topics with so much going on.”

Student responses revealed that they had difficulty finding appropriate resources (textbooks, reading materials) especially since there were language differences. This may result in lack of preparation and difficulty in forming clear expectations about the location prior to the trip. They are bombarded by new experiences and find reflection and focus difficult during the course of the trip.

Students reported a number of *Surprising Experiences*. Many were focused on the differences in the way of life and the hospitality received.

“The people in Morocco are so much more social than people in North America. We had only just talked with a shop vendor for 2 minutes and he invited us in for tea. We returned to his shop on a number of occasions. It was the best hospitality I had ever received in my life.”

“It surprised me that people in rural areas are very unfamiliar with the way of life in North America, especially children.”

“The people (local) were more accommodating to our culture than I thought they would have been.”

When asked what observations supported or contradicted their prior beliefs the most prevalent subject discussed by the respondents involved *Perceived Poverty*. Of the 17 respondents 3 commented that the level of poverty was higher than they previously believed, 3 had their previous perceptions confirmed and 1 respondent felt the poverty level was lower than they initially thought.

“There are some poor areas, ex. Shanty towns that we don’t see in Canada.”

“I think I knew how [bad] things are in some places of the world, and these places needed aid – but not until I saw them, and the people who are affected did I realize how truly [bad] it is.”

“I expected Morocco to be more poverty stricken.”

From the question “What from this experience have you learned about being a tourist?” two major themes developed. *Respect for Locals* was identified 10 times as well as *experience as much as possible* which was identified 6 times. The quantified statement “I feel that field

studies enhanced my ability to be a better tourist.” received 13 strongly agree ratings, 3 agree and 1 disagree.

“It is important to be conscious of local beliefs, religion, culture, etc. As well as the environmental degradation that tourism causes the land. Also just because they rely on tourism doesn’t mean we should take advantage of the situation. Respect is needed.”

“Respect their traditions, be careful, and be enthusiastic when learning the culture and listening to the locals.”

“I have learned to respect other cultures when traveling and to appreciate what I have.”

With regard to student definitions of quality learning experiences, application of knowledge and involvement was important rather than just reading information in a book. One student identified the situation in which “you learn something you do not expect but mainly when you learn something that adds value to your life (something that is tangible and useable).”

DISCUSSION

The rich experiences reported by students in this small sample of questionnaires indicate the value of field studies. There is value in learning experiences, in social interaction and in self development. Time for on site reflective thinking seemed limited but reflection post trip (as when asked for in this study) revealed the depth of student feelings about field studies as well as about the Morocco experience itself. Indeed, according to Gelter (2003p. 337) ‘reflection does not seem to be a spontaneous activity as we need to actively dedicate time and effort to make reflections.’ This suggests that students need to be requested to reflect on their learning as they may not normally do so. The poor level of reflections found by Gmelch (1997) in his analysis of international student travel journals supports this hypothesis.

Students enjoyed high levels of social interaction with the local people as well as within their own group of classmates. One student remarked how surprised that she was that everyone got along so well, both students and professors. I was even thanked for a romance that developed between two of the field course participants.

The self reflection questions on their personal strengths and weaknesses showed appreciation for their own quality of life, their bartering and language skills, their ability to deal with crowds. They witnessed and reflected upon the distress of poverty in their surroundings and their relative wealth. They took on the physical challenges of hostile environments: personal achievements in the form of climbing Mt Toubkal, the highest mountain in North Africa were favorably reflected on with pride, although at the time of ascent students were not so enthusiastic. Dealing with high temperatures in the desert area provided a personal and health challenge for many of the students. They were able to cope with such hardships and were stronger as a consequence which was expressed by the vivid detail of their reflections of these

experiences. Negotiating an unfamiliar landscape and cultural environment also contributed to self development.

There is not space here to comment on the findings from the video but at the presentation excerpts from the video will be displayed if suitable technology is available. The journal analysis is not yet completed as of July 2007. The themes identified in the questionnaire open ended responses will be used as a search instrument to identify when and where observations of these types were made over the course of the on-site experiences. In that way, evidence for reflective thinking will be measured over course of the trip. Any new themes which illustrate that reflective thinking was occurring will also be identified. Such findings will provide insight into the value of field work in international settings and have wider implications for international educational tourism.

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A COMPARISON STUDY OF HOSPITALITY PRACTITIONERS AND STUDENTS WORK VALUES

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ABSTRACT

Hospitality management programs in colleges and universities are viewed as critical for providing an academically qualified managerial workforce. While many studies focusing on work-value implications have been conducted, few such projects have focused specifically on the hospitality management and hospitality and tourism industries related educational programs. This dearth of research poses opportunities for researchers to contribute new findings for use in human resource recruitment and retention strategies, as well as for hospitality management curriculum design. A survey designed to assess work values was conducted in a major US city. Responses from 393 hospitality industry practitioners and 820 hospitality management students were received. Fifteen values were identified along with their hierarchical order. Way of life, Achievement, Supervisory Relationship, Altruism, and Security received the highest rankings. Economic Return ranked 3rd among hospitality management students. Using Principle Component Analysis with Varimax Rotation, three dimensions (General Work Values, Management Work Values, and Hospitality Work Values.) were revealed. No significant differences were found between practitioners and freshmen students. However, practitioners rated Management Work Values and Hospitality Work Values significantly higher than upper classmen. The findings of this study suggest demographics and work values should be considered by those performing strategic planning, recruitment, and hospitality management curriculum design. Further investigation of the impact of social/cultural variables on work values is warranted.

KEYWORDS: *Work Values; Hospitality Education; Hospitality Management; Organizational Behavior; Retention Strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

Hospitality management programs in colleges and universities are viewed a critical institutes to cultivate and prepare academically qualified future managerial workforce to the hospitality industry. Being able align work values with student personal work preference leads to future job satisfaction (Kalleberg, 1977). For this reason, a number of studies have been conducted to investigate hospitality management student work values and related constructs (e.g., Chen, Chu & Wu, 2000; White, 2005).

Work values are the underlying preferences and beliefs that should be satisfied in people's career choices (Brown, 2002; Sukiennik, Bendat, & Raufman, 1989; Ginzberg, E., Gingsburg, Axelrad, & Herma, 1951). Viewpoints of occupations and career choices are constantly impacted by factors such as intrapersonal factors (i.e., maturing individual) and the situational variable (i.e., social-cultural impact) (Brown, 2002; Ginzberg, et al., 1951; Super, 1975). These factors provide opportunities and create threats in the workplace. Individuals' values are prioritized in terms of importance relative to ones' specific goals (Brown, 2002; Rokeach, 1973). Thus, the hierarchical order of individual work values influences their occupational behavior (Adkins, Russell, & Werbel, 1994; Elizur, Borg, Hunt, & Magyari-Beck, 1991; Rokeach, 1973). Hence, individual well being (e.g., job satisfaction) may be greatly impacted by a work values hierarchy.

While many studies focusing on work-value implications have been conducted, few such projects have focused specifically on the hospitality management and hospitality and tourism industries related educational programs (Chen et al., 2000). This dearth of research poses opportunities for researchers to contribute new knowledge as well as for hospitality and tourism management curriculum design. Hence, the purpose of this study was to investigate the differences of work values between hospitality industry practitioners and hospitality management major students.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected from two types of populations: Hospitality industry practitioners and hospitality management students. The industry practitioners samples were managers and supervisors from a number of hospitality organizations located in USA. The student data were collected from a hospitality management college in Southeast USA. The first survey package from hospitality managers and supervisors resulted in 398 useable samples. For student data, a total of 828 useable samples were collected.

The study employed a self-administered paper-and-pencil questionnaire with three sections: (a) Occupational behavior, (b) Work Values, and (c) Socio-demographic behavior. Super's (1957) Work Value Inventory was adopted to assess the work values of the participating managers and students. Forty-five statements representing 15 work values were identified. Using a 5-point scale, where 1 = unimportant and 5 = very important, respondents indicated how important it was in relating to the 45 statements. Each of the 15 Work Values was calculated within the range of 3 to 15, where 15 = most important and 3 = least important.

The practitioner samples consisted of 50.6% of female and 49.4% male. Their ages ranged from 20 to 59 years old. The student samples consisted of 68.4% of female and 31.6% male with an average age of 21 years old. Approximately one fifth of students did not have any formal work experience in the hospitality industry. Some of the students (approximately 12% of the total student sample) had been involving with hospitality organizations as part-time workers. Table 1 shows the details of demographic profiles of practitioners and students sampled.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Practitioners and Students

	Hospitality Practitioners		Hospitality Students	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
Gender				
Female	199	50.6	561	68.4
Male	194	49.4	259	31.6
	393	100.0	820	100.0
Age	(average: 37.7 years old) (from 20 to 58 years old)		(average: 21 years old) (from 17 to 29 years old)	
Work Experience in the industry (years)	(average: 9.83 years)		(average: 2.75 years)	
No experience	0	0.0	174	21.2
1-5 years	151	41.0	537	65.5
6-10 years	89	24.2	99	12.1
10-15 years	62	16.9	7	0.9
15-20 years	37	7.3	3	0.4
20 years and more	39	10.6	0	0.0
	368	100.0	820	100.0
Class Standing				
Freshmen	N/A	N/A	45	5.5
Sophomores	N/A	N/A	166	20.2
Juniors	N/A	N/A	429	52.3
Seniors	N/A	N/A	180	22.0
			820	100.0

The frequency analysis was performed on the 15 work values to determine the ranking order of importance from both the hospitality industry practitioners' and students' perspectives. Among the 15 work values, *Way of Life* was ranked as the most important work value where *Aesthetic* as the least important attribute for both practitioners and students. Practitioners ranked *Way of Life*, *Achievement*, *Supervisory Relationship*, and *Altruism* as the top 4 important work values. However, students ranked *Economic Return* as the 3rd most important work value. Practitioners viewed *Altruism*, *Independence*, and *Intellectual Stimulation* as the next three important work values. Students ranked these 3 attributes relatively lower than *Prestige* and *Achievement*. Surprisingly, both groups ranked *Management* as the relatively less important work value. Table 2 illustrates the rank order the importance of the 15 work values for both groups.

Table 2. The Comparison Rank Order of Industry Practitioners and Hospitality Management Student Work Values.

Hospitality Industry Practitioner				Work Values	Hospitality Management Student			
N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank		Rank	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
387	13.7	1.6	1	Way of Life	1	799	13.7	2.0
387	13.6	1.6	2	Achievement	4	800	13.0	2.2
387	13.5	2.0	3	Supervisory Relationship	2	800	13.2	2.2
387	13.2	1.8	4	Altruism	7	800	12.4	2.5
387	13.1	2.1	5	Security	5	800	12.7	2.3
387	13.0	1.7	6	Independence	8	800	12.2	2.1
387	12.9	1.6	7	Intellectual Stimulation	13	800	11.3	2.1
387	12.9	1.8	8	Economic Return	3	800	13.2	2.3
387	12.8	1.8	9	Creativity	10	800	11.9	2.3
387	12.6	2.0	10	Prestige	6	799	12.4	2.2
387	12.4	1.8	11	Variety	11	800	11.8	2.3
387	12.4	1.9	12	Surrounding	9	799	12.1	2.3
387	12.2	2.0	13	Management	14	800	11.2	2.3
387	11.7	2.3	14	Associates	12	799	11.6	2.3
387	10.8	2.6	15	Aesthetic	15	799	10.3	2.6

Note: The values of each work value ranging from 3 (the least important) to 15 (the most important).

To explore the underling dimension of these 15 work values, the principal component analysis using VARIMAX rotation was performed and followed by correlation matrix examination, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO), and Bartlett's test for sphericity. The factor analysis (see Table 3) resulted in a 3-dimension-solution with 62.13% of variance explained by the components. Based on the commonality within item groupings, the three dimensions were labeled as: *General Work Values*, *Management Work Values*, and *Hospitality Work Values* (see Table 3).

The first dimension, *General Work Values*, included 7 items: Economic Return, Supervisory Relationships, Security, Surroundings, Way of Life, Prestige, and Achievement. The second dimension, *Management Work Values* contained 4 items: Management, Independence, Creativity, and Variety. The third dimension, *Hospitality Work Values*, included 4 items: Aesthetic, Altruism, Associates, and Intellectual Stimulation. The internal consistency reliability procedures were performed on the three dimensions of work values. The three dimensions were deemed "acceptable" and "adequate" with the reported Cronbach's Alpha scores (Nunnally, 1978), ranging from .69 to .89.

Table 3. Work Values Dimensions.

Work Values	General Work Values	Management Work Values	Hospitality Work Values
Supervisory Relationship	.766		
Economic Return	.760		
Security	.758		
Way of Life	.739		
Surrounding	.639		
Prestige	.609		
Achievement	.593		
Management		.734	
Independence		.715	
Creativity		.672	
Variety		.651	
Aesthetic			.710
Altruism			.646
Associates			.576
Intellectual Stimulation			.526
Mean	12.96	12.03	11.63
(Std. Deviation)	(1.64)	(1.72)	(1.68)
EigenValues	6.80	1.50	1.00
N	1190	1190	1190
Cronbach Alpha	.89	.81	.69

Note: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

In order to determine the differences of work values between practitioners and students, ONE-WAY ANOVA procedures were performed. Students group was analyzed using four class standings: Freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. The results indicated there were no differences on *General Work Value* among practitioners and the four groups of students. However, there were statistically significant differences among practitioners and students on the *Management Work Values* (13.748***, df=4,1182) and *Hospitality Work Values* (F=19.075***, df=4,1182).

Hospitality practitioner valued more on *Management Work Values* and *Hospitality Work Values* than sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Among the students sampled, sophomores valued *Management Work Values* less than seniors and juniors. However, there were no significant differences found on all three dimensions (see Table 4) between freshman and all other study participants.

Table 4. Work Values Dimensions by Hospitality Practitioners and Students Using One-Way Analysis of Variance (Means and Standard Deviations).

		Mean	Std. Dev.	N		df	F-Values
General Work Values		13.10	1.31				
	Freshman			44	Between Groups	4	1.469
	Sophomore	12.79	1.76	161	Within Groups	1182	
	Junior	12.92	1.78	423	Total	1186	
	Senior	12.85	1.88	172			
	industry	13.10	1.32	387			
	Total	12.96	1.64	1187			
Management Work Values		11.97	1.26				
	Freshman			44	Between Groups	4	19.075***
	Sophomore	11.34***a, b	1.83	161	Within Groups	1182	
	Junior	11.84***a, b	1.78	423	Total	1186	
	Senior	11.94***a, b	1.83	172			
	Industry	12.59***a	1.42	387			
	Total	12.04	1.72	1187			
Hospitality Work Values		11.82	1.32				
	Freshman			44	Between Groups	4	13.748***
	Sophomore	11.27***c	1.63	161	Within Groups	1182	
	Junior	11.43***c	1.71	423	Total	1186	
	Senior	11.37***c	1.92	172			
	Industry	12.13***c	1.47	387			
	Total	11.64	1.68	1187			

Note: Work value scores ranged from 3 = least important to 15 = the most important.

***significant at .001 level. Identical superscripts indicate significant differences.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study findings indicated significant differences between practitioners' work values hierarchy and students' work values hierarchy. The hierarchical order of work values could be emphasized in order to attract potential future hospitality workforce: hospitality management students as well as experienced managers and supervisors. The practitioners' hierarchical order of work values could be used for organization's management strategies associated with employee recruitment and retention. Furthermore, the ranking order differences in work values between hospitality practitioners and hospitality students' warrant further investigation in order to seek

their underlying causal factors. These underlying causes could be utilized for hospitality management curriculum designs and modifications in order to prepare our students to meet the challenges once they enter the workforce of the real world.

Secondly, this study identified three dimensions of work values (*General, Management, and Hospitality*) perceived by both hospitality practitioners and hospitality students. Again, these findings could be used in the designing of hospitality management programs. Interestingly, the study results showed the sampled freshmen students and practitioners shared similar views on all three dimensions of work values. However, when comparing the differences of *Management Work Values* dimension and *Hospitality Work Values dimension*, all students', except freshman, scores were found significantly lower than those of practitioners. Does it imply freshman students valued more than other hospitality management students on these two dimensions? If so, what contributed to this phenomenon? Further investigations on the causal factors of this phenomenon are recommended. Furthermore, investigations of the impact of social/cultural variables on work values are also warranted.

There are some limitations associated with this study. For example, the lack of adequate number of freshman samples (due to that majority of students do not declare their major till their sophomore years) in this study might cause the generalizability of the study results.

In summary, this study found useful information of differences in work values between hospitality management students and industry practitioners. The hierarchical work values and the three dimensions of work values revealed might contribute to hospitality organizations' strategic planning and hospitality educational program' curriculum designs as well.

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REVEALING THE TRAVEL EXPENDITURE PATTERN AMONG SENIOR TRAVELERS IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

U.S. population is aging rapidly. The population aging places an urgent demand on leisure and travel services. Using the Consumer Expenditure data collected by the Department of Labor and the Bureau of the Census from 1999 to 2002, this study seeks to identify senior travel patterns, and to understand how personal resources of the elderly influenced their travel expenditures. Descriptive statistics, crosstabs, and chi-square analysis were first used to reveal the variations of socio-demographics and travel expenditure patterns across different age groups. It was found that seniors contributed significantly to the total travel expenditures compared with all age groups in the United States. Most travel expenditures were spent on food and lodging, followed by entertainment and transportation. Age affected the spending on travel with younger seniors tending to spend more than older seniors. The variation of travel expenditures across different quarters of each year also displays the seasonality of travel patterns among seniors. Most expenditures were allocated in the third quarter which implies that seniors might travel more frequently in summer due to pleasant weather, better time of the year to visit family and friends, and a fewer weather based transportation problems. Multiple regression was used to test if personal resources and health condition affect senior's travel expenditures. Although income was found to be positively related to travel expenditures, the expected negative relationship between medical expenses and travel expenditures was not supported.

KEYWORDS: *Health; Income; Personal Resources; Senior; Travel Expenditure.*

INTRODUCTION

The world's population aged 65 and older is growing by approximately 800,000 people a month (United States Department of Commerce News, 2001). In July, 2003, those 65 and older in the United States constituted 35.9 million (12 %) of the total population (He, Sengupta, Velkoff, and DeBarros, 2005). The older population is anticipated to increase with the most rapid growth predicted to occur after 2010, when the baby-boom population reaches age 65 (Baloglu and Shoemaker, 2001). The largest increase in this population is expected to occur between 2011 and 2030, and the population in 2030 is projected to be twice as large as it was in 2000 (He, Sengupta, Velkoff, and DeBarros, 2005). A rising number of elderly people will result in a corresponding need for increased services (Kwan, 1990). These include not only traditional social welfare services, but also leisure services (Hung and Crompton, 2004).

Involvement in leisure activities has long been recognized as a useful way of alleviating feelings of being isolated, bored and unhappy (Iso-Ahola, 1980); offsetting emotions of disillusionment and distress (Jang and Wu, 2006); and fulfilling needs such as rest, relaxation, social interaction, physical exercise, learning, nostalgia, excitement, education, and visiting friends and relatives (Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Horneman et al., 2002). Therefore, studying the leisure behaviors of the elderly in various areas including travel is likely to help leisure service providers better understand their travel needs.

Studying aging in a tourism context is a recent phenomenon (Hsu, 2001). However, increasing attention is being paid to this market due to increases in the aged population, improved health, more time flexibility after retirement, increasing disposable income, and the elderly's substantial interest in travel (Faranda and Schmidt, 1999; Marvel, 1999; Lieux, Weaver, and McCleary, 1994). Past research in this field falls into two categories from the perspective of life span: studies using a lifespan approach embracing all age groups including the elderly and studies focusing only on older age cohorts. The former category often compares senior and non-senior travelers on various aspects such as travel motivations, travel demands, travel amenities preference, travel purposes, socioeconomic factors, travel mode, distance of travel, etc. (e.g., Reece, 2004; Javalgi, Thomas, and Rao, 1992; Ananth, DeMicco, Moreo, and Howey, 1992). The general consensus from these studies is that senior travelers are different from younger travelers on a wide range of items. The other category of studies focuses only on older age cohorts. These studies often further divide the aged population into different subgroups, and investigates variations of travel behaviors across these groups (e.g., Bai, Smith, Cai, and O'Leary, 1999; Huang and Tsai, 2003; Horneman, Carter, Wei, and Ruys, 2002). Studies in both categories of research suggest heterogeneity of travel characterizes not only between groups (i.e., senior and non-senior), but also within groups (i.e., subgroups in the senior population) (e.g., Shoemaker, 1989; Hsu, 2001; Prideaux, Wei, and Ruys, 2001).

Although each of us has to adapt to changes, there is particular emphasis on adaptation in later life in the aging literature. Adaptation has been viewed as an important process in successful aging. It is defined as a process of responding to the constantly changing demands of one's environment (Teague & MacNeil, 1992). Both positive adaptation and negative adaptation can result in depending on one's ability and available resources to adjust to change. Three common sources of major adaptive change in later life have been identified: sources related to

the individual; sources related to family; and sources related to the social environment (Rosenthal & Colangelo, 1982). The resources that elderly have affect their ability to travel. It is reasonable to assume that the factors which affect one's successful adaptation to later life can also prevent them from traveling or facilitate their decisions to travel. These factors may include personal resources such as accumulation of travel experience, increased leisure time after retirement, available financial income, good health, and adequate financial resources; interpersonal opportunities such as readily available travel companionship; and situational opportunities such as appealing travel deals, convenient transportation and advanced online travel bookings.

This study seeks to understand how elderly, U.S. consumers' personal resources influenced their travel expenditures from 1999 to 2002. The resources to be investigated in this study included not only subjects' financial resources, but also their health conditions. The financial status was estimated by income before taxes, other money receipts excluded from CU income before taxes, and retirement and pension deductions. Their health status was estimated by their health care expenditures in various aspects including: health care, health insurance, prescription drugs, and medical supplies. It is hypothesized in the study that personal resources positively influence older adults' travel behavior. The more resources (good financial status and health) they have, the more likely they will allocate money on taking leisure trips.

Among the few studies examining travel expenditure patterns of senior travelers from the perspective of consumer demand, most have incorporated cross-sectional rather than longitudinal data (e.g., Fish and Waggle, 1996; Dardis, Soberon-Ferrer, and Patro, 1994; Spotts and Mahoney, 1991; Fan, 1994) in which changes on the pattern of travel expenditures were seldom identified. Although Hong, Kim, and Lee's (1999) study was based on five consecutive quarters of consumer expenditure data, the whole set of data was collected within a period less than one year (i.e., between October 1994 and February 1995). Lohmann and Danielsson (2001) analyzed travel patterns in Germany with four years' data ranging from 1971 to 1999, using ten year increments, and found a travel continuity up to about 15 years for a given generation. Based on this finding, they predicted that the travel patterns of those aged 65 to 75 years in the year 2010 will be similar to those aged 55 and 65 years in 1999. Using national-wide consumer expenditure data collected by census over the last four years, this paper identified the changes within elderly U.S. citizen's travel expenditures over consecutive years, and investigated how personal resources and health influenced these travel expenditures.

METHODS

The Department of Labor and the Bureau of the Census conducts Consumer Expenditure Survey annually to collect information regarding American consumers' buying habits, including data on their expenditures, income, and consumer unit characteristics. This ongoing research activity is designed to be representative of the total U.S. civilian population. Using national probability samples of households, the eligible population includes the non-institutional civilian population. The survey consists of two components: 1) the quarterly Interview survey in which each consumer unit selected is interviewed once every three months over five consecutive quarters; and 2) the Diary survey in which consumer units record spending for two consecutive

1-week periods. The former captures monthly major items of expenses while the latter details weekly expenditures. Approximately 11,000 sample units were contacted each calendar quarter, and 7,800 consumer units participated in the interview survey for each quarter. It is estimated that the survey covers approximately 95 percent of total expenditures (United States Department of Labor and Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2005).

Since the data were collected at the consumer unit level instead of an individual level to reveal the travel expenditure patterns of the elderly, only those consumer units which referenced persons aged 60 or above (represented 26.6% of total sampled consumer units) and who lived alone or with their spouses (represented 79.4% of those reference persons who aged 60 and over) were included in the data analysis. This was done to ensure the information referred directly to the older population rather than the mixture of elderly and their younger household members. The final sample size which resulted from the screening procedures was 25,582 cases.

Descriptive statistics, crosstabs, and chi-square analysis were first used to reveal the variations of socio-demographics and travel expenditure patterns across different age groups. Multiple regression was then used to test if personal resources and health condition affect senior's travel expenditures. For the regression analysis, the dependent variable was total travel expenditures which were comprised of four aspects of travel costs: food and beverage, accommodation, transportation, and entertainment. The two independent variables were: 1) financial status, which refers to the sum of consumer units' various incomes.; 2) health condition, operationalized as the amount that respondents spent on their health care. It is expected that those with higher financial income are more likely to spend more than those with lower income and that the more elderly persons spend on medical care, the worse their health conditions are, and the less likely they could travel or spend money on traveling. The specific hypotheses being tested in the study are:

H1: Financial resources are positively related to the amount elderly persons spend on travel. The higher the income, the more likely they will travel or spend more on travel.

H2: Health condition is negatively related to travel expenditures among the elderly. The more medical care they receive (suggesting their health conditions are worse), the less likely they would travel or spend more on travel.

FINDINGS

Sociodemographics

The average age of the sample was 72 years old with a range from 60 to 94. Chi-square analysis suggested that different cohorts' marital status were significantly different ($p < .001$). About half of the respondents were still married (48.3%); one third were widowed (34.5%); and one tenth were divorced (10.9%). As age increased, the percentage of those married decreased (from 49.4% in 60-69 age group to 13% in 80+ age group) and the chance of being in widowhood increased (from 20.2% in 60-69 age group to 40% in 80+ age group). The majority

of widows were female (80.7%), and most respondents were retired (90%). In addition, most had paid off the mortgages for their houses (61.5%), with a small percentage still paying for them (18.7%), or living in rented houses (19.4%). The majority of those who were still paying mortgages were in younger age groups (61.3% for 60-69 age group), and most owned at least one vehicle (82%).

Travel expenditure patterns

The total spending on travel among those aged 60 and over and living alone or with their spouses in the United States in years 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 was US\$5.3 billion, US\$6.6 billion, US\$5.9 billion, and US\$5.6 billion respectively. These comprised 17%, 20.7%, 17.8%, and 16.9% of the overall travel expenditures in the United States in the four years (Table 1). Most travel expenses were spent on food and beverage including both consumption at a restaurant and prepared by consumer units (38.3%), followed by lodging including vacation home rentals, and motels (35.3%), entertainment including sporting events, movies, and recreational vehicle rentals (15.8%), and transportation including airfare, local transportation, tolls, parking fees, and car rentals (10.6%) (Figure 1). Figure 2 reveals that younger seniors spent more on travel compared to their older counterparts in which half of the travel expenditure was contributed by those who were in the 60-69 age group (58.2%) while only a small percentage of travel expenditures were contributed by those aged 80 and older (4.7%).

Table 1. Sum of travel expenditures over the years.

Year	All population	Seniors	Proportion of senior travel expenditure to the total travel expenditure
1999	31,387,729,708.43	5,343,915,996.12	17.0%
2000	31,933,831,567.11	6,603,637,946.17	20.7%
2001	33,410,445,244.13	5,943,027,363.60	17.8%
2002	32,835,697,792.29	5,561,768,775.71	16.9%

From 1999 to 2002, the third quarter (July – September) of each year was generally the period in which the elderly spent most of their travel expenditures (Figure 3). This implies that the third quarter is the preferred travel season for the senior population. This corresponds with previous research which suggested that the elderly tend to travel more frequently in summer (Romsa, & Blenman, 1989) due to its warm climate. In addition, the elderly spent the least amount of money on traveling during the first quarter of each year in which cold weather or perceived travel condition challenges might have contributed to their lower demand for travel.

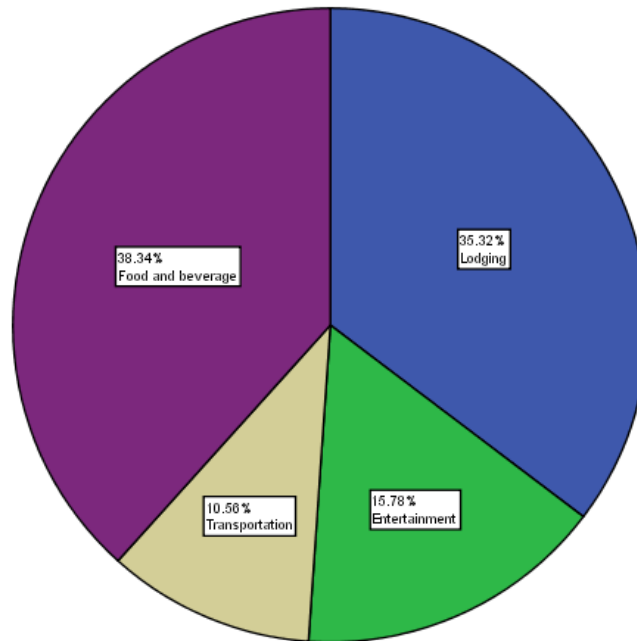


Figure 1. Composition of travel expenditure in 2002.

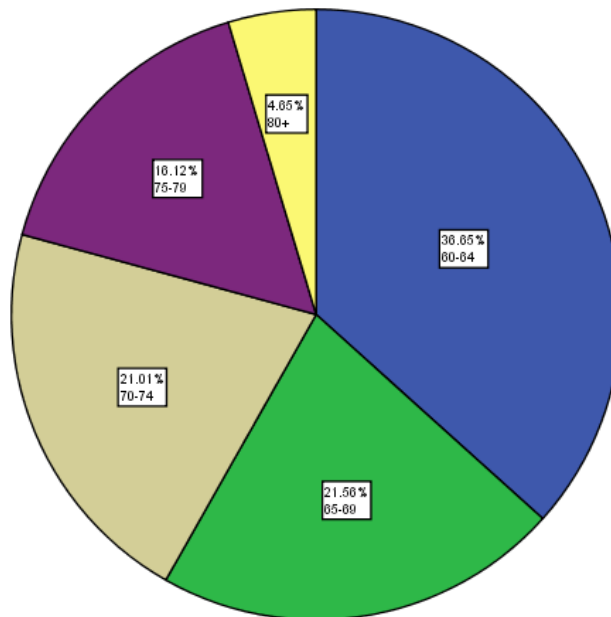


Figure 2. Percentage of total travel expenditure among each age group in 2002.

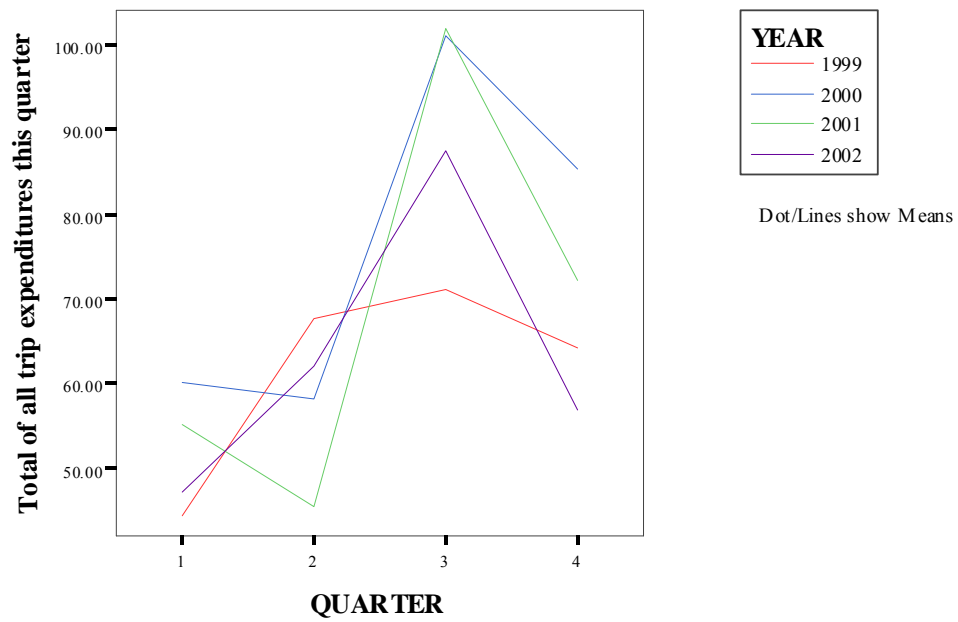


Figure 3a. Total of all trip expenditures.

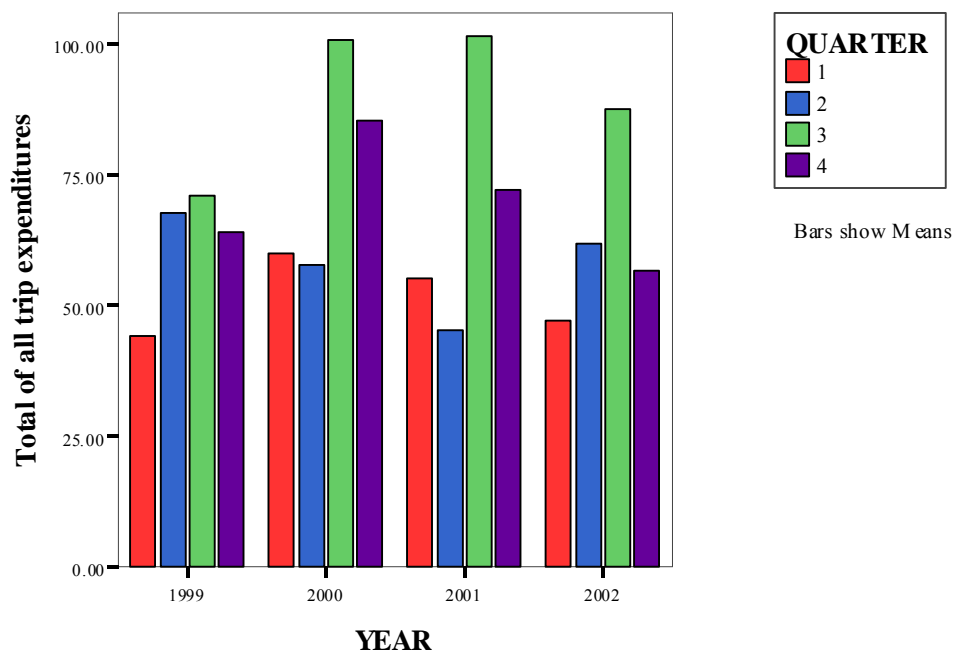


Figure 3b. Total of all trip expenditures.

Personal resources and travel expenditure

Multiple regression was used to investigate if personal resources (financial and health conditions) which influence seniors' travel expenditures. Total travel expenditure was the dependent variable, while the sum of various incomes and health care expenditures were the independent variables. The equation for analysis was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y is the total travel expenditure; X_1 is the sum of various incomes including CU income, other money receipts and retirement and pension deductions; X_2 is health care expenses including health care, health insurance, prescription drugs, and medical supplies; β_0 is the intercept coefficient; β_1 and β_2 are the coefficients of each independent variable; and ε is the error term.

Since the total travel expenditure (dependent variable) failed to meet the assumption of linearity which is a pre-requirement for using regression analysis, the data was transformed by using logarithm value. Thus, the revised equation for analysis was:

$$\text{Log}(Y) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * X_1 + \beta_2 * X_2 + \varepsilon$$

The output of the regression analysis (Table 2) reveals that both incomes and health care expenditures significantly affected travel expenditures ($p < .01$). Although Hypothesis 1 was fully supported, hypothesis 2 was only partially supported. The positive value of β_2 suggests that health care expenditures were positively related to travel expenditures, which contradicted the original assumption that higher medical expenses would result in less travel spending due to health constraints.

Table 2. Regression analysis output.

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.961	.037		133.550	.000
	CU income + other money receipts + retirement and pension deductions	3.67E-006	.000	.112	6.656	.000
	Health care + health insurance + prescription drugs + medical supplies	9.74E-005	.000	.099	5.891	.000

a. Dependent Variable: log

CONCLUSIONS

Using consumer expenditure data representing the U.S. population collected by the Department of Labor and the Bureau of the Census from 1999 to 2002, this study identified sociodemographic characteristics, travel spending patterns, and the influence of personal health resources on travel expenditures among the elderly. It was found that seniors contributed significantly to the total travel expenditures made by all populations in the United States. Since the sample included in this study did not consider those who lived with their household members other than their spouses, the travel expenditures obtained in this study were expected to be smaller than their actual expenditures. The decline in travel expenditures among both all population and seniors in 2002 might be due to the terrorist's attack in September 11, 2001. However, given that there may be a rebound of interest in traveling among U.S. citizens, it is expected that there would be increasing demand for travel services and increasing travel expenditures. Future research will need to incorporate more recent data in order to determine if this is the case.

Most travel expenditures were spent on food and lodging, followed by entertainment and transportation. Age affected the spending on travel with younger seniors tending to spend more than older seniors. This might be due to the higher affordability, better health, and travel frequency of those who are in the younger age groups. Previous research has also indicated a higher tendency of travel before 75 years old and lower propensity of travel after reaching the more advanced age of 75 to 85 (Lohmann & Danielsson, 2001).

The variation of travel expenditures across different quarters of each year displays the seasonality of travel patterns among seniors. Most expenditures were allocated in the third quarter which implies that seniors might travel more frequently in summer due to its desirable weather. The data did not include travel destinations. Further research will need to monitor the travel destinations of seniors in order to reveal variation of travel patterns throughout the year and the possible tie to experiential trip development by the industry.

The study also tested the hypotheses whether personal resources and health conditions affect seniors' travel expenditure. Although income was found to be positively related to travel expenditures as was expected, the expected negative relationship between medical expenses, and travel expenditures was not supported. Rather, the relationship was found to be positive. This might be due to the inappropriate approximation of health condition by using medical care expenses. It is possible that those who have lower financial ability cannot afford to have high medical outlays even when their health condition has declined. They may be lack of health insurance or avoid seeking medical treatment to reduce the costs and thus, lead to lower medical expenses. On the contrary, those who have high affordability may be more willing to spend money on their health and thus, tend to have health insurance and get medical treatment more frequently. Therefore, high medical expenses may reflect high income or financial ability rather than a poor health condition. Future research needs to use other items to measure health conditions in order to more accurately reflect true health conditions.

In summary, this study gives some insights to the older population in the United States in terms of travel expenditures and travel patterns. The large proportion of travel expenditures contributed by seniors implies an increasing significance of the older population in regards to travel. The senior population in the United States is increasing rapidly. Marketers need to be aware of and monitor the changes of this market not only in terms of their socio-demographic factors, but also the factors which inhibit or facilitate their travel behaviors. Longitudinal data can be used to reflect the changes of travel patterns, and lead to implementation of effective marketing strategies in order to meet the needs of senior travel market.

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN INTERACTIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY: A PILOT STUDY IN A HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This pilot study investigates the type of community that facilitates students' learning in the most effective way. It investigates students self reporting on the instructional methods, in and out-of-class activities that best facilitate their learning, and the evaluation methods that best assess their understanding and learning of the course material. The findings indicate that demonstration type instructions that are more hands-on and interactive in nature facilitate students learning to a greater extent when compared to other methods that are more traditional, such as lecture. The type of in-class activity that was most effective in students' learning was large-group discussion, while reading and written discussion were identified as the most effective out-of-class activities that facilitated the most learning. The evaluation method that students indicated that best assess their understanding and learning of the course material was weekly assignments.

KEYWORDS: *Interactive Learning; Learning Communities; Instructional Methods; In-Class and Out-of-Class Activities; Evaluation/Assessment.*

INTRODUCTION

To encourage learning at the college level, it is important to cultivate a learning community that allows students to be more active than passive learners. Many organizations and educational institutions have found that students prefer Interactive Teaching Methods for the

following reason. When students participate, they become more interested in learning and they tend to retain the course material to a greater extent than they would have in the absence of an interactive teaching method (Gelb, 2000). Academic disciplines such as education, hospitality management and business administration commonly agree that some type of experiential, or practical *hands-on work experience* is necessary to achieve the highest level of effectiveness in the application of the theoretical classroom content (Ford & LeBruto, 1995).

The literature suggests that a major benefit of practical hands-on experience is the delivery of skills and competences in hospitality management (Paprock, 1992; Tas, 1983, cited in Ford & LeBruto (1995)). Haury and Rillero (1994) summarizes the benefit of hands-on learning as follows: (1) remembering the material better, feeling a sense of accomplishment when the task is completed, and being able to transfer experience easier to other learning situations; (2) empowering the students in their learning process; and (3) stimulating students who are either not as academically “talented” or have not shown “interest” in school.

To create a learning community that facilitates active learning allowing students to achieve the highest level of effectiveness in the application of the theoretical course content material, instructors need to identify the methods that best facilitate students’ learning. This study considers instruction methods; in-class and out-of-class activities that students believe best facilitates their learning; and the assessment methods that best indicate their learning of the given course content as four pillars of a learning community. The goals are to:

1. Evaluate the instructional methods that students identify as most effective in their learning.
2. Identify the in and out of class activities that students identified as fostering learning.
3. Evaluate the evaluation/assessment methods that students identify to be most effective in assessing their learning.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Sousa (2001), the instructional methods that facilitate high levels of retention are: (1) teach others and immediate use of learning (90%); (2) practice by doing (75%); and (3) discussion groups (50%). This indicates that students learn in a more interactive learning community. To understand interactive learning, one must first understand what it means. Interactive learning is used interchangeably with the term hands-on-learning in most instances. This term “*hands-on learning*” seems to have emerged during the 1960s and is interpreted as an educational experience that actively involves students in gaining knowledge and understanding of course material. Others identified hands-on learning method as the incorporation of field observations by students with a wider incorporation of other instructional methods to support lecture classes (Cullen, (1993).

Studies have confirmed that there is a greater effectiveness associated with interactive/hands-on instructions, particular for certain learning styles. A study by Arnold, Kackley, and Fortune, (2003) confirmed this when they compared lecture based sessions with hands-on learning. Further support for interactive learning was indicated by The National

Survey of Student Engagement (2002) showing that students are engaged by academic challenge, active and collaborative learning, and interaction with faculty (Oblinger and Hawkins, 2005). Student persistence is associated with student-faculty interaction; student-student interaction; participation in extracurricular activities; interaction with peers outside of class; and living and working on campus (Kuh et al., 1994 cited at Oblinger and Hawkins, 2005).

The benefits associated with interactive teaching methods include: 1) Getting all students involved actively in learning, 2) Enabling students to teach each other, 3) Increasing student retention of course concepts, 4) Allowing student to contribute to the learning process, 5) Providing feedback to students on their progress in learning and 6) Providing the educator with the opportunity to see how successful the interactive teaching methods have been once evaluation techniques have been administered (American Hotel & Lodging Education Institute). The literature review indicates that a learning community where students are active participants facilitates and enhances learning. Hence, this pilot study sought and integrated students' feedback on the type of instructional methods, the types of in and out of class activities, and the evaluation/assessment methods that best indicate their learning of the course material.

Instructional methods can be defined as methods a teacher uses to disseminate or communicate information to students. The instructional methods measured in this study include: lecture, demonstration, field trip, guest speaker presentation, guided note outlines, panel/symposium/forum/debate, and chapter summary. This list is partially adapted from components of one professor's chosen delivery methods as selected from techniques provided from the Educational Institute's list of interactive teaching delivery methods as taught or listed in the Certified Hospitality Educator Workshop materials.

In-class activities are activities used to deliver or reinforce the instructional methods and included role play, student presentation, small group discussion and presentation, large group discussion, two-minute papers and spot quiz. Out-of- class activities are defined as activities out of the classroom to support the instructional strategy and included reading assignments, reading and writing assignments, individual research, group research, and online group discussion.

Evaluation or assessment methods are "the primary means of measuring progress toward attainment of the standards and of holding students, teachers and administrators accountable for improvement over time" (National Research Council, 2001 pg. 24). Reinforcement methods that assess the instructional delivery methods and student preparation include quizzes, weekly assignments, cumulative exams, chapter exams, midterm exams and final exams, individual and group projects.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken in an undergraduate marketing class in an effort to indirectly identify the instructional methods, in and out-of-class activities and evaluation methods based on the perceptions of the learners as they began the course. To address the research questions, students in marketing sections were given a survey on the first day of class asking them to indicate the (1) instructional methods; (2) in-class activities; (3) out-of-class activities; and (4)

evaluation methods that are most effective in their learning. Initially, 87 useable surveys were collected. The students were requested to rank-order each of the individual methods included across four questions involving the course content. Each question requested student to rank their preferences with anchors from 1 labeled most effective to 6 labeled least effective.

Simple rank order results were interpreted for surveys that were completed using SPSS software package version 15.0. Results shown in the below tables include the above mentioned four elements. This form of analysis will be reported in relative numbers according to total percentage that preferred various methods of IS, ICA, OCA and ET.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Initial results (See Table 1) for instructional methods indicate that students perceived demonstration over the other six methods to be the most effective instructional method that facilitates their learning and that panel/symposium/forum was the least of the seven methods confirming expectations that students will chose methods that are perceived as more interactive or hands-on rather than those perceived as less interactive or hands-on in nature.

Of the in-class activities results indicate that large-group discussion was what students believed was most effective in learning the course material, with a spot quiz being the least effective. This confirms the literature's suggestions that students will opt for interactive activities when given a choice in their learning. For the out-of-class activities the findings indicate that the most effective learning activity was reading and writing assignments and the least effective was online chat rooms.

Of the seven evaluation methods, the most evaluation method that students reported to best indicate their learning was weekly assignments with cumulative examination being the least effective. This is not a surprise since students are being asked about evaluations to be administered.

Table 1. Most / Least Effective Instructional Methods

Activity Type	Most Preferred	Least Preferred
Instructional Methods	Demonstration	Panel/symposium/forum
In-class Activity	Large-group Discussion	Spot Quiz
Out-of-class Activity	Reading/Writing Discussion	On-line group Discussion
Evaluation Technique	Weekly Assignments	Cumulative Examination

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

The findings of this pilot study were not surprising in that students believe that activities which are more interactive and hands-on-in nature facilitated their learning to a greater extent when compared to the traditional lectures. This is confirmed by recent scholarship for teaching and learning literature across many disciplines. The research supported the teacher's course development strategy of offering more interactive and hands-on-activities in her course portfolio

across instructional methods in and out of class activities, and evaluation/assessment techniques. This seems to indicate that the course designed with greater opportunities for interactive activities is likely to be perceived as chances for improved learning by students. A follow up study confirming the assertion would lend further support.

After more input is collected, the survey will be redesigned and information will be collected across multiple sections and longitudinally over multiple semesters, including the collection of student demographic information, taking into account, gender, school year, and state or country of origin for cross-referencing purposes. Also, collecting direct measures reflecting student skill level with material at the end of the course could provide useful information for course assessment along with the current survey being administered at the beginning and ending of the semester.

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A MODEL OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM AND AN OPEN ACCESS INITIATIVE

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ABSTRACT

Tourism research has reached a mature stage indicated by the rising number of journals and citation patterns inside the tourism field. However, many challenges exist including the irrelevancy of tourism research to practitioners, increasing subscription cost of academic journals, the long delay in publishing research results, and academic institutions' limited budget. Academic institutions are also facing the academic publishing paradox in that they are forced to pay high costs to have access to the research results their own scholars produced. The author argues that printed journals as one type of materialization of scholarly communication alone could not fulfill the growing needs for faster scholarly communication and knowledge creation in tourism field. Either in physical or digital form, tourism publications is merely material manifestation of a complex network of collaborative activity of tourism researchers that comprises discovery, ideation, and research of tourism knowledge. Thus, the author provides a model of scholarly publishing in tourism field and promotes the adoption of open-source and open-access scholarly communication among tourism researchers. All materialization of formal and informal communication between tourism scholars should be captured, stored, and disseminated. An open access and open source tourism journal will facilitate future mature of tourism field and speed up the tourism knowledge dissemination. However, the value of this open-source journal will largely depend on the willingness of the participants in the system, publishers, scholars, academic institutions, funding institutions, and others, to adopt new forms of knowledge creation and discovery.

KEYWORDS: *Knowledge Creation; Open-Access; Scholarly Communication; Social Network; Tourism Research; Web 2.0.*

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INTRODUCTION

Compared with other well-established fields such as physics or chemistry, tourism is a relatively young research field. A number of scholars have argued that it has reached a mature stage, demonstrated by the continuous accumulation of tourism literature, the growth of publication venues, and the expanding of the body of authors and scholars (Ryan, 1997; Xiao and Smith, 2006). In addition, citation percentage of articles from its own field is an indication of the degree of maturation. Xiao and Smith (in press) showed that tourism publications contain a rather large percentage of citations from its own field (around 50%), while the percentages of citations from other fields such as recreation or management are falling. This indicates that tourism has already developed its own identify (Xiao and Smith, in press).

Nonetheless, a few challenges are facing scholarly publishing today in tourism field. First, it seems that there are two distinctive communities: tourism academia and practitioners in tourism industry (Xiao and Smith, 2007). They have different mandates, priorities, norms, and rules (Dunn, 1980; Xiao and Smith, 2007). The field practitioners are rarely aware of the recent development in the tourism research field and they considered the academic studies largely irrelevant (Jordan and Roland, 1999). Second, peer-reviewed journals have been considered as the premier publication venues for tourism research, especially for the top three: *Annals of Tourism Research (ATR)*, *Journal of Travel Research (JTR)*, and *Tourism Management (TM)* (Zhao and Ritchie, in press). However, if you open any one of the three journals and turn to a random paper, you may easily find that twelve months are needed from the initial submission of the paper to its final publishing, if not more. Though on one hand, the long delay was deemed necessary for the rigorous peer-review process, the knowledge creation is dramatically slowed because of the latency between the production of research results and their dissemination. Thirdly, there are also many arguments regarding the prestige of different tourism journals and other publication venues (Zhang and Ritchie, in press). Even with a shorter turnaround time, conference proceedings in tourism field are deemed secondary compared to journal papers and may be discounted when the authors are evaluated for tenure or promotion. Fourthly, the imbalance between the rising subscription cost of academic journals and the limited budget of many institution libraries are becoming more and more severe (Van de Sompel et al., 2004). There exists the paradox of scholarly publishing: as a whole, universities and research institutions provide financial support for their scholars to conduct scientific research; the scholars and researchers publish their findings on academic journals usually without any financial rewards; but the institutions need to pay high subscription fees to publishers for the research results their supported scholars produced. The double-payments of the institutions will eventually end in the pockets of commercial academic publishers.

A new conceptualization of scholarly communication is needed in order to address these dilemmas. In this abstract, the author argued that journal papers and other publications are different materialization of communication content between tourism scholars. The advancements in information technologies, such as data capturing, data storage, and data mining techniques along with the proliferation of the Internet technologies afford new ways of facilitating scholarly communication which might be easier, faster, cheaper, more relevant, and could reach a larger audience. In addition, these communication channels should be made free to the public. An open source and open access initiative is proposed in this paper.

THE NATURE OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATIONS

From the publication of the first journal, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* in 1665, the printed journals have stood at the core of scholarly communication (Hitchcock et al., 2002). Printed journals were made possible by the invention of paper; and they transformed scholarship from a closed group activity which relies on face to face communication to a more democratic and accessible system, which works beyond geographical and institutional boundaries. The functions of printed journals include registration of new research results, certification of their quality, dissemination to peers, documentation for reward mechanisms (e.g. tenure, promotion), and preservation of results for future scholarship (Roosendaal and Guerts, 1997). However, with the dramatic expansion of knowledge and information and the growing body of tourism researchers and scholars in the world, the slow turnaround time of printed journals and higher cost of subscription might not be helpful to the needs of fast scholarly communication of tourism research field today. With the advancements of the Internet technologies, the digital media could afford faster communication with more flexible and interactive content than paper-based venues. Many ephemeral and informal communications between scholars could be captured, stored, and retrieved, such as discussion group messages, emails, and blogs. These information communications may contain valuable insights and findings which need to be shared and discussed.

A MODEL OF SCHOLARLY COMMUNICATION IN TOURISM

We argue that the tourism publications are not the goal in their own right; tourism publications support the scholarly communication in tourism and knowledge creation. Scholarly publishing and communication are both information exchange through artifacts: either formal and materialized artifacts such as tourism journal articles and conference proceedings, or informal and non-conclusive artifacts such as online discussions, informal meetings, and blogs. In order to facilitate the discussion, three classes of documents can be identified: formal documents are officially published journal papers and conference proceedings; semi-formal documents are those from online publication venues which have obtained a certain status in the scholarly publishing world, such as the online version of the tourism journals; and informal documents, which have not been materialized or taken into consideration in the evaluation of scholars, including comments, reviews, discussions, web blogs, and personal web pages.

The official and semi-formal publication systems form tourism document networks (Figure 1). Since journal papers tend to cite published articles in the past, they form directed graphs with citation edges from newer documents to published ones. The development of electronic publishing has collapsed the time dimension of this citation graph: in the past you might only be able to cite papers published in past years; now you can cite contemporaneous papers stored in e-journals. Evaluation of this citation graph reveals popularity of documents and suggests quality (Hitchcock et al., 2003).

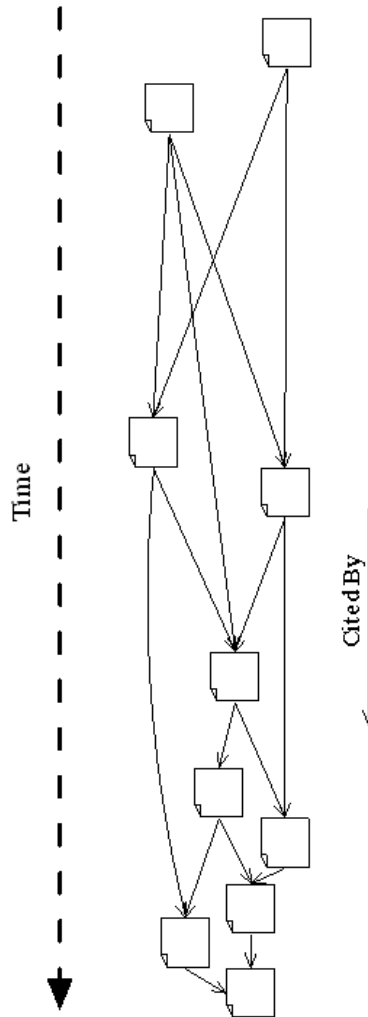


Figure 1. Formal Tourism Document Network.

Coexisting with the formal tourism document networks, there are social networks composed of tourism authors and researchers. Tourism scholars communicate not only through formal publications and conference proceedings, but also through comments, reviews, email discussions, informal meetings, and chatting over lunch and coffee breaks. These channels of informal communication compose a rich array of information flows, which can help generate original ideas and develop new theories. Figure 2 shows a social network formed by various formal and informal communication channels, in which journal publications are only part of the network.

The intrinsic limitations of formal and semi-formal document networks call for materialization of this less formal communication.

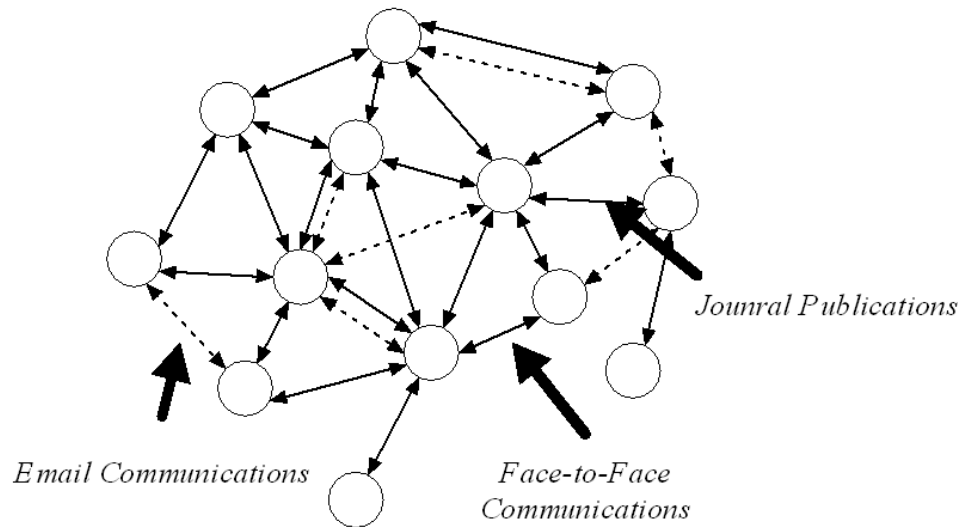


Figure 2. A Social Network of Tourism Scholars.

NEW TRENDS IN ONLINE SCHOLARLY INFORMATION SHARING AND AN OPEN ACCESS INITIATIVE

The new model of scholarly communication indicates that we need to capture, store, and disseminate the informal documents as well as formal documents of the content of scholarly communication in tourism. Both types of documents contribute to knowledge creation and the evolution of tourism as a field. The journal legacy has been destabilized due to increasing demand for rapid communication of research results, rising subscription costs in the context of flat library budgets, and concerns about copyright in light of nascent open access models. In recent years, a new open-source and open-access movement has extended from software development domain to scholarly publishing (Van de Sompel et al., 2004). The ethics behind this is that public funded research should be made public; the research results should be deposited in an online repository and made freely available (Jeffery, 2006). Advanced search algorithms and the wide use of the Internet will make it feasible. A number of initial open access technologies have surfaced over the past decade in tourism and other fields (especially in physics and computer science), including e-Print archives (Cogprints, 2007), institutional repositories such as eprints.org, digital library repositories and protocols such as *Journal of Digital Information*, and electronic journals such as *eReview of Tourism Research*.

However, an open-access and open-source journal will raise numerous questions about how essential characteristics of scholarly communication such as quality, integrity, and reputation will be maintained. The two journals (*ATR* and *TM*) indexed by SSCI (*Social Science Citation Index*) are still the primary publications venues that the leading tourism researchers strive to get in (even though one of the top three tourism journals *JTR* is not indexed by either one). However, in physics field, the online repository arXiv.org has gained status from its initial introduction in early 1990's. It is now widely cited in the field of physics. In arXiv.org, the submission of paper is free to all and any researchers are welcomed to comment on the papers

and the authors are free to revise multiple times. It also allows linkage to other types of documents such as datasets and simulations. In the age of Web 2.0, layperson-contributed and free- accessed content can form collective intelligence (Greaves, 2007). The successes of wikipedia.org and Google are great examples of the validity of emerged intelligence of the mass.

The author argues that the basis for formulating new systems of scholarly communication lies in understanding this underlying collaborative social network and exposing it as part of scholarly communication. An open source publication venue, which includes not only formal documents but also informal communications and multi-format data, might in fact provide the basis for better metrics of quality and reputation, more powerful research tools, and better ways of tracking and exploiting developing ideas. For example, PageRank algorithm of Google utilize the link structure of the web can successfully identify valuable information sources even though there is no formal expert reviewers of all the web pages (Brin and Page, 1998). Here the author promotes an initiative to create an open-source tourism journal. This journal will captured not only submitted articles but will also include reviewers' comments and feedbacks. Furthermore, it will allow multimedia and other types of digital content in the article including podcast, blogs, and YouTube videos. The content of journal will be freely available online; the quality of research will be determined by network algorithm based on citations or downloading times.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the author argues that printed journals as one type of materialization of scholarly communication alone could not fulfill the growing needs for faster scholarly communication and knowledge creation. Either in physical or digital form, tourism publications is merely material manifestation of a complex network of collaborative activity of tourism researchers that comprises discovery, ideation, and research. Thus, the author promotes the adoption of open-source and open-access scholarly communication among tourism researchers. All materialization of formal and informal communication between tourism scholars should be captured, stored, and disseminated. An open access and open source tourism journal will facilitate future mature of tourism field and speed up the tourism knowledge dissemination. However, the value of this open-source journal will largely depend on the willingness of the participants in the system, publishers, scholars, academic institutions, funding institutions, and others, to adopt new tools of knowledge discovery on top of the system.

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EVENT TERRORISM: A PLAN FOR RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

September 11, 2001 was a day the world changed, especially for North Americans. It was a day of unimaginable sorrow and grief and a day when people displayed their humanity and compassion for others. Most of all, it was the day we lost our innocence and sense of security, and we have struggled since then to find ways to feel safe again. There is no denying that terrorism is a real threat in general as well as to the tourism industries. How does the belief that tourism is at risk for future terrorist attacks apply to the event industry specifically? The event industry academic literature has focused on providing event managers with information on site selection and perceived evaluation of meeting services and destinations. The non-academic literature describes how the event industry should deal with terrorism, through risk management plans, but does not provide any information or guidance for measuring the actual level of threat from terrorism. Interestingly a non-scholarly survey has reported that 77% of event planners have not been influenced by terrorism concerns. The intention of this research is to study the perception of terrorism on the events industry. Event planners from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Australia will be surveyed online; these countries are the leaders in the events industry, both in professionals and educational opportunities.

KEYWORDS: *Event Industry; Terrorism; Tourism; Risk; Risk Perception.*

INTRODUCTION

September 11, 2001 was a day the world changed, especially for North Americans. It was a day of unimaginable sorrow and grief and a day when people displayed their humanity and compassion for others. Most of all, it was the day we lost our innocence and sense of security, and we have struggled since then to find ways to feel safe again.

In tourism, September 11 lead to an increase in the academic and non-academic literature (see e.g., Kegley, 2003). In particular, there has been significant research on the effects of terrorism on the tourism industry (Tarlow, 2005). In order to set the framework for this research it is necessary to understand what is meant by the term “tourism”. There has been disagreement in calling tourism an industry as it does not offer a distinct product or service (Chadwick, 1994). In 1991 the World Tourism Organization held the International Conference on Travel and

Tourism Statistics in Ottawa, Canada. At this conference a definition of tourism was accepted, which reads:

Tourism is defined as the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes not related to the exercise of an activity remunerated from within the place visited. The use of this broad concept makes it possible to identify tourism between countries as well as tourism within a country. "Tourism" refers to all activities of visitors, including both "tourists (overnight visitors)" and "same-day visitors" (UNWTO Statistics, 2007).

The literature suggests there are specific reasons that put the tourism industries at risk from terrorism (Tarlow, 2005). The reasons for this belief are economic and social (Boger et al, 2005; Goldblatt & Hu, 2005; Spindel & Tesdahl, 2005; Tarlow, 2005). Tourism is an integral part of global economy. It generates spending internationally and creates jobs (Tarlow, 2005). Socially tourism provides a venue in which to expose travelers to new cultures and ideas, thereby promoting a more global community (Tarlow, 2002). Further, tourism consists of several types of industry, most of which have perishable products and are seen as luxuries not necessities (Tarlow, 2002).

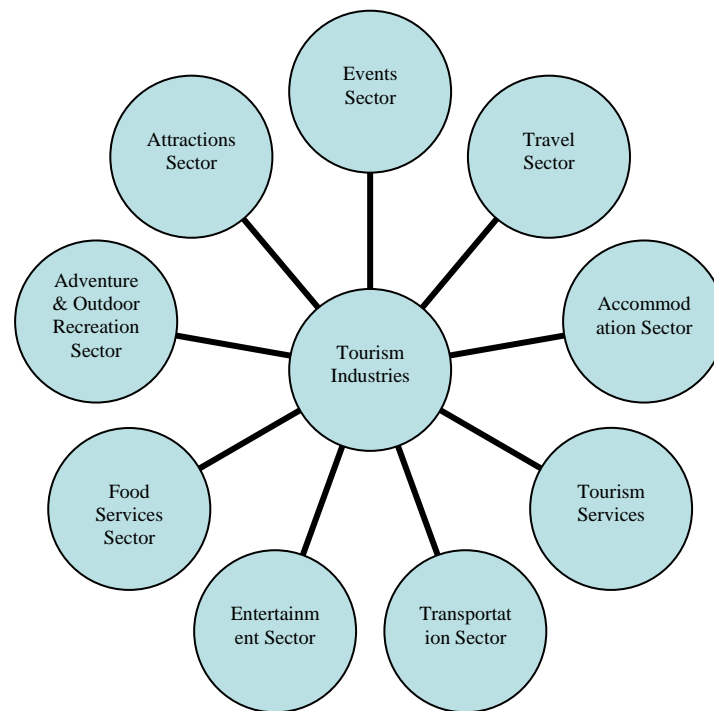
As can be seen by Figure 1, events are one of many industries that are considered operating sectors of tourism. Within the category of events are further classifications, such as conventions, meetings, and exhibitions. For the purposes of this research, "events" will be defined as "a function requiring public assembly for the purpose of celebration, education, marketing and reunion" (Goldblatt & Nelson, 2001, p.71). The types of events that will be used within this research are: meetings and conferences; social life-cycle events; civic events; expositions; fairs and festivals; hallmark events; and sports events.¹

How does the belief that tourism is at risk for future terrorist attacks apply to the event industry specifically? There is very little literature that deals with the impact of the fear of terrorism in the event industry. Most academic literature on events has focused on providing event managers² with information on site selection and perceived evaluation of meeting services and destinations (Lee & Back, 2005). Some professional literature describes how the event industry should deal with terrorism through risk management plans, but does not provide any information or guidance for measuring the actual level of threat from terrorism. Interestingly, a non-scholarly survey is done each year by one of the leading industry publications, in which managers are asked if their plans are influenced by terrorism concerns, with 77% saying that plans have been somewhat influenced or not influenced at all (Grimaldi, 2005). The events industry is global in size and shape, yet no attention has been directed to the potential differences between managers in different countries. This research proposes to undertake the task of

¹ Meetings and events are educational and networking opportunities; social life-cycle events are weddings and anniversaries; civic events are parades or bicentennials; expositions are trade shows; fairs and festivals are entertainment gatherings; hallmark events are large and global (Olympics); sports events are athletic games and/or tournaments.

² An event manager is an individual responsible for researching, designing, planning, coordinating and evaluating an event (Goldblatt & Nelson, p. 73)

discovering what perception event managers have regarding the risk of terrorism in the events industry in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. This will assist planners and destinations to gain a sense of those factors which contribute to an increase in risk perception at venues and destinations. It will also provide a starting point for understanding which types of events are perceived as being riskier.



Source: Goeldner & Ritchie (2003), p. 122.

Figure 1. Tourism Industry Sectors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no academic research on the perception of terrorism in the events industry. There exists scholarly research in the area of perception of risk by tourists, which can be applied to the events industry. In order to make more meaningful connections between perception of risk and the events industry, a review of the general literature regarding risk perception is also included. Fortunately, there does exist professional literature discussing terrorism as it relates to the events industry. To better understand the framework of the research, a terrorism literature review is included here.

It is interesting to note that although terrorism is acknowledged as a global issue, the literature notes that the 'experts' have been unable to develop a universally accepted definition (Sonmez & Graefe, 1988b; Weinberg et al, 2004). For the purposes of this research terrorism is

defined as “a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or use of force or violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role” (Weinberg et al, 2004).

Terrorism is not a new threat: it has been lurking in the background of world events throughout history. According to Boger, et al. (2005), terrorism has seen an increase since the 1960s. Since 1995 and 1996 there are recorded incidents of terrorist activity targeting Americans in the United States (Boger et al., 2005). The new concern about terrorism most likely stems from the proximity of the September 11th terrorist attack, in that the attack took place in the United States resulting in a potential loss of innocence by members of the North American public. The September 11th attacks are illustrative of a “new” phase of terrorism (Weinberg, et al, 2004). The characteristics include religious extremism, large loss of life and the use of unconventional weapons (Weinberg, et al, 2004).

Individuals deal with risks in very different ways because the perception of risk is a very individualized response. It can be affected by many factors, including culture, past experiences, proximity, information sources, friends and family, and gender (Johnson, 1993). Numerous studies have concluded that everyone perceives risk differently, but the common thread is that risk perception is based on intuition and emotions as opposed to rationality (Kasperson et al, 1988; Rogers, 1997; Slovic, et al, 2004; Slovic, et al, 1981).

One of the most common themes in the literature regarding risk perception is the “availability heuristic”, with research rooted in social psychology (Fischhoff, 2006; Krueger & Funder, 2004; Tversky & Kahneman, 1974; Johnson, 1993; Slovic, et al, 1981). The “availability heuristic” suggests that people will judge the probability, or frequency, of an event happening based on how familiar it seems to them; the easier an event is to recall or image, the greater the perceived risk.. It is possible that the amount of exposure terrorism has received through the media (television, radio and the Internet), has kept it in the forefront of people’s minds (Diamond, 2001; Fear Factor, 2002; Fischer, 2005; Hall, 2003; Pi-Sunyer, 2004; Rowe, 2004; Yuan, 2005).

This is not to say that people are ruled completely by their instincts in regard to risk perception. In fact, humans have developed a decision-making processes to deal with the many complexities of daily life. These processes have evolved as people have gained more control over their environment (Slovic et al, 2004). These decision-making tools include probability theory and risk assessment based on expert opinions, integrated with their intuitive knowledge (Slovic, et al, 2004).

Many of the attributes identified with general risk perception are clearly illustrated in tourism decision-making, particularly the availability heuristic. In general, today people see the world as riskier than in the past (Floyd & Pennington-Grey, 2004; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005). Tourism often involves some degree of risk in that there are many unknowns when planning to travel. Tourism products are, by their very nature, perishable and intangible imbuing the decision to purchase with some degree of risk, at least in terms of satisfaction (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). However, the most prominent factor in the literature regarding tourist decision-making is related to affect (Sonmez & Graefe, 1988a; Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2005; Fischhoff et al, 2004). These studies indicate that personal

experience (destination and potential risks), culture and motivation are the guiding factors when making travel decisions.

The tourism industry has been identified as a prime target for terrorism. Tourism is economically important to many countries. In 2005 international tourism generated approximately \$680 billion USD (WTO, 2007). Due to the interconnectedness of industries within tourism, a downturn in one impacts others (Evans & Elphick, 2005; Tarlow, 2003). Tarlow (2005) suggests that tourism is at risk from terrorism because it “promotes international understanding, integrates economies, opens borders, promotes multicultural understanding and leads to economic development” (p. 18). An attack on tourists will lead to publicity, which is one of the dominant motivators for terrorism (Evans & Elphick, 2005; Tarlow, 2005; Tarlow, 2003).

Economically, the events industry is an important part of tourism. In 2003, it was estimated that \$141.3 billion in revenues were generated by the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and expositions) industry (Lee & Back, 2005). The events industry is comprised of many different types of events. Each event draws very different kinds of people with different reasons for attendance, with the common denominator being the crowd.

Goldblatt & Hu (2005) offer some reasons why organized events are likely targets for terrorism. These include: proximity to major transportation centres; media coverage (publicizing the event); difficulty in maintaining accurate information on attendees (security for admission); connection to other businesses (both inside tourism and outlying businesses); require quiet setting for business and are settings where business and relaxation converge; and, the constant flow of people. Others also postulate that the event industry, as part of the tourism industry, is at risk (Goldblatt & Hu, 2005; Tarlow, 2004; Tarlow, 2005) but offer no empirical data to support this assertion.

Interestingly, non-academic research is conducted each year by several of the industry publications. In 2004 a survey was conducted with 278 international planners that measured the impact of the threat warnings from the United States (Grimaldi, 2004). This survey found that 40% of corporate meetings and 44% of association meetings were affected by the threat warning. In 49% of these cases, the meeting was still held. In 2005, 296 international planners were surveyed by email. This time the survey included questions relating to terrorism. Only 23% of corporate planners and 16% of association planners said their plans were influenced by terrorism concerns (Grimaldi, 2005).

In June 2004, a conference was held in Washington, DC for international event planners – The World Quest Forum: Planning for the New Challenges of International Meetings (Nelson, 2004). The focus of this inaugural conference was to provide a forum for international planners, those already planning internationally, and those interested in planning international meetings to discuss current issues and trends. The opening discussions for the round tables asked the question, “Based on what you’ve learned today about the forecast for international meetings as well as your own observations and experiences, what are the biggest challenges facing international meeting planners in the next 5-10 years?” (Nelson, 2004). The overwhelming response was terrorism. The audience was primarily American. While none of these planners

had dealt with any threat of terrorism, all believed that this was “the” threat to the international industry.

A case study by Mitchell (2006) reveals what can happen when an organization/planner focuses on formulating a terrorism plan without the proper assessment techniques. Bloomsberg Fair has been in existence for 150 years, draws a crowd of 500,000+ visitors over an eight-day period. Bloomsberg Fair is located in Pennsylvania, close to Philadelphia, Washington DC, New York City and Pittsburgh. In 2003 the emergency plan for the fair was revised to include terrorism as a threat. Interestingly although the fairgrounds lie on a 100-year floodplain and has faced cancellation as recently as the 2004 fair due to flooding, this was not mentioned in the revised emergency plan. Further surveying asked fairgoers about “their single greatest fear” (p. 1302), with ride safety being prominent. Terrorism rated 9th out of 16 concerns with 17%.

Although some researchers have argued the event industry is an ideal target for terrorists, several industry leaders suggest that terrorism is not a direct threat (Ito, 2001; Yang, 2003). They suggest that a risk management plan is necessary, but that objectivity is required when assessing terrorism as part of this plan (Sturken, 2005, M&C, p. 64, Nov 2005). The belief in developing risk management plans, or crisis plans, is a focus of the existing literature (Boger et al, 2005; Diamond, 2001; Goldblatt & Hu, 2005; Sturken, 2005; Tarlow, 2004). However, even with all the attention and discussion regarding the potential impact of terrorism on the industry, almost half of planners voluntarily surveyed do not have any risk management plan tailored to each of their meetings (M&C, p. 26, Nov 2005). Why does this occur? That is what this research proposes to investigate.

Based on this literature review, it is expected that the host country for an event will be the primary factor in the perception of terrorism for event managers. The countries targeted in this research offer very different experiences in these areas. For instance, the United States is still reeling from the shock of the September 11th attacks, and terrorism is a frequent item in the various media sources. As this attack was the first large-scale terrorist initiative by a foreign entity on American soil, this may have made Americans more sensitive. In comparison, the United Kingdom has a history of violence and terrorism (historically associated with the IRA). This history may affect event organizers perceptions of terrorism threat. Canada was chosen due to its proximity to the United States, as well as its access to American media sources. Canadian culture is seen as being more laid back and it was not a target of the September 11th attacks, which may affect the perceptions of Canadians about the risk of terrorism (Lonely Planet, 2006). Finally, Australia is located geographically at a distance from the September 11th attacks. Again, travel and adventure risk are part of their cultural identity, which may affect the perceptions of Australians (Lonely Planet, 2006).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study will explore the general hypothesis that the perception of risk of terrorism is higher for event managers residing in the United States than in Canada, the United Kingdom, or Australia. The foundation of this hypothesis is the “availability heuristic” that suggests close exposure and familiarity to a negative event, such as a terrorist attack, will be related to media

coverage. A great deal of attention has been focused on terrorism in the US media sources, which will lead to an increase in risk perception in the US. In addition, no contradictory evidence is being offered to counter the argument that terrorism is a threat in everyday life, as well as the events industry, even though the September 11th attacks were political and economic targets. Even though terrorism has a long history in the United Kingdom, it is assumed that this history will have desensitizing effect.

Based on a review of the influences on the perceptions of risk within and outside the context of tourism, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H₁ Perceptions of the risk of a terrorist attack will be higher among US event managers than among Canadian, UK, and Australian managers.
- H₂ Managers of events that draw local visitors will perceive the risk of a terrorist attack to be lower than those that manage national or international events.
- H₃ Event managers with formal education in event management will perceive the risk of terrorist attack to be lower than those without formal even management education.
- H₄ Event managers with 5 or more years of international planning experience will perceive the risk of terrorist attack to be lower than event managers with less than 5 years of international experience.
- H₅ Event managers with 5 or more years of planning experience will perceive the risk of a terrorist attack to be lower than event managers with less than 5 years experience.
- H₆ Event managers who have made 5 or more international trips in the past 24 month period will perceive the risk of a terrorist attack as lower than event managers who have made fewer than 5 international trips in the past 24 month period.
- H₇ Event managers relying on event industry or academic literature for researching destinations and venues will perceive the risk of a terrorist attack as lower than event managers relying on newspapers or magazines.
- H₈ Event managers planning political events will perceive the risk of a terrorist attack as higher than event managers planning local non political events.
- H₉ Event managers planning local events will perceive the risk of a terrorist attack as lower than event managers planning a national event.

PROCEDURES

The population that will be used for this research will be individual event managers with current membership in Meeting Professionals International (MPI) or International Special Event Society (ISES). These associations were chosen due to their international nature and large membership base. MPI has over 20,000 members globally and ISESS has over 4,000. These associations have chapters in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. Event manager categories include corporate, association and independent planners. These categories will be utilized within the research.

The countries of residence that will be utilized in this research are the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia. These locations were chosen due to their established event industry and that their native language is English. As well each country offers a distinct history and culture, as outlined above.

A single stage sample design will be used with a stratified random sample based on the country of residence. Access to the membership lists from MPI and ISES will be requested in order to develop a sampling table. A quota sample of 100 completed surveys per country (400 in total) will be sought in order to manage the data in an effective and efficient manner.

The research instrument will be an online survey. The country of residence will be the dependent variable and will have a box choice. The manager's perceptions of the risk of terrorism with respect to the event she/he manages represents the dependent variable and will be rated on a Likert-type scale (very high; high; somewhat high, low, very low). Further questions relating to the type of planner, type of event organized, location of event, media sources, education level, years of experience, and, travel habits will be closed-ended with an "other" option (independent variables).

DATA ANALYSIS

A frequency distribution analysis will be conducted on the entire data set in order to determine the perception of terrorism for event managers generally. As well a frequency distribution analysis will be conducted to determine the perception of terrorism by country of residence. These findings will be used as a baseline on which to make comparisons with the independent variables. Cross-tabulation tables and regression analysis will be conducted to determine the effect, if any, of the independent variables. Each independent variable will be measured against the baseline findings to determine the level of influence.

CONSIDERATIONS

Permission will be required from the industry associations to use membership lists. These lists are available to all members (including the researcher), so access to the membership list does not violate rights to privacy.

Respondents may feel uncomfortable answering questions about a perception of terrorism as event industry publications are now placing substantial emphasis on developing risk management and terrorism plans (M&C, p. 26, Nov 2005). The anonymity of the survey, in addition to the fact that it is being conducted electronically may alleviate these concerns.

There is a possibility of low response rate. Current information suggests that response rates for electronic surveys are lower than for mail surveys (Solomon, 2001). As mentioned above in the Ethical Considerations, event managers may not be comfortable discussing their perceptions of terrorism risk, particularly if these are contrary to the event industry views. Further, work in the event industry requires long hours and frequent travel, this may mean that

managers do not feel that they have the time to participate in the research. These limitations will be countered by producing a survey instrument that is short in length, limited to a maximum of 15 questions, as well as outlining the importance of this research to the industry. Finally, the researcher's reputation as an event manager could be beneficial in dealing with understanding the demands of the industry and adding credibility to the research.

There is a possibility that contact will be made with non-event managers. The industry associations that will be targeted also include suppliers and vendors. The use of a qualifying question "Are you an event planner/manager?", and the categorization already in place in the associations should eliminate this limitation.

The final consideration is the high proportion of American membership in both associations. This may make it difficult to obtain similar/homogeneous characteristics across countries. However, the fact that the industry is diverse in many factors, the chosen countries also have established events industries, and the target of 100 completed surveys from each country should alleviate this limitation.

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VIDEO GAME PLAYING AS A COMPONENT OF ATTRACTION MANAGEMENT INSTRUCTION – DOES IT IMPROVES STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

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ABSTRACT

A study group of 24 students played the SIM Theme Park video game as part of their theme park and attraction management instruction in the 2006 Fall semester. These students were required to play the SIM Theme Park game for a minimum of 1 hour per week and to maintain a reflective journal of their playing activities. The journals compared their game experience with the real world. The study group's performance was compared with that of a control group of 15 students who received similar instruction. Participants in the control group were not required to play the video game or to maintain the reflective journal. Marked improvement was recorded in the weaker students of the study group though overall there appeared to be no significant variation in the average student performance. The control group performed better than the study group in all areas of assessment except in the research paper, where the gamers performed better irrespective of gender or academic level.

KEYWORDS: *Attraction; Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL); Theme Park; Video Game.*

INTRODUCTION

Theme park and attraction management is a core course in the Bachelor's Degree in Hospitality Management program of the University of Central Florida. While many students taking the degree program are familiar with the entertainment and recreational aspects of theme parks as consumers, they are not always familiar the development, commercial and operational aspects of attractions. The stated objective of the course is to:

"... provide an in-depth study of the theme park and attraction industry, focusing on resources, ride operation, merchandising, food service and architectural design" (Rosen College of Hospitality Management, University of Central Florida, 2006, p. 1)

The course therefore brings together the two worlds of the familiar theme park rides with the less familiar business and entrepreneurial operation. A creative way to engage the theme

park students by using a video game was being sought. If using the video game SIM Theme Park would improve student understanding of the business of theme park and attraction operation as reflected in the student's grades for the course, then the incorporation of the video game into the course instruction would be justified.

According to the Federation of American Scientists (2006) "[video] game players examine a skill set closely matching the thinking, planning, learning and technical skills increasingly demanded in a wide range of industries" (p.4), including theme park management. In addition the Federation of American Scientists further proposed that video games provide an excellent contextual bridge between theory, what is learned and how it is used (p 18). This would clearly benefit students in the introduction to theme park and attraction management.

This project therefore tested the following hypothesis; students who played SIM Theme Park will attain higher grades for the course.

USING VIDEO GAMES IN ATTRACTION MANAGEMENT IS DIFFERENT

Playing video games is a widespread activity among students and young people. Since its development in 1947 by Goldsmith and Mann, video games have grown in popularity to the extent that in 2005 more than 228.5 million units were sold (Entertainment Software Association, 2006, p 10). The USA is the number 1 consumer of video games. There is however a divide between games that are designed primarily for entertainment, arcade and thrills, and those that are designed for education. There are crossover areas in that educational games that entertain may tend to have greater utilization and appeal. But there is also the crossover use of entertainment-based games for instruction.

SIM Theme Park was developed by Bullfrog Productions and launched in 1999 by Entertainment Arts. Known at that time as Theme Park World, this game is part of a genre of games used to simulate reality as its focus is on management and strategy. The game features the building of four different types of parks. Success is measured by the accumulation of money and the smooth operation of the park as reflected by happy and large numbers of customers.

The current thinking appears to be that video games can represent an attractive vehicle for instruction (Federation of American Scientists, 2006; Prensky; 2001), although much of the recent research has tended to focus on the health issues and negative effects associated with video games (Nowlin, 2007). Students have different learning styles, some learn through the use of facts and data; some through theories and mathematical tools; some respond better to visual forms of information; and still others to verbal forms (Felder, 1996). The SIM Theme Park video game provides stimulation in all these areas.

Specifically related to hospitality and tourism, video games have been used along with role playing and video presentations in courses such as strategic management, and human resource management (Okumus & Wong, 2005). More specifically in the area of theme parks, Mielke, et al (1998), developed a theme park simulation model which might address management issues and operational problems.

The difference with this research project is the method used to assess the contribution of the video game playing to the education process. The underlying premise is that if the only difference in instruction is the game playing activity and the students' reflections there on, then the game playing activity and reflections are responsible for any variation in student performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) is based on reflective teaching (Stolpa-Flatt, 2005) where both the instructor and the student reflects on the activities and determine what achieves the objectives and what does not. SoTL is defined by the University of Central Florida as,

“... us[ing] discovery, reflection, and evidence-based methods to research effective teaching and student learning. These findings are peer reviewed and publicly disseminated in an ongoing cycle of systematic inquiry into classroom practices. This work benefits students and colleagues and is a source of personal renewal.”(Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning, University of Central Florida, 2007).

This project to investigate whether the incorporation of SIM Theme Park into the instruction of the course of HFT 4755: Theme Park and Attraction Management would produce higher grades was submitted and approved by the UCF Institutional Review Board.

The project, conducted in the fall of 2006 saw two sections of HFT 4755 being taught by the same professor on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Both course sections covered the same syllabus, using lectures, video presentations and workshop sessions. Students were allowed to attend either the morning or the afternoon lectures as they deemed appropriate to their individual schedules.

At the beginning of the semester students of both course sections were informed of the project and all students signed the informed consent form as required by the UCF's Institution Review Board. The project had the following differences between the study group and the control group,

- Students in the study group:
 - Were provided with a copy of the SIM Theme Park video game
 - Were required to play the game for one hour per week for weeks 5 to 13 of the course
 - Maintained a reflective journal for the period during which the game was played. Journals were submitted weekly for assessment. This insured that game playing activity was conducted and allowed for monitoring student reflection.

The journals were graded using a rubric which took into consideration the comparison/reflections on the similarities and differences between the game and the real world.

- Students in the control group:
 - Were NOT given a copy of the game, and
 - Were not required to play the game or to maintain a reflective journal.
- Overall assessment for each section of the course:
 - Used four quizzes which included a final exam.
 - Prepared and submitted a research paper where students identified an attraction or theme park concept and presented research on the development, operation or marketing of their attraction, and
 - Assessed participation and attendance.

Playing the game and the associated reflection were the only differences between the study group and the control group.

A total of 40 students were enrolled in the two course sections at the start of the Fall 2006 semester. In total there were 16 students in the control group and 24 students in the study group.

Overall there were more female students taking the course, 57.5% of the 40 students. However, the study group was evenly distributed by gender, while in the control group there were twice as many female students as male.

Table 1. Study and Control Groups by Gender

VARIABLE	<i>Control Group</i>		<i>Study Group</i>		<i>TOTAL</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	5	31.3	12	50.0	17	42.5
Female	11	68.7	12	50.0	23	57.5
TOTAL	16	100.0	24	100.0	40	100.0

Juniors made up 40% of the students taking the course, however seniors and juniors each represented 41.7% of the study group while sophomores and juniors were the largest percentage of students in the control group. Only one freshman took the course. This was only to be expected since the freshman year is usually devoted to general education courses and taking the prerequisite for the theme park and attraction management course. By their sophomore year students generally have decided on their major and start to compete the core courses in the program.

Table 2. Study and Control Groups by Academic Level

VARIABLE	<i>Control Group</i>		<i>Study Group</i>		<i>TOTAL</i>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Freshman	-	-	1	4.1	1	2.5
Sophomore	6	37.5	3	12.5	9	22.5
Junior	6	37.5	10	41.7	16	40.0
Senior	4	25.0	10	41.7	14	35.0
TOTAL	16	100.0	24	100.0	40	100.0

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

One student dropped the course at the commencement of lectures and two other students did not submit all the components for assessment. In total the findings are reported for 37 students who successfully completed the course, 15 students in the control group and 22 students in the study group.

Table 3 indicates the performance of both the study and the control groups on each of the comparable assessment tools. These include the average percentage grade for each of the four quizzes; the percentage grade for the research paper; attendance and participation; and overall grade for the course. Tables 3, 4 and 5 also report the final course percentage with AND without the inclusion of the reflective journal.

The average performance of the study and control groups was within 5 percentage points of each other as reflected in table 3. However this variance appeared to be reduced as the semester progressed. With regard to the lower limit of the range of performance, as reflective of the weaker students, the variation between the two groups appeared to be further reduced after the first quiz. It was after Quiz 1 that the video game activity and the associated maintenance of the reflective journal were started.

What is suggested by the data is that video game playing and the associated maintaining of the reflective journal help the weaker students to improve their performance on the course that is, the students who were at the lower end of the range of performance.

In all four quizzes the control group performed better than the study group. However, the study group performed better than the control group in the research paper. If it is assumed that students in both the control and study groups had the same disposition towards taking multiple choice/true false quizzes, and to conducting and presenting research, then the only difference would be the game playing and reflective activity. This more thorough understanding of the attraction operations brought about by the game playing and reflection might have resulted in the better performance by the study group in the research papers.

Table 3. A comparison of the grades of the Study and Control

VARIABLE	Study Group(N=22)	Control Group (N=15)	Variance
QUIZ #1 (%)			
Mean	80.0	84.3	4.3
Lowest	54.0	70.0	16.0
Highest	92.0	94.0	2.0
Quiz #2 (%)			
Mean	85.0	87.2	2.2
Lowest	70.0	76.0	6.0
Highest	96.0	98.0	2.0
Quiz #3 (%)			
Mean	91.3	93.5	2.2
Lowest	78.0	84.0	6.0
Highest	98.0	102.0	4.0
Quiz #4 (%)			
Mean	87.1	90.3	3.2
Lowest	66.0	66.0	0.0
Highest	104.0	100.0	4.0
Research Paper (%)			
Mean	85.3	85.5	0.2
Lowest	66.7	60.0	6.7
Highest	94.7	96.0	1.3
Attendance (%)			
Mean	97.6	96.0	1.6
Lowest	68.0	72.0	4.0
Highest	100.0	100.0	0.0
TOTAL WITH JOURNAL (%)			
Mean	86.9	88.6	1.7
Lowest	77.4	80.7	3.3
Highest	94.6	95.7	1.1
TOTAL WITHOUT JOURNAL (%)			
Mean	87.0	88.6	1.6
Lowest	75.0	80.7	5.7
Highest	95.0	95.7	0.7

Irrespective of gender (see Table 4) the control group performed better than the study group in the four quizzes. However both genders of the study group performed better in the research paper than their control group counterparts. The weaker female students of the study group recorded marked improvement in performance on the research paper.

Table 4. A comparison of the grades of the Study and Control Groups by Gender

<i>VARIABLE</i>	<i>Study Group (N=22)</i>	<i>Control Group (N=15)</i>
QUIZ #1 (%)		
Male	80.4	81.2
Range Low to High	54 to 90	74 to 90
Female	81.3	85.8
Range Low to High	72 to 92	70 to 94
Quiz #2 (%)		
Male	85.6	87.2
Range Low to High	70 to 96	82 to 94
Female	84.4	87.2
Range Low to High	74 to 96	80 to 98
Quiz #3 (%)		
Male	91.6	95.2
Range Low to High	84 to 98	94 to 100
Female	90.9	90.0
Range Low to High	78 to 98	88 to 102
Quiz #4 (%)		
Male	85.5	90.8
Range Low to High	66 to 102	84 to 98
Female	88.7	90.0
Range Low to High	76 to 104	66 to 100
Research Paper (%)		
Male	82.4	80.3
Range Low to High	63 to 97	60 to 89
Female	88.4	88.0
Range Low to High	81 to 95	75 to 96
Attendance (%)		
Male	96.4	94.4
Range Low to High	68 to 100	72 to 100
Female	96.0	96.8
Range Low to High	72 to 100	84 to 100

**Table 4. A comparison of the grades of the Study and Control Groups by Gender
(Continued)**

<i>VARIABLE</i>	<i>Study Group (N=22)</i>	<i>Control Group (N=15)</i>
TOTAL WITH JOURNAL (%)		
Male	86.6	89.0
Range Low to High	81 to 95	84 to 95
Female	90.1	91.3
Range Low to High	85 to 97	83 to 98
TOTAL WITHOUT JOURNAL (%)		
Male	83.3	89.0
Range Low to High	77 to 95	84 to 95
Female	89.1	91.3
Range Low to High	79 to 94	83 to 98

With regard to the quizzes there appeared to be no clear pattern to performance based on academic level. Seniors in the control group (non-gamers) generally performed better than the seniors in the study group (the gamers). Juniors in the control group performed better in quizzes 2 and 4 than their counterparts in the study group. While sophomores in the study group performed better than those in the control group in quizzes 1, 2 and 4. Performance appears to have transcended academic level with regard to the student grade on the research paper as sophomores, juniors and seniors in the study group all performed about two percentage points better than their control group counterparts on the research paper (see Table 5).

Table 5. A comparison of the grades of the Study and Control Groups by Academic level

<i>VARIABLE</i>	<i>Study Group (N=22)</i>	<i>Control Group (N=15)</i>
QUIZ #1 (%)		
Freshman	86.0	-
Sophomore	88.7	84.3
Junior	80.6	83.2
Senior	77.5	85.5
Quiz #2 (%)		
Freshman	82.0	-
Sophomore	92.0	85.3
Junior	86.6	86.0
Senior	80.8	91.5
Quiz #3 (%)		
Freshman	90.0	-
Sophomore	90.7	92.3
Junior	90.6	94.4
Senior	92.5	94.0
Quiz #4 (%)		
Freshman	80.0	-
Sophomore	100.0	90.3
Junior	86.8	85.6
Senior	83.5	96.0
Research Paper (%)		
Freshman	62.7	-
Sophomore	88.9	86.7
Junior	88.1	86.9
Senior	83.5	81.7
Attendance (%)		
Freshman	100.0	-
Sophomore	100.0	93.2
Junior	93.6	96.8
Senior	97.6	99.2
TOTAL WITH JOURNAL (%)		
Freshman	81.4	-
Sophomore	93.1	88.2
Junior	87.8	88.0
Senior	84.2	89.8
TOTAL WITHOUT JOURNAL (%)		
Freshman	80.0	-
Sophomore	92.4	88.2
Junior	87.3	88.0
Senior	84.7	89.8

CONCLUSION

Overall variation in performance on the course as reflected in the final percentage grade between the two groups does not appear to have been significant. Students using SIM Theme Park and conducting the reflection did NOT attain a higher overall average grade than students not using the game. Playing SIM Theme Park appeared to help WEAKER students and to enhance the study group's percentage grade performance on the research paper. The better research paper performance by the study group was not related to gender or academic level, though weaker female students appear to have recorded greater improvement in performance than the weaker male counterparts. Playing the game and reflecting on the activity appeared to help in the conceptualization and articulation of the research paper.

In both the end of semester course assessment and in the reflective journals, students in the study group reported that they found the use of the SIM Theme Park video game to be very helpful. They stated that it allowed them to visualize the operation of the attraction and the inter-relationship between the development, operation and customer satisfaction elements of attractions.

A number of areas of refinement of the study are suggested. These include; a continuation of the project with an increase in the number of students in both the study and control groups; the incorporation of a reflective journal by the control group in addition to the study group, this might allow for a qualitative assessment of the reflective activity; and the recording of the amount of time spent in reflection on game playing and other course related activities.

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AN EXPLORATION OF DETERMINANTS OF INTENTION TO ADOPT MOBILE DEVICES FOR TRAVEL: A MULTI-NATIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Due to uniqueness of mobile technology and its current impact and diffusion on various industries, practitioners in travel industry should pay attention to how travelers adopt the mobile technology. Although China has been advanced an important market with the incredible amount of expected demand for the mobile technologies, researches on mobile technology adoption of Chinese consumers remain at an exploratory stage. Based on abundant studies about consumers' technology adoption process in western nations, Chinese' mobile technology adoption is investigated and compared to the corresponding results of USA consumers', which can be regarded as a representative of western nations. With examining a modified TAM for two different nation samples with using SEM, the results suggested that the hypothesized factors namely ease of use, usefulness, and subjective norm tend to have different influences on intention to use mobile technology in traveling situation according to the nationality.

KEYWORDS: *Chinese Traveler; Mobile Technology; Multi-National Study; Technology Acceptance Model (TAM).*

INTRODUCTION

Given the dramatic development of mobile technologies, it is natural that businesses in the travel industry expect to benefit from every opportunity to use it. Traveling and mobile technology share the inherent quality of mobility. Particular mobile technologies related to traveling have been introduced, such as the Lancaster GUIDE system (Cheverst et al., 2000), and other PDA based systems such as GPS. Beside technological issues, mobile data services like the Internet travel portals have been one of the most commonly utilized portal services by combining different kinds of traveling related services.

With over 282 million cell phone subscriptions in 2004 (CellularOnline, 2004) in China, the Chinese mobile market has advanced to the biggest market all over the world. More surprisingly, while the Internet is more dominant wireless technology in the rest of the world, the adoption mobile technology in China has surpassed the one of the Internet wired technology, with only 49.7 million subscribers in 2002 (Yan, 2003). The dominant market size as well as the possibility of development beyond the Internet may make China's mobile market an extremely competitive in global market. Since now, the very charming market to compete to win market shares for international companies in the mobile technology industry has been occupied by several domestic firms. While the grand and global opening of this Chinese market is anticipated in these days, the potential competitors may need information about Chinese consumers especially in terms of their mobile technology adoption stage or the unique characteristics related to adoption process. Nonetheless, in reality, most technology adoption literature has been done in Western culture contexts. Unfortunately, the results focused on these developed countries cannot be easily generalized into other eastern cultures (Zhang & Prybutok, 2005). Anticipating extreme competition between global companies in China, it is still crucial for foreign managers to gather information in advance about new consumers they will confront when entering a new foreign market (Straub, 1994). In this sense, China has to be investigated in highlighting technology adoption from consumers' perspectives by comparing the traditional results from the western cultures. Besides the obvious cultural differences (Straub & Brenner, 1997), general technology infrastructure can affect how consumers perceive mobile technology through the adoption process. The current article selected the USA as the representative western country in order to compare to China because the USA has the fastest diffusion rate across the world.

As a fundamental theoretical background, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) has been applied for approaching Chinese consumers' mobile technology adoption processes. Plus, the results of China were compared to the corresponding results of USA. The TAM has been researched empirically and utilized theoretically by a lot of researchers. Throughout the process of verification of research, it has been deemed as the most representative model to account for consumers' technology adoption (Venkatesh, 2000). Thus, the current research attempted to explore differences of mobile technology adoption processes in traveling situation between two nations such as USA and China based on the TAM in order to provide meaningful hints to international companies which expect to extend the market to the newly emerging market.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Originally, the TAM developed by Davis (1989) based on theory of reasoned action (TRA) (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). After emergence of e-commerce, the TAM has been thought of as one of the most powerful theoretical model to explain consumer's new technology adoption process. In the earlier version of the TAM, the effects of main predictors on behavior intention to adopt the new technology were considered to be mediated by attitude toward the technology. However, empirical studies using the TAM have eliminated the mediating element of the attitude in order to reduce redundant and rather big effect of attitude toward behavior intention and finally provide more enhanced understanding about the interesting influences of main predictors like perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Venkatesh, 2000). Referring to the TAM, intention to use the information technology (IT) can be determined by three antecedents such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy and social influence and, as a consequence, intention to use is to influence on actual behavior toward the IT with facilitating condition (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis & Davis, 2003).

When summarizing the general results of many empirical studies which was investigated in western cultures, the perceived usefulness has been considered as the most powerful determinant in explaining the intention to use the system, regardless of types of settings, such as mandatory or voluntarily. This study operationalized the usefulness as how much people perceive the mobile technology is useful in their travel experience across all purposes including business, leisure, and daily commuting travel. Ease of use can be measured by how comfortable people feel in utilizing new technology. Ease of use finally gets to determine how consumers perceived the technology as a useful process since they can not think of the technology as being efficient one without feeling comfortable when manipulating the technology. Many subsequent literatures attempted to expand the basic TAM with adding other meaningful predictors which potentially explain adoption intention toward the new technology. Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1992) defined the perceived enjoyment as the extent to which experiences using the new technology is perceived to be enjoyable regardless of the level of its actual performance. With conceptualizing the perceived enjoyment as a technology-specific intrinsic motivation, Venkatesh (2000) found out that the extent to which people perceive the information system as enjoyable affects the level of perceived ease of use. Furthermore, Yi and Hwang (2003) demonstrated that perceived enjoyment influenced not only ease of use perceptions, but also perceived usefulness.

The roles of these main explanatory factors are expected to be led to be different across the two nations according to the level of experience related to the mobile technology. Overall, while USA is a sort of a frontier in adopting this new mobile technology and has reached the mature adoption stage, the Chinese mobile market is currently at a relatively pre-development stage. One thing that can discriminate two nations is how much time has passed since the mobile technology diffused. As discussed earlier, despite an incredibly fast diffusion rate in China, its actual period adopting the mobile technology is relatively shorter than the USA. Several studies' results (Bruner & kumar, 2005; Chan and Lu, 2004; Pavlou, 2003;) explained the dominant role of the perceived usefulness in the technology adoption process with insisting it seems to happen as experiences of consumers with the technology are accumulated. Klopping and Mckinney's study (2004) suggested that while the perceived usefulness is the main element to explain the

adoption, the perceived ease of use tend to show only a minor or indirect effect as a predictor of the perceived usefulness. Yan (2003) showed that Chinese consumers tend to rely on the perceived ease of use when deciding on acceptance of the mobile technology. Pertaining to the effect of the perceived enjoyment, since the enjoyment was conceptualized as the technology system specific intrinsic motivation, perceived ease of use may be turned out to be the unique aspects explaining the perceived enjoyment with increasing experience (Vankatesh, 2000).

- H1: The positive influence of the perceived enjoyment on perceived ease of use seems to be strengthened in USA comparing to the case in China.*
- H2: The positive influence of the perceived enjoyment on perceived usefulness seems to be strong in China comparing to the case in USA.*
- H3: The positive influence of the perceived ease of use on perceived usefulness seems to be strong in USA comparing to the case in China.*
- H4: The positive influence of the perceived ease of use on the intention to use mobile technology when traveling seems to be strong in China comparing to the case in USA.*
- H5: The positive influence of the perceived usefulness on the intention to use mobile technology when traveling seems to be strong in USA comparing to the case in China.*
- H6: The positive influence of the subjective norm on the intention to use mobile technology when traveling seems to be strong in China comparing to the case in USA.*

As another important predictors to determine behavior intention on new technology, Venkatesh and Davis (2000) suggested the effect of social influence in that important others' opinion about the system adoption can affect consumers' acceptance evaluation. Mao and Palvia (2006) confirmed the significant effect of social influence on technology adoption in Chinese cultural contexts, since inexperienced people are likely to comply with significant others' opinions. Conversely, the effect of social influence in the USA can still significantly exist because the effect of self identity as the other comprising concept of social influence may dominate technology acceptance. Especially pertaining to Chinese economic development stages, geographical and economic disparity in terms of mobile technology acceptance may be led by the relatively higher cost of cell phone calls as well as unbalanced developed infrastructures for using the wireless Internet like a satellite (Zhang & Prybutok, 2005). This disparity will form general perceptions toward mobile technology as a status symbol, which may let the effect of social influence on intention to adopt mobile technology increase with regard to Chinese consumers. The proposed conceptual model has been illustrated in Figure 1.

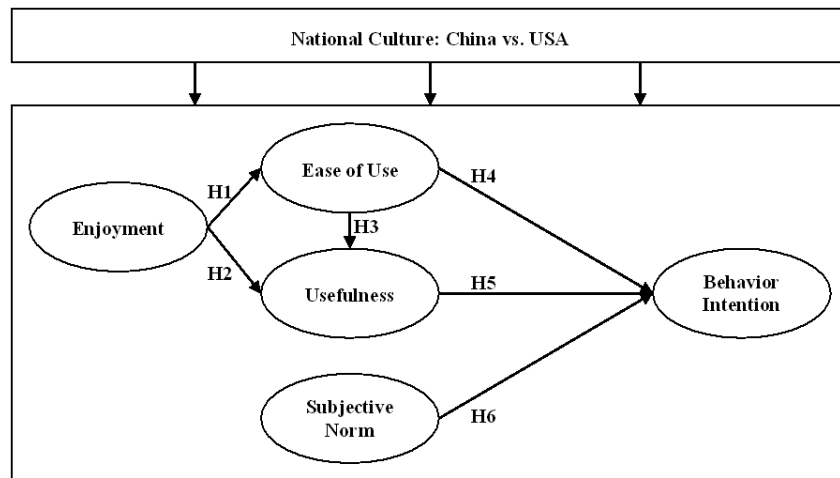


Figure 1. Proposed Model.

MEASUREMENT & DATA COLLECTION

The formulated hypotheses were tested on two samples of consumers, located in China and USA, respectively. Through distributing invitation e-mails with a link to a survey in USA and in China to potential subjects, who is the mobile technology users, 283 Americans and 217 Chinese participated in this survey. The population for this study comprises mobile technology users who are resident in USA or China. Questionnaires, which were developed with following the back-translation process (Brislin, 1970), were administered to the participants in their native language on the web. Measures for most of the factors in the proposed model namely perceived enjoyment, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness and the subjective norm have been adapted from the previous TAM literatures (e.g., Venkatesh, 2000). Those instruments were measured by seven-point scales (1: agree – 7: disagree). The means, standard deviation and the result of correlation analysis are presented in Table 1 for both USA and China samples. As the Cronbach's alpha for all the measurements as reliability of measures appears above or slightly less than a satisfactory level of reliability which is .70 (Nunnally, 1978), the scales can be considered as being acceptable for the further analysis in the both nation cases.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

As shown Table 2, mobile technology users from two nations may show quite different technology usage patterns. Particularly, in traveling situation, while the USA consumers may rely on the cell phone as a main wireless internet access device, Chinese consumers are likely to be able to access the wireless internet only through the more high technology utilizing devices like PDA or laptop computers. This result may not indicate that Chinese consumers do not use cell phone but show that the technology relating to the cell phone has not been developed enough to use the wireless Internet. Especially in traveling situation, Chinese consumers showed lower

frequency of usage of the mobile technology than Americans did. The other specific descriptive analysis results across the two nations are available in Table 2.

Table 1. Means, Standard deviation, Construct inter-correlation, and Cronbach's Alpha

<i>CHINA</i>								
Variable Name / No. items	Mean	Standard Deviation	ENJ	EU	USE	SN	I	Cronbach' α
Enjoyment (ENJ)/4	5.01	1.367	1					.673
Ease of Use (EU)/4	5.06	1.252	.321**	1				.805
Usefulness (USE)/4	5.56	1.120	.442**	.445**	1			.781
Subjective Norm (SN)/4	5.51	1.177	.304**	.343**	.340**	1		.796
Intention (I)/2	5.71	1.319	.235**	.320**	.238**	.523**	1	.683
<i>USA</i>								
Variable Name / No. items	Mean	Standard Deviation	ENJ	EU	USE	SN	I	Cronbach' α
Enjoyment (ENJ)/4	5.38	1.248	1					.837
Ease of Use (EU)/4	4.89	1.187	.518**	1				.799
Usefulness (USE)/4	5.68	1.043	.580**	.664**	1			.836
Subjective Norm (SN)/4	5.13	1.230	.695**	.628**	.619**	1		.739
Intention (I)/2	5.07	1.160	.552**	.536**	.574**	.656**	1	.748

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

RESULTS

The hypothesized relationships are examined with using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with big enough sample size to apply to. As shown in Table 3, this research looked at multiple fitness indexes simultaneously following researchers' recommendations. The χ^2/df value indicates 1.861 for China sample and 3.450 for USA sample which satisfy the suggested level which is below and around 3.0 (Bollen & Long, 1993). GFI and CFI appeared above the desired level like 0.9 as generally accepted (Hayduk, 1987). The last index that this research looked up like RMSEA is 0.063 for China sample and 0.078 for USA sample that is below the recommended cut-off level of 0.08 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). With these accepted multiple fit indices, the results of the structural model analysis can be considered as presenting a reasonable fit of the proposed model to the collected data.

When it comes to the proposed relationships, all the anticipated differences between those two nations turn out to exist. Specifically, the positive effect of the perceived enjoyment on the perceived ease of use appears stronger in USA having more experienced consumers with the mobile technology ($\beta_{USA} = .643$ ($p < .01$) $>$ $\beta_{CHINA} = .416$ ($p < .01$)) while its influence on the perceived usefulness turns out to be stronger in China than USA ($\beta_{USA} = .142$ ($p < .05$) $<$ $\beta_{CHINA} = .512$ ($p < .01$)). As expected in the conceptual model, the experienced USA consumers no longer rely on the perceived ease of use ($\beta_{USA} = .141$ ($p > .1$)) and almost depend on the perceived usefulness ($\beta_{USA} = .741$ ($p < .01$)) when forming their intention to use the mobile technology when traveling. Whereas, China consumers show totally a converse tendency where they are likely to put more importance on the perceived ease of use ($\beta_{CHINA} = .191$ ($p < .05$)) than the perceived usefulness ($\beta_{CHINA} = .050$ ($p > .1$)) when determining their intention to use the

mobile technology in traveling situations. While showing the positive influence of the subjective norm on the intention to use the mobile technology when traveling in both two nations, the effect in China where people tend to consider the mobile technology devices as a sort of status symbol turns to be stronger than in USA as expected ($\beta_{USA} = .569$ ($p < .01$) $< \beta_{CHINA} = .639$ ($p < .01$)).

Table 2. Comparison Statistics in Mobile Technology Usage Patterns.

		<i>USA</i>		<i>China</i>	
		n	%	n	%
Type of wireless devices	PDA	76	15.9	210	20.3
	Wireless notebook	81	16.9	191	18.5
	Potable GPS	26	5.4	203	19.7
	Auto navigator	17	3.6	212	20.5
	Cell phone	269	56.3	37	3.6
	Others	9	1.9	179	17.3
Purposes of wireless devices	Gaming	42	5.3	59	7.6
	Communication (Voice & Instant Messaging)	257	31.8	18	2.3
	Checking e-mail	117	14.9	117	15.0
	Web surfing	89	11.3	132	16.9
	Directions/Maps	91	11.6	205	26.3
	Word Processing	57	7.2	110	14.1
	Calendar/Organizer	121	15.4	89	11.4
	other	20	2.5	49	6.3
Places to use wireless devices	At home	232	23.8	125	17.0
	At work	202	20.7	116	15.8
	During travel	245	25.1	43	5.9
	During daily commutes	168	17.2	188	25.6
	Meetings away from the office	104	10.7	191	26.0
	Only when away from hard wired-devices (i.e., desktop computer)	25	2.6	72	9.8
Travel situations to prefer to use wireless devices	Hotels	145	13.8	108	10.3
	Restaurants	69	6.6	65	6.2
	Resorts	83	7.9	139	13.2
	Airports	150	14.3	166	15.8
	Airplanes	139	13.2	122	11.6
	Automobiles	110	10.5	106	10.1
	Recreation Facilities	82	7.8	79	7.5
	Outdoor Leisure Areas	95	9.0	127	12.1
	Business Areas	92	8.8	107	10.2
	Commuter train and subway	85	8.1	31	3.0

Table 3. SEM Analysis Results.

			CHINA		USA	
			Estimate	C.R.	Estimate	C.R.
H1	Enjoyment → Ease of Use		.416***	3.449	.643***	4.434
H2	Enjoyment → Usefulness		.512***	3.622	.142**	1.943
H3	Ease of Use →Usefulness		.250***	2.783	.741***	7.475
H4	Ease of Use →Intention		.191**	1.950	.141	.955
H5	Usefulness → Intention		.050	0.519	.337**	2.266
H6	Subjective Norm →Intention		.639***	6.918	.569***	6.571
			$\chi^2=156.312(.00)$		$\chi^2=162.168(.00)$	
			X2/df=1.861		X2/df=3.450	
			GFI=.916 AGFI=.880		GFI=.910 AGFI=.851	
			CFI=.930 RMSEA=.063		CFI=.935 RMSEA=.078	
Note: *** p < .01 ** p < .05 * p < .1						

DISCUSSIONS

As possible application of the mobile technology has been widen and more feasible for consumers to adopt with reasonable costs, the mobile technology has been counted one of the opportunities of travel industry to enhance customer satisfaction and experiences. Considering the overwhelming size of demands for the mobile technology in China as well as the potential as an undeveloped market which anticipates coming competitive international companies, there is huge need to investigate the China as a new market for mobile technology. Given scarcity of researches related to technology adoption models about eastern nations including China, this research attempted to reinvestigate the exhaustively tested TAM with comparing to the corresponding results of USA, which is a representative sample of western nations.

While the hypotheses about the expected differences across the two nations are accepted significantly, the results can be interpreted from two kinds of viewpoints such as the level of experiences with the mobile technology and the fundamental cultural differences. First of all, the influences of the perceived enjoyment on the two main antecedents like the perceived ease of use and the perceived usefulness were noticeably discriminated in USA with showing absolutely higher effects on the perceived ease of use. In terms of China, the effects of the perceived enjoyment on those two elements appear almost similar and show weaker influences on the perceived ease of use than in USA. The reason being is understood from looking at the different maturing stages of the mobile technology adoption. Since China stay at the premature stage to adopt the mobile technology, applicable user interfaces of their mobile devices may be crude and not user-friendly. Conversely, more user-friendly and even fun and cute user interfaces seem to be available in mobile devices which USA consumers utilize. Such interface features can create enjoyment with enhancing the perceived ease of use of the specific mobile devices. Simultaneously, because China consumers with much less experience are likely to be sort of beginners feeling more challenging and more effortful, the perceived enjoyment can enhance the perceived usefulness.

Pertaining to the effects of two main predictors of usage intention, the effect of the perceived ease of use was totally mediated by the perceived usefulness with losing the direct

effect on the intention to use mobile technology when traveling in the case of USA. This has been empirically validated by several researchers who tried to the effect of experience as mentioned earlier. As such, in the case of China, the effect of perceived ease of use appears still dominant when determining the intention. When getting into this new Chinese market, practitioners may take the importance of perceived ease of use into account when not only developing mobile devices and building communication strategies. For example, when promoting an advertisement, it has to be focused to user-friendly interface rather than emphasizing complicated performances.

The difference across the two nations of the significant influence of subjective norm on the intention to adopt mobile technology when traveling can be interpreted with considering a viewpoint of cultural effect as well as economic development stage. As referring to Hofstede's research (2001) dealing with cultural dimensions discriminating national cultures, China is located far away from USA especially in terms of Collectivism vs. Individualism. According to his research, collectivists like Chinese consumers are more likely to care about other's opinion especially the others are included in their own group or reference group. Additionally, given the diverse economic development in China where mobile phones are regarded as expensive, mobile technology use is perceived as kind of conspicuous consumption. For Chinese consumers, social influence could be a significant facilitating factor forming the intention to utilize mobile technology when they travel. When applying this to real example, marketers in the international mobile companies who intend to extend their market may have to pay incredible intention to let Chinese consumers perceive their mobile device as a status symbolizing and luxurious accessories to show off to other people by positioning their brand at a high reputation and price level.

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SECTION III
WORKING PAPERS
(STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)

BUILDING COMPETITIVE WINE TOURISM ROUTES: THE CASE OF NORTH CAROLINA WINERIES

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ABSTRACT

Today wine tourism is emerging as an important component of rural diversification in North Carolina. Using Stebbins (1992) model of serious leisure as a guideline, the purpose of this study is to explore wine tourism as a type of serious leisure and to examine the demographic and psychographic characteristics of wine consumers in order to develop effective wine marketing strategies for local wineries in North Carolina. In addition, this study seeks to determine how small North Carolina wineries can diversify and position their products and services to effectively meet the needs of wine consumers and what competitive marketing tools these wineries can develop without the outlay of large capital investments in promoting wine tourism. This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods of research in an effort to increase the validity and reliability of the results of the study (Jick, 1979). First, in-depth interviews will be conducted with a range of people who are known to be different from one another in terms of length and type of involvement with wine. Next, based on the results of the interviews and previous wine-related research, a questionnaire will be constructed and placed in retail wine stores and wineries in North Carolina.

KEYWORDS: *Serious Leisure; Wine Consumers; Wine Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

Recent trends in tourism indicate a growing demand for forms of special interest tourism such as nature-based tourism, festival and special event tourism, sport tourism, adventure tourism, and cultural tourism (Hall & Weiler, 1992; Novelli, 2005; Stebbins, 1992; Trauer,

2006). Cultural tourism is referred to by Douglas, Douglas and Derrett (2001) as a type of cultural immersion that emphasizes “the cultural, heritage or artistic aspects of a destination or experiences and activities for the tourist” (p. 114). A broader definition is offered by Reisinger (1994) who describes cultural tourism as a type of “experiential tourism based on searching for and participating in new and deep cultural experiences ... such as aesthetic, intellectual, emotional, or psychological” (p. 24). In other words, as MacCannell (1976) notes, in contrast to mass tourism, cultural tourists are searching for “authenticity” in their tourism experiences.

Stebbins (2007) argues that cultural tourism can be conceived of as a form of serious leisure and, when pursued as such, cultural tourism results in a special identity which is not found in casual leisure and mass tourism (p. 79). While mass tourism, such as camper tourism or guided tourism, is accessible both socially and financially to a large number of people, objects that attract the cultural tourist are much less accessible, both psychologically and socially (Stebbins, 2007). Cultural tourist attractions require, for example, the development of certain tastes (e.g. in art, music, food, or wine), the acquisition of specialized knowledge (e.g., the history of a region, a foreign language, or wine terminology), or the development of certain social skills (e.g., how to taste wine, how to talk to the locals, how to behave according to their norms) (Stebbins, 2007, p. 80).

Several researchers (Hall et al., 2000; Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987; Stebbins, 1996, 2002, 2007) have recognized the inter-relatedness of tourism, recreation, and leisure. However, as Stebbins (2007) notes, few researchers (Wearing, 2001; Wearing, 2004; Wearing & Neil, 2001) have attempted to link the concepts of cultural tourism and serious leisure. In Europe and the United States visiting wineries and exploring wine routes has become an important form of cultural tourism (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Wargenau & Che, 2006). These wineries have the potential to make significant contributions to the local economy. For example, since 2002 the number of wineries in North Carolina has doubled and it is estimated that each year over a million people visit vineyards and wineries in North Carolina. With wine representing a \$46 million industry, the economic impact of wineries and vineyards in North Carolina is \$800 million (North Carolina Wine and Grape Council, 2007).

Recently, a number of researchers have contended that wine tourism can be a competitive marketing tool which small wineries could develop to compete with large brand wine companies and imported wines (Beverland, 2000; Dodd, 1995; Elgin, 2000; Getz & Brown, 2004; Getz, Dowling, Carlsen & Anderson, 1999; Hanagriff, Beverly & Robinson, 2005; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003; O'Neill & Palmer, 2004; Sparks, 2007; Wargenau & Che, 2006)). In addition, several researchers (Dodd, 1995; Getz et al., 1999; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003; Hanagriff et al., 2005; Wargenau & Che, 2006) have attempted to investigate how small local wineries could develop competitive wine tourism marketing and local winery tourism routes in conjunction with local tourism attractions. In Europe, for example, visiting small local wineries has become an important component of popular tourism destinations (Hall, Sharples, Cambourne & Macionis, 2000; Wargenau & Che, 2006). Wine routes have the potential to play a major role in wine tourism development in North Carolina. By developing wine tourism trails, small wineries have the ability to significantly increase on-premise wine sales, consumer brand awareness, and loyalty without heavy capital expenses (Dodd, 1995).

While it is acknowledged that the region plays an important part in wine marketing, in order to develop effective wine tourism strategies, it is also necessary to understand the demographics and purchasing behavior of the target market. In the formation of market segments, the role of demographic variables is well documented (Barber, Almanza & Donovan, 2006; Jaffe & Pasternak, 2004). Although recent research has begun to focus on the behavior and characteristics of winery visitors and wine tourists (Alant & Bruwer, 2004; Charters & Ali-Knight, 2002; Dodd and Bigotte, 1997; Dowling, 2001; Yuan, Cai, Morrison & Linton, 2005), it has been noted that in-depth research is needed to examine the nature of the wine consumers in general (Carlsen, 2004).

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of wine tourism and the demographic and psychographic characteristics of wine consumers in North Carolina in order to determine potentially effective wine marketing strategies for small wineries in the state. To lay a theoretical foundation for the present study, the first section explores the concept of serious leisure which is used as a framework to guide the study and reviews the research on serious leisure and wine tourism. The second section briefly examines the events that have led to the development of wine tourism in North Carolina. The final section discusses the methodology and significance of the study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Serious Leisure

A theoretical framework for the study of leisure is proposed by Stebbins (1982) that places serious leisure in contrast to casual or unserious leisure. Stebbins (2007) defines serious leisure as the “systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer core activity sufficiently substantial, interesting, and fulfilling in nature for the participant to find a career there acquiring and expressing a combination of its special skills, knowledge, and experience” (p. xii). Over time, careers of involvement in certain activities develop and typically lead through successive stages of beginning, development, establishment, maintenance, and decline of special skills and knowledge. Serious leisure can lead to self-creation and self-actualization. With changing patterns and perspectives on work, the potential of serious leisure participation takes on greater significance. Its counterpart, casual leisure, is a considerably less substantial form that offers no career (Stebbins, 1992, 2002, 2007).

Stebbins (1992) identifies six qualities associated with serious leisure that distinguish it from casual leisure. First is the occasional need to persevere to overcome difficulties. A second quality of serious leisure is the provision of a career involving stages of achievement and involvement. Third, is the requirement of significant personal effort based on specially acquired knowledge, training, or skills. Fourth, eight durable benefits or rewards of serious leisure include self-actualization, self-expression, self-enrichment, renewal of self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction, and lasting physical products. Another quality of serious leisure is the participants’ strong identification with their chosen pursuit. Finally, a unique ethos develops in connection with the activity.

Stebbins (2001) denotes three types of serious leisure participants: amateurs, serious volunteers, and hobbyists. Stebbins (1992) describes a hobby as “a specialized pursuit beyond one’s occupation, a pursuit that one finds particularly interesting and enjoyable because of its durable benefits” (p. 10). Although hobbyists do not have a professional counterpart, they may have a commercial equivalent. Five categories of hobbyists are identified: collectors, makers and tinkerers, activity participants, players of competitive pursuits, and liberal arts hobbyists (Stebbins, 2007).

Collectors gradually acquire the technical knowledge of the social, commercial, and physical conditions that surround their object of interest. In addition, they gain an understanding and appreciation of that object such as old car collectors (Dannefer, 1980), gun collectors (Olmsted, 1988), stamp collectors (Gelber, 1992) and wine collectors. Makers and tinkers compose the next hobbyist category which includes handicrafters, inventors, furniture and toymakers, and gardeners. The third type of hobbyists consists of activity participants who engage in non-competitive rule-based activities which have no professional counterparts. Activity participants consistently pursue a leisure activity for personal enrichment, knowledge, skill development and expression. Activities in this category include fishing (Bryan, 1979), kayakers (Bartram, 2001; Kane & Zink, 2004), and snowboarding and mountain and ice climbing (Stebbins, 2005). The fourth category of hobbyists consists of the players of sports and games who compete in mostly non-professional sports. The players are related to one another by a set of rules which governs their actions during the game (Stebbins, 1982). Activities in this category include competitive running (Major, 2001), swimming (Hastings & Cable, 2005) and bird-watching (Lee & Scott, 2006). The final category is the liberal arts hobbyists who acquire knowledge for its own sake (Stebbins, 2001). Stebbins notes that because they generally practice their hobby alone, this social world is less evolved than some other hobbyist social worlds. Activities such as language learners (Kennett, 2002), football fans (Jones, 2000; Gibson, Willming & Holdnak, 2002), and cultural tourism (Stebbins, 1996) are found in this category.

The present study will explore wine tourism as a subtype of cultural tourism. Getz, Dowling, Carlsen and Anderson (1999) describe wine tourism as “a form of consumer behaviour based on the appeal of the wine and wine regions, and a development and marketing strategy for the wine industry and destinations in which wineries and wine related experiences are the dominant attractions” (p. 21). Although few researchers (Brown & Getz, 2005; Ravenscroft & van Westering, 2001) have examined the link between serious leisure and wine tourism, Hall and Weiler (1992) formed a close link when they presented a conceptual scheme relating special interest tourism to the six qualities of serious leisure. Ravenscroft and van Westering (2001) investigated serious leisure within the context of the social world of wine amateurs and suggested that “for serious leisure participants, at least, the quest for distinctiveness is much more about access to the subculture of wine than it is to associations with wine drinking itself” (p. 157). Brown and Getz (2005) explored the relationship between wine consumer preferences and wine tourism destinations. The authors note that “for those engaged in serious leisure or with high levels of involvement in wine (as part of their lifestyle), there is likely a strong predisposition for pleasure travel to wine regions –or at least to include wine in general-purpose travel (p. 275).

Wine Tourism in North Carolina

Historically, North Carolina has been considered one of the pioneer states in cultivating wine in the United States. According to the sixth federal census, North Carolina was the leading producer of wine in the United States in the early 1900s. At the turn of the century, for example, 25 wineries were in operation, making North Carolina one of the most productive wine states in the United States (North Carolina Winery Association, 2007). Since then the state's wine industry has undergone a tremendous amount of change. When Prohibition was enacted in 1919, the state's wine industry was destroyed and did not begin to operate again as a serious commercial endeavor until the 1970s. Wineries experienced significant growth until the mid-1980s when changes in tax laws and new legislation regarding distribution again stymied the industry (Mills & Tarmey, 2003).

Since 1992, however, new growth has occurred in the wine industry. Today wine tourism is emerging as an important component of rural diversification in North Carolina. One major factor that has contributed to the growth of the wine industry is the decline of the tobacco crop. The latest federal Census of Agriculture states that 4,736 tobacco farms were lost in North Carolina between 1997 and 2002, which represents more than one-third of the tobacco farms in the state (North Carolina Wine and Grape Council, 2007). As former tobacco farmers and others convert to vineyards, grape production has provided a means of farm diversification. North Carolina is ranked 10th in the nation for both grape and wine production.

The continued emergence of new vineyard and winery projects across the state is breathing new life into the area's tourism industry. North Carolina is now home to 400 vineyards and 61 wineries, with ten new wineries expected to open by December, 2007 (North Carolina Winery Association, 2007). Many of these wineries are small, privately owned, and operated with family heritage and tradition. For example, the Yadkin Valley, considered the heart of the North Carolina wine industry, is the only federally designated viticulture region in the state. There are currently twenty wineries and more than 400 acres allocated to these vineyards. Although early in its development, the Yadkin Valley is poised to become an internationally recognized region for world-class wines (North Carolina Wine and Grape Council, 2007).

However, despite the state's long tradition of wineries and a growing wine consumption among United States consumers, small wineries in North Carolina have been suffering from the rapid environmental changes of the global wine industry, including a significant growth of new wine countries such as Chile and Australia, as well as lack of competitive wine marketing (Yule, 2004). For example, wineries in new wine-making countries have increased their market share in the United States through aggressive wine marketing such as television advertising and promotion as well as through their competitive and inexpensive wines.

In 2003, the United States imported 68 million cases of wine from foreign countries. This represents a 10% increase compared to the 62 million cases imported in 2002. Furthermore, over 90% of United States wine has been produced in California by large wine companies such as Gallo and Robert Mondavi (American Wine Society, 2007; Roberto, 2002; Yule, 2004). In addition, due to complicated Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) laws and complex wine

distribution channels, small local wineries possessing low financial resources and brand powers have been challenged to develop sustainable wine marketing to promote their wines.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study explores wine tourism as a type of serious leisure using Stebbins (1992) model of serious leisure as a guideline and examines the demographic and psychographic characteristics of wine consumers in order to develop effective wine marketing strategies for small local wineries in North Carolina. Thus, this study is designed to answer the following questions:

- What factors influence a person's choice of local wineries?
- Does wine tourism possess the six qualities of serious leisure as defined by Stebbins (1992)?
- How can North Carolina wineries diversify and position their products and services to effectively meet the needs of wine consumers?
- What competitive marketing tools can North Carolina wineries create and develop without the outlay of large capital investments in promoting wine tourism?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative methods of research in an effort to increase the validity and reliability of the results of the study (Jick, 1979). First, a qualitative approach will be adopted to gain a deeper understanding of the reasons that lead individuals to become wine consumers. The objective is to interview a range of people known to be different from one another in terms of experiences and involvement in the wine world. Snowball sampling will be used in the present study to select informants. In general, the use of snowball or reputational sampling seems appropriate when the range or extent of a phenomenon is unknown (Becker, 1963; Burgess, 1984). The objective is to identify someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study. That informant is then asked to recommend others they know who may also meet the criteria of the study. Participants in the study will be chosen on the basis of years of experience and type of involvement in the wine world. To gain different perspectives, in-depth interviews will be conducted with owners and managers of retail wine stores and wineries, key officials from the North Carolina Wine and Grape Council and the North Carolina Alcohol Beverage Control Commission, and various types of wine consumers.

Interview procedures will follow those of Spradley (1979) and Patton (1987). A general interview guide will be followed to allow informants to respond to interview questions in their own terms (Patton 1987). The constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss 1967) will be used to analyze the data. Transcripts will then be coded to identify common patterns among the data. Next, on the basis of the qualitative findings and previous research (Dodd, 1995; Getz et al., 1999; Hashimoto & Telfer, 2003), visitor questionnaires will be constructed and placed in retail wine stores and wineries in North Carolina. The questionnaire will be pilot-tested at a retail wine store to ensure clarity of the questions and reliability (Jick, 1979).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The results of this study will help small North Carolina wineries survive in a fiercely competitive market through the development of wine tourism marketing strategies designed to attract various types of wine consumers. Regional alliances can help small wineries in rural destinations to recognize the value of tourism networking, cooperative partnerships, and synergistic relationships. In addition, the results of this study may have significant implications for food and beverage operations and bed and breakfast establishments in the area. For example, forming alliances with restaurants and bed and breakfast establishments in the surrounding area is an important way to promote wine tourism and has the potential to attract tourists to the region. In addition, wineries can work with restaurants and bed and breakfast organizations to put together tourism packages which can be promoted by the local Chamber of Commerce. For example, theme-oriented tourism packages could be designed to highlight current trends such as the slow food movement and organic wines. This research is timely because, although North Carolina is emerging as a major wine tourism region, there has been relatively little research conducted on the area. This research also contributes to the serious leisure literature.

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AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STAKEHOLDER UNDERSTANDING OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The concept of sustainable tourism is not a new concept and has been addressed by many tourism scholars and professionals. However, there is little consonance among these scholars and professional on how to define, implement, plan, or measure sustainable tourism. A critical area that most agree is important when addressing sustainable tourism is the need for community participation. Much has been written about community participation, however, little is known about a community's understanding of sustainable tourism. The researchers of this study believe that before a community can be a part of sustainable tourism, they must understand the concept of sustainable tourism and understand how it impacts their community. The purpose of this exploratory study is to better understand a community's knowledge of sustainable tourism principles and to examine differences between stakeholder groups based on demographics and psychographic variables such as gender, age, rural vs. urban, and recreation activities. The main objective of this study is to test and validate an assessment tool, the Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Index (SUSTDI). This study produced a six factor solution ($r=.93$); (1) resource preservation, (2) environmental education, (3) stakeholder inclusion, (4) economic planning, (5) cultural awareness, and (6) community resource identification. In addition, this study found statistical differences between groups of stakeholders based on gender and participation in certain recreational activities. Those activities are bird watching, respondents that visited a museum, and respondents that attend a festival event. No statistical differences were found between age, level of education, and urban/rural residence.

KEYWORDS: *Community Participation; Stakeholder Understanding; Sustainable Tourism.*

INTRODUCTION

The term “sustainability” has become a hot topic in the tourism industry. Many scholars and organizations have attempted to develop a definition for sustainable tourism (Gunn, 1994; Hardy and Beeton, 2001; Ioannides, 1995; Robson and Robson, 1996; WTO, 1998). The definition applied most by tourism planners and in the tourism research literature was developed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO).

Sustainable tourism development meets the needs of the present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future. It is envisaged as leading to management of all resources in such a way that economic, social, and aesthetic needs can be fulfilled while maintaining cultural integrity, essential ecology processes, biological diversity, and life support systems (p. 21, 1998).

As stated, this definition is used by planners and scholars, but how does the host community describe sustainable tourism? Does the host community understand what is meant by the term “sustainable tourism development”? One common theme of sustainable tourism is having stakeholder inclusion and support for tourism (Byrd & Gustke, 2007; Hardy & Beeton, 2001; Sautter & Leisen, 1999; Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001). A stakeholder is defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by” tourism in a community (Feeman, 1984, p 46).

However before a community can support sustainable tourism, they need to know what it is they support. Therefore, it is important to first assess a community’s knowledge of the principles of sustainable tourism development. An assessment can provide baseline information and data about the community and its perception of sustainable tourism development. Moscardo (1999) argued that, “[S]ustainable tourism and recreation are more likely to result from visitors who are active, interested, questioning, and capable of reassessing the way they view the world (p 26).” This idea can be expanded to include all stakeholder groups. Without a clear understanding of the issues it is difficult for stakeholders to make sound decisions regarding tourism development and management in their communities.

Limited research has been conducted on communities’ stakeholders’ knowledge of sustainable tourism. The purpose of this paper is to better understand a community’s knowledge of sustainable tourism principles and to examine differences between stakeholder groups. An assessment tool, the Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Index, has been developed to measure a community’s knowledge of sustainable tourism. The Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Index (SUSTDI) is a 42 item index. The purpose of this study is to test and validate SUSTDI and to investigate if differences exist between key demographics and psychographic variables such as gender, age, rural vs. urban, recreation activities in regards to their understanding of sustainable tourism development.

METHODS

During the winter and spring of 2005 the study of tourism stakeholders was conducted in five North Carolina counties. Three counties are classified as rural and two are classified as urban (North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc., 2006). Stakeholders were mailed a questionnaire inquiring about their understanding of sustainable tourism development in their respective communities. The responses were collected and analyzed to discover if difference in understanding of sustainable tourism concepts existed between stakeholders in the communities.

The questionnaire was mailed to 2,000 stakeholders using a modified Dillman technique. Of the 2,000 questionnaires that were mailed, a total of 289 unusable questionnaires were received. One hundred and nine were undeliverable because of incorrect addresses or requests not to be included in the study. Of the 295 questionnaires, six were not usable due to lack of responses, resulting in 289 usable questioners and a response rate of 14%. The initial SUSTDI contained 42 items and used a 5-point scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.

An initial principle component analysis was conducted without any restriction and produced a correlation matrix, communalities, eigenvalue, scree plot and factor loadings. In addition, an initial reliability analysis was conducted and produced a reliability statistic, inter-item correlation matrix, and item-total statistic. The purpose for this initial analysis was to help reduce items in the SUSTDI to get a more parsimonious scale. Three main criteria were used to reduce items at this stage: factor score, goodness of fits and corrected-item total correlation. Based on the data 11 items were deleted producing a 31 item scale ($r=.93$).

The second part of the analysis consisted of conducting a principle component factor analysis with Varimax rotation. The analysis produced six factors with eignenvvalues of one or greater with a total variance explained of 61.99%. The factors were labels as (1) resource preservation, (2) environmental education, (3) stakeholder inclusion, (4) economic planning, (5) cultural awareness, and (6) community resource identification (Table 1.). To discover if differences existed between community stakeholders, t-tests and ANOVA were conducted with each of the six factors.

Table 1. Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Factors as Perceived by Local Community Members¹

<i>Factor/Item</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean*</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Factor Loading</i>
<i>Factor 1. Resource Preservation</i>				
Tourism development should include the protection of the natural environment	292	4.31	0.68	.649
Environmental impact studies should be conducted for both existing and proposed tourism development	292	4.11	0.69	.632
Tourism activities should be integrated with a regions conservation programs	292	4.03	0.71	.617
Tourism development should be discouraged when it harms the environment	292	3.86	0.86	.590
Tourism should improve the environment for future generations	292	4.07	0.71	.582
Tourism should not be allowed to damage the cultural resources	292	4.22	0.65	.515
The natural environment must be protected for use by future generations	292	4.48	0.70	.512
The community should be actively involved in the conservation of the region's environment	292	4.37	0.72	.402
<i>Factor 2. Environmental Education</i>				
Opportunities are needed to learn more about environment	292	4.08	0.76	.762
Environmental education programs lead to improvement in natural resources	292	4.02	0.77	.688
Plants and animals have as much right as humans do to the natural resources in the community	292	3.66	1.08	.645
Education of local residents about proper land use practices is important to the success of tourism development	292	3.95	0.73	.586
Education of local business owners about proper land use practices is important to the success of tourism development	292	3.99	0.79	.575
Education of visitors about proper land use practices is important to the success of tourism development	292	3.88	0.78	.569
<i>Factor 3. Stakeholder Inclusion</i>				
Tourism leaders must monitor business satisfaction with tourism in order for tourism to be successful	292	3.95	0.69	.770
Tourism leaders must monitor citizens satisfaction with tourism in order for tourism to be successful	292	4.01	0.64	.721
Community involvement increases support for tourism	292	4.01	0.55	.679
Tourism leaders must monitor tourist satisfaction with tourism in order for tourism to be successful	292	4.06	0.59	.670
Visitor participation in tourism development is essential to the success of the tourism development	292	3.81	0.70	.593
Community participation in tourism development is essential to the success of the tourism development	292	3.97	0.65	.562

<i>Factor 4. Economic Planning</i>				
Tourism diversifies the local economy	292	3.84	0.80	.722
Tourism is good for community's economy	292	4.13	0.64	.709
Economic development funds should be used to promote tourism	292	3.56	0.86	.678
A long-term goal is needed when planning for tourism development	292	4.25	0.66	.621
I believe tourism development needs well-coordinated planning	291	4.22	0.61	.615
Education of local governmental officials about proper land use practices is important to the success of tourism development	292	4.17	0.70	.519
<i>Factor 5. Cultural Awareness</i>				
Opportunities are needed to learn more about the local history	292	4.06	0.61	.799
Opportunities are needed to learn more about the local culture	292	4.02	0.69	.798
<i>Factor 6. Community Resource Identification</i>				
The culture of the community is a tourist attraction	292	3.80	0.80	.792
Restoration of historical sites would promote tourism	292	4.06	0.69	.758
The natural environment is a tourism attraction	292	4.15	0.71	.527

¹Based on 5-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree

FINDINGS

The number of women (52%) and men (48%) surveyed were almost equal. Almost 60% were from a rural county. The mean age was 51 with a range from 20-90 years. Almost 15% indicated they were business owners, while 4% indicated they were a government official. Half of the respondents had at least their college education, while 17% had a Post Baccalaureate degree. The top five recreational/leisure activities included walking (68%), driving/sightseeing (65%), watching television (65%), reading (64%), and shopping (58%).

The results of the t-test indicated there were some statistical difference between groups of stakeholders and the six factor solution of the SUSTDI. A statistically significant difference was found between the men ($M=3.81$, $SD = .67$) and the women ($M = 4.03$, $SD = .56$) participants with women having higher environmental education (Factor #2) scores ($t = -2.984$, $p = .003$). No other differences were found based on gender with any of the other five factors. In addition, no statistical differences were found between age, level of education, urban/rural and the six factors of the SUSTDI.

Many of the recreational/leisure activity variables were found to be statistically significant with respect to the six factors solution. Those activities are bird watching, respondents that attend festivals and events, and respondents that visited museums. Bird watching and those that attend festivals and events reflected statistically significant differences in all six factors. Respondents who indicated they bird watched and attend festivals had a higher mean score for all six factors compared

to those respondents who said they don't participate in this type of recreation activity (Table 2 and Table 3, respectively). In addition, there were statistically significant differences between those respondents who indicated they visited museums and those who did not visit museums with four of the six factors (Table 4).

Table 2. Bird Watching and Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Index¹

<i>Factor/Item</i>	<i>Yes Mean (SD)</i>	<i>No Mean (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Resource Preservation	4.41(.50)	4.11(.41)	4.56	281	.000
Environmental Education	4.19(.61)	3.85(.61)	4.01	281	.000
Stakeholder Inclusion	4.16(.54)	3.91(.43)	4.01	281	.000
Economic Planning	4.24(.52)	3.97(.53)	3.87	281	.000
Cultural Awareness	4.28(.51)	3.97(.62)	3.78	281	.000
Community Resource Identification	4.20(.59)	3.93(.59)	3.24	281	.001

¹Based on 5-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree

Table 3. Attend Festivals and Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Index¹

<i>Factor/Item</i>	<i>Yes Mean (SD)</i>	<i>No Mean (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Resource Preservation	4.24(.45)	4.12(.53)	2.06	281	.039
Environmental Education	4.05(.55)	3.78(.68)	3.72	281	.000
Stakeholder Inclusion	4.06(.48)	3.86(.44)	3.55	281	.000
Economic Planning	4.14(.47)	3.88(.59)	4.04	280	.000
Cultural Awareness	4.17(.61)	3.90(.56)	3.78	281	.000
Community Resource Identification	4.11(.58)	3.86(.59)	3.55	281	.000

¹Based on 5-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree

Table 4. Visit Museums and Stakeholder Understanding of Sustainable Tourism Development Index¹

<i>Factor/Item</i>	<i>Yes Mean (SD)</i>	<i>No Mean (SD)</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
Resource Preservation	4.25(.48)	4.12(.49)	2.23	281	.026
Economic Planning	4.13(.52)	3.94(.55)	3.01	280	.003
Cultural Awareness	4.16(.57)	3.95(.62)	2.92	281	.004
Community Resource Identification	4.14(.55)	3.88(.62)	3.78	281	.001

¹Based on 5-point Likert scale with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree

DISCUSSION

Stakeholder involvement is a critical part of sustainable tourism development. To involve stakeholders, researchers and planners must first measure a stakeholder's knowledge of the concept of sustainable tourism. The data indicated that difference may exist between

different stakeholder groups and their understanding of sustainable tourism development. Based on the study the resource preservation factor score for women was higher than men, indicating that women identify the importance of resource preservation in their community more than men. This difference could also indicate women value or understand the importance of maintaining the community resources for future use. Therefore, if planners or tourism professionals discuss tourism development to a group that is predominately male they may want to focus more on the ideas and concepts of resource preservation to increase the group's overall understanding of sustainable tourism.

Also, based on the data an individual's recreation/leisure activity may indicate their level of sustainable tourism development understanding. This study found that participation in any of the following three recreational activities; bird watching, respondents that visited a museum and respondents that attend festivals or events, statistically significantly increased the score (understanding) of at least four of the six factors. For example those that indicated they bird watched had a higher mean score than those that did not participate in those activities.

Respondents that visited a museum scored higher than those who did not on four of the six factors; resource preservation, economic planning, cultural awareness, and community resource identification. There was no statistical difference between those who did or did not visit a museum in regards to the environmental education factor and the stakeholder inclusion factor. The data indicates that information targeted towards museum attendees about the concept of sustainable tourism focus on other factors such as environmental education and the stakeholder inclusion.

Respondents that attended a festival or were bird watchers scored higher than their counterparts in all six factors; resource preservation, environmental education, stakeholder inclusion, economic planning, cultural awareness, and community resource identification. This indicates that an individual that participates in one or both of these activities has a better understanding of sustainable tourism development than those that do not participate in one of these activities. Individuals in these groups would still benefit from information about sustainable tourism development, but there is not an area that should be focused on with these groups. Residents in these recreational groups may be ambassadors/leaders that planners can use in increasing the overall understanding of sustainable tourism in the community.

Many of the variables commonly used to group stakeholders such as age, level of education, and geographic area that the individual lives in, urban or rural, did not show a statistically significant difference in their understanding of sustainable tourism concepts. Regional and state tourism planners in North Carolina can therefore assume that no matter the age, level of education, or area they live in (urban or rural), in general stakeholders will have a similar understanding of sustainable tourism. Statistical differences were found in variables such as groups of stakeholders, gender, and participation in bird watching, gardening, photography, hiking, biking, visiting a museum and attending festivals. These findings indicate that there are groups that can be targeted for specific messages about sustainable tourism, but in some communities these groups may be small or it may be cost prohibitive to develop an information campaign targeting them.

This study has shown that certain variables may indicate an individual's level of understanding of sustainable tourism development. It is critical to determine the level of understanding of sustainable tourism development so that programs can be developed to better inform the local community about specific impacts of tourism development to their community. This will strengthen the tourism industry by allowing all stakeholders to make a more informed decision about the type of tourism development and activities that take place in their community. In addition understanding will, in turn, lead to the development of a stronger sustainable tourism product and experience for all involved.

This study was the initial test of the SUSTDI. Six factors were identified that comprise a stakeholders understanding of sustainable tourism development; (1) resource preservation, (2) environmental education, (3) stakeholder inclusion, (4) economic planning, (5) cultural awareness, and (6) community resource identification. The SUSTDI can be used as a tool that will assist planners in measuring a community's knowledge base for sustainable tourism development in their communities. This tool could also become a barometer of stakeholder understanding for sustainable tourism development in a community.

More research, though, needs to be done with regards to stakeholder understanding of sustainable tourism. This study is a preliminary step in the process of developing a tool for identifying the elements that comprise a stakeholder's understanding of sustainable tourism development. Additional research needs to be conducted to validate and refine the factors including conducting the study on a broader scale and in different areas, including regions, such as southeastern US, on a national scale, international scale and in developing countries. Additional questions must be developed to gain a better understanding of the awareness of tourism factor.

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REALITIES OF EMPLOYMENT IN VACATION OWNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

There appears to be patterns present based on all of the responses showing similarities and differences between lodging and timeshare operations. There were no differences of note between the independent respondent and the brands. The skills that are most prominent deal with the special needs of the owner verses the transient guest. Both require ongoing training and insurance that skills are learned and maintained. Working the front desk appears to be more intense in the timeshare business because of the smaller window of time in which guests check in and check out. The skill of solving problems is perhaps even more essential in the timeshare industry because of dealing with owners. They expect resolutions to their problems by upper level management and want to have access to upper level management as well. Food and beverage is an essential part of the timeshare experience because guests do like to be taken care of.

KEYWORDS: *Food and Beverage; Front Desk; Lodging Owners; Timeshare; Training.*

INTRODUCTION

In a market analysis report provided by the American Resort Development Association (ARDA), the vacation ownership industry was reported as having grown nearly 1000% between 1980 and 1999 making it the fastest growing segment of an already rapidly-expanding hospitality industry (ARDA, 1999). Indeed, with a growth rate often exceeding 10% per annum it becomes obviously difficult, if not impossible, for vacation ownership resorts to locate talented, qualified, educated workers.

Some of the growth is a result of the entrance of the major hotel firms into the timeshare industry (Woods, 2001). The major hotel firms are benefiting from their timeshare division of

their company as they continue to bounce back from the post 9/11 travel slump and the effects of corporate cutbacks (Gose, 2003). Hotels are also benefiting because of their experience in guest service. Based on the fact that timeshare ownership is a long-term commitment to a company the relationship and trust given to the operation's management is essential.

Based on the fact that owners of a deeded property resort have control of who manages the resort in the timeshare industry the developer must ensure that the owners have their expectations continually met or exceeded to maintain the management contracts. Working with owners who stay longer than the average hotel guest that has more vested in the product can offer the timeshare manager many challenges. The manager will be faces with a more demanding public that is loyal to the product with higher expectations (ARDA, 2002).

STUDY

The demand for managers in the vacation ownership industry is evident with the growth of this segment. Ricci and Kaufman (In Press) found that there are differences in the knowledge, skills, and abilities deemed necessary for success in the timeshare industry verses the traditional lodging industry. The purpose of this paper is to follow up with specific issues relevant to the vacation ownership segment in order to prepare students that are considering management in the vacation ownership industry as a career choice. At the time of this paper 3 vacation ownership companies (2 branded and 1 independent) have participated in the survey (all 3 companies have properties in Orlando, Florida). Representatives from each company were given the survey and collected information from the respective departments. The following includes unedited responses from each resort. From the results of this research an educational module will be created to help students get a realistic understanding of this growing segment.

Staffing

- 1) What are some of the skills that are needed in the Timeshare industry workforce that are different and/or similar to the Lodging industry workforce?
 - i. Relationship skills – in the VO industry, managers must know how to handle different situations an owner may have. Also, VO industry has more functions than the Lodging industry to deal with such as HOA accounting and other support functions. In addition, managers have to be able to master their jobs.
 - ii. Tenacity to get the Sale! Product knowledge and persuasiveness. Personality and Prowess.
 - iii. There really isn't any different skill sets, it's all about hospitality still. The accounting is the same at the manager level, people use credit cards or cash (just not as much), invoices need to be paid, etc. You still check people in and out, cook pizza or hamburgers, and fix their light switch if it's broken. The coolest thing though is if you're really into hospitality, is that our guests stay on average 7days. This means you get all week to learn people's names, where they are from, what they like to do, the ages of their kids.....

- 2) When you look to hire potential employees, do you look for experience in the Timeshare industry and/or Lodging industry?
 - i. Yes experience is always a plus because having experience from the Lodging industry is not equally comparable to the VO industry.
 - ii. Actually we prefer no industry background unless it's documented and proven. A strong background in the other attributes can prove to be much more effective.
 - iii. Either is fine, although we are starting to coach our managers that we are looking for personality and genuinely nice and friendly folks. They are seeing it's much easier to teach someone how to check a guest in than it is to teach them to be nice.

Training

- 1) When training new hires in the timeshare industry, how are the training tools or classes different and/or similar to the Lodging Industry?
 - i. Training is very intense because they are more applications that staff needs to know in order to provide phenomenal service to owners.
 - ii. Different in regards to the people you are serving, actually own at the resort they are staying in. Or at least exchanging, but are still owners someplace.
 - iii. It's the same, you have guest service training and technical training. The training tools for most departments are similar. For Maintenance, Housekeeping and Security etc the needs are close to the same both technical and service orientation. We do discuss more of our types of guests (Owners, Exchangers, Rental Guests and Marketing Guests) and the importance and process of the Sales component to our business. We also train the thought process of maintaining the timeshare owner's investment through preventative maintenance and reserves.
- 2) Since owners tend to be more demanding in the Timeshare industry, are the training classes longer and detailed than in the Lodging Industry?
 - i. The training classes are longer and more intense due to the bulk of information that is given to the staff to successfully do his/her job.
 - ii. Absolutely more emphasis is placed on appreciating the knowledge of the guest. Not just for there home resort but for all the other experiences they have had.
 - iii. I don't think so, but training is an ongoing thing so it should never be over. Training classes are similar. The details are important. I am not sure I would use the term "the owners tend to be more demanding" but we do work hard to create a comfortable atmosphere where owners become familiar and comfortable with our employees building a positive long term partnership when possible.

Front Desk

- 1) When the owners come to visit their home resort, are the C/I and C/O process as strict as the Lodging industry or the owners are accommodated if they wanted to C/I earlier or C/O later?

- i. It all depends on housekeeping and what's the occupancy rate for C/I that particular day.
 - ii. We are much more accommodating based on housekeeping productivity.
 - iii. We do everything we can to accommodate all our guests, but being honest, we like all hotel chains have certain guests that we would be more flexible with than others. We have VIP, Gold, Platinum etc levels just like the hotel industry does with their frequent guest programs.
- 2) Are the tasks of a front desk agent harder in the Timeshare industry than in the Lodging industry?
- i. It is harder because the front desk agents have more applications to deal with.
 - ii. Again, harder is relative. Overall it's the guest experience that is tantamount. Exceeding expectations is what our company strives for in either capacity. TS or hotel.
 - iii. Yes and No, it's still the same process as a hotel checking people in and out BUT our "rush" is more intense. Because 80% of our guests check in or out between Friday and Sunday those days are very busy, but the other 4 days its minimal intensity and more guest services oriented.

Solving Problems

- 1) Since the owners in the TS industry are so demanding, what are some of the differences in providing a solution to owners' problems verses guests' problems?
- i. Apologize, apologize, and apologize to the owners. Issue a certificate for a weeks stay at the resort at a later date.
 - ii. The sense of urgency and immediacy to elevate to the next level if necessary.
 - iii. I don't know if demanding is correct but their expectations might be higher. Obviously it's a large purchase when someone buys a timeshare and you want to make sure you're treated well. One thing we do to recover from a really awful experience someone has had is to have the resort manager call the owners directly afterwards, apologize and give them his or hers direct line at the resort. They ask the guest to personally call before they come back so the resort manager can personally greet them and escort them to their room. Because a lot of our guests come back to the same resort year after year this helps them feel more comfortable when they have the RM name and direct line that they can call at any time.....
- 2) Do you tend to offer more compensation/perks to an owner than a guest or does it depends on the situation at hand?
- i. Yes because you have to satisfy the owners the best way possible because you will see that owner every year and you want that owner to refer their friends and family members to purchase at your resort.
 - ii. Always the situation at hand.

- iii. All the guests or owners get the same perks while on property; the only difference would be the flexibility we might have with a high priority owner versus a guest. Typically the “guest” is contacted by our in house sales team that offers them tickets to an area attraction or dining certificates if they spend some time looking at possibly buying a timeshare.

Food & Beverage Management

- 1) Since Food and Beverage in the Timeshare industry is not very demanding by owners, are the products and services different than what is being offered at hotels in the Lodging industry?
 - i. Bar – offers same products and services like a hotel ex. beer, liquor, and grilled items
 - ii. On the contrary. The greatest demographic that is purchasing vacation ownership is quite resolved on the amenities of the resorts with a major focus on F & B. The ability to utilize a kitchen is obvious, but our owners want to be pampered.
 - iii. Yes, we have more quick service and very little sit down opportunities. Owners usually eat breakfast in their units; have lunch at our grills while sitting by the pool then visit local restaurants for dinner.

DISCUSSION

There appears to be patterns present based on all of the responses showing similarities and differences between lodging and timeshare operations. There were no differences of note between the independent respondent and the brands. The skills that are most prominent deal with the special needs of the owner verses the transient guest. The host-owner relationship is more involved based on the commitment of the owner to pay a large sum of money to a company before the actual service is delivered. The owner therefore expects a great deal from the service experience. Fortunately, because the length of stay is longer in the timeshare industry the manager has more time to develop relationships with the guest and recover from service failures if necessary.

In terms of training there are more similarities than differences between timeshare and traditional lodging. Both require ongoing training and insurance that skills are learned and maintained. The primary difference is that both require training to improve insure preventative maintenance measures maintain the quality of the property. However, in the case of timeshare these measures are vital because it limits the need to increase maintenance fees or charge assessments. Finally, the timeshare guest tends to be more demanding because they are likely to be owners at the resort or with the same company and expect a higher level of service so training must incorporate standards that help with relationship building.

Front desk has similarities as well as differences. In the timeshare industry there are VIPs and gold and platinum members which is the same as the lodging industry. However, the timeshare industry tends to be more intense. You have 80% of the guests that are checking in

and out during a shorter 3 day span and the employee must be able to stay cool and collected during the rush.

The skill of solving problems is perhaps even more essential in the timeshare industry because of dealing with owners. They expect resolutions to their problems by upper level management and want to have access to upper level management as well. Perhaps because they are owner they feel a greater sense of entitlement. Also, because they are owners they are more likely to make certain that whatever problem arises is resolved.

There is a common misconception that because timeshare units have a kitchen that there is no need for food and beverage options. This according to our sample is a myth. Although, they like the convenience of the kitchen, especially in the morning for breakfast, they like to have the option of meals on site. The big draw would be a grill that serves lunch and possibly dinner. Depending on the location of the resort the sample finds that the guests like to dine in local restaurants off site. Even though the restaurants may not have the big draw of off premise guests in the same fashion as traditional lodging establishments.

There appears to be enough differences between traditional lodging and timeshare management to make further study in this area valid. The segment of timeshare has experienced unprecedented numbers during the past decade and is a vital addition to most international lodging brands portfolio. Based on these facts it will be wise to delve deeper into the intricacies of timeshare management in order to prepare the next leaders of the hospitality industry.

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THE CAROLINA SHAG DANCERS: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK OF STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on that group of people who dance the shag, the official regional dance of South and North Carolina, and their influence on sustainable tourism in the coastal area in and around North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Society of Stranders is an association of these dancers which holds two major dance and music festivals a year. Each ten-day festival draws over 13,000 participants to the downtown area of North Myrtle Beach and contributes significantly to the local economy. Serious shaggers tend to form a strong identity with the dance and exhibit greater involvement than casual shaggers. This study proposes a socialization model which contains antecedents, intervening learning processes and outcomes of learning. The model incorporates notions from the literature on serious leisure, leisure specialization, socialization, and niche tourism. Findings indicate that the hypotheses and the model are for the most part confirmed. Results indicate that learning at a young age, from an informal source, is related to being categorized as a serious shag dancer, whereas, learning from formal sources at a later age is more likely to result in a casual shagger. Both serious and social shaggers, no matter what the learning source, take vacations that specifically include festivals but it is the serious shagger who becomes involved in festivals and shag clubs, often in an administrative capacity, whom actively works to perpetuate and preserve the dance.

KEYWORDS: *Festivals; Niche Tourism; Serious Leisure; Socialization.*

INTRODUCTION

The involvement of individuals in particular leisure activities has been the focus of an increasing number of studies (Yoder, 1997; Jones, 2000; Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2003; Brown, 2004, 2005). According to Getz (1991), festivals and special events have become one of

the fastest growing forms of leisure and tourism-related phenomena. When the pursuit of a particular leisure activity involves travel, there can be a significant effect on many aspects of tourism. Many festivals, for example, are organized around a specific leisure activity such as international film festivals, cultural festivals, and jazz festivals. Festivals concentrate a wide array of activities into a condensed time frame, creating a variety of products for tourist consumption (McKercher & du Cros, 2002). Festivals cater to the interests of tourists and contribute to the local economy; the travel industry benefits; and the host city gains recognition in a larger context through publicity surrounding the event.

This study focuses on that group of people who dance the shag, the official regional dance of South and North Carolina, and their influence on sustainable tourism in the coastal area in and around North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The Society of Stranders is an association of these dancers which holds two major dance and music festivals a year. Each ten-day festival draws over 13,000 participants to the downtown area of North Myrtle Beach and contributes an estimated ten million dollars to the local economy (Wachsman, 2004). Festivals attract the pursuer of serious leisure, defined by Stebbins (1992) as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is sufficiently substantial and interesting for a participant to find a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge” (p. 3). Given the lack of explanatory studies in the area of serious leisure involvement, the focus of an increasing number of studies has been on showing how people become involved in leisure activities, why they continue or discontinue involvement, the formation of a career-like commitment to an activity, and the economic results of such involvement. “Festivals and events can help promote the destination and attract tourists -they can be viewed as a new form of tourism in which to anchor economic prosperity and development....Festivals and events are a significant and integral segment of the leisure industry” (Yeoman, Martin Robertson, Ali-Knight, Drummond & McMahon-Beattie, 2004, p. 5).

Based on past recreation specialization research (Bryan, 1979; Unruh, 1979; Stebbins, 1979; Scott & Godbey, 1994; Brown, in press), Brown and Belk (2005) suggested a typology of dance types categorized by their dance orientations, interpersonal relationships and commitment to the dance, broadly categorized as serious dancers and casual dancers. Both types attend the festivals, and both types contribute to the local economy, but it is the serious dancer who internalizes a specific ethos which results in the desire to preserve and promote the dance, to teach others, and to grow as a group.

These serious dancers belong to local shag clubs and they organize the festivals. Casual dancers benefit, and do so in the short term, but serious dancers benefit in both the short and long term by working to ensure that the shag is promoted and preserved as a uniquely Southern cultural experience. They are looking for a deeper understanding of the dance and may be compared to what Stebbins (2001) describes as a specialized cultural tourist. They tend to form a strong identity with the dance and regard their involvement in the social world as serious. This commitment is evident in an increasing amount of time spent in the shag world as opposed to other activities (Brown, in press).

Here we explore differences between the acquisition of the dance skills from formal and informal sources. We are interested in the effect of this acquisition from a teacher who provides

the learning of steps versus a mentor who not only teaches dance proficiency but the unique ethos shared by serious shag dancers. We hypothesize that method of the acquisition of the dance skills affects the outcomes of learning and suggest a model based on the socialization models proposed by Moschis and Churchill (1978) and Smith and Moschis (1986) which posit causal relationships between type of learning (formal and informal) plus agent of learning (instructor, mentor, mass media, parents, peers) and outcomes such as festival attendance, with its subsequent impact on local economies, and perceived benefits: physical, psychological, and sociological.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The focus of this study is the subculture of shaggers, a group of people who dance the “shag”. The shag originated in the “beach” culture of South Carolina and was designated the official state dance of South Carolina in 1984 and official popular dance of North Carolina in 2005 (Brown, 2007). Large numbers of tourists attend the Society of Stranders (S.O.S.) dance festivals, which cater to the shagger and which realize approximately ten million dollars from each event (Wachsman, 2004). This study proposes a socialization model which incorporates notions from the literature on serious leisure, leisure specialization, socialization, and niche tourism. Given the considerable economic impact this group has on festival host cities, learning more about them is important.

MODEL

A socialization model contains antecedents, intervening learning processes, and outcomes of learning (Moschis & Churchill, 1978). Based on Brown’s (2005b) qualitative research and on Brown and Belk’s empirical study (2005), the antecedents are age, perceived health status, cognitive age, motivation for learning to dance, and age the dance was first learned. The intervening socialization processes are type of learning and source of learning. The outcomes include the learner’s place in the typology of shag dancers proposed by Brown and Belk (2005) and Brown (in press) as serious or casual. This outcome is important since the serious dancer becomes the preserver and promoter of the dance; the festival attendee becomes the festival organizer, the economic benefit to the host area is maintained and, hopefully, enlarged.

From Brown’s excellent qualitative study (in press) of shag dancers, we identified the variables important to this study, quantified them, and placed them into a theoretical framework which can serve as a guide for the testing of one relationship or all, depending on the resources and focus of the researcher. All of the relationships proposed in this study were suggested by Brown’s original (2005a) and subsequent research (Brown & Belk, 2005). The structure of the model in Figure 1 is based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response model in psychology (Bagozzi, 1980) and the consumer socialization model in marketing (Moschis & Churchill, 1978, Smith & Moschis, 1986).

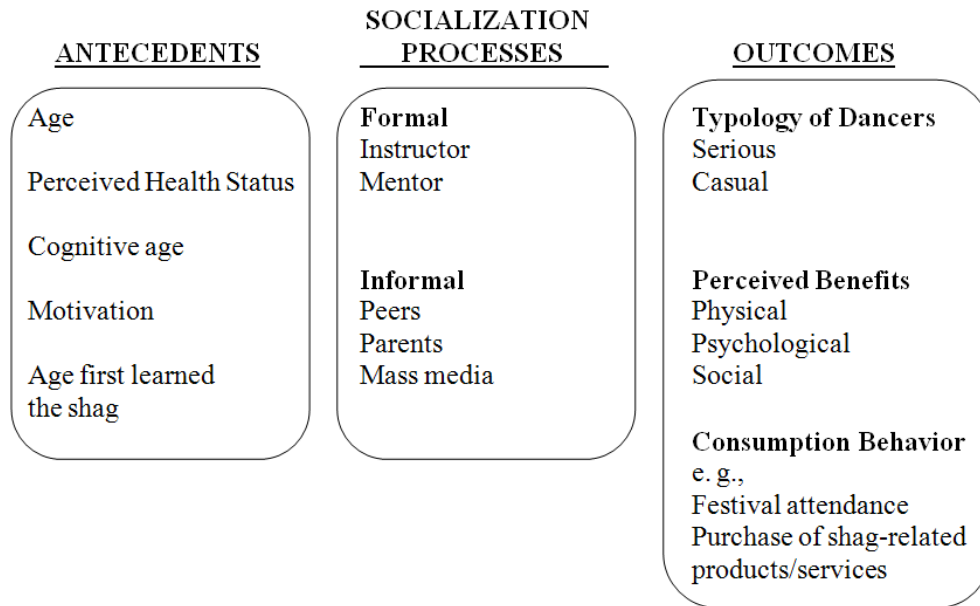


Figure 1. Socialization Model of Shag Dancers.

HYPOTHESES

Using the proposed model as a guide, the relationships of two antecedents, age and age first learned the dance with type of learning (formal or informal) are examined, plus the relationships of learning type with two outcomes: festival attendance and whether the respondent is a casual or serious shag dancer. Finally, the direct effects of age and age first learned to dance on the two outcomes are reported, along with their indirect effects on the outcomes through learning type. The variables examined in this paper concern age and age first learned to shag as antecedents, type of learning (formal and informal) as the intervening variable, and festival attendance and dancer typology (casual or serious) as the outcomes. Both direct and indirect linkages are examined. These linkages are examined here to help explain festival attendance, with its measurable impact on the local economy of the host city.

The expected relationships are as follows:

- H1: There is a positive relationship between age and formal learning*
- H2: There is a negative relationship between age first learned the dance and formal learning*
- H3: There is a positive relationship between formal learning and casual dance type*
- H4: There is a negative relationship between formal learning and serious dance type*
- H5: There is a positive relationship between formal learning and festival attendance*
- H6: There is a positive relationship between informal learning and festival attendance*

The indirect effects of age and age first learned the dance, on the two outcomes, are mitigated by learning type.

METHODOLOGY

Data were collected at shag clubs in a variety of southeastern cities and several Society of Stranders festivals, with a usable sample size of 324. Scales were developed based on Brown's (in press) qualitative research to measure each variable of the model, and demographic information was obtained. Respondents completed a four-page questionnaire which included scales to measure dancer typology, dancer motivations, and perceived benefits of shag dancing. There were also measures of how often the respondent practiced the dance, attended dances, engaged in competition, and attended shag dance festivals. Other outcomes, such as a number of festivals attended, amount of time and money spent, the perceived physiological, psychological, and social benefits of shag dancing, and orientation to the dance as serious or casual were measured. Relationships between variables were first assessed with correlation analysis, second with partial correlation, and third with regression. Scales were purified (Churchill & Iacobucci, 2005), and factor analysis was used to test the dancer typology.

FINDINGS

Findings show two distinct factors of the typology: the serious shagger and the casual shagger, with Eigenvalues of 6.58 and 2.31. The dancer typology scale had a Chronbach's alpha of .86. The tested relationships are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlations, Partial Correlations, and Regression Coefficients

	<u>Formal Learning</u>	<u>Informal Learning</u>	<u>Dancer Type</u>	<u>Festival Attendance</u>
Age	.21 (.000)	-.113 (.06)	-.009 (.87) [-.065 (.282)]	-.013 (.89) [.011 (.850)]
Age First Learned	-.172 (.004)	.189 (.002)	.298 (.000) [.117 (.051)]	.110 (.049) [.008 (.896)]
Type of Learning			.166 (.006)	.114 (.05)
Partial Correlation Coefficients [], p-values ()				

As we expected, age when the respondent learned to dance was negatively related to being a serious dancer, that is, the younger the learning took place, the more likely to be a serious shagger. This finding has a peculiarity: this negative relationship is only apparent when age first learned was the teens or lower. These findings also suggest that learning the shag from only objective means (an instructor, videotape instruction) does not result in a serious dancer

who will aid in the long term advancement of the shag, but in a casual dancer who will take advantage of the benefits but not participate in promoting and sustaining of the dance.

On the other hand, learning from a mentor, from parent(s), and from peers produces a dancer who learns both the steps and the unique ethos of the shag community. It is this unique ethos, lacking in the casual dancer, which results in the career-like commitment and concerted effort to perpetuate the dance and its clubs, festivals and membership. The effects of age alone were not remarkable, and partial correlations show that, when controlled for learning type, the relationships become insignificant.

CONCLUSIONS

Given the importance of the economic impact festivals have on host cities, and given that tourism is a unique industry which contributes to local economies without much cost, it would seem beneficial to continue study in this area. People visit; most travel to do so; they spend money on lodging, meals, entertainment, alcohol, and souvenirs. In order to sustain such tourism, the festival must continue, and to continue, there must be a consumer. It may be that the serious shagger is the opinion leader of this group and that a socialization process which includes internalizing of the shag ethos of sharing and sustaining the dance will create new serious shaggers who become actively involved in the business of the shag clubs and festivals. These are also the dancers who seek to constantly attract newcomers.

Newcomers who do not drop out may become either serious or social shaggers. Both are important to the shag dancer group. Serious shaggers may buy retirement homes, second homes, condominiums, or time-share rentals in the area; casual shaggers contribute as do most tourists, enjoying the amenities and attractions of the area. The S.O.S. festival, now in its twenty-seventh year, attracts cultural tourists who participate in the dancing, music, and regional foods, as well as recreational beach activities. Further study in this area is necessary, and the proposed socialization model provides a theoretical framework to guide hypothesis testing.

IMPLICATIONS

Shag dancing most easily fits into the “niche tourism” category. Based on the concept of marketing segmentation, Novelli (2005) defines a niche market as a “group whereby the individuals in the group are identifiable by the same specialized needs or interests and [who have] a strong desire for the products on offer” (p. 5). There is in some niche tourism a “geographical dimension by which locations with highly specific offers are able to establish themselves as niche destinations” (Novelli, 2005, p. 6), such as wine-growing regions. The North Myrtle Beach area is such a niche destination, and there is an ongoing relationship with the client base. The “beach culture” plays a key role in the shag community and offers the tourist the opportunity for “direct participation in the unique lifestyle of the hosting community” (Novelli, 2005, p. 9). These findings suggest that people who shag tend to take vacations that include a festival, whether they learned to dance from formal or informal sources, but that serious shag dancers become more involved in the shag world.

The way the dancer learned seems to be related to whether the dancer is “casual” or “serious,” and both types are essential to the sustaining of this type of recreational specialization. The “serious” dancers involve themselves in the shag world and actively work to preserve it as a Southern cultural experience and to perpetuate it by continuously recruiting new members. The “casual” dancers are the tourists who spend money to travel to, stay near, and participate in the festivals, without necessarily getting involved in the inner world of shaggers. They simply enjoy the activity and the social togetherness in a beach community. All, though, contribute in their ways to the local economy.

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