



DESTINATIONS. . .IT'S ALL ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE!



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ACADEMIC PAPERS – VOLUME XXI

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PREFACE

The 2009 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) conference theme is: “Destinations...It’s all about the experience.” This theme highlights ISTTE’s mission to improve the quality of education and research in the travel, tourism and hospitality industries by promoting the exchange of information and ideas which speaks to the core value of hospitality...it’s all about the experience. Research and Academic papers presented at the 2009 Conference showcase six key themes: The Tourist Experience; Economic, Environmental, and Socio-Cultural Impacts of the Tourist Experience; Destination Image and the Tourist Experience; Heritage Museums, Farmers; Markets, and Cultural Tourism as Increasing Popular Forms of the Tourist Experience; The Leadership Experience in Hospitality, Travel, Tourism and Education; and The Recruiting Experience in the Travel and Tourism Industry.

Three types of papers are included in the 2009 Proceedings: full, poster, and working papers. This year, set a new record of 65 submissions across these three categories of research and academic papers competing for presentation opportunities. All entries were subjected to a double-blind review process. Twenty-eight were accepted in the full paper competition of 46 entries. This represents a 61% acceptance rate in the full paper category. Authors with accepted submissions were invited to submit a final paper for inclusion in the 2009 Proceedings. In total, 36 research and academic papers were presented at the 2009 Conference. Thirty-four of these papers were received and included in this Proceedings, including 21 refereed full papers, six refereed poster papers, and seven refereed working papers.

We would like to thank all the researchers who participated in the Paper Call Process regardless of the outcome. Our sincere thanks are also extended to the 26 research and academic paper reviewers who generously contributed their time and constructive comments to the authors. We are also grateful for the support of ISTTE officers, Professor Michael Sabitoni, President, Dr. Dominic Dillane, Vice President Dr. Thomas Cannon, Conference Chair, Ms. Joann Bruss, ISTTE Executive Director, and members of the ISTTE Board of Directors. We would also like to thank Dr. Cathy Hsu, the Editor-in Chief of ISTTE’s official journal (*Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism*) for her encouragement to allow for a special issue for this year’s accepted submissions. The Call for Papers of this special issue is forthcoming.

Ady Milman & Linda Lowry

Research and Academic Papers Committee Co-Chairs



Linda Lowry, Ph.D.
Editor, 2009 Annual ISTTE Conference Proceedings

GENERAL INFORMATION

The 2009 Annual International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference devotes several sessions to the academic and research presentations. 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 year's conference title is "Destinations...it's all about the experience" and provides a forum for international educators, scholars, researchers, industry executives, corporate trainers, consultants, vendors, administrators, and government officials to explore issues related to travel and tourism at all levels.

CONTRIBUTION AREAS

Contributions are invited in any of the following subject areas or their related areas:

- Bridging the gap between industry and education needs
- Cross-cultural studies in travel and tourism
- Emerging issues in travel and tourism education and training
- Innovations and designs for travel and tourism
- Innovative and creative teaching techniques
- 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/conventions and events management
- New perspectives of the travel and tourism management
- Perspectives on articulation and/or accreditation
- Sports and entertainment management
- Strategic management of travel and tourism services
- Studies of gaming and entertainment industries
- Sustainable tourism planning and development
- Technological applications in travel and tourism education
- Travel and tourism education and curriculum
- Travel and tourism research issues or cases

TYPES OF SUBMISSIONS

The ISTTE provides researchers with a choice of four types of research papers that are all reviewed in a double-blind review process:

- Refereed full paper
- Full paper based on refereed extended abstract
- Poster paper based on refereed extended abstract
- Working paper 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

We express our sincere gratitude for the strong support and timely assistance of the 26 reviewers who reviewed the 65 research and academic papers that were competing for a presentation opportunity at the 2009 International Society of Travel and Tourism Annual Conference. Their careful consideration of these papers as well as their thoughtful and informative comments for the authors helped us to identify the best possible papers for presentation at the conference and for this Proceedings. Without their significant contribution to ISTTE as well as to the profession and the disciplines of Tourism and Hospitality we could not have produced a quality conference program at San Antonio. *Thank you for your help and hard work...*

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THE PROGRESSIVE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY LEADER: FROM TRANSFORMATIONAL TO TRANSCENDENTAL

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to convey a progressive leadership model that aims to improve tourism and hospitality practices. Toward this end, it defines the concept of leadership, explores the dimensions and attributes of multistream leadership behavior, and analyzes recent theories. The objective is achieved by utilizing industry and academic literature within the field of tourism and hospitality management and related disciplines. The main consequence of the manuscript is that the unique paradigm presented provides theorists and practitioners an opportunity for future empirical research and immediate industry application, respectively. Testing the paradigm through empirical research is the next likely step for those in the academy interested in the unique dimensions indicated in the research results. The inference of transcendental leadership theory is that more of an interchange among tourism and hospitality managers, educators, and researchers would be beneficial. The transcendental type principles may be used to enhance leadership development in the tourism and hospitality field. Specifically, executives who have the power to effect change and already use progressive practices could readily assimilate and accommodate the information in the article. Tourism and hospitality practitioners, scholars, and student-learners should find the leadership model constructive. It depicts the next generation of leadership theory and practice for those that seek progressive organizational change.

KEY WORDS: Leadership Development; Tourism Management; Transcendental Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Although technology has decreased the need for organizational workers, worldwide the tourism and hospitality industry remains labor intensive. Unfortunately, the expression, “human resource is our most valuable resource,” still eludes most people’s experience and often bemuses tourism and hospitality employees. The current crisis has worsened the tourism and hospitality worker’s human condition. Thousands have been “laid off,” had their hours cut, or become increasingly mistreated (because of job insecurity). Job satisfaction is undeniably linked to the work environment and that atmosphere is primarily shaped by leadership. The manuscript puts forth a model that discusses how tourism and hospitality leaders can create environment that will facilitate a self-motivating workplace through a transcendental type approach to leadership. Though there exists abundant research in the literature examining leadership, the model suggested below describes pragmatic relationship between theory and practice for leadership development and implementation. The paper blends research and application to present

recent thinking relevant to the leadership of tourism and hospitality operations. It reveals how the tourism and hospitality organization's most valuable resource can be optimized through *transcendental leadership*. The article is based on experience and evidence from the multidisciplinary international tourism and hospitality field rather than philosophical speculation. The travel, tourism, resort, and hospitality sectors are uniquely suited to use this type of leadership. Hence, the manuscript's purpose is to convey a progressive leadership model that, if implemented, improves tourism and hospitality practices.

The Consequence of Leadership

There is vast disagreement over the term leadership. However, the leader makes a significant impact on an organization's success and longevity (Crother-Laurin, 2006). One leadership definition often used is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal. Leadership may also be defined as a commitment to the success of people surrounding the person that is thought to be leading. Another definition is accomplishing something through other people that would not have happen if the leader were not a factor. The word leadership was found by one researcher to be the predominant response when participants were asked what is their greatest obstacle hindering extraordinary products or services (Crother-Laurin). Most would agree that when it comes to resignations, employees quit their bosses not their companies. Thirty-five percent of the respondents answered yes in one survey to the question, "Was the attitude of your direct supervisor/manager the primary factor in your quitting a previous job?" (Smith, 2002). The conservative rule of thumb among experts puts the cost of replacing an employee in excess of that employee's yearly salary. The cost increases exponentially the higher up the corporate ladder people quit or are terminated. The Appendix lays out the typical reasons for the high cost of employee turnover. Soft management skills or people skills are critical in battling high turnover. They also create a high-retention workforce or "retentionship" (Smith, 2002). In short, effective leadership can go a long way in the direction of *retentionship*.

Analysis of Transformational Leadership

Leadership theories abound, with the most talked about in recent years being transformational leadership. It is commonly defined as developing an exchange and implicit transaction contract between leaders and followers that is supplemented with behaviors that lead to organizational transformation. There is usually a charismatic aspect to the transformational leader. This alluring element further spotlights the relationship between leaders and followers, rather than as a combination of leadership traits and behaviors. Transformational leaders have indeed been described as being optimistic, hopeful, developmentally oriented, and of high moral character (Bass, 1998, as cited in Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Companies throughout the world have gained from putting such leaders in place and training others in transformational type leadership. Some researchers (e.g., McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002) go so far as to say that organizations should recruit and nurture transformational leadership qualities for leaders to increase performance of subordinates. The theory has arguably affected many managers working in every sector of the travel, tourism, hotel, and resort industry.

While theories such as transformational leadership have their merits, they are not without their criticisms. For example, some studies have indicated that transformational leadership is based on the emotions of followers. Conger and Kanungo (1988) suggested that leadership is a process of attribution, which implies that people construct naive theories to explain relations between phenomena (Kelly & Michela, 1980). Conger and Kanungo concluded that people follow transformational leaders owing to the fact that they attribute to those leaders the ability to impose order, security, and direction in an otherwise chaotic and threatening world. The inference sounds familiar and is hard to ignore in light of the amplified power that Western governments and corporations assumed since *September 11* under the pretext of safety and security concerns. The post-911 national mood translated into a similar atmosphere in Corporate America. Add to that the present global recession that is set to be deeper than already pessimistic forecasts (Judge, 2009), and the result is a boon for coercive leaders. Kets de Vries (1989) explained transformational leadership in terms of transference that comes from the psychoanalytic field. In effect, there exists an unconscious redirection of feelings by a follower. The feelings are for an important person in the follower's past that are *transferred* or assigned to the leader. For instance, one could trust a charismatic leader who resembles a beloved parent in kindness, gregariousness, or enthusiasm; or be overly compliant to a leader who resembles a childhood friend. A transference reaction indicates that the followers are reacting to transformational leaders in terms of what they want to see. It is also often what followers see when they know little about the leader (Racker, 2001). The saying goes, 'you really don't know someone unless you live with them' not '... work with them.'

According to their studies, Popper and Lipshitz (1993) liken transformational leadership to a regressive expression of fantasies and yearnings to a past when people felt protected by strong authority figures. Leadership theories must be properly and repeatedly tested in the real world for them to have efficacy. Just because a particular buzzword is popular and "everyone is doing it" does not mean that it is correct, let alone useful. To consent to the existence of those fad leadership theories, one needs to complicate the theory by adding experimentally unsupported processes and ad hoc postulates (Conger & Kanungo, 1988). Educators, researchers, managers, and leaders working in the related international mega-industries of tourism, resort, and hospitality are dealing with high labor cost percentages. Hence, like tourism and hospitality services and products, leadership and motivation theories should be thoroughly examined to be certain they meet the industry's own exacting quality control standards.

Theory X and Y

There are two contrasting sets of assumptions that leaders make about human nature. Theory X is a pessimistic view of employees' performance propensities. Theory Y is an optimistic view of employees' performance propensities. Theory X thinking is not supported by the literature but still predominates much leadership thinking and behavior (Alexakis, Platt, & Tesone, 2006). As formal tourism and hospitality and business education have increased internationally, Theory X managers and leaders are fast

becoming a relic of the past in the tourism and hospitality industry. They are being replaced by Theory Y types.

In any case, the fact of the matter is that leaders face dilemmas that require choices between opposing sets of values. Leaders set a moral example that becomes the model for the group. Good leaders tend to align the values of their followers with those of the organization or movement. Preziosi (2009) presented the four main qualities of highly effective leadership as: (a) vision, (b) empathy, (c) consistency, and (d) integrity. Effective leaders tend to:

1. be consistent, which usually contributes to stable performance, creates trust, and lowers employee turnover. Inconsistent leaders may cause employees to doubt higher-ups and be less inclined to give their best efforts.

2. focus on the future. They see that the past is the best indicator of the future to gauge the direction of the organization if it does not undertake significant changes. They then visualize a future for which they are desirous.

3. foster change, once they evaluated the direction that the organization is likely to otherwise advance. They then look for ways to effect change within their sphere of influence so that the organization is guided in an improved direction.

4. create a culture based on shared values. They understand the fact that people are more likely to follow a program that they themselves have helped design. Likewise, every voice is heard or represented to get maximum buy-in among employees.

5. establish an emotional link with followers. They do this by using their personal power, the power that can never be taken away from them.

6. recognize that leaders are not above followers, are not better than followers, and should have an interactive relationship with followers. They *manage things* but *lead people*.

7. ultimately foster an emotional and social commitment to the organization that keeps people working and attached to the organization (Preziosi).

As maintained by iconoclastic business guru Stephen Covey, leadership is primarily a high-powered, right brain activity. It is not principally a science, but is more of an art; it is based on a philosophy. An individual has to ask the ultimate questions of life when dealing with personal leadership issues. Metaphorically speaking, leadership development is a journey of professional and personal development. In fact, to develop oneself as a leader is to develop oneself professionally and personally. Taking personal responsibility for one's actions is consistent among today's successful, ethical leaders. They make it their business to understand breadth, depth, and context before they act. They learn constantly and know that they must find out how to successfully teach others. They stay true to their own inimitable style. Finally, if they want those around them to change, they change themselves first. The next step is creating the appropriate motivational workplace atmosphere to facilitate self-motivation.

Leaders and the Led

In the broad context, humans today are required to use their labor to make enough

money to live, which economists refer to as *exchange*. Few people would work at a job if they had no economic need. As such, they are at usually at least a little resistant to working for others. It is perceived at some intrinsic level (whether consciously or subconsciously) as an implicit form of societally accepted exploitation. Employees make a decision to accept direction and responsibility, which industrial psychologists call *balance*. Regardless, the arrangement is one in which employee labor is more or less exploited by the organization. Against such a backdrop, most people are resistant to work at a high performance level unless they find their jobs very enjoyable. A recent national study revealed that “fewer than half (44%) of employees feel glad that they chose to work for their current employers . . .” (Harris, 2005, ¶ 1). Therefore, leading others to provide superior quality and productivity in a tourism or hospitality entity when they are not likely to be happy with their employers is understandably a difficult job.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, what effective tourism and hospitality industry leaders do is make work enjoyable, engaging, interesting, and otherwise intrinsically rewarding as an efficient means to further the organization’s goals. Hartline and Ferrell (1996) discovered that one way to increase service quality is to improve employee job satisfaction, as the employee attitude impacts heavily on customer’s perception of service quality. Service quality is central to tourism and hospitality operations. Because job satisfaction is so heavily influenced by one’s supervisor, the onus is on the manager to actively build a work atmosphere to improve morale and in turn service quality. Otherwise, as Peter Drucker once said, “The only things that evolve by themselves in an organization are disorder, friction, and malperformance.” Organizations can be complicated. There are (a) multiple technologies, (b) myriad interconnected processes, and measureless array of responsibilities. Dealing with the intricacies associated with a tangible product or service can be a monumental task. Again, the onus is on the leader to set the tone. Otherwise, the affects of action will be supplanted by effects from inaction as they relate to organizational dynamics outcomes.

When asked if there are enough resources in their organization, most people say no. Successful leaders continually inventory what resources they have and utilize them the best way possible. Through an optimum mix of available resources and an appropriate application of available systems and technologies, an effective leader implements operational, tactical, and corporate strategies that would enhance competitiveness, quality, turnaround, and flexibility. A progressive leader can meet an organization’s goals and objectives by working through people. S/he is mindful of the fact that the *things* should be managed and the *people* should be led. “Management is about coping with complexity,” asserts Kotter (as cited in Steers, Porter, Bigley, 1996, p. 620). The art of leadership involves sizing up the players and needs in each situation and constructing strategies suitable to the time and setting (Senge, 2006).

Despite the difficulties, leaders are to be responsible and accountable for everything at their level and below. To complicate their duties further, leaders are expected to be conscious of the organizational environment. Further, it is not enough for a leader to direct people and systems. Particularly in the tourism and hospitality industry, the leader should also be aware of subordinates’ expert views. A leader’s degree of

empathy often plays an important role (Pescosolido, 2002); that is, the ability to feel another's emotional pain. Leaders who are not fully aware of how they impact the people around them are unlikely to be in tune with the appropriateness of their own behaviors. A hotel industry study showed a striking association between profitability and how workers perceive their managers' behavioral integrity (Simons, 2002). In most tourism and hospitality organizations, those in positions of power tacitly cooperate in self-seeking actions while these collective actions typically contribute to organizational failures. In such a complex system of behavioral anomalies, the question of how organizations survive and thrive is more puzzling than how they fail (Gordon & Lowe, 2002). Companies should be seen holistically as interrelated socioeconomic systems that need to adapt to particular markets (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2002). Great tourism and hospitality leaders lean on worker expertise instead of making autocratic decisions.

Today's leaders must realize that it is the human resources that can impinge on long-term profits and its success. This is particularly poignant in Canada, United States, and other Western nations where the economies have markedly moved toward the service sector. Work-related outcomes in tertiary industries are often tied to include job satisfaction, communication, and perceptions of the work environment. The tourism and hospitality industry's service and people orientations give it an edge over other sectors, because the profile of individuals attracted to the industry are by their very nature people-oriented.

Mainstream Versus Multistream Leaders

The above discussion points to the inevitability of a transformation in thinking occurring about the effects of motivating others through leadership. Current theorists and practitioners are beginning to distinguish what are essentially the two types of leadership thinking in existence today: mainstream and multistream. Multistream leaders are more aware of the multiple tensions facing them (Dyck & Neubert, 2010). Multistream leadership is of special relevance for individuals of the "Millennial" generation. The *Millennials* are people that were born approximately between the years 1980 and 2000. The group represents almost 70 million people. The multistream approach "is being increasingly advocated by management professors and becoming more evident among vanguard practitioners" (Dyck & Neubert, 2010, p. 1).

Beyond the typical concerns for an organization's financial viability and stakeholder interests, the multistream advances values, ecological concerns, ethical conduct, and social justice in a way never seen before. For instance, a look at the facts about how different people are ethically motivated is fast replacing those theories found in the latest leadership craze. Human resource development can be seen as an (a) underutilized resource, (b) untapped source of profit, and (c) idle silver bullet. Tomorrow's leader will have the facts when assessing what does work and what does not work. How people are motivated remains one of the most talked about and least understood phenomena in leadership. The theories that support the reality of motivation have been tested and retested for many decades. Paradoxically, mainstream management and leadership literature has frequently ignored the research. People are not motivated by

other people in any enduring way—people motivate themselves. In other words, self-motivation is the only kind of motivation. Therefore, it is imperative and instructive for tourism and hospitality professionals to investigate the organizational leadership literature; specifically, how leaders can create environments in which others are likely to motivate themselves and others.

Transcendental Leadership

The term *transcendence* has to do with favorably stretching the limits of ordinary behavior. The adjective, transcendental can be used to describe leaders who cause others to peak-perform by means of self-transcendence. In the workplace, transcendental leadership is interested in aligning the motivations of associates and organizations for extraordinary results. Transcendental leaders are concerned with people (Cordona, 2000). They strive to contribute to employee personal development. Specifically, they facilitate employee transcendent motivation: the motivation to do things for others and the motivation to contribute (Cordona, 2000). Thus, the most important competence of transcendental leaders is their integrity and capacity to sacrifice themselves in the service of their associates (Cordona, 2000). The capacity for service is a habit acquired based on interaction with associates with or without natural sentiments for service, although with a sense of responsibility for the people that are being led (Cordona, 2000). As the eminent Viktor Frankl aptly phrased it, “success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one’s personal dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one’s surrender to a person other than oneself” (1997). The idea is that if transcendental leader does the right things, everything will fall into place. It was suggested by Nicolaidis (2008) that transcendental type of leader is generally more desirable in a tourism or hospitality enterprise.

According to Cordona (2000), the best way to execute transcendental leadership is by example. Leaders should epitomize those qualities that they seek others to emulate. Analogously, *authentic leadership* development involves ongoing processes whereby leaders and followers gain self-awareness and establish open, transparent, trusting, and genuine relationships, which in part may be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Transcendental tourism and hospitality leaders have as their ultimate aim, to create circumstances in which leaders will self-motivate to progress in the direction of peak performance causing workers to do the same and organizational goals to be met or exceeded. In effect, they indirectly effect change by first identifying what motivates each respective person. Then they promote inspiration or, at times, desperation (pleasure or pain) among employees so that self-motivation is likely to occur. These leaders strongly recognize the transcendent importance of autonomy as a means of self-motivation in the workplace. In such circumstances, the leader’s role is only one of a facilitator in the motivation process.

Through the practice of empowerment, the leader has the power to harness and utilize the available intellectual capital. The language used is also important to the discussion. All too often, leaders are told to “motivate employees.” The leader can be most effective when fostering, aiding, supporting, collaborating, assisting, abetting,

fostering, helping, backing, easing, promoting, furthering, cultivating, nurturing, sponsoring, and otherwise advancing the motivational level that is within a person.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research indicated that the work of tourism and hospitality employees could be made more efficient and effective through the implementation of progressive principles such as transcendental type leadership. The implications of transcendental leadership theory call for more of an interchange between tourism/hospitality managers, educators, and researchers. Tourism and hospitality executives can begin with leadership redevelopment programs without empirical investigations of transcendental principles. The model can be used immediately by teaching it through individual mentoring or small group training. While the idea of changing the leadership conventions in a large organization may have an immediate appeal, it should be noted that commitment from *C-level* executives is a likely requirement for success. One way to actualize such a program would be to include transcendental type leadership on the agenda of the annual executive retreat. The same holds true for small, independently owned operations. If the top-level leaders embrace the model, the remainder of the organizational leadership will undoubtedly follow. The behavior of managers is most often indicative of their higher-ups. The practice of emulating the dress of higher ups among direct reports is particularly extreme, to which corporate observers will attest. If imitation is a constant in the organizational setting, then it can conversely become a powerful positive tool too.

The transcendental leadership model is offered to tourism and hospitality managers as a way to effect constructive organizational change. It provisions them with an opportunity to concurrently self-reflect and effect a dynamic work environment. After all, it is all about the experience that the employee has in the workplace that shapes the type of experience that the tourist or guest will have. The ability of tourism and hospitality practitioners to develop their own programs to adopt the principles of self-reflection, responsibility, service, and facilitation will dictate the level of success of such programs. Self-reflection takes place when people gather the courage to look at their blind side—behaviors and personality characteristics that keep them from reaching their full potential. Implementation the process can be as easy as asking a trusted colleague or as involved as a full 360° evaluation.

There are practical implications of transcendental leadership for the management of tourism and hospitality across the range, from single unit local concerns to large international organizations. The personal-professional nature of the model application suggests future studies that look at its broader implications for tourism and hospitality executives, leaders, and human resources developers. In the teeming field of leadership theories, educators and scholars may also be inclined to use this theoretical construct for future empirical studies from the academy's vantage point. Offshoot research can also delve into how the relationship between the leader and the led affects motivation. However, the criteria and principles presented in this applied research article provide inducement for immediate practical use.

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APPENDIX

The Costs of Voluntary Employee Turnover

Separation Costs

A. Financial Costs

HR staff time (e.g., exit interview, payroll, benefits)
 Manager's time (e.g., retention attempts, exit interview)
 Accrued paid time off (e.g., vacation, sick pay)
 Temporary coverage (e.g., temporary employee; overtime for current employees)

B. Other Costs

Production and customer service delays or quality decreases
 Lost or unacquired clients
 Leaves—goes to competitor or forms competitive business
 Contagion—other employees decide to leave
 Teamwork disruptions
 Loss of workforce diversity

Replacement Costs

Staffing costs for new hire (e.g., cost-per-hire calculations)
 Hiring inducements (e.g., bonus, relocation, perks)
 Hiring manager and work-unit employee time
 Orientation program time and materials
 HR staff induction costs (e.g., payroll, benefits enrollment)

Training Costs

Formal training (trainee instruction time, materials, equipment)
 On-the-job training (supervisor and employee time)
 Mentoring (mentor's time)

Socialization (time of other employees, travel)

Productivity loss (loss of production until full proficient employee)

Other Costs

Replacement employee not as experienced in job, even with training

Time to get up to speed with KSAO

These might require the time and expense to restructure work unit

Cost from not replacing employee immediately (i.e., time to recruit, select, hire)

Replacement more expensive in salary, because of growing expectations of emerging employees and because of the salary compression experienced by former employee.

Note. Adapted from “Voluntary Turnover: Costs and Benefits,” by H. G. Heneman III and T. A. Judge, 2006, *Staffing Organizations* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MYSTERY SHOPPING LEARNING OBJECTS IN HOSPITALITY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Mystery shopping, the use of concealed participant observation, is used in the Hospitality industry as a tool for quality control, market research, training, and integrity checks. In academia, it has been a teaching tool in hospitality education, but to date, no published research addresses the measurement of effectiveness of mystery shopping as a learning object. This study applies the Learning Object Rating Instrument (LORI) method of rating learning objects, using student and faculty assessments of nine established dimensions on a five-point rating scale.

Keywords: hospitality education; learning objects; mystery shopping.

INTRODUCTION

“Traditional” methods of higher education are evolving due to demographic changes in the student body population, decreasing institutional budgets, greater accessibility to technology, and instructors’ desires to improve existing teaching methods (Cramer, 2007; Koppi, Bogle, & Lavitt, 2004; Meyers & Jones, 1993). Colleges are experiencing an increased population of working adults and distance learners, providing challenges and opportunities for digital content delivery (Meyers & Jones, 1993). This delivery is accomplished through varying techniques, such as podcasts (Townend, 2005), closed circuit television (Pierce, 1960), and online lessons, all of which are composed of multiple learning objects (Baruque & Melo, 2004). This study examines student perceptions of the Mystery Shopping Learning Object, an instrument designed to introduce students to elements of guest service in Hospitality Education.

The purpose of this study is to measure student perceptions of the effectiveness of mystery shopping as a learning object based on the nine dimensions included in the Learning Object Rating Instrument (LORI). In order to assess mystery shopping as a learning object utilizing the LORI rating system, a Mystery Shopping Learning Object (MSLO) computer module was created. The MSLO was hosted on the Internet at www.ProjectMSLO.com¹ and students accessed the module outside of the classroom asynchronously. The MSLO consisted of a brief presentation of service guidelines, followed by a mystery shopping activity for a quick service restaurant. During this activity, students were to identify elements of service presented in the previously viewed presentation. Students then reflected and reviewed the experience from the perspective of management, noting the elements of service which they observed. Finally, students evaluated the module using LORI.

Overall, students perceived the Mystery Shopping Learning Object (MSLO) to be an effective teaching tool for the objective of learning to identify elements of service, from both guest and management perspectives. The highest rated LORI dimensions were the Presentation Design and Interaction Usability. Both of these dimensions relate to the digital format of the module. There was no statistically significant difference in ratings based on age, gender, or grade level (i.e. freshman, sophomore).

Limitations of this study include possible bias of student evaluations concerning the learning object due to perceived desirable response, the constraints of the available software to create the module, file size restraints, and the knowledge base of the researchers in regard to Instructional Technology. Future research could determine if the mystery shopping service experience has a relationship with the LORI ratings of the module. Additionally, the module could be evaluated in alternate service situations such as lodging and retail, in a digital and non-digital format, to determine variability of LORI ratings based on assignment specifics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Service is an intangible, heterogeneous product (Walker, 2009) varying among experiences, and as such, mere discussion of service elements may not adequately introduce students to practical knowledge. One technique used to teach students to examine service in a critical manner is through mystery shopping activities. Mystery shopping is the use of concealed participant observers to measure the performance of service providers. The observer poses as a customer or guest, deceiving the service provider as to the purpose of the visit (Wilson, 1998, 2001). Mystery shopping is becoming an accepted and highly utilized tool for service quality control, currently used in a multitude of industries, including travel and tourism (Beck & Miao, 2003; Felertag, 2007), retail (Finn, 2001), banking and financial services (Reed & Miles, 1995), pharmaceuticals (Norris, 2004), academia (Czepiec, 1983), government agencies (Wilson & Gutmann, 1998), and housing (McDonough, 2004). The most cited reasons for

¹ The website www.ProjectMSLO.com is no longer active. It was hosted as a courtesy of Service Quality Solutions, Inc. during the duration of research only.

implementing mystery shopping programs are quality control and cash handling/ asset control (Beck & Miao, 2003); however, mystery shopping has been used as a teaching tool in marketing and management to facilitate student interactions with service providers in the various industries (Czepiec, 1983).

The use of learning objects originated in the discipline of computer science, namely instructional design theory (Nugent, Soh, & Samal, 2006; Van Zele, Vandaele, Botteldooren, & Lenaerts, 2003). Conforming to the object-oriented paradigm (Van Zele et al., 2003), programmers create computer code, reusable by other applications (Nugent et al., 2006). Fundamental to this paradigm is minimized inherent contextualization necessary for reusability, which has been identified as an important dimension of learning objects (Barritt & Alderman Jr., 2004; Cramer, 2007; Nesbit et al., 2008; Wiley et al., 2004), and is also incredibly efficient for educators who may always build their own objects. By creating granular elements of a digital lesson, mystery shopping can be introduced as a reusable learning object applicable to various Hospitality courses (e.g., Introduction to Hospitality Management, Introduction to Service Management, etc.) taught either in distance education formats (e.g., hybrid, on-line or distance learning) and traditional classrooms. Learning objects are primary elements of educational content composed of self-contained modules of information, created in association with individual learning objectives (Barritt & Alderman Jr., 2004; Bradley & Boyle, 2004). Information can be digital or non-digital, as simple as a picture or as large as an entire course (Nesbit, Belfer, & Leacock, 2008). Learning objects consist of “granular” elements which coalesce into reusable lessons (Barritt & Alderman Jr., 2004). They are able to be found through database searches hosted by learning depositories (Cafolla, 2006).

Proponents of active learning encourage self-directed learning (Meyers & Jones, 1993) for building knowledge through the learning process. Learning objects enable the construction of meaning for the individual student, with information parceled into digestible portions of information (Baruque & Melo, 2004). These principles of learning objects are most aligned with Cognitive Constructivist theory, as it “encourages learner autonomy and initiative” (Baruque & Melo, 2004), allowing the student more control over the learning process.

Learning objects are evaluated by numerous depositories, such as the Digital Library Network for Engineering and Technology (DLNET) (Nesbit & Li, 2004), the Multimedia Educational Repository for Learning and On-line Teaching (MERLOT) (Cafolla, 2006), the Co-operative Learning Object Exchange (CLOE) (Nesbit & Li, 2004), and Apple’s Learning Exchange (Cramer, 2007). Many of the depositories utilize peer review, similar to academic journal publications, implementing standardized review instruments (Cafolla, 2006; eLera, 2008; Nesbit & Li, 2004). The instrument chosen for assessing effectiveness for this study is the Learning Object Review Instrument (LORI).

While there are over 20 different evaluation approaches (Tzikopoulos, Manouselis, & Vuorikari, 2007), LORI, developed in 2003, is the most cited (Akpınar, 2008). LORI measures nine dimensions of learning objects effectiveness on a 5-point Likert-style scale (Nesbit et al., 2008) (Table 1).

Table 1- Dimensions Measured by Learning Object Rating Instrument

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Elements of dimension</i>
Content Quality	The learning object should present an appropriate level of detail, with accurate and comprehensive information.
Learning Goal Alignment	The learning object should forward the goals and objectives of the subject matter.
Feedback & Adaptation	The learning object should be adaptive to the individual learner.
Motivation	The learning object should motivate the learner and stimulate interest in the subject.
Presentation Design	The learning object should be designed to stimulate learning in individuals with differing learning methods, including audio, visual, and participatory elements.
Interaction Usability	The learning object should exhibit navigational ease and interface predictability.
Accessibility	The learning object should be designed for distance learners and learners with disabilities
Reusability	The learning object should be transferable to learners across subjects and from different backgrounds.
Standards Compliance	The learning object must comply with standards of the learning institution.

Based on the review of literature, the following research questions are proposed:

R₁: Do students perceive the mystery shopping learning object to be an effective learning object in Hospitality education?

R₂: Is there a difference in perceptions of effectiveness among students based on gender, race, age, or grade classification?

METHODOLOGY

In order to assess mystery shopping as a learning object utilizing the LORI rating system, a Mystery Shopping Learning Object (MSLO) computer module was created. Meyers & Jones (1993) identified four elements of active learning: reading, talking and listening, reflecting, and writing. All four of these elements have been integrated into the learning object created for this study. The performance objective for this learning object is “to identify elements of service, from both guest and management perspectives” (p.21). The proposal of a single learning objective is consistent with research recommendations for learning objects (Barritt & Alderman Jr., 2004).

The Mystery Shopping Learning Object (MSLO) was hosted on the Internet at www.ProjectMSLO.com. Students began by accessing the website for instructions and elements of the module. First, students reviewed a short presentation on the elements of service. This element was created by the researchers and presented in PowerPoint format. Students were allowed to access the presentation multiple times and it was available throughout the semester. Topics of the presentation consisted of guest service guidelines and “the 7 deadly sins of service,” which include apathy, brush-off, coldness, condescension, robotics, rule book, and runaround (Walker, 2009, p. 19). The presentation was approximately 2 minutes in length and featured audio for explaining service concepts, visual representations of the same concepts, and accompanying written text.

After students reviewed the presentation, they were instructed to engage in the mystery shopping learning activity. Students were expected to visit a quick-service dining facility and note the service received, viewed from the perspective of a guest. Students were to observe the service standards of staff without revealing the purpose of the visit. Post-visit, the mystery shopping evaluation form was completed by the student. The form listed eleven service standards for evaluation, with the student recording “Yes”, “No”, or “N/A” (Not applicable) to reflect the performance of each standard. These service standards (Table 2) were adapted from evaluation forms currently used by an Orlando-based mystery shopping firm to evaluate quick-service dining establishments. A qualitative section was provided for the student to report any additional information they wished concerning the service experience.

Table 2 – Service Standards Evaluated in MSLO

	Yes	No	N/A
1. Did the associate smile?			
2. Did the associate make eye contact?			
3. Did the associate greet you within 30 seconds of arrival?			
4. Was the associate friendly?			
5. Was the associate professional?			
6. Was the associate knowledgeable about products?			
7. Did the associate confirm your order?			
8. Was your order correct?			
9. Was your order delivered with 3 minutes of placement?			
10. Did the associate thank you for your business?			
11. Did the associate invite you to return?			

Once the mystery shopping learning activity was complete, students were instructed to reflect on the service experience. Recalling specific points of service, students were to envision they were the manager of the visited restaurant. A writing activity provided the student the opportunity to voice opinions on the service provided, noting what they would ask the employee to change if they were in management.

The final section of the assignment was the student assessment of the aforementioned learning object. The LORI instrument was modified into an online form. The nine dimensions measured by LORI were numbered 1-9 of the form. In addition to the LORI section, students were asked for demographic information for analysis,

including gender, race, age, school attended, year of study, and the name of the course utilizing the MSLO.

The study was conducted in the Summer 2008 and Fall 2008 semesters at a community college and a university in Orlando, Florida. Instructors of various courses within Hospitality education were contacted during Summer 2008 for integration of the module into their teaching plan and syllabi. Two instructors at the community college and one at the university agreed to participate in the study. The primary investigator was responsible for creation and hosting of the MSLO. Instructors were allowed to determine point values and due dates for the assignment.

Students were to follow the module in the pre-determined steps defined in the beginning of this section. The instructors provided due dates for assignment completion, but the module was self-paced by the individual student. Additionally, the student determined the hospitality entity they wished to evaluate for the assignment. In an effort to increase response rate for the measurement instrument, the LORI section was a requirement of module completion.

RESULTS

A pilot study was conducted to test the usability of the learning object and obtain feedback from users concerning necessary design modifications. The sample size for the pilot study was 18 students attending a local community college. These students were part of a survey level course introducing basic hospitality concepts. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected during the pilot study. The pilot study sample was not large enough to determine differences among groups, but was examined in the main study. Based on feedback obtained during the pilot study, two minor revisions were completed. The first included improved identification of examples in the LORI evaluation section. The items being evaluated, i.e. reusability of the module, compliance to the standards of the institution, etc., were explained further. The second was the addition of enhanced user interface tools for web navigation.

The main study was completed in Fall 2008. Faculty members of three different classes agreed to integrate the module into their lesson plans, requiring activity completion as a graded assessment. The total combined population in the courses was 89 students. A total of 72 students completed the project, with four evaluations deemed unusable due to insufficient data. This resulted in a response rate of 76.4%.

The difference in mean scores for each LORI dimension was not statistically significant between the pilot and main study results (Table 3).

Table 3- LORI Means

<i>Dimension</i>		<i>Mean</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Content Quality	Pilot	4.50	.7303	.468	.496
	Main	4.42	.6304		
Learning Goal Alignment	Pilot	4.44	.6292	.001	.971
	Main	4.54	.6106		
Feedback & Adaptation	Pilot	4.31	.9426	1.43	.235
	Main	4.35	.7500		
Motivation	Pilot	4.38	.8062	.013	.910
	Main	4.31	.7966		
Presentation Design	Pilot	4.81	1.515	.284	.596
	Main	4.44	.7593		
Interaction Usability	Pilot	4.69	.7932	1.648	.203
	Main	4.43	.7593		
Accessibility	Pilot	4.38	1.204	.853	.358
	Main	4.29	.9629		
Reusability	Pilot	4.50	.9661	.955	.331
	Main	4.49	.7430		
Standards Compliance	Pilot	4.19	1.223	2.414	.124
	Main	4.32	.8365		

*Sig. at .05

In the pilot test, compliance to the standards of the institution had the lowest mean score and adjustments to the instructions on the evaluation form could have rectified confusion as to the item being rated. Once rectified, compliance to institution standards was consistent with other dimensions. The Learning Goal Alignment dimension had the highest mean score in the main study, however, all mean scores were high.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to determine differences in mean scores between groups based on gender, age, race, and class year (i.e. freshman, sophomore, etc.). There were no statistically significant differences between groups based on any of the measured demographics (Table 4).

Table 4- ANOVA based on Gender, Age, Race, and Class Year

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Gender</i>		<i>Age</i>		<i>Race</i>		<i>Class Year</i>	
	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Content Quality	.790	.458	2.200	.079	1.370	.248	.412	.799
Learning Goal Alignment	.059	.942	2.693	.352	.725	.607	1.250	.299
Feedback & Adaptation	.941	.395	1.096	.371	1.033	.406	.801	.529
Motivation	1.563	.217	1.049	.389	1.462	.215	.974	.428
Presentation Design	.911	.407	1.050	.389	1.234	.304	.288	.885
Interaction Usability	.240	.787	.446	.775	.642	.668	.322	.862
Accessibility	.639	.531	.553	.698	.795	.558	.598	.666
Reusability	.674	.513	1.229	.307	.540	.745	.856	.495
Standards Compliance	.199	.820	1.449	.228	.229	.948	.450	.772

*Sig. at .05

DISCUSSION

Overall, students perceived the Mystery Shopping Learning Object (MSLO) to be an effective teaching tool for the objective of learning to identify elements of service, from both guest and management perspectives. In the pilot study, the highest rated LORI dimensions were the Presentation Design and Interaction Usability. Both of these dimensions relate to the digital format of the module. As this module was an assignment for students who met primarily in a traditional face-to-face class environment, the evaluation may have been favorable due to the unique nature of the assignment. One participant noted, "I really enjoyed it and the exercise was extremely user friendly. As an older student, I was afraid of the assignment, but I now see the computer really can help you learn better." The opportunity to integrate the electronic assignment into the traditional face-to-face course was appreciated by many students. One participant noted, "Sometimes our teachers just post notes on the computer or our grades and that is all we do. With this, I got to use it for something more and it was fun."

In the main study, none of the LORI dimensions were significantly higher than the rest. Minimal variation between items, combined with high mean scores, indicates the use of a mystery shopping learning object was generally accepted on all dimensions. Thus the learning object was perceived as effective and no statistically significant differences were reported based on demographics. However, several interesting things can be noted from the study including students reported an enhanced knowledge of the service experience, demonstrating the effectiveness of the learning object, and the effectiveness of this experiential assignment.

One student noted "Because the assignment made us go step by step, first as a student, then as a guest, then as a manager, I saw how everybody works together. The assignment was set up to make sure we saw everything." When comparing the service standards they experienced during the activity with those discussed in the learning object, students were introduced to the issues managers encounter. One student was appalled at the attitude of staff, noting,

As a manager of [a major fast food chain] I would step in and shake those employees. Everyone at [a major fast food chain] tends to always look so miserable when they are working. I would hold a mandatory orientation for current employees and new employees. Those that don't attend the orientation will either be put on suspension or be let go. In our meeting we would review the basics, no matter how basic they are. We would go over how customers should be approached through the drive through as well as in house. I would have all employees sign a contract stating they have attended orientation and will comply with the set standards. I would then send out secret shoppers to make sure the employees aren't tending to the customers as if they hated their job.

The same student noted the new perspective when evaluating the learning object, I have never been in management and sometimes forget what the customer sees. This assignment made me look at things different. I had to see what happened then say what I would change. The exercise was good because I never thought what to do when employees were bad. Now I think I will make mystery shoppers come to where I work when I am a manager so they can tell me things.

The exercise was created with a student budget in mind, asking them to evaluate a quick service or campus dining location. Three of the students stated they enjoyed the activity, but would have liked the opportunity to visit more upscale facilities or other types of hospitality venues. One student commented “I liked the exercise, but I wish the mystery shopping would have been a little more detailed in the evaluation of the shopped place. Or the ability to do a sit down restaurant and evaluate that more thoroughly.” However, having the students focus on quick dining made them see how service delivery in a fast environment can be challenging, as one participant noted, The cashier said "hello" and that's about it. I handed him my card and smiled. He did not return the smile. Once he rung my card and he handed it back to me I said "Thanks" and his reply was "pull forward to the next window." At the next window I was quickly handed a bag and a cup. I ordered chicken tenders and I was not asked if I would like any sauce. I actually didn't realize this until I went to eat my food and all I found was bland chicken. I forgot to ask for it myself because I was rushed through so quickly. Sometimes I think fast food can be too fast.

By having the students reflect on their experiences, the initial learning objective “to identify elements of service, from both guest and management perspectives” was achieved through the mystery shopper learning object. Students responded favorably to the learning object, indicated it promoted active learning by creating interest and providing a different method of instruction. Such learning objects could assist with the facilitation of both traditional face-to-face courses and online instruction.

The study however underlines the importance and potential effectiveness of integrating technology into the curriculum in all courses as demonstrated in the high effectiveness scores. Since students are familiar with the electronic environment to a large degree, such assignments may be more easily accepted by the student. The assignment also gave a great example of how an electronic assessment can be utilized to teach something experiential which provides more understandable and tangible objectives for the exercise.

The storehousing of such learning objects as the mystery shopping learning object may also enhance the efficiency of teachers allowing them to still customize their courses but to avoid reinventing assignments which save energy and provides more time for teaching effectiveness and research considerations. Finally, it was evident that the service management learning object was quite well accepted by students and since it required a visitation to a restaurant, students were also empowered to customize the activity based on their choice providing learner empowerment.

Limitations

There are limitations to this study. First, student evaluations of the learning object could be biased due to perceived desirable response. As the module is part of formally graded assessments, students may perceive grading to be dependent on their positive assessment of the module. To minimize this limitation, students were advised the grading is determined by their performance on the module itself, not the assessment of the module. This was achieved by having a separate form submitted for the evaluation, which was completed after the mystery shopping activity.

A second limitation to the study is the constraints of the available software to create the module. The primary researcher utilized host-provided web-creation software and was not able to insert code to completely customize the module as desired. The forms were created with host-provided form-building software, which limited the survey design. The file sizes allowed by the host would not support file sizes over 10MB, requiring a smaller presentation on service guidelines than originally designed. With modifications, this limitation was minimized by creating a module that still addressed the four elements of active learning proposed by Meyers & Jones (1993): reading, talking and listening, reflecting, and writing.

A third limitation identified is the knowledge base of the researchers in regard to Instructional Technology. Two of the researchers have primary experience in the Hospitality industry and the third is a researcher of Education. While the primary researcher has experience in online education and has developed numerous websites for industry use, no formal Instructional Technology design courses have been completed.

Future Research

This study has collected data of service experiences, both qualitative and quantitative, in addition to the LORI evaluation data. Future research could determine whether the mystery shopping service experience could influence the student's evaluation of the module. For students receiving exceptional service, the perceptions of the activity could differ from students receiving poor service.

This mystery shopping learning object incorporated visits to quick service restaurants in order to accommodate student budgets. Using the module in other service situations, such as lodging, theme park, and retail environments, could alter the perceptions of participants in this study, as each service situation is partially dependent on the environment in which it is performed.

Another study concerning the perceptions of students concerning whether or not this assignment was helpful in modifying or changing the behavior of managers either in a course or industry setting may provide helpful information concerning the relevance of the learning object assignment.

Finally, the learning object in this study could be utilized in a non-digital format. Perceptions of the learning object's effectiveness may differ from those presented in this study. The reusability element of the module should transfer to traditional classroom application with minimal modifications. The module would then be evaluated using the Learning Object Rating Instrument in a paper format.

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERCEIVED CHARACTERISTICS AND
ABILITIES OF AN EFFECTIVE TOURISM/HOSPITALITY
HEAD OF SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

The study utilizes an online survey of academic staff in the Institutes of Technology in Ireland to explore perceptions of the characteristics and abilities crucial for the effectiveness of a Tourism/Hospitality Head of School. It also examines school success measures for judging a Head of School's effectiveness. Implications for staff, Heads of School and senior management are addressed.

KEYWORDS: Abilities; Characteristics; Effective; Head; Hospitality; Perception.

INTRODUCTION

The job of a head of an academic unit is seen as critical to the successful operation of universities and colleges of higher education and is the major factor determining staff satisfaction (Hageseth and Atkins 1988; Jennerich 1981; Knight and Holen 1985; Leaming 1998; Singleton 1987). Departmental leadership is critical to the morale of the academic staff and the general social climate in the academic unit.

Heads of School may make as many as four-fifths of the administrative decisions in colleges and universities which may involve, budgets, staff appointments and performance management, class time tables, curriculum management and development, and other delegated responsibilities that are not part of the requirements for the majority of staff (Korn and Munz 1991; Roach 1976; Wolverton et al. 1999A). Often the decisions of the Head of School are accompanied by high performance expectations from

a variety of stakeholders such as, other academic staff and senior management. However, there is strong evidence from the literature highlighting the lack of any formal training for the position of head of school (Boice 1985; Leaming 1998; Lucas 1989).

An online survey was conducted on academic staff in the Institutes of Technology (IOTs) in Ireland. In particular, academic staff in the area of tourism and hospitality were the potential respondents for this study. The IOT sector is comprised of 14 Institutes of Technology established under the 1992 Regional Technical Colleges (RTCs) Act. Most have Schools of Science, Engineering & Technology and Business. In addition, many of the institutes have developed special programmes in areas such as Humanities & Languages, Paramedical Studies and Healthcare, Art & Design, and Tourism. Throughout the sector, the school is the fundamental academic unit and this provides the motivation for exploring the factors influencing effective school leadership.

While these issues have been considered in the education literature little research has been conducted in the Irish context in either the university or institute of technology sectors. This study provides a systematic and empirical examination of the abilities and characteristics that make an effective Head of School and a successful school. The study identifies those abilities that are perceived as crucial for effectiveness in this position. Indicators of what constitutes success criteria for judging a school head's effectiveness are also examined.

We believe the study should prove useful to members of the academic community in the following ways. Firstly, the study's survey results and analysis may be employed to develop criteria for selection and appointment of management posts. Secondly, academic staff contemplating or seeking such positions may use the findings as a tool to evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses. Heads of School, and more generally those in academic management positions, can gain insight to evaluate and potentially enhance their own performance. Finally, information gleaned from this research may be useful for designing a programme for the professional development of those in academic management positions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned earlier, surprisingly little attention in the Irish education literature has been paid to the position of the school head in the third-level sector. There is a substantial US literature and while many issues are ubiquitous there are significant differences between the two systems. The literature review essentially presents information about the complexity of the school head's role and qualities of successful heads.

Criticisms abound in the literature, particularly from the US, which have been directed at higher education that can affect the performance of school heads. For example, criticism about the poor preparation of college graduates in general and **business students** specifically include the inability to communicate clearly and work in teams (Simpson and

Siguaw 2000). Several criticisms have also been directed at staff in higher education. These include emphasizing research over teaching, studying irrelevant, esoteric issues, resisting accountability, hiding behind a privileged status of tenure to oppose needed changes, and resisting performance measures such as student job placement, graduation rates, and quality of service to the non-academic community (Limerick 2000; Murray 1995). Academic staff have also been accused of pandering to students by diluting curricula and inflating grades to increase student satisfaction in a competitive environment (Swenson 1998; Wilson 1998).

The public is now calling for academics to respond to these criticisms (Simpson and Siguaw 2000). School heads are expected to formulate and communicate much of the response to these critiques. In addition, school heads are expected to satisfy staff and operationally manage the school. Because of a lack of appropriate skills and training, school/department heads are often ill-prepared to accomplish these required tasks (Atkins and Hageseth 1990; Eley 1994; Jennerich 1981; Tucker 1993).

A number of studies found that the majority of academic unit heads received no training or assistance either prior to assuming the position or during their tenure as head (Gmelch and Burns 1993; Hammons 1984). Although many academic unit heads have completed undergraduate and master's level coursework involving administrative and leadership training, there is no evidence that this educational experience translates into success as a school/department head. This general lack of training and inadequate support tends to complicate the job (Leaming 1998; McLaughlin, Montgomery, and Malpass 1975).

For these reasons, most school heads in the US intended to return to the academic staff ranks (Gmelch and Burns 1993; Perrin 1985; Singleton 1987; Whitson and Hubert 1982). Few reported any desire to climb the administrative ladder. In fact, it was found that sixty-five percent of school heads returned to academic staff status before their term expired (Carroll 1991; Gmelch and Burns 1994; Wilson 2001).

Job Requirements and Important Qualities of a Head of School

School heads have the primary responsibility for managing their academic units (Murray 1992). Estimates of the number of distinct functions expected of a department head ranged from 26 to 97 (Alexander and Cowan 1987; Atkins and Hageseth 1990; Kremer-Hayon and Avi-Itzhak 1986; Staton-Spicer and Spicer 1987). The roles of the school head are typically clustered into four generally accepted categories of leader, school/department developer, manager, and scholar (Carroll and Gmelch 1994; Creswell et. al. 1990; Moses and Roe 1990; Tucker 1993; Wolverson et. al. 1999B). Each category contains an array of tasks that requires special abilities and traits.

The leadership role pertains to providing vision, conflict management, external constituency interaction, and, particularly in the US, fundraising. The school developer function requires school heads to perform duties related to staff recruitment and evaluation as well as improving staff morale and development. The managerial role necessitates the preparation and overseeing of budgets, records, timetables, school

meetings, committee delegation, facilities, and being the chief advocate for the school. The final role of scholar deals with the fact that the school head is also a member of staff, who teaches, conducts research, serves on committees, and engages in professional development activities (Gmelch and Miskin 1993).

Research has shown that school heads experience a great deal of stress related to managing role conflict and finding balance across all of the required tasks. For instance, a head may experience stress when performing administrative tasks, such as selecting a staff member for a promotional post from some of the staff within a school, while simultaneously conducting scholarly research with some of the same staff. Other sources of stress include time pressures for completing paperwork, obtaining programme and financial approval and complying with rules and regulations (Gmelch and Burns 1994; Gmelch and Carroll 1991; Gmelch 1991; Singleton 1987; Wolverson et.al. 1999B). School heads often reported that they were picked upon by people inside and outside the academic unit and expected to deal with the personal problems of staff (Wilson 2001). The stress associated with the position was found to lead to low job satisfaction and high turnover (Gmelch and Burns 1993; Singleton 1987; Watkins 1985).

Regarding the qualities for the job, several studies from the general education literature examined the attributes and abilities of successful heads. This body of research suggests that effective heads possess the traits of openness, integrity, honesty, and objectivity, and are both task and people-oriented (Leaming 1998; Roach 1976). Outstanding chairpersons at three universities were found to be unselfish, fair, respectful, collegial, flexible, compassionate, cooperative, and, not surprisingly, trustworthy (Mitchell 1987). Leadership ability, communication skills, and organisational ability were also found to be important when fulfilling the requirements of the role (Jennerich 1981; Staton-Spicer and Spicer 1987).

METHODOLOGY

An online survey was conducted using Free Online Surveys software to analyse academic staff perceptions of Head of School effectiveness. The questionnaire was designed using a number of qualitative approaches. Firstly, a group of 12 academic staff comprising 6 Heads of School and 6 academic staff were asked to provide, in writing, those qualities they perceived as important in a Head of School. Based upon a content analysis, items with similar meanings were combined into 10 school head characteristics, 22 school head abilities, and 14 school success measures that were influenced by the performance of the school head.

The questionnaire was pre-tested a second time by 8 academic staff at different schools throughout the sector. Based upon feedback from these groups and the content analysis of the education literature on academic leadership, the questionnaire included 15 school head characteristics, 31 school head abilities, and 25 crucial school success measures for judging a school head's effectiveness. Because it was found in the study's pre-test phase that most of the characteristics and abilities were perceived as crucial, an

unbalanced scale was used in order to increase response variability. As such, items were measured on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (not absolutely crucial to the school head's overall effectiveness) to 7 (absolutely crucial to the school head's overall effectiveness).

Participants were asked several questions about their background and school to assess demographic variation in responses. The participants reported their academic grade, employment status, gender, and their length of service. The sample profile is outlined in Table 1.

Table 1 Profile of Survey Respondents

Academic Grade	%	Years working in an IOT	%
Assistant Lecturer	21.5	1-4 years	26.0
Lecturer 1	12.4	5-9 years	22.2
Lecturer	38.2	10-14 years	13.4
SL1 Teaching	9.3	15-19 years	12.8
Lecturer Structured	2.1	20+ years	25.6
SLII	9.7		
SLIII	6.8		

The survey was emailed to all tourism/hospitality academic staff in the IOTs. The email cover letter included a hotlink to the questionnaire, explained the purpose of the study, promised confidentiality, and stressed that no particular Head of School was being examined. Three hundred and eighty seven surveys were returned, yielding a responses rate of 38%. Statistical analyses were carried out for non-response bias. A wave analysis with the Student's t-test was used to look for significant differences between early and late returns, classified by a split in the order of response from two email dates separated by two weeks (Zou, Andrus, and Norvell 1997). The wave analysis method assumes that subjects who respond less readily are more like non-respondents. Using the t-test for two-sample proportions and a 95 percent confidence level, it was found that there were no significant differences between early and late returns for items in the questionnaire at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

First, we generated descriptive statistics for survey items pertaining to school head abilities, characteristics, and success measures. We then ranked the survey items in descending order of their means. These results are presented in Tables 2.1a, b and c.

Respondents identified crucial abilities in effective Heads of Schools. The top six abilities, in order, were ability to foster a collegial school, treats staff with respect, ability

to motivate others, ability to manage everyday operations within the school, possess a strategic vision for the school and the ability to represent the school needs to central administration. Not surprisingly, the top three abilities identified concern a Head's capacity to relate to staff. Abilities pertaining to school needs were also seen as essential with possessing a strategic vision for the school and ability to represent the school's needs to central administration being ranked fifth and sixth respectively.

Table 2.1a Mean and Std. Dev for School Head abilities

	Mean	Standard deviation
Ability to foster a collegial School	6.78	0.53
Treats staff with respect.	6.68	0.61
Ability to motivate others	6.44	0.85
Ability to manage everyday operations in the School	6.24	0.87
Possess a strategic vision for the school	6.23	0.9
Ability to represent school to central administration.	6.18	0.91
Ability to implement change	6.1	0.95
Effective communicator with external audiences	6.08	0.98
Ability to build consensus	6.06	1.01
Keep staff informed about issues	5.99	1.03
Open and transparent with staff on all school issues	5.94	1.08
Ability to represent institutions perspective to staff	5.91	1.03
Promote innovative curriculum	5.88	1.07
Foster effective school research	5.83	1.05
Ability to handle difficult people	5.8	1.12
Ability to say no when necessary.	5.75	1.14
Enthusiasm for the School	5.67	1.1
Democratic leadership style	5.62	1.17
Distributes work assignments equitably	5.56	1.21
Ability to manage school budget	5.47	1.27
Enthusiasm for the Institution	5.43	1.23
Ability to convey policies clearly to staff	5.42	1.21
Fosters effective school teaching	5.38	1.23
Knowledge of student education needs	5.32	1.33
Head of Schools research skills	5.28	1.35
Ability to delegate responsibilities	5.15	1.45
Fosters professional Development for staff	4.8	1.61
Ability to generate funding from private sources	4.45	1.42
Knowledge of current literature in the field	4.25	1.51
Head of Schools teaching skills	4	1.61
Authoritarian leadership style	2.7	0.96
Laissez-Faire Leadership style	1.8	0.56

Only two options received a negative rating. These were authoritarian and laissez-faire leadership styles. The six least crucial school head abilities (in descending order of importance) were perceived to be: Head of School's research skills, ability to delegate responsibilities, fosters professional development for staff, ability to generate funding from private sources, knowledge of current literature in the field and Head of School's teaching skills. It is surprising that a Head of School's teaching skills were given such a low rating. The ability to fundraise from private sources which Heads of School are not generally involved in was given a higher rating. In fact, three of the abilities viewed as least crucial involved the Head's skills in performing scholarly functions.

There were however, differences in rankings between respondents in the different faculties. Those in the faculty of science ranked the Heads own research skills as the sixth most important ability overall. This was significantly different from the other faculties, perhaps because most research activity occurs in the science faculty. The ability to implement change was ranked as the third most important ability in the faculty of applied arts while those in the engineering faculty ranked the ability to develop innovative curriculum as the second most important ability.

Respondents also rated characteristics of school heads they viewed as crucial to the position. The findings are presented in Table 2.1b. The most crucial characteristics for a school head were perceived to be fairness, integrity and honesty. These characteristics are key to the relationship between the Head and individual staff members. They are essential elements of the key abilities of fostering a collegial school and treating staff with respect identified above.

The three least crucial characteristics of school head effectiveness were compassion, charisma and humour. It seems that humour (14th) and charisma (13th) are characteristics that may be 'nice to have' but perhaps not as crucial to the school head's effectiveness.

Table 2.1b School Head Characteristics

Rank	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Fair	6.81	0.48
2	Possesses Integrity	6.79	0.54
3	Honest	6.71	0.57
4	Open-minded	6.24	0.87
5	Innovative	5.99	0.93
6	Decisive	5.84	0.99
7	Good listener	5.81	1.05
8	Good interpersonal communicator	5.71	0.94
9	Energetic	5.55	1.06
10	Organised	5.49	1.03

11	Empathetic	5.3	1.08
12	Compassionate	4.92	1.11
13	Charismatic	4.15	1.51
14	Humourous	3.93	1.46

Respondents were asked to rank the importance of individual items as indicators of a successful school. The five most important indicators were: positive climate for teaching, interpersonal atmosphere within the school, positive climate for research, resource support for teaching and resource support for research. Not surprisingly positive climate for teaching and positive climate for research were identified as key indicators of a successful school.

The three indicators that were perceived to be least important were; low staff turnover, recognition of staff scholarship by non-academic community and staff service to industry. The low rating of staff service to industry was surprising given the Institute's strong industry focus and links.

Table 2.1c Importance of School Success Indicators

Rank	Item	Mean	Std. Dev
1	Positive climate for teaching	6.05	0.87
2	Interpersonal atmosphere within the School	5.99	0.93
3	Positive climate for research	5.9	0.98
4	Resource support for teaching	5.81	1.03
5	Resource support for students	5.76	0.95
6	Strategic Direction of the School	5.69	1.11
7	Resource support for disadvantaged students	5.57	1.02
8	Overall staff satisfaction with the School	5.5	1.35
9	Quality of teaching within the School	5.48	1.25
10	Student graduation rate	4.8	1.47
11	Resource support for research	4.62	1.53
12	Low staff turnover	4.39	1.24
13	Recognition of staff scholarship by non-academic community	4.17	1.59
14	Staff service to industry	3.98	1.71

Factor Analysis

The underlying structure of the three sets of variables (school head characteristics, abilities, and school success indicators) was examined through principal components factor analyses after the individual item analysis identified the most critical variables of an effective school head. The factor analysis was conducted in order to reduce the

number of variables for a subsequent MANOVA identifying response variation based upon participant characteristics. An analysis of the Eigen values suggested the appropriate number of factors for the three sets of variables. Items on factors with a loading of .50 or greater and with a cross loading of no more than .40 or greater were included in the analysis.

Four factors were uncovered for crucial school head abilities, three for crucial characteristics, and three for success indicators by which to judge a head's effectiveness. Some of the items that were rated highly in the individual item analysis were eliminated from the factors due to high cross-loadings or low loadings on any one particular factor. The majority of the top ranking individual items, however, did load on one of the purified factors.

An examination of the purified factors in Table 3a reveals that people skills (mean = 5.72) is perceived to be the most crucial of all departmental abilities. This factor is characterized by the school head's ability to maintain a collegial work environment where school input is valued and respected. Managerial acumen surfaces as the next most prominent factor (mean = 5.7) and represents the school head's abilities to carry out administrative duties such as managing the budget and serving as a liaison between staff and central administration. The third most relevant factor pertaining to school head's abilities is termed strategic leadership (mean = 5.39). This factor represents the school head's ability to promote innovation and change to outside audiences in an effort to realize some vision for the department. Academic scholarship emerges well below the others as the least crucial school head ability as perceived by the respondents (mean = 4.70). Academic scholarship represents the school head's skills in terms of functioning as a regular staff member by staying current with their discipline literature, teaching, and conducting research.

Table 3a. Principal Component Analysis within School Head Abilities

<i>Item</i>	<i>People Skills</i>	<i>Managerial Acumen</i>	<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	<i>Academic Scholarship</i>
Ability to build consensus	.61			
Ability to generate funding from private sources			.5	
Ability to implement change			.63	
Ability to manage school budget		.55		
Ability to manage everyday operations in the school		.54		

Ability to represent the Institute's perspective to staff		.59		
Ability to represent the school to central administration		.61		
Ability to say 'no' when necessary		.55		
Ability to foster a collegial school	.73			
Ability to convey policies clearly to staff		.53		
Democratic leadership style	.55			
Knowledge of current literature in the field				.74
Promotes innovative curriculum			.65	
Effective communicator with external audiences			.79	
Research skills				.77
Teaching skills				.79
Treats staff with respect	.64			
Possesses a strategic vision for the school			.69	
Mean	5.72	5.7	5.39	4.70
Variance	9.9	9.6	12.0	9.9
accounted for (%)				
Eigen values	2.59	2.9	4.02	3.16
Cronbach's Alpha	.55	.68	.69	.78

Factor analysis of the respondent data yielded three factors pertaining to perceived school head characteristics. As shown in Table 3b, the most crucial factor (mean = 6.81), as perceived by the respondents, is termed principle, and is comprised of fairness, honesty, and integrity. The second most crucial factor, ranking considerably below principle (mean = 5.08), is labelled understanding. This factor pertains to the school head's empathy, compassion, and listening skills. The least crucial factor (mean = 5.01), deemed vigour, consists of the school head's energy, humour, and innovativeness.

TABLE 3B● PRINCIPAL COMPONENT ANALYSIS WITHIN SCHOOL HEAD CHARACTERISTICS

<i>Item</i>	<i>Principle</i>	<i>Understanding</i>	<i>Vigor</i>
1. Compassionate		.83	
2. Empathetic		.81	
3. Energetic			.64
4. Fair	.74		
5. Good listener		.51	
6. Good interpersonal communicator		.54	
7. Honest	.68		
8. Humorous			.75
9. Innovative			.78
10. Open-minded		.56	
11. Possesses integrity	.74		
Mean	6.81	5.08	5.02
Variance accounted for (%)	15.1	19.5	14.2
Eigenvalues	2.26	2.93	2.14
Cronbach's Alpha	.69	.77	.65

Factor analysis of the data yielded three factors regarding success indicators for a school.. The findings (see Table 3c) indicate that staff satisfaction (mean = 5.37) is the most important success indicator for a school. This factor encompasses such criteria as a collegial atmosphere within the school as well as the interpersonal atmosphere within the school. Student focus (mean = 5.45) includes the criteria of student graduation rate, student job placement, and overall student satisfaction with the school. Support for staff research (mean = 5.47) includes criteria such as funding for conference travel and research, and a positive climate for research

Table 3c. Principal Component Analysis within School Success Measures

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Staff Satisfaction</i>	<i>Student Focus</i>	<i>Staff Profile</i>
1.	Staff research productivity			.57
2.	Overall Staff satisfaction with school	.53		
3.	Staff service to the non-academic community			.66
5.	Interpersonal atmosphere within the department	.74		
6.	Staff satisfaction	.58		
7.	Low staff turnover	.52		
8.	Student graduation rate		.62	
9.	Student job placement		.71	
10	Overall student satisfaction with the department		.73	
11	Quality of teaching within the department		.74	
12	Positive climate for research			.67
13	Resource support for research			.70
14	A collegial department environment	.68		
16	Conference travel support			.75
	Mean	5.91	5.71	5.4
	Variance accounted for (%)	14.5	20.2	14.6
	Eigenvalues	3.6	5.1	3.6
	Cronbach's Alpha	.78	.86	.76

Staff Perceptions and Head of School Abilities

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA), followed by Scheffe comparison tests, were run in order to assess the relationship between the classification variables and the purified factors pertaining to department head abilities, characteristics, and departmental measures of success. Classification variables assessed included grade and length of service.

There was evidence of differences between staff views on school head abilities between different academic grades. SL11 and SL111 placed a greater emphasis on managerial acumen than did the other faculties ($p < .04$) while Lecture 1 rated people skills significantly higher than other staff grades ($p < .03$). It is not clear why such differences should arise and this probably needs further research to explore the reasons. Length of service showed no significant differences while the only significant gender difference was on people skills with females scoring this significantly higher than males. ($p < 0.5$)

CONCLUSIONS

An effective Head of School has the potential to have a hugely positively influence on the development of their academic discipline by managing the time and talent of their staff and facilitating their work. However, the converse is also true. An ineffective head of school may stymie development and lead to low morale and low levels of motivation amongst staff. In the US and in the university sector in Ireland the Head of School roles are rotated with the incumbent holding the position for usually a period of five years. In the IOT sector the Head of School and the director/dean once appointed hold the position until they retire from it. Thus the selection of an effective academic unit head in the IOT sector is even more critical.

This study identifies abilities and characteristics that were perceived by staff as crucial for success in the role of academic unit head. This study should be useful for Heads of academic units to assist them in their job performance. Such identification can also help facilitate the selection and induction of department, school and faculty heads.

The education literature describes four school head roles that require the demonstration of leadership, staff development, managerial, and scholarly abilities. Three of the roles identified in this study— leadership, managerial, and scholarly abilities – were congruent with the education literature and were valued to varying degrees by the respondents. This study, however, identified a different school head role which has not been emphasized in the education literature – that of the diplomat. Ability items comprising the diplomacy factor were in fact perceived to be crucial in an effective school head.

In terms of the diplomacy role, our respondents seem to want a head that is fair and decisive while respecting staff input and democratically seeking opinions. Further, staff appear to value their relationships with colleagues and perceive an effective head as one who fosters a collegial work environment. Perhaps survey participants feel that a

democratic, collegial environment helps foster benefits such as increased collaboration on teaching, curriculum development and research and greater satisfaction with the School. Respondents wanted the decision making process within the academic unit to be transparent and inclusive.

School Heads are expected to display abilities comprising strategic leadership. This role involves many diverse abilities, ranging from promoting innovative curriculum to effective communication with external audiences. It also includes ability to implement change and possession of a strategic vision for the school. Schools Heads are thus expected to be change managers and have a strong futuristic vision that will position the school effectively with external audiences.

Certain personal characteristics were deemed as crucial for a school head to possess. Staff perceive an effective school head as one who displays a high level of integrity and honesty. The high ratings that the respondents assigned to these characteristics imply that school heads need to follow through with commitments and keep promises. Treating staff in a fair and even-handed fashion is also seen as crucial quality for a head of school. Further, academics perceive the effective head as an individual who is open-minded and a good listener.

Although school heads are charged with myriad duties and goals to accomplish, our results suggest that most academic staff use similar criteria to judge the success of a school. Positive climates for teaching, good interpersonal atmosphere within the school positive climate for research and resource support for staff and students emerged as the most crucial measures of a successful school head. Senior management and staff need to clearly understand the other's expectations for a successful school to help the school head and staff focus energy and effort on meeting crucial objectives.

Further research might include a qualitative study amongst staff to explore further the findings from this study.

IMPLICATIONS

The information generated in this study may serve a number of purposes and may well have implications for academic management in higher education institutions regarding the selection, training, and professional development of heads of academic units. Training mechanisms, such as institutional workshops and/or professional association seminars that help school heads enhance particular abilities and recognize success measures most valued by staff should benefit the effectiveness of heads of academic units.

Those who aspire to be a school/department/faculty head should realize that the position requires a distinct set of characteristics and duties that are not expected of a lecturing staff member. Some staff may be particularly skillful and passionate about their teaching and research. This type of person, however, may not be well-suited for the department head position, as administrative tasks often detract from the time one can

devote to more favored scholarly pursuits. However in schools with research active staff there is an expectation that the head would have a strong research background.

Further, the study's information may be used to create a preparatory checklist when interviewing and appointing individuals for such positions. This study might assist in identifying clear criteria to evaluate candidates.

By identifying those abilities, characteristics, and success measures that are perceived as relatively more important than others, this study will allow school heads to refine their skills in particular areas and focus on specific outcomes. Such focus may help to reduce the stress associated with attempting to wear too many hats, and may in turn increase job satisfaction and decrease turnover associated with the position. The future development of higher education depends to a large extent upon the success of the academic units and their administration. Understanding the school head position will help improve the discipline associated with it.

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ACCOUNTING FOR TOURIST NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE – A CONCEPTUAL MODEL

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ABSTRACT

This study proposes a tourist attributional process model to illustrate how tourists account for negative experiences. The model starts with tourist negative experience as the antecedent to causal attribution, and sets satisfaction as the consequence of casual attribution. Three attributional dimensions are identified. They are locus (internal vs. external), stability (stable vs. unstable), and globality (global vs. specific). The proposed model postulates that internal, unstable, and specific attributions lead to a higher level of overall tourist satisfaction under the circumstance of negative tourist experiences. The linkage between satisfaction and loyalty is also examined in the model. However, the study not only looks at loyalty as a desired outcome of tourist experience but also focuses on its role as a moderator affecting the three attributional dimensions and their linkages to satisfaction. Six propositions are introduced to illustrate the relationships in the model including the moderating effects of loyalty. This paper concludes with a discussion on the study's implications, and a call for continuing investigations to empirically examine the proposed model.

KEYWORDS: attributional dimensions; loyalty; moderating effect; satisfaction; tourist negative experience.

INTRODUCTION

Tourist experiences of visiting a destination are different from consuming other products. In addition to the general service characteristics of intangibility, perishability, variability, and inseparability, tourism experiences depend on a mixture of consumption opportunities made available by a wide spectrum of different service providers including hotels, street vendors, and attractions, among others. Tourist experiences also comprise encounters with people not involved in the commercial provision of services such as local residents and other tourists. Furthermore, tourist experiences are subject to situations beyond the control of service providers, such as the effects of political turmoil and natural disasters of forest fires and earthquakes. Under these features of tourist experiences, virtually no destination can offer a 100% satisfaction guarantee. Recovery efforts of service failures by individual providers may mitigate tourist dissatisfaction with a particular event that caused the negative experience, but little is known on how such

negative experience affects the overall satisfaction of tourist entire trip and loyalty to the destination.

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize a process model of the tourist's psychological reactions to a negative experience. The study sets two specific objectives. They are to examine key concepts of the process model, and to identify the relational linkages among these concepts. These objectives are achieved through syntheses of theoretical examination and empirical findings in consumer behavioral studies in general and in tourism literature in particular. The conceptual foundation of the study is the attribution theory as originally proposed by Heider, and modified and extended by others (e.g. Kelley, 1973; Martinko & Thomson, 1998; Weiner, 1985a, 2000).

THE TOURIST ATTRIBUTION MODEL

Conceptual Foundation

Fritz Heider (1958), the founder of attribution theory, suggested that individuals attempt to uncover linkages between causes and effects, and emphasized that different aspects of interpersonal actions cause different kinds of attribution. Other scholars "analyzed the processes by which people infer others' intentions and dispositions—and explain events in terms of being caused by self or others or God or luck (McClenon, 1998:36)." Among many ensuing studies, Kelley (1973) proposed information-based attributional dimensions of distinctiveness, consensus, and consistency at the high and low levels. Weiner (1985a) proposed the attributional dimensions of locus, stability, and control at the internal vs. external, stable vs. unstable, and global vs. specific levels. Martinko and Thomson (1998) integrated Kelley's and Weiner's dimensions and proposed a model of their own. Coffee and Rees (2008) also combined Kelley's and Weiner's models to develop measurement scales and to examine the main and interaction effects of attributional dimensions.

Attribution theory and its various derivatives have been used for studies in diverse disciplines, explaining cause-and-effect phenomena in consumers' and marketers' behaviors, and in supervisors and subordinates relationships. Influenced by Weiner's work (1986), Oliver (1993) classified a consumer's negative affect into three—external, internal, and situational—dimensions, and set the causal attribution as the antecedent of affect and satisfaction. Harris, Mohr, and Bernhardt (2006) focused on the internal vs. external dimension to examine if online consumers attribute more to themselves. Boshoff and Leong's (1998) empirical study considered the locus (internal vs. external) of attribution as a factor of service firm's service recovery and confirmed the importance of internal attribution done by the service providers. Maxwell (1999) used attribution theory to explain that a consumer has a egocentric tendency and blames the sellers when the price increases regardless of the culture that the consumer belongs to. Laczniak, DeCarlo, and Ramaswami (2001) validated the mediating effect of attribution in explaining the causal relationship between negative word-of-mouth communication and brand evaluations.

There have been alternative theories to examine an individual's explanation of the cause and effect of an event. Malle (1999) distinguished between causes for unintentional behavior and reasons for intentional behavior which comes out of the subject's desire and belief. Malle explained that intentional behavior starts from the causal history of an individual and reasons, defined as "agents' mental states in light of which they formed an intention to act (Malle, 1999:36)." This theory suggests that intention is motivated by reasons and leads to behavior by enabling factors. Self-enhancement theory and self-serving bias posit that people tend to attribute positive events to internal, stable, global factors and vice versa (Bradley, 1978; Mezulis, Abramson, Hyde, & Hankin, 2004; Shepperd & Sweeny, 2008). Extant literature also applies justice theory to explain a consumer's psychological process, especially under negative events (Blodgett, Hill, & Tax, 1997; McCollough, 2000; Weber, 2005). The justice theory suggests that a consumer's perceived notions of fairness, interaction, treatment, and procedural acceptability define the consumer's satisfaction and behavioral intentions (Hocutt & Charkraborty, 1997).

In comparison to attribution theory, the abovementioned alternatives have their own limitations. Malle's focus on the intentional reasons of a behavior is rarely the case in a tourism setting where a negative experience would result from an intentional act by a service provider. Self-serving bias misses complex combinations of attributional dimensions that appear differently by different emotional states and other factors such as loyalty level. Justice theory does not accommodate a broader nature of services provided in a tourism experience because it focuses on the consumer's perception towards specific actions of individual service provider. On the other hand, attribution theory provides clear criteria to study a holistic process and makes possible to explore combinations of attributional dimensions that lead to different levels of satisfaction towards the totality of experiences.

Studies of the tourists' explanation of negative experiences are limited in tourism literature. Bowen (2002) suggested a structured, observational method to capture micro-events which affect the tourists' locus of blame and ensuing satisfaction. Park, Lehto, and Park (2008) collected consumers' complaints to analyze the different justice dimensions by different contexts of services provided in a family tourism setting. In some studies, attribution theory is suggested as a persuasive framework. For example, Chang (2008) found tourists' and travel agencies' different loci of attributional process by observing and interviewing tour participants. While revealing general tendencies of external attribution, he also proposed cultural influence on the attribution by introducing Chinese tourists' tendencies of blaming themselves.

Negative Experience and Satisfaction

What happens between a tourist negative experience and satisfaction of his or her overall trip is analogous to a black box. A negative experience occurs when the tourist encounters an event that is unexpected and adversely affects his or her wellbeing as a tourist at the time of the event. Existing literature on satisfaction seems to support that such event or negative experience would result in decreased satisfaction (Bougie, Pieters, & Zeelenberg, 2003; Reichel, Lowengart, & Milman, 2000; Swan & Combs, 1976).

Satisfaction is defined in a few different ways. From the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, satisfaction is seen as the gap between the consumer's expectations and perceived performance of brands or services (Oliver, 1980). Equity theory (Adams, 1965) explains that satisfaction is determined by comparing the benefit-to-input ratio with the ratio under other transaction situations. Three-factor structure of satisfaction (e.g. Matzler & Sauerwein, 2002) consists of basic factors, performance factors, and excitement factors by different levels of satisfiers and dissatisfiers. These studies on consumer satisfaction share an implied assumption: when service fails that result in negative consumer experience, it is the provider's responsibility to mitigate the failure and its consequence through service recovery. This assumption underlies the popular consumers-are-always-right motto.

Attribution theory makes no such assumption. It accommodates the understanding that consumers do not always attribute a negative experience to a specific entity or individual, and their satisfaction is multidimensional. When a tourist encounters negative experiences, he or she tends to make causal explanations about the experience for justification and for the reference in their attitudes and behaviors in the future. For example, if a tourist attributes the negative experience to internal factors, his or her satisfaction towards the outer services would not be lowered and the negative experience would not adversely affect the tourist's loyalty toward the destination.

An important development of literature on tourist satisfaction is the understanding that it could have a cognitive-affective structure. Attribution theory is appropriate in explaining the role of emotion and its rational process by causal attribution. Gnoth (1997) distinguished between the satisfaction of emotional values, which is closely associated with inner-directed attitudes and causes overall satisfaction, and cognitive values, which is outer-directed. Accordingly, cognitive-affective aspects are regarded as two evaluation categories from this classification. Recent studies in tourism point out the lack of attention to cognitive-affective model to interpret tourist satisfactions and apply these concepts in different settings (de Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Rodriguez del Bosque & San Martin, 2008). Rodriguez del Bosque and San Martin (2008) adopted cognitive-affective concepts and used them in measuring satisfaction with additional questions about fulfillment, overall satisfaction, and image attributes. Fornell, Johnson, Anderson, Cha, and Bryant (1996) considered perceived quality and expectation, and perceived value of consumers as the predictors of consumer satisfaction. Szymanski and Henard (2001) summarized that five predictors—expectation, disconfirmation of expectations, performance, affect, and equity—have significant effects on satisfaction.

Differentiation between transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction is critical for understanding the outcome of complex services settings (Bitner & Hubbert, 1994). Tourist experience takes place in such a complex service setting. This means that the level of a tourist's overall satisfaction is not necessarily directly linked to the level of transaction-specific satisfaction. That is, tourists may be dissatisfied with specific services but might be satisfied with the overall tourism experience, which has not been seriously considered in the extant research. This is due to the notion that the evaluation of the experience as a whole is much more important in service industries (Bowen, 2001:53). This does not mean, however, the events that are responsible for negative

experiences but do not affect the overall satisfaction should be overlooked. On the contrary, it highlights the importance of discovering not only what negative experiences are linked to tourist overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction but also how they are linked. Attribution theory clarifies the understanding of these links. It shows the process that leads to overall satisfaction as the outcome of a chain of causal explanations of negative events. Specifically, clear relationship can be examined through the identification of attributional dimensions as the causes of satisfaction or lack of it. And eventually, overall satisfaction as the consequence of tourism experiences and attributional process of them affects loyalty.

Loyalty as a Moderator

Various studies have suggested diverse components or sub-constructs of loyalty. As Oliver (1999) defines, brand loyalty involves a deep commitment of repurchase and a high level of favor towards the brand even if the stimuli which pull towards other brands exist. There are two most popular categorizations of loyalty. One consists of the four stages of cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty, which leads to the real behavior (e.g. Oliver, 1999); and the second categorization dichotomizes loyalty into attitudinal and behavioral components (e.g. Dick & Basu, 1994). As Li and Petrick (2008) recently validated cognitive, affective, and conative loyalty as sub-dimensions of attitudinal loyalty which leads to behavioral loyalty in a tourism setting, the two categorizations can in fact be reconciled.

However, cognitive, affective, and even conative loyalty may not be defined as the “true loyalty,” because they are attitudinal, and may only represent wishes. Similarly, behavioral loyalty may not be regarded as “true loyalty” either, because it can be covetous and inertia (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004). Not all the repeat purchasers of brands or services are more loyal, and repeat purchase doesn’t always imply high loyalty. It may be argued that repeated purchase is just an outcome of habitual behavior (Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001). Others suggest that high transition costs or no alternative options cause repetitive purchase (Yang & Peterson, 2004). In spite of the conceptual disagreement on the structure of loyalty and the lack of research on the relationships among the loyalty dimensions in tourism, a strong relationship between repurchase intention and actual repurchase behavior was shown by Li and Petrick (2008) in tourism and was also reported by Kenningham, Cooli, Aksoy, Andreassen, and Weiner’s (2007) study on generic products.

Therefore, repeated purchases would be a good measure of behavioral loyalty when such purchase is inspired by the consumers’ satisfaction with prior purchase experiences. In tourism settings, satisfaction with previous visit becomes a condition of consequent revisit to the destination. Extant literature in tourism generally recognizes that a high level of satisfaction causes higher likelihood of repeat visitation. Many studies prove the causal relationship by using structural equation modeling, repeat visitation being measured by revisit intention as a part of a loyalty construct. For example, Yoon and Uysal (2005) provided empirical evidence of a structural relationship between satisfaction and loyalty, with motivation factors included in the model, by surveying tourists to Northern Cyprus. Revisit intention as part of loyalty is also treated separately

from attitudinal loyalty and the relationship with satisfaction is tested by using regression. For example, in examining the effect of number of visit on satisfaction and revisit intention, Kozak and Rimmington (2000) showed that satisfied tourists are likely to revisit as well as to recommend to others. Furthermore, the structural relations provided by Li and Petrick (2008) showed a causal relationship between attitudinal loyalty and “behavioral loyalty,” which was measured by the actual repeated purchase. In this aspect, loyalty in the tourism attributional process model is defined as repeat visitation.

Baron and Kenny define a moderator as a variable that “affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986:1174).” In the current study, tourist loyalty is defined as a moderator, because different levels of it intervene tourist emotional process and affect the tendency of causal attribution after a negative experience. Branding literature suggests that consumers with a higher level of loyalty think the brand of being their side, have a lower level of negative emotions, and are more likely to patronize the brand even if they face negative events as a part of the brand experience because higher level of loyalty is based upon higher awareness and more positive brand image and because it is enhanced through durable interactions between the brand and the consumer. As Pantouvakis and Lymeropoulos’ (2008) study on ferry passenger shows that repeat consumers are likely to show higher satisfaction and low dissatisfaction, moderating roles of repeat visitation in satisfaction and loyalty are expected to exist in tourism as well. As a destination brand towards which tourists have higher level of loyalty will be perceived as being akin to the tourists themselves, it is also assumed that loyalty towards the destination affects the way they interprets the causes of their negative brand experiences according to the self-serving attribution bias. Those who have a higher level of destination loyalty are likely to attribute negative experiences less towards the destination, which is an external factor. Tourists who show higher loyalty are likely to assume that the negative experience is an unstable event and is less likely to be generalized—which indicates a lower level of globality—that they believe that negative experiences didn’t happen due to the destination brand they are loyal to and are not likely to happen during their future visits.

Tourist Attributional Dimensions

A tourist attributional process model is proposed in Figure 1. Martinko and Thomson’s work (1998) provided a useful starting point for identifying tourist attributional dimensions. The model consists of three attributional dimensions forming causal attribution, with negative experience as the antecedent and satisfaction as the outcome. The model defines loyalty as having moderating effects on the attributional dimensions.

Locus dimension (internal vs. external), which is also referred to as consensus by Kelley (1973), explains the process that individuals attribute the cause of an event to themselves or external factors. When the tourists trace the causes of a negative experience, different loyalty levels lead to different ways of tracking the origin. Those who have a high destination loyalty are likely to be generous towards the service

providers and perceive that the event occurred because of their own faults or mistakes. Even if the entire tourism experience involves multiple service failures, tourists are likely to be tolerant towards them because they justify that the negative events are originally expected and they themselves are to blame in that they did not act carefully.

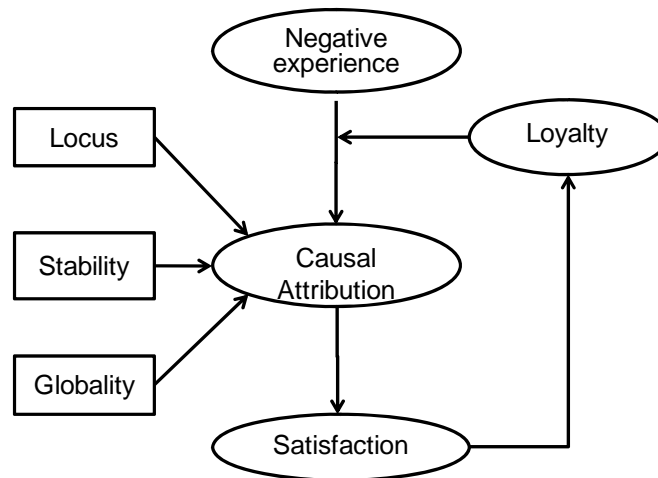


Figure 1. Tourist Attributional Dimensions and Process

From the expectancy-disconfirmation point of view of satisfaction, this mechanism reduces the gap between the expected performance and the perceived outcome. That is, when the consumer's mindset operates to narrow the gap between the two and not to blame the service provider, he or she is likely to have a higher level of satisfaction. As mood is known to link experience to satisfaction (de Rojas & Camarero, 2008), the chain of negative experience, negative mood, and dissatisfaction is usually expected. However, inward attribution imputes the liability of bad events less to the external factors such as the services provided and it decrease external dissatisfiers to blame. From the psychological chain mediated by mood, it consequently decreases the bad mood stimulated by dissatisfiers which occur during the transaction from outer factors and it offsets negative dissatisfiers which are generated by the transaction-specific situations. The locus dimension provides that, in the event of a negative experience, internal attribution is likely to decrease the level of dissatisfaction caused by the event itself, and at the same time increase the level of overall satisfaction.

Stability (stable vs. unstable) determines if the negative event has been occurring and will consistently happen. For example, if a service failure occurs, the tourist may either interpret that the negative experience will happen again in the future or that it happened by chance and is likely not to happen again. As those who show more behavioral loyalty tend to have already had positive destination experiences prior to the particular trip, they are more likely to assume the negative events as accidental situations and expect that they will not occur in their future travel to the same destination. In addition, people who attribute a negative experience to unstable factors tend to think that the immanent attributes of a destination are not related to the negative events during the particular trip. It means that the stability dimension provides that, when the negative

event occurs, causal attribution towards unstable factors decreases the level of dissatisfaction caused by the event itself, and at the same time increases the level of overall satisfaction.

Globality (global vs. specific) deals with the generalizability of the specific negative experiences to the all possible tourism experience of the destination. While the tourists trace the causes of a negative experience, they consider if it can be generalized into all service encounters at the destination. If they perceive a trivial service failure as a generalizable dissatisfier of the destination experience, tourists are likely to expand dissatisfied emotion and rationalization of it by the causal attribution towards the destination. When the destination is perceived negatively due to the generalization of partial dissatisfiers, the tourist's overall satisfaction level decreases. However, loyal tourists tend not to generalize a specific negative experience to the entire destination experience because they are more emotionally involved with the destination and revisit out of the belief that the trip would fulfill their expected satisfaction level. Therefore, they reduce the emotional effects of specific dissatisfactory events. By disconnecting a negative specific experience from the overall evaluation of their destination experience, loyal consumers reduce their dissatisfaction with the destination experience.

The relationships between the three-dimensional causal attribution, its antecedent (tourist negative experience), its consequence (satisfaction), and the dynamic mediator or loyalty can be summarized in six propositions as follows.

Proposition 1a (Locus): Higher level of destination loyalty leads tourists to attribute more to internal factors after a negative experience.

Proposition 1b (Stability): Higher level of destination loyalty leads tourists to attribute more to unstable factors after a negative experience.

Proposition 1c (Globality): Higher level of destination loyalty leads tourists to attribute more to specific factors after a negative experience.

Proposition 2a (Locus): Tourists are more satisfied with overall destination experiences if they attribute the negative experience more to internal factors.

Proposition 2b (Stability): Tourists are more satisfied with overall destination experiences if they attribute the negative experience more to unstable factors.

Proposition 2c (Globality): Tourists are more satisfied with overall destination experiences if they attribute the negative experience more to specific factors.

CONCLUSION

This study proposed a tourist attributional process model. The process consists of tourist negative experience as the antecedent to causal attribution and satisfaction as the consequence of it. Three attributional dimensions were identified. The linkage between

satisfaction and loyalty is expressed in the model as well. However, loyalty, defined as repeat visit, also serves as a moderator affecting the three dimensions of tourist casual attribution. Six propositions were introduced to illustrate the moderating effects of loyalty.

The proposed process model contributes to the extant tourism literature by focusing on tourist negative experiences. Tourist perceptions of and reactions to negative experiences are different from those to the positive ones. So are their attitudinal and behavioral responses. This study provides a conceptual understanding on how tourists may account for such negative experiences through a three-dimensional causal attribution, how each of the attributional dimension is related to their satisfaction, and to what extent their loyalty moderates the dimensions and their linkages to satisfaction. The three attributional dimensions identified in the study affirm that tourists do not always blame service providers for their negative experiences, and their overall satisfaction with a destination may not be adversely affected by such experiences. The study therefore calls for the attention to the notion and practice that consumers are always right when tourist services fail. It highlights the importance to track how tourists show different attitudinal and behavioral reactions in the event of a negative experience.

Studies show that consumers try to avoid perceived risks in making purchase decisions. This is especially true when tourists buy tourism products (Mitchell, Davies, Moutinho, & Vassos, 1999; Tsaur, Tzeng, & Wang, 1997; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2007). Loyalty is important in reducing risks both for the destination and consumers. Uncertainty and possibility of negative experience always exists when tourists choose destinations. Individuals tend to build brand loyalty to minimize risks (Gounaris & Stathakopoulos, 2004) and risk-averse people tend to be more loyal to brands while brand trust and affect mediate the relationship (Matzler, Grabner-Kräuter, & Bidmon, 2008). Tourist loyalty to a destination is typically considered as a desired outcome of tourist experience. This study not only related loyalty to tourist satisfaction under the circumstance of tourist negative experience, but also examined its role as a moderator. Destinations have long recognized the value of repeat visitations by tourists. Destination management organizations would benefit from the knowledge that tourist loyalty affects how repeat tourists account for negative experiences should they occur.

Scholars of attribution theory assert that causal attribution is done more frequently under unusual situations than during routine events (Read, 1987; Weiner, 1985b). Increasingly volatile environmental conditions are adding risks to destinations and tourists. They are building up a higher level of tourist expectations, yet at the same time threatening the stability of tourism service quality. The threat of terrorism such as the recent attack in Mumbai and political instability in popular tourist destinations as can be seen from the Thailand's anti-government protests exemplify increasing risks caused by political factors. Other crisis situations such as H1N1 flu outbreak further the volatility of tourist experience. While they might be considered as uncontrollable and destinations may assume no responsibility for adverse events, tourist negative experience nevertheless occurs, and a sound crisis management procedure is expected. These dynamic causes of tourist negative experiences warrant empirical investigations for a better understanding of the relationships as proposed in the process model.

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RESOURCE EXCHANGES ON AGRITOURISM ENCOUNTERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the conceptual relationship of social interaction and satisfaction derived from resource theory. Tourists encounter a series of interactions which provide various resources, so understanding how those interactions influence tourism experiences is believed to be important. This study examines this issue by investigating what tourists' reactions to receiving particular versus universal types of resources are. Results of the study provide empirical evidence that particular resources exchanged on tourism encounters contribute more to satisfaction than universal resources.

KEYWORDS: Agritourism, Resource theory, Service encounters, Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Service encounters often refer to a service experience from a customer's point of view (Bitner, 1990). The heterogeneity and the inseparability of service characteristics emphasize that services encounters involve customers' interactions with service providers and/or other customers (Lovelock & Gummesson, 2004; Namasivayam, 2002; Sierra & McQuitty, 2005). Moreover, a majority of service encounter scholars suggest that customers' interactions with service providers during service encounters are very important because it is during this time when customers judge the service experience and most services involve at least one human being interacting with another (Czepiel, 1990; Shostack, 1985).

In tourism, researchers have also demonstrated that tourists have a wide variety of social encounters, involving various kinds of exchanges with service providers and other tourists/customers. Thus, the nature and meaning of social interaction is a critical issue to tourism scholars who are concerned with the quality of tourist experiences. One of the questions involving social interaction is what it is that people exchange with each other and how the exchanging different kinds of resources effect the service experience. For many years, psychologists and sociologists have assumed that much of human behavior can be understood through studying the resources and benefits people give to and receive from others and the rules that govern such exchanges. Resource theory (U. G. Foa, 1971; U. G. Foa, Converse, Tornblom, & Foa, 1993; U. G. Foa & Foa, 1974)

directly studies these issues yet, few researchers have formally tested this theory for tourism and marketing phenomena (Morais, 2000). Resource theory could help understand how tourists direct their efforts into social interactions by identifying what kinds of resources they exchange in the social exchange relationship during tourism encounters and how these resources influence tourists' satisfaction.

Tourists are often encouraged to engage in interactions in order to enjoy activities and services, so it is thus believed to be important to understand how those interactions could contribute to the evaluation of tourism experiences. This paper addresses this issue by focusing on the content of exchanges, adopting resource theory.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the service marketing literature, service encounters are defined as any period of time during which a customer interacts with a service (Bitner, 1990; Shostack, 1985). Many scholars (e.g., Lovelock, Patterson and Walker, 1998) have taken an even narrower view, suggesting that a service encounter is a dyadic interaction. Therefore, the use of the term "service encounter" has primarily focused on a dyadic interaction that occurs between a service provider and a service recipient, describing the service encounter as a social encounter (Czepiel, 1990; Suprenant & Solomon, 1987). This paper follows the service marketing definition of Shostack (1985) and Bitner (1990) mentioned above, but the focus is narrower to the extent that it will only be taking into consideration face-to-face encounters.

Resource theory can be useful for understanding interpersonal interactions of service encounters between service providers and customers because it attempts to understand the characteristics of the resources exchanged between individuals and the patterns of exchange, examining the exchange of interpersonal resources as well as economic resources. According to this theory, a resource is defined as anything of value that can be transmitted from one person to another (E. B. Foa & Foa, 1976) and categorized into six classes: love, status, information, money, goods, and services. It is important to note that this classification of resources transacted pertains to the meanings assigned to interpersonal behavior rather than specific behavior used to convey meaning. This view is consistent with current cognitive models/theories explaining that a given behavior can be rewarding, punishing, or indifferent, depending on the meaning ascribed to it (U. G. Foa et al., 1993). This suggests that one behavior can possibly be perceived as having multiple meanings. Two dimension of the six resources has been proposed: particularism versus universalism (how interchangeable the particular people in an exchange are) and concreteness versus symbolism (U. G. Foa, et al., 1993; U. G. Foa & Foa, 1974). For example they classified love as the most particularistic resource because the actors in fact make all the difference. The least particularistic is money, in which actors' identities make little difference.

According to resource theory, individuals satisfy personal needs through resource exchanges with others (Foa & Foa, 1980). The ordinal position of a resource on the particularism dimension influences the levels of satisfaction that are possible for

interpersonal exchanges. The opportunity to exchange love with a highly valued particular person in repeated encounters over a period of time offers an opportunity for the highest levels of satisfaction (Rettig & Leichtentritt, 1998). According to Rettig and Leichtentritt (1998), the exchange of particularistic resources require personalized care, privacy of space, and repeated encounters. These requirements are not necessary for the exchange of universalistic resources. Previous research has established that personal feelings about a more particularistic resource received in a family environment (in contrast to a universal resource) can significantly contribute to explaining the variance in evaluations of satisfaction level in one's family life (Rettig & Bubolz, 1983a, 1983b). Therefore, this study hypothesizes that travelers who receive particularistic resources via interaction will be more satisfied with their tourism experiences than those who received universal resources.

METHODOLOGY

The data for this study were collected from February to March 2009 in two ways: (1) onsite survey at selected organic farms in TX; and (2) an online survey of persons who visited local farms in TX and visitors to selected farms through email addresses provided by the two farmers. During an 8-week period, a total of 452 surveys were returned. Of those, 21 incomplete or duplicate responses were identified and removed. Thus, 431 were kept in the final sample (onsite 286; online 145) for analysis. Demographic characteristics of study subjects (N=431) are provided in Table 1. Following the conceptualization of social interaction drawn from social exchange theory and resource theory (U. G. Foa & Foa, 1974), 18 items (Table 2) were included to measure the concept of interaction with service providers (Morais, Backman, & Dorsch, 2003). All variables were measured with five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree) (Table 2).

Table 1 Demographic characteristics of survey respondents

Demographic Variable	Sample (N=431)	Demographic Variable	Sample (N=431)
Gender			
Male	26.9%		
Female	73.1%		
Age		Employment status	
18-29	27.4%	Employed full-time	35.8%
30-39	36.3%	Employed part-time	21.4%
40-49	17.2%	Self-employed	5.7%
50-59	9.7%	Full-time homemaker	11.9%
60-74	8.1%	Student	13.2%
75+	1.3%	Retired	7.5%
		Not currently employed	4.4%
Income		Education background	
Less than 19,999	11.0%	Less than high school	0.3%
\$20,000 to less than \$40,000	13.9%	Some college, not completed	13.5%
\$40,000 to less than \$60,000	23.6%	Completed high school	

\$60,000 to less than \$80,000	13.4%	Completed college	4.7%
\$80,000 to less than \$100,000	31.1%	Post graduate work	49.9%
\$100,000 +	17.7%	started/completed	31.7%
Income Average	\$79,000		
Median	\$80,000		
Marital status		Ethnic background	
Single		Caucasian	79.7%
Married	31.8%	Hispanic/Mexican American	5.5%
Single parent w/child(ren)	29.8%	African American	1.1%
Married w/child(ren)	16.2%	Asian	10.4%
Other	20.6%	Native American	0.5%
	1.7%	Other	2.7%

RESULTS

Before factor analysis, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for factor analysis was tested and the result suggested the data were better than “metritorous (0.80’s) and close to “marvelous (0.90’s) using Kaiser’s (1970) definition. Therefore, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on the 18 items to help determine if these items reliably measure visitors’ interaction with service providers. The three factors extracted using Varimax rotation accounted for 64.2% of the variance. Factors were labeled based on the common characteristics of grouped items. Thus, factors were labeled Love (Factor 1), Money (Factor 2), and Service (Factor 3) which explained 42.7%, 15.5% and 6.0% of the variance respectively. Five items (SI5, SI9, SI10, SI12 and SI14) were excluded due to either low factor loadings or cross loadings. After excluding these items, factor loadings for the retained items were increased by .04 on average and no significant change was found on Cronbach’s α coefficients.

Based on the information from EFA, structural equation modeling (SEM) using AMOS 7.0 was used to compare the effect of the factors representing particular and universal resources exchanged via social interaction respectively on satisfaction. Two items (SI3 and SI15) (Table 2) were removed due to large residuals having modification indices of error terms greater than 100. Specifically they seemed to be correlated with multiple factors. In addition, an examination of the wording of SI_S15 revealed that it might not be clearly associated with the current factor (Money) as it was originally developed as an item for Information which does not exist anymore.

Table 2 shows that the indicators loaded significantly and substantively on their hypothesized factors ($p < .001$), suggesting convergent validity (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). To assess discriminant validity, a test was conducted to determine whether the squared root of the average variance of the factors were greater than their square correlations with the factors (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). SEM results indicated all factors met this requirement and composite reliabilities of the items were greater than the recommended .7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) (Table 2 and 3). In addition, the model demonstrated good explanatory power, as 34.9% of the variance in satisfaction was explained (Figure 1).

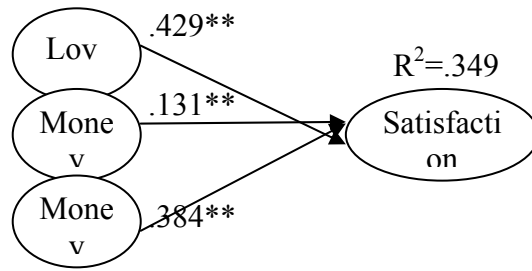


Figure 1 The relationship between resource exchange of social interaction and satisfaction

As resource theory identifies, “Love” corresponded to the most particularistic resources and “Money” was the most universal resource while “Service” resides in between. Comparison of path coefficients from each factor to satisfaction was conducted. Results from SEM revealed the following path coefficients: Love ($\beta_{\text{Love}} = .429$, $t = 8.633$, $p < .001$), Service ($\beta_{\text{Service}} = .384$, $t = 5.738$, $p < .001$), and Money ($\beta_{\text{Money}} = .131$, $t = 11.382$, $p < .001$). Thus, “Love” was found to be the best predictor, supporting the study’s hypothesis.

Table 2 Factor loadings and Composite reliabilities of retained items of measurement scale

Retained Items	Factor loading	t-Value	Composite reliability (ρ)
<u>Love</u>			.750
Service providers were very fond of me (SI1).	.794	21.50	
Service providers treated me as an important person (SI2).	.749	9	
Service providers treated me personally (SI7).	.717	-	
Service providers cared about me (SI13).	.747	16.62	
		5	
		16.36	
		7	
<u>Money</u>			.777
Service providers offered discounts (SI5).	.846	12.29	
Service providers provided monetary benefits (SI11).	.747	2	
Service providers provided or shared a free stuff (SI17).	.810	11.59	
Service providers provided or shared souvenirs (SI18).	.857	4	
		-	
		15.33	
		3	
<u>Service</u>		.701	.701
Service providers provided or shared good quality equipment to use in this visit (basket, bag, etc) (SI6).	.710		
I took advantage of service providers’ help (SI16).	.727		
<u>Satisfaction</u>			.978
I was satisfied with the farm and its service (SA1).	.973	-	

I was pleased with the farm and its service (SA2).	.981	18.12
My experience at the farm was.....(SA3)	.939	1
My overall feelings about the farm was ...(SA4)	.948	12.43
		4
		13.97
		6
Removed items		
() provided me with information on attraction, lodging, or restaurant around the farm (SI3)		
() offered discounts (SI5)		
() provided me with information (SI9).		
() assisted me in arranging the visit (SI10)		
() provided good quality products (SI12).		
() treated me special (SI14).		
() educated me about a farm (SI15).		

Table 3 Correlations in the Final Model for examining Discriminant Validity (N=400)

	Love	Money	Service	Satisfaction
Love	.642			
Money	.172	.544		
Service	.562	.476	.650	
Satisfaction	.568	.315	.625	.914

The diagonal entries (in bold) represent the average variance extracted by the factors. The correlations between constructs are shown in the lower triangle.

DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATION

This paper examines the conceptual relationship of social interaction and satisfaction derived from resource theory. Tourists encounter a series of interactions which provide various resources, so understanding how those interactions influence tourism experiences is believed to be important. This study examines this issue by investigating what tourists' reactions to receiving particular versus universal types of resources are.

Results of the study provide empirical evidence that particular resources exchanged on tourism encounters contribute more to satisfaction. Information on how tourists perceive interactions with service providers should help tourism marketers understand the importance of interpersonal interactions in enhancing tourists' experiences. In the service marketing literature, service encounters represent social encounters in which employees' interpersonal skills affect customer satisfaction (Bitner, Booms, & Mohr, 1994; Bowers, Martin, & Luker, 1990) while customers influence one another directly and/or indirectly (Bitner, et al., 1994; Martin, 1996; Wu, 2007). Of these, customers' interactions with service providers (e.g., employees) are a primary concern as it is more controllable.

Therefore, it is believed to be important for tourism marketers and management to consider how a tourist is enjoined to interactions with service providers and how s/he perceives them. This stresses that the alignment of particular resources for tourism encounters is desirable in order to better ensure positive experiences for tourists.

Specifically, it is suggested that tourism markets need to make sure that interpersonal

interactions provide the opportunity for the bond between tourists and service providers to grow stronger and perhaps more personal by providing more particular resources to tourists. As a result, the tourists may develop a more enhanced view of the relationship which will eventually affect satisfaction judgment for overall service experience. Resource theory also has an implication on agritourism marketers that provide universal resources (e.g., monetary benefits or discount) as they could be more effective if they are designed to convey personal care and attention towards individual tourists rather than just being monetary benefits. In this way, tourists can perceive universal monetary benefits as more particularistic resources to them.

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MEASURING ATTRIBUTE-SPECIFIC AND OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH DESTINATION EXPERIENCE

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ABSTRACT

In tourism, some researchers have measured the concept of satisfaction at both global and attribute levels. When satisfaction is operationalized at two levels, the measurement structure presents the type of 'specific-general' questions. Much research has maintained that this 'specific-general' question structure (also called 'part-whole' types of questions) yields contrast and/or assimilation effects (or additive or subtractive effects). This study, therefore, aims to examine whether there are any additive or subtractive effects in measuring specific and general satisfaction from a survey psychology perspective. Data were collected from 10 marketing literature effectiveness study projects across the United States. The results were that the degree of overall satisfaction was consistently higher than the average of attribute-specific satisfaction regardless of destination level, sample size, regions, and time. Therefore, additive effects were observed. Additionally, in order to fill the gap between specific and overall satisfaction, the role of information satisfaction derived from the satisfaction model proposed in the previous study was investigated. Path analysis showed that both information satisfaction and attribute-specific satisfaction were significant predictors of overall satisfaction. Therefore, it can be inferred that overall emotional satisfaction reflects something more than the sum of specific satisfaction with attributes in destinations. Finally, further research is recommended to examine why individuals feel highly positive overall satisfaction even though they have somewhat lower satisfaction with each attribute at destinations.

Keywords: Attribute-Overall satisfaction, Information satisfaction, Part-Whole question effect, Psychology of survey response

INTRODUCTION

In tourism, satisfaction has been largely studied as one of the critical indicators for destination marketing to retain loyal travelers (Baker & Crompton, 2000).

Specifically, numerous studies have examined the relationship between tourists' satisfaction and their intentions to revisit (Barsky, 1992). However, the concept of satisfaction and its application to tourism has varied depending on researchers' definitions and study contexts. For example, Baker and Crompton (2000) defined tourist satisfaction as quality of experience, and argued that it is an emotional state of mind after exposure to an opportunity. Accordingly, tourism researchers have used diverse ways of measuring satisfaction. Some apply the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm (Patterson, Johnson, & Spreng, 1997), while others measure the concept of satisfaction at both global and attribute levels (Oliver, 1993; Petrick & Backman, 2002; Spreng, Mackenzie, & Olshavsky, 1996). In particular, when satisfaction is operationalized at two levels, the measurement structure presents the type of 'specific-general' questions: global (overall) satisfaction questions follow attribute-specific satisfaction questions, or vice versa. Much research has maintained that this 'specific-general' question structure (also called 'part-whole' types of questions) yields contrast and/or assimilation effects (or additive or subtractive effects). This study, therefore, aims to examine whether there are any additive or subtractive effects when measuring specific and general satisfaction from a survey psychology perspective. In addition, in order to fill the gap between specific and general satisfaction, the role of information satisfaction derived from Spreng et al.'s (1996) satisfaction model will be investigated.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Satisfaction

Although attempts to clearly define the concepts of satisfaction have been made, there is still little consensus on the operational definition of tourist satisfaction (Petrick & Backman, 2002). One of the dominant conceptualizations to delineate satisfaction in the tourism and marketing literatures is the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm (Oliver, 1993). The disconfirmation paradigm suggests that consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction relies on the comparison of expectations to actual performance. If service performance is perceived better than one's expectation, it is satisfactory (positive disconfirmation), and conversely, if the performance is less than expected, it leads to negative disconfirmation. However, this conceptualization has been problematic, particularly in tourism contexts (Petrick, 2004). Due to the intangibility of tourism and leisure products, it has been argued that expectations are inevitably less concrete and less useful. Petrick and Backman (2002), therefore, pointed out the necessity of using a concept of desire as a predictor of satisfaction. Desires indicate "the attributes, levels of attributes, and benefits that the consumer believes will lead to or are connected with higher-level values" (Spreng & Olshavsky, 1993, p. 171), and could be more appropriate for intangible products or services since while expectations arise from only factors that an individual is aware of prior to use, desires could be made without specific attribute information (Petrick & Backman, 2002). Another concern is that according to the disconfirmation paradigm, consumers will be inevitably satisfied if their expectations are very low (LaTour & Peat, 1979).

Guided by Oliver's (1993) conceptualization, Spreng, Mackenzie, and Olshavsky (1996) distinguished between attribute and overall satisfaction, and emphasized the importance of two-level satisfaction because overall satisfaction is derived from not only the overall experience, but also the individual attributes. Based on the two-level conceptualization, Petrick and Backman (2002) examined the determinants of golf travelers' overall satisfaction, and clearly distinguished attribute-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction. Derived from discussion with golf resort management, they chose four attributes: resort facilities, resort service, quality of golf courses, and number of golf courses. Results revealed that attribute satisfaction significantly influenced overall satisfaction. More specifically, specific satisfaction with resort-related attributes (e.g. facilities and services) more than golf-related attributes (e.g. quality and number of golf courses) predicted overall satisfaction with golf travel.

However, it was also found that attribute-specific satisfaction was not the only antecedent of overall satisfaction and that information satisfaction also had a significant role in predicting overall satisfaction (Petrick & Backman, 2002). Spreng, Mackenzie, and Olshavsky (1996) argued that the degree of satisfaction with the collected information prior to purchase contributes to explaining post-purchase global satisfaction beyond attribute satisfaction. Petrick and Backman (2002) maintained that information provided prior to travel helped form expectations of future travel experience, and the more travelers were positively satisfied with information received, the more likely they were to be satisfied with their overall travel experience. Therefore, along with attribute satisfaction, information satisfaction is believed to be another predictor of overall satisfaction.

Question context effects

Contrast and assimilation effects are the most well known with reference to survey question order effects (Weisberg, 2005). Contrast effects mean that the responses to questions become more different from the previous questions, while an assimilation effect indicates that responses tend to be more similar to the responses to the previous questions (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). These question effects are more likely to occur when the questions are closer to one another in terms of topic and physical locations on the questionnaire. Numerous researchers have reported contrast and consistency effects in psychological surveys of attitudes, satisfaction, and happiness (Moore, 2002; Schuman & Presser, 1981; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000). For instance, questions regarding marital happiness and happiness in general life have been found to have question order effects (Mason, Carlson, & Tourangeau, 1994). That is, when respondents were asked to assess their happiness in general following the question regarding their marital happiness, they have been found to be more likely to consider it based on their earlier answers.

Moore (2002) introduced a new taxonomy of effects, which includes additive and subtractive effects to the responses of preceding and following questions. Additive effects indicate the situation in which the second question yields more positive responses than the preceding questions do, and subtractive effects refer to the opposite. These two effects are very similar to contrast and assimilation effects in terms of the outcome, but are different in terms of the causes as they occur regardless of question order (Moore, 2002). Moore (2002) pointed out that although a number of studies have found question context effects over the years, the underlying causes are unknown. Moreover, there are few clear operational definitions of the effects. Therefore, why survey respondents are affected by these types of effects should be investigated. Conceptually, Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) suggested four types of cognitive possible causes leading question context effects: priming, carryover, anchoring, and subtraction.

The four causes of assimilation and contrast effects are based on psychological characteristics, and question order effects can occur when these cognitive thinking processes influence answers to early and following questions (Dillman, et al., 2009). Priming refers to a process of activating one of the strands leading to retrieve a memory (Bower, 1986). Through this cognitive procedure, early questions bring certain conditions that are more accessible for answering later questions. Carryover means that respondents perceive two consecutive questions as being related. As mentioned earlier, respondents have had carry over considerations from their responses related to their marriage into their answers related to happiness in general life. Anchoring is a phenomenon that occurs when a different initial value yields different estimates because the initial value set a standard to which the estimates are made (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Thus, later answers could be biased toward the earlier answers by anchoring effects. Lastly, subtraction occurs when people answer later questions by subtracting considerations used to answer earlier questions. For example, Mason et al. (1994) revealed that respondents assessed more positively the economic situation in their state than the community economic situation if the state question preceded the community question. On the other hand, when the community question was asked prior to the state question, less people positively felt about the state economic situation because they ruled out some factors for evaluating the community economic situation. Subtraction usually yields contrast effects.

METHODOLOGY

Data for the current study were derived from 10 marketing literature effectiveness and conversion study projects for five state-level destinations and five city-level tourism destinations across the United States. Each study was conducted independently in 2008. The selection of multiple projects targeted to diverse regions across one country was expected to contribute to external validity, and moreover, the inclusion of two-level destinations (state and city) was expected to make the results more generalizable. The sampling frame was inquirers of tourism literature to each destination, and the total respondents were 16,397 for state-level destinations, and 5,576 for city-level destinations. The respondent size of each study ranged from 180 to 9,340 for state-level studies, and from 216 to 4,001 for city-level studies (Table 1).

Table 1. Destinations profiles

	State 1	State 2	State 3	State 4	State 5	City 1	City 2	City 3	City 4	City 5
Respondents (n)	5,650	564	663	180	9,340	377	216	391	591	4,001
Survey period	Dec 08	Nov 08	Apr 08	Mar 08	Feb 08	Sep 08	Jul 08	Jun 08	Jun 08	Apr 08
Region	Southern	Southern	Southern	Southern	Southern	Middle West	Southern	Southern	Southern	Middle West

In this study, attribute-specific satisfaction was operationalized in terms of destination experience, and was asked with 5 questions regarding specific experiences: attractions, transportation, accommodations, restaurants, and entertainment. To cope with missing values and increase validity, a “no experience” option was included in each item on a scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). In order to examine question order effects, right after specific satisfaction questions, overall satisfaction with destination travel experience was asked with one item: “Thinking just about your most recent visit to XXX, how satisfied are you with overall XXX travel experience?”. Information satisfaction pertained to the evaluation of the tourism literature they received. Accordingly, the question was “which of the following best describes how the information you received affected your decision whether or not to travel to XXX”, and a 6-point Likert-type scale was anchored by *extremely positively*, *somewhat positively*, *no influence on my decision (neutral)*, *somewhat negatively*, *extremely negatively*, and *do not recall*.

RESULTS

As shown in the table 2, the degree of overall satisfaction was consistently higher than the average of attribute-specific satisfaction regardless of destination level, sample size, regions, and time. More specifically, none of the attribute-specific satisfaction ratings were higher than the respective overall satisfaction. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showed that the differences between specific and overall satisfaction were statistically significant ($Z = -2.877$, $p=.004$). Also, there was no significant difference in specific and overall satisfaction among different level of destinations, regions, or study time.

Table 2. Specific and Overall Satisfaction

Projects	Specific satisfaction					Specific satisfaction (average)	Overall satisfaction
	Attraction	Transportation	Accommodation	Restaurants	Entertainment		
State 1	4.4	4.0	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.6
State 2	4.3	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.5
State 3	4.3	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.5
State 4	4.0	3.7	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.0	4.5

State 5	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.4
Subtotal	4.2	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.5
City 1	4.4	4.1	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.7
City 2	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.4
City 3	4.0	3.8	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.3
City 4	4.2	3.8	4.5	4.4	4.1	4.2	4.5
City 5	4.5	4.1	4.6	4.5	4.2	4.4	4.7
Subtotal	4.3	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.5
Total	4.3	4.0	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.5

* Satisfaction measurement: on a scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied)

In order to investigate why there was a significant difference between specific and general satisfaction, the relationship between attribute-specific and overall satisfaction was examined using path analysis. Particularly, the information satisfaction variable was added to the relationship as an antecedent. This is a replication of Petrick and Backman's (2000) satisfaction formation model test, and LISREL 8.80 was used to investigate to what extent information satisfaction and attribute-specific satisfaction predicted overall satisfaction with a destination travel experience.

Since no significant difference was found in satisfaction ratings among the 10 study projects, only data from City 5 with the highest response rate and more than 4,000 respondents was used. With maximum likelihood estimation, manifest variable path analysis was conducted. Attribute-specific satisfaction was manipulated as the average of all five attribute-specific satisfaction values. As seen in table 3, all paths among the three kinds of satisfaction variables were statistically significant.

Table 3. Summary of path analysis in satisfaction model

Destination	Beta coefficient (t-value)			R ²
	Information satisfaction → Attribute satisfaction	Information satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction	Attribute satisfaction → Overall Satisfaction	
City 5	.19 (10.98)*	.03 (2.05)*	.67 (49.17)*	.454

* p < .05

This result is consistent with Petrick and Backman's (2002) findings. Specifically, the attribute-overall satisfaction beta coefficient (.67) is almost the same as their result (.68), and the information-overall satisfaction beta coefficient (.03) is also very similar to their finding (.13). On the other hand, the degree of the information-attribute satisfaction path (.19) is much lower than their results (.76). Because the path model was composed of manifest variables, no fit indices were generated to examine the model fit, but based

on the significant mediated effect of information satisfaction on overall satisfaction (total effect = .16, ($t = 8.85$), indirect effect = .13 ($t = 10.72$)), it can be concluded that the information-attribute-overall satisfaction path was statistically significant.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study showed that global emotional evaluation of destination experience can be inferred as the sum of attribute-specific perceived quality. However, statistical tests demonstrated that overall satisfaction was not exactly equivalent to the sum of attribute-specific satisfaction, which is consistent with Spreng et al.'s (1996) claims that attribute and overall satisfaction should be distinguished because overall satisfaction is based on the overall experience, not just the individual attributes. With consistent observations across 10 studies, it was found that tourists are more positively satisfied with their overall experience at destinations than with specific attributes (i.e., attractions, accommodations, transportations, entertainments, and restaurants).

From the literature and previous empirical findings, it can be inferred that overall emotional satisfaction reflects something more than the sum of specific satisfaction with attributes in destinations. According to Baker & Crompton's (2000) definition, while attribute-specific satisfaction implies perceived quality (or quality of performance), overall satisfaction refers to quality of experience. Lee, Petrick, and Crompton (2007) also noted that "satisfaction is a psychological outcome derived from the experience, whereas service quality is concerned with attributes of the service itself" (p. 404). Therefore, it could be argued that attribute-specific satisfaction in this study refers to service quality, and is a predictor of overall satisfaction.

From a marketing perspective, while attributes of service quality can be controlled by tourism providers, overall satisfaction is beyond tourism marketers' control (Baker & Crompton, 2000). Therefore, increasing the quality of each destination attribute can contribute to improving tourists' overall satisfaction, but overall satisfaction is more than just the accumulation of satisfactions with the various attributes associated with the offering. This study also revealed that destination information prior to visitation has a significant influence on both attribute and overall satisfaction. Information satisfaction represents consumer's evaluation of the firm's marketing efforts (Spreng, et al., 1996). Accordingly, destination marketing organizations should invest resources on making destination information material (e.g. brochure, newsletter) attractive and informative, and pay attention to evaluate the marketing effectiveness by obtaining feedback.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Although this study found consistent evidence across multiple data sets it certainly had limitations. In particular, only one data set from a city destination was used

to figure out the significant relationships between information variables. Despite the justification given, using multiple project data could increase external validity. Another limitation is that overall satisfaction was measured with a single item, which may produce more measurement error than when measured with multiple items. Typically, it is known that a measure with more items can reduce error variance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Thus, if overall satisfaction is measured with more items in further research, the predictability of attribute information should increase.

From the viewpoint of survey response psychology, the data analysis also revealed that tourists rate overall satisfaction higher than attribute-specific satisfaction. Why this additive effect occurs still remains unsolved although several possible interpretations could be suggested such as priming, assimilation, and carryover effects. Although Dillman et al. (2009) suggested four kinds of possible implicit reasons for leading question context effects, it still remains questionable why individuals rated overall satisfaction higher than their satisfaction with each attribute. It is possible that attributes not measured (i.e., travel companions, scenery, etc.) could have contributed more to the respondents overall satisfaction, than the attributes measured. It is also possible that overall satisfaction is additive, such that each potential attribute increases satisfaction (both those measured, and not measured).

In this study, path analysis was conducted to see if information satisfaction had a predicting role in overall satisfaction. It was revealed that both information satisfaction and attribute-specific satisfaction were significant predictors of overall satisfaction. This is consistent with Petrick and Backman's (2002) finding although there was a small discrepancy between the information-attribute satisfaction relationships. However, this does not mean that information satisfaction had an additive effect on attribute-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction. Thus, in order to examine the factors affecting this sort of outcome, further research using an experimental design is necessary. For instance, by comparing reverse order of questions (i.e. attribute-specific satisfaction questions follows overall satisfaction question) to specific-overall question order, salient psychological factors could be better understood.

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FACTORS INFLUENCING CAREER CHOICE AMONG TOURISM ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The negative stigma attached to sectors of the tourism industry is cause for concern when youth are beginning to make career decisions. The purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions of the tourism industry, factors that influence them to pursue a tourism career path, and their participation in a tourism-related education program. Little research exists regarding tourism career development and degree program persistence, and available literature is largely quantitative in nature. A follow-up explanatory sequential mixed methods design was used in this study. Surveys were distributed to students enrolled in tourism-related programs at six American universities; data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Four focus groups were held at one university. Results suggested that while students had positive perceptions about the tourism industry, it was not typically their first career choice. Industry experience and specific job characteristics were highly influential on the career decision process. Five themes emerged from the qualitative data analysis; common factors that influence career choice, lack of awareness of tourism-related degree programs, relevance of experience and internships, common areas of program satisfaction, and suggested improvements programs. The implications of this study extend beyond education. Recognizing factors that influence students to enter tourism-related careers helps educators pinpoint where and, to an extent, how to disseminate information about the tourism industry and related educational programs. This information may also be useful for industry leaders as they seek to obtain trained employees, whereas they can determine outlets at which to create awareness of this industry.

KEYWORDS: Career choice; Career development; Persistence; Tourism careers; Tourism education

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry, and indicators suggest the economic importance of tourism will continue to grow. By 2010, the World Tourism Organization expects 1 billion people to spend \$1.5 trillion annually on travel (National Conference of State Legislatures, n.d.). In 2006, the Travel Industry Association of

America anticipated total traveler spending would reach \$675 billion. However, projections showed an expected expenditure volume of \$699.9 billion. The United States tourism industry is expected to reach record highs in international and domestic travelers for 2008, with projected expenditures of \$772.9 billion (Travel Industry Association, 2009). Employment opportunities in the tourism industry will likely increase as well.

With the increase in economic impact and the increase in job opportunities within the tourism industry, it is imperative that potential and current workers are prepared with the necessary competencies to be successful in related careers. Although the tourism industry makes an incredibly important contribution to the United States and world economies, there is a negative stigma attached to some industry sectors. To educators, this stigma is probably most prevalent among parents and school counselors who influence their children's and students' career paths.

It is hard to look past the so called dirty job of the waitress and housekeeper to see the full potential that a career in the tourism industry can hold. It is even harder to convince parents that their child can earn a very good living in this industry, provided they are willing and able to put in the hard work to do so. Many of our youth start out in this industry, yet few seek additional education and lifelong careers in the industry (Schiller, 1995).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The tourism industry encompasses a wide variety of sectors and can be defined in many ways. For the purposes of this study, tourism was defined as a composite of activities, services, and industries that delivers a travel experience: transportation, accommodations, eating and drinking establishments, shops, entertainment, activity facilities, and other hospitality services available for individuals and groups that are traveling away from home. (Goeldner, Ritchie, & McIntosh, 2000, p. 14)

As indicated by the definition, there are a variety of industry sectors that, in turn, create a wide array of job opportunities.

Unfortunately, this quickly expanding industry has a stigma attached to it, creating a negative image that can be a barrier to employee recruitment (Brien, 2004). Educators sometimes find it difficult to explain to potential students, parents, and even high school guidance/career counselors the opportunities offered by the tourism industry. The general public often thinks of waiting tables in a restaurant or checking in guests at a hotel front desk as the extent of the industry; these are the aspects with which the general population is most familiar. Although these are very important aspects of the industry, tourism is much more. Five-star restaurants with world renowned chefs, all-inclusive beach resorts, and cultural and heritage attractions are only a few of the many highlights of the tourism industry.

Tourism has been, and continues to be, one of the strongest and fastest growing economic sectors worldwide. Tourism today equals and sometimes surpasses the

business volume of oil exports, food products, or automobiles (World Tourism Organization, 2008). The global spread of tourism has undoubtedly increased direct and indirect employment opportunities. The World Tourism Organization (2008) reported international tourist arrivals worldwide at 846 million for 2006, a 5.4% increase over the previous year. International travelers spent the equivalent of \$733 billion during 2006, accounting for more than 35% of the world's export services, and up to 70% in the least developed countries. Forecasted arrivals for 2020 are expected to surpass 1.5 billion people.

With tourist expenditures nearing \$700 billion, the United States is experiencing record numbers as well. A strong tourism industry can equate to new job growth and increased economic stability for many regions in the United States. According to the Illinois Bureau of Tourism (2008), travelers to Illinois spent \$28.3 billion in 2006, an 8% increase over 2005. In the same year, 301,600 people in Illinois were employed in the tourism industry, earning nearly \$8.3 billion.

The numbers speak for themselves. The task for educators is to prepare future tourism workers and managers with the competencies required to be successful in this growing industry. Understanding what influences a student to join this industry will better allow educators to recruit bright, capable future industry leaders. Understanding what draws students to a specific tourism-related degree program will provide insight on how to recruit new students and how to serve existing students by providing them with the best possible educational experience.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although literature in the general fields of career development and degree program persistence is readily available, there is little information specifically regarding the tourism industry, and available literature is largely quantitative in nature. Since the hospitality and tourism industry is often viewed as an industry in which one would not want to be employed, it is interesting that little attention has been paid to the reasons why students choose a tourism-related career path. While research suggests this stigma causes more harm than good, many young people still choose to enter tourism-related careers, and many choose to enter a tourism-related degree program to further their education prior to entering the workforce. There is a need for more qualitative and mixed approaches regarding tourism industry career choices among students, and this study will contribute to that end.

Recognize factors that influence a student's choice to enter this field is of great importance so educators may develop strategies to recruit students into related degree programs. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions of the tourism industry, factors that influence them to pursue a tourism career path, and their participation in a tourism-related education program.

To address the problem posed in this study, answers to the following research questions were sought:

1. What are the perceptions of the tourism industry among students enrolled in a tourism-related baccalaureate degree program?
2. What factors influence a student's choice to pursue a tourism-related career path?
3. Is there a statistically significant relationship between a student's choice to pursue a tourism-related career and
 - a. having completed an internship and
 - b. industry work experience?
4. Is there a statistically significant relationship between a student's choice to enter a tourism-related career and degree program satisfaction level?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although the tourism industry as a whole has a relatively positive image, there are some who believe tourism does more harm than good. Given the importance of tourism to a local or regional economy, it is important to understand where negative perceptions originate. Davis, Allen, and Cosenza (1988) tackled this topic finding a strong connection between knowledge of the economic impact of tourism and appreciation of the tourism industry, suggesting that negative perceptions may be caused by little more than lack of awareness. This seems to hold true when educators discuss potential careers in tourism, more specifically hospitality, with parents of prospective students.

Jobs in hospitality have often been viewed by the general public as “dead-end” jobs that never lead to careers. A perception exists that the hospitality industry is the “jumping off” point for non-college-bound youth. However, little attention has been paid to the perceptions of young people regarding the tourism industry as a career option. Given the importance of the workforce to successful development of tourism, as well as evidence that attitudes toward tourism careers span such a wide range from glamorous and exciting to poorly paid and mundane, this lack of attention is surprising (Airey & Frontistis, 1997).

A large number of youth attending either high school or college hold jobs within the hospitality industry, suggesting that the flexible hours and decent wages attract students into this field. However, very few students make a career out of their experience. Kokko and Guerrier (1994) discussed jobs in the hospitality industry as being physically repetitive, poorly paid, controlled by task oriented managers, and providing limited opportunities for participation and development.

In a 1999 study conducted in part to explore some of the main influences on students' attitudes toward working in the tourism industry in Trinidad and Tobago, results indicated that secondary school students had a positive attitude toward tourism employment. These students believed that tourism provided good career opportunities and that the industry was generally high level and not boring (Lewis & Airey, 2001). It would seem that students who reside in areas of high tourism growth or economic impact have more positive attitudes than those who are less familiar with the industry.

Research suggests that minority students have higher positive perceptions of the tourism industry than Caucasian students. Cothran and Combrink (1999) found that, while Anglo students had greater knowledge of jobs within the tourism industry, they had less interest in pursuing related jobs than their Hispanic and Native American counterparts. In contrast, the majority of students who had industry experience also had positive impressions of tourism-related jobs, indicating that wages were either good or average as compared to other industries and that required working hours were the same.

Interestingly, a considerably higher percentage of Anglo students planned to attend a four year college than did Hispanic and Native American students, but they were much less likely to pursue tourism-related studies. The majority of Hispanic and Native American students were more likely to pursue tourism-related studies, regardless of education level identified. Minority students were also much less likely to see tourism-related jobs as “dead-end” than their Anglo counterparts (Cothran & Combrink, 1999).

Regardless of how one perceives jobs in tourism, specifically hospitality, it is hard to dispute the idea that these entry-level jobs in which youth are employed actually build much needed soft-skills. Boatman, Seegert, and Schroeder (2007) stated “experience in these first jobs builds foundational skills needed for later success” (p. 5). These often include communication, responsibility, dependability, and teamwork.

Despite generally negative perceptions of the tourism industry, many youth choose to enter tourism-related careers and, as a result, choose to enter a related degree program. O’Mahony, McWilliams, and Whitelaw (2008) found that students decided to study at a particular university prior to choosing a tourism-related program, suggesting that these students had a goal to attend college prior to making a decision about a course of study, or may have chosen tourism as a second option. Students enrolled in tourism programs were not influenced by parents, teachers, or counselors and were, instead, more influenced by personal observations and experience, media reports on the growth in the tourism industry, and family or friends who worked in the industry. Students also considered internship opportunities a major strength of their program, as well as the reputation of instructors within their program.

A student’s level of program satisfaction may impact his/her decision to enter a tourism-related career, specifically regarding the internship experience. Degree program satisfaction “relates to the fulfillment of expectations regarding the content of the degree program and required study activities” (Suhre, Jansen, & Harskamp, 2007, p. 207). Satisfaction has been shown to impact persistence (whether or not a student remains enrolled in the educational program).

Among the many benefits of satisfied students includes recommendation of the program to others, and generally speaking highly of their experiences within the program. Additionally, satisfied students will take part in more alumni activities and be more likely to make financial contributions to the school or program after graduation (Mills, Graham, Jeha, Kim, & Clay, 2000).

TOURISM AS A CAREER CHOICE

Helwig (2001) concluded that the “media, including the Internet, is a constant source of information about what is desirable, with values and status levels assigned to most everything” (p. 90). The unfortunate reality is that many of the occupations within the tourism industry are portrayed by negative or substandard connotations. The general public seems to be unwilling or unable to accept the tourism industry as something more than waiting tables or cleaning guestrooms. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult to recruit students into this industry to build lifelong careers. Research suggests that parents and their image of the industry are strong influences in a child’s career decision.

Parents play a role in how a child views various occupations and may be a large contributor to how a child defines sex roles and prestigious occupations. Children often identify first with what their parents do for a living as well as high profile jobs that are often considered fantasy jobs for very young children. Lankard (1995) stated that parents provide “cultural standards, attitudes, and expectations and, in many ways, determine the eventual adequacy of self-acceptance and confidence of social skills and sex roles” (p. 2). Lankard further pointed out that children respond to the attitudes and behaviors of parents as they are working or discussing their work.

A study of 127 high school students in Kansas City, Missouri, showed that students with some experience in the tourism industry are highly likely to choose a career within the industry (Baker, 2003). Two-thirds of respondents had a positive perception of the industry, indicating advancement opportunities and above average wages as contributing factors. However, less than half of the respondents indicated they would consider careers in the industry or consider enrolling in tourism-related courses. Only 30% indicated an interest in pursuing a tourism-related associate’s degree and only 27% indicated an interest in obtaining a bachelor’s degree in a tourism-related field. These same students indicated that parents, family and teachers had the most influence on their career choice while friends and counselors had little influence.

Parents have a profound influence on their child’s choice of occupation. Combine this influence with the idea that parental attitudes about the tourism industry are often negative and that these negative assumptions are often passed on to children (Cothran & Combrink, 1999), and it is no wonder why students may steer clear of tourism careers. Parents are most concerned with pay and working conditions when helping their children choose a career path (Parry, 2001). They are often unaware of the vast opportunities that tourism can provide to their children (Cothran & Combrink, 1999).

Although much research suggests that parents play a vital role in career choices among youth, Kwan (2005) found that students were more influenced by previous experience in the tourism industry and that this experience was a main influence on subsequent decisions to enter tourism-related careers upon graduation. Freshman students indicated that tourism alumni were also of great influence for pursuing a tourism-related career, suggesting that educators might look toward current students and

alumni for recruitment help. Interestingly, Kwan found that parents of current hospitality and tourism students were very positive about their children entering the tourism industry upon graduation, adding further questions to the role that parents may play with regard to a child's decision to enter tourism-related careers.

Jobs most closely associated with tourism are those that travelers come into contact with regularly, such as restaurant servers, hotel front desk agents, housekeeping staff, bellmen, ticket takers and carnival ride operators. Thinking first of these traditionally low paying jobs, it is easy to understand why the tourism industry is perceived negatively. Regardless of the negative image, youth still find their way to the industry.

Tourism is the world's leading employer; as the United States continues to shift from a goods producing industry to that of service, job opportunities will only expand. This job expansion will make necessary the education of workers, both in specific skill and knowledge, who can succeed in this ever growing and changing industry. Many educators find it disheartening to talk to parents of prospective students who are not aware of the advantages and opportunities that tourism can provide their child. These same parents are often unwilling to submit to the notion that there are jobs within tourism where, through hard work, their child can succeed and earn a great living. This misconception doesn't stop with parents. High school guidance counselors often hold the same stereotypical image of tourism; dead-end, low paying jobs not worthy of having.

Although there is much research regarding career decision and student persistence in an education institution or program, there is very little research specifically related to the tourism industry. Much of the existing research connects parental influence to youth career choices and states that parents generally have a negative perception of the tourism industry. The combination of these two factors can burden educators as they recruit students into tourism-related degree programs. Research has also revealed that tourism students tend to rely more on their experiences in the industry, and less on parents, when choosing their career. Perhaps this is a result of tourism being a second choice for many who enroll in college.

Factors such as parental influence, previous experience, or a genuine love of helping others are typical reasons a student chooses a tourism career. A student's perception of the tourism industry is also likely to impact his/her decision about a career. Understanding tourism students, what prompts them to choose their given careers, and what influences them to choose tourism education programs, will allow educators to make better recruitment choices.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Mixed methods research provides a more comprehensive approach to studying a research problem than does quantitative or qualitative alone, and provides strengths that offset the weaknesses of each individual method (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Tourism-related research regarding career development is largely quantitative in nature.

Very few studies related to career development in tourism-related fields have utilized a qualitative design, and almost none have utilized a mixed methods approach. Quantitative research can only skim the surface of a problem or issue; sometimes it is necessary to dig deeper to expose the thoughts and ideas of participants. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allows the researcher a more in depth look at a broad problem, providing much richer data overall.

Given the nature of the research problem, quantitative data can be greatly enhanced by collection and analysis of qualitative data. A follow-up explanatory sequential design was used to explore stated research questions. The overall purpose of the explanatory design is that “qualitative data helps explain or build upon initial quantitative results” (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007, p. 71).

Within the explanatory design, quantitative data are collected and analyzed, followed by qualitative data, which is used primarily to supplement the quantitative data. The two sets of data are connected, usually in the analysis and interpretation phases of research (Hanson, et al. 2005).

According to Hanson, et al. (2005), a mixed method approach is used when a researcher wants to “enrich their results in ways that one form of data does not allow” (p. 224). The sequential explanatory approach was chosen for this study because quantitative data alone is not enough to fully understand the factors that push students toward their career decisions, or those factors that influence students’ satisfaction with and persistence in related degree programs. Therefore, qualitative data were collected to provide a clearer view and to be able to elaborate on quantitative results.

Seven universities in the United States were invited to participate in this study and were chosen based upon their geographic location and curriculum design. Ultimately, students enrolled in tourism-related programs at five universities participated: East Carolina University, North Dakota State University, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, University of South Carolina Beaufort, and University of Southern Mississippi.

Quantitative Phase

A group administered survey was given to students enrolled in tourism classes at participating universities. The survey requested information regarding perceptions of the tourism industry, work and internship experiences, career decisions, educational program satisfaction, and general demographics. Demographic data included age, gender, ethnicity, occupation of parents, university standing, and socio-economic status. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, specifically percentages and chi-square.

Qualitative Phase

The qualitative phase consisted of four focus groups held at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC). Southern Illinois University Carbondale was selected because its geographic location was convenient, saving travel time and expense for the researcher. Findings of the quantitative data analysis were examined for unexpected results, and, based upon this examination, an interview guide for the focus groups was developed. A criterion-based purposeful sampling technique was used to select focus group participants. Because this study focused on the experiences of students enrolled in a tourism-related baccalaureate program, this criterion was the most important. Therefore, students enrolled in the Hospitality and Tourism Administration program at SIUC were invited to participate in focus groups. A semi-structured technique was utilized, allowing for conversations to emerge as they would in a social setting. The goal of the focus groups was to further explore factors that influence career decision, as well as factors that influence program choice and persistence.

Common factors were determined during data analysis. Five themes emerged during data coding: a) common factors that influence career choice, b) lack of awareness of tourism-related degree programs, specifically SIUC HTA, c) relevance of experience and internships, d) common areas of program satisfaction, and e) suggested improvements to the SIUC HTA program.

Trustworthiness

The issue of trustworthiness is very different between quantitative and qualitative research. In quantitative research, researchers are concerned with reliability and validity where "reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the actual measuring instrument or procedure", and "validity is concerned with the study's success at measuring what the researchers set out to measure" (Colorado State University, 2008). Survey research is, by its very nature, weak on validity and strong on reliability.

Golafshani (2003) differentiated between quantitative and qualitative research stating that "unlike quantitative researchers who seek causal determination, prediction, and generalization of findings, qualitative researchers seek instead illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations." (p. 600). There is more focus on accuracy in qualitative research; whether the account provided by the researcher and the participants is accurate, can be trusted, and is credible (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007). Krefting (1991) presented specific strategies that can be used to increase the trustworthiness of qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Components of each of Krefting's (1991) strategies were employed during the qualitative phase of this study. Member checking, thick description, a code-recode procedure, and research reflexivity were used to help remove researcher bias.

RESULTS

Surveys were completed by 414 students enrolled in tourism-related degree programs at six universities in the United States. Twenty-seven surveys were excluded because students were enrolled in other majors, leaving 387 quality surveys. As reflected in Table 1, the gender make-up of the respondents showed that 68.5% were female (n = 265) and 30.5% were male (n = 118); four did not respond. Class standing results indicated 9.6% were freshmen (n = 37), 17.6% were sophomores (n = 68), 33.6% were juniors (n = 130), and 38% were seniors (n = 147). One respondent was a graduate student, and there were four non-respondents. The racial/ethnic make-up showed the majority of respondents (84.8%) were Caucasian.

Students were asked questions regarding their parents'/guardians' education level and career path. Interestingly, only 14.5% of respondents' fathers and 15.5% of respondents' mothers worked in tourism-related careers, suggesting other factors have influence on these students to enter tourism-related careers. Educational level of parents ranged from high school or equivalent to post-graduate work. Fathers who completed college accounted for 36.2% and mothers accounted for 42.9%.

Quantitative data analysis results helped guide decisions regarding the qualitative phase of this study. Although the overall results of the quantitative data analysis are very relevant to this study, only a few individual results were compelling. Students seemed to be less influenced by parents and other family members than other work-related factors, going against much of the existing research regarding career decisions. Regarding university selection, respondents indicated that location and specific programs were the most influential factors, with financial aid being one of the least influencing factors. Additionally, the majority of survey respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with their education program and indicated the desire to pursue a tourism-related career post-graduation. These results guided development of the focus group questions.

All focus groups included students enrolled in the HTA program at SIUC. Southern Illinois University Carbondale's hospitality and tourism administration (HTA) program is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in and excel at careers within the tourism industry. Currently, there are three specializations within the program: lodging management, foodservice management, and tourism management. However, several students within the lodging and tourism management specializations are pursuing specific careers in events management. Included in the focus groups were five lodging management students, two foodservice management students, one tourism management student, and four students pursuing event management careers.

Research Question 1

What are the perceptions of the tourism industry among students enrolled in a tourism-related baccalaureate degree program?

The quantitative phase of this study showed that students generally had a positive and realistic perception of the tourism industry, which parallels research done by Lewis and Airey (2001) and Cothran and Combrink (1999), suggesting that students who have experience in or a connection to the industry often have more positive perceptions of tourism. Students who participated in the qualitative phase of this study discussed the long hours associated with this industry. However, the positive attributes of working in tourism seemed to outweigh the negative, and job characteristics such as non-routine workdays and an ever-changing industry served as incentive to enter the field.

Research Question 2

What factors influence a student's choice to pursue a tourism-related career path?

Work experience and specific job characteristics, such as working with diverse people, having non-routine workdays, and being able to help others were the most influential factors in career decision. Young women were more likely to be influenced by the ability to help others than young men were, suggesting a connection between the nurturing nature of women and the personal benefits tourism jobs have. Additionally, those without work experience in the industry are less likely to enter tourism upon graduation. These findings mirror those of Baker (2003), who found that students with some experience in tourism are more likely to choose a career within the industry. However, Baker also found that those students who indicated an interest in tourism cited parents and teachers as having the most influence. Kwan (2005) also found that students were more influenced by previous work experience, but that parental support was also a key influence.

Though these findings were not necessarily surprising, they did little to explain the true reasons why a student chooses tourism over other careers. Focus group sessions revealed that while students did not believe their parents to be an overwhelming influence in their career decision, stories they told revealed otherwise. Several students discussed parents who had been employed in or connected to the tourism industry at some point, but failed to recognize the influence that may have had over their own career decision. This may suggest that factors such as work experience and job characteristics do more to solidify a student's choice to enter a tourism-related career than influence it altogether.

Although students had a variety of reasons they chose tourism, and important point was brought forth in the focus groups; a tourism-related degree and subsequent occupation was not necessarily the student's first choice. Many students were enrolled as undeclared majors, while a few others had initially chosen different majors. In each instance, the student "happened onto" the tourism program in a variety of ways. This finding is consistent with O'Mahony, McWilliams, and Whitelaw (2001) who concluded that tourism was a second choice for many students.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

		n = 387	
		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	118	30.5
	Female	265	68.5
	Non-response	4	1.0
Age	21 and under	253	65.4
	22-25	107	27.6
	26-28	14	3.6
	28 and over	9	2.3
	Non-response	4	1.0
Class Standing	Freshman	37	9.6
	Sophomore	68	17.6
	Junior	130	33.6
	Senior	147	38.0
	Graduate	1	.3
	Non-response	4	1.0
Ethnicity	Caucasian	328	84.8
	African American	27	7.0
	Hispanic/Latino	9	2.3
	Asian	5	1.3
	Native American	10	2.6
	Mixed Race	4	1.0
	Non-response	4	1.0
Education level of father/male guardian	High School/Equivalent	72	18.6
	Some College	100	25.8
	College Graduate	140	36.2
	Post-graduate Degree	70	18.1
	Non-response	5	1.3
Education level of mother/female guardian	High School/Equivalent	69	17.8
	Some College	92	23.8
	College Graduate	166	42.9
	Post-graduate Degree	55	14.2
	Non-response	5	1.3
Father/male guardian career path	Yes	56	14.5
	Currently/ever worked in	327	84.5
	tourism-related job	4	1.0
<i>Mother/female guardian career path</i>	Yes	60	15.5
	Currently/ever worked in	323	83.5
	tourism-related job	4	1.0

Research Question 3

Is there a statistically significant relationship between a student's choice to pursue a tourism-related career and

- a. having completed an internship and*
- b. industry work experience?*

Both internship and industry work experience influenced a student's decision to enter a tourism-related career after graduation. Although the quantitative phase showed a relationship between both internship and work experience and career plan, the qualitative phase shed light on reasons why these were so important. Students who participated in focus groups felt that both the internship and work experience would benefit them greatly when beginning their careers, even if those experiences had not been perfect. Although research related to negative internship experience cite students leaving the industry as a result (Foucar-Szocki & Bolsing, 1999), these students were able to use that imperfect experience to enhance their career decision in some way.

Students were also adamant about having internship experiences, or at least job shadowing experiences, early in their education, stating that it would help students narrow their career focus, or even make a student decide whether tourism is a good career fit. These results mirror those of Roush, Dickson, and LeBruto (1996) who stated that internships early in a college career clarify career decisions, and Boger and Lim (2005) who found that internships in tourism-related areas allow students to determine whether tourism is the right career path to follow.

Research Question 4

Is there a statistically significant relationship between a student's choice to enter a tourism-related career and degree program satisfaction level?

The majority of students who responded to the survey were highly satisfied (50.9%) or satisfied (46.2%) with their current educational program. The relationship between program satisfaction and career decision was positive. However, the reasons why were unclear; thus a focus of the qualitative phase of this study. Students who participated in focus groups liked that their major was small, allowing for more frequent and comfortable interaction with faculty and peers. This demonstrates how academic and social integration in college can play a role in persistence. A student who is satisfied with his/her program is more likely to remain in school. Other factors of satisfaction were program flexibility and group work in and outside of classes.

Conversations within each focus group that centered on program satisfaction ultimately led to suggestions on improvements that could be made to the existing tourism program. While this information was not sought, it was compelling and of relative importance; before recruitment and retention efforts can be undertaken, it is wise to evaluate existing degree programs to see if they actually provide students with the best possible educational experiences, and allow students to grow intellectually, while integrating not only into the academic and social aspects of the program, but of the university.

CONCLUSION

Although literature in the general fields of career development and degree program persistence is readily available, there is little information specifically regarding the tourism industry, and available literature is largely quantitative in nature. Since the hospitality and tourism industry is often viewed as an industry in which one would not want to be employed, it is interesting that little attention has been paid to the reasons why students choose a tourism-related career path. This study has attempted to identify related factors of influence.

The negative stigma attached to the tourism industry is cause for concern when youth are beginning to make career decisions. However, youth still choose to enter tourism-related careers, and many choose to enter a tourism-related degree program to further their education prior to entering the workforce. As a result of the negative image the tourism industry has, recognizing factors that influence a student's choice to enter this field is of utmost importance. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine student perceptions of the tourism industry, factors that influence them to pursue a tourism career path, and their participation in a tourism-related education program. This information will allow educators opportunities to develop recruitment and retention strategies

Implications of this research for educators, industry leaders, and parents are many. Although the study cannot be truly generalized to an audience beyond that of research participants, the information gleaned can be valuable for educators on many levels. Recognizing factors that influence a student to enter a tourism-related career helps educators pinpoint where and, to an extent, how to disseminate information about the tourism industry and related educational programs. This information may also be useful for industry leaders as they seek to obtain trained employees, whereas they can determine outlets at which to create awareness of this industry.

Additionally, factors that play a role in student persistence in educational programs help educators determine where improvements may need to be made in existing programs, whether with faculty and peer interaction or with curriculum. Furthermore, being able to identify how current students have come to the existing program will help determine outlets to promote tourism and the degree program.

There is little doubt that parents have at least some influence, if not great influence, on their children's career decisions. Therefore, building awareness among parents regarding opportunities afforded by the tourism industry is paramount. To this end, industry leaders and educators alike must do a better job promoting the industry as a viable career option for our youth.

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THE IMPACT OF DESTINATION BRAND IMAGE ON TOURISM MARKETING: INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

Destination image is understood to be a determinant of competitive advantage for tourism destinations. The study confirms the importance of association with the destination image to both product suppliers and tour wholesalers. It also examines the perception of the impact of various image creation factors on awareness, desire and intention to travel by Americans to Australia. It recognizes that despite the budgets associated with marketing, stakeholders consider “Word of mouth” (WOM) as the most important factor in image creation and they contend it is a primary driver of the consumer buying behavior process. The study examines the perceived value of the activity undertaken by the Australian Tourism Commission (ATC) in the branding process from the perspective of two groups likely to benefit from such activity. The Australian experience also provides insights for destination marketing organizations (DMO) seeking to maximize their impact on destination image creation by leveraging “word of mouth”, public relations and stakeholder marketing efforts.

Keywords: Destination Branding, Destination Image, Destination Marketing Organization; marketing, tourism operator; travel wholesaler.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years considerable academic attention has been applied to the topics of destination image, destination branding and the roles of tourism destination stakeholders in these processes. Indeed, several researchers have suggested destinations receive competitive advantage through effectively developing destination image. Despite these assertions there has been little examination of how destination image creates advantage or

can be used to stimulate visitation. Among the topics not fully explored is the importance of destination image to stakeholders marketing the destination, the impact of image on consumer buying behavior and the perceived effectiveness of deliberate destination image development, or branding, by destination marketing organizations. This study will address these issues. It looks at these topics from the perspective of two stakeholder groups directly involved in converting potential consumers to actual visitors, products located in the destination and tour wholesalers selling packages to the destination.

Clearly branding is not a panacea for all marketing problems. Given the significant investments by communities and other stakeholder groups in destination branding it is important that we understand how branding impacts destination image and the consumer buying process. Through greater understanding of the process in which the destination image is developed and the impact image has on the consumer we can better allocate resources to maximize benefits from our activity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination Image, Branding and the Consumer Buying Process.

Destination image has been a topic of discussion and examination in tourism research since the 1970s and in the period since Hunt (1975) first examined the topic of image, tourism researchers have struggled to define the term. This study will adopt a definition of destination image that is consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of image research and provides a bridge to destination marketing and branding. As such, we define “Destination Image as the set of associations that people have of the destination”. This is consistent with the definitions of “image” provided by brand researchers such as Aaker (1991) “a set of associations, usually organized in a meaningful way” and later, more simply as “how the brand is perceived”; and Keller (1998), who defines brand image as “perceptions about a brand reflected by the brand associations held in memory.” It is noted “tourism and marketing scholars share similar thought on what image is.” (Li, Petrick, & Zhou, 2008) Bridging the gap between marketing and destination marketing, Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) describe “Place Image as the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place”. In the tourism literature, as Tasci and Gartner (2007) note, many of the differences in the definition revolve around the interpretation of the components of the “image”. The definition adopted for this paper is “inclusive” of a many of the perspectives of destination image. In so doing it will adopt the perspective proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) that incorporates a holistic view of destination that includes cognitive, affective and connotative spheres of influence.

The creation of these associations in the “mind’s eye” of consumers takes place over an extended period of time and is the result of a variety image formation factors. Gartner (1993) provides one of the most commonly used frameworks for examining how image is created. His model identifies three distinct types of image formation agents: Induced agents, autonomous agents and organic agents. The combined effect of these image formation agents on a given consumer creates the destination image. As noted by Hanlan and Kelly (2005) it is a significant limitation to our understanding of destination

image formation that there has been little research on the relative importance of the various factors associated with image formation. In addition it is noted that to this point there is little information available on what roles the marketing activity of the various stakeholders have on destination image formation.

Australia's efforts to attract American visitors provides useful example of the dynamics of image creation and their impacts on travel. Australia enjoys high levels of consumer awareness and is a destination that is desired by many Americans according to research undertaken by several consumer sentiment surveys including the Harris Poll. Indeed, the Harris Poll, an annual, nationwide survey of over 2100 Americans has placed Australia at the number 1 most highly desired destination by Americans in 10 of the past 11 years (HarrisInteractive, 2009). In recent decades Australia has benefited from positive image creation factors covering each of Gartner's three main categories. Induced image creation has been undertaken both by the DMO and commercial operators since mid-1980s. During that time the Australian Tourism Commission, and later its successor Tourism Australia, the state tourism offices of Australia, tourism product and channel members have actively promoted the destination to American consumers. Autonomous agents have also contributed to Australia's destination image. The destination has benefited from a number of high profile media events including miniseries like "The Thornbirds", movies including "The Crocodile Dundee" movies and more recently "Australia – The Movie", television exposure including "Survivor Outback", The Steve Irwin "Crocodile Hunter" Shows, the "Bindi - The Jungle Girl" series and even the Wiggles. Australia's movies actors and musicians developed high profiles in the US market. Finally, it is noted that 41% of travelers from the United States are repeat visitors (TRA, 2009) indicating that travelers benefit from what Gartner describes as "organic" image creation. During this period Australian tourism product and US based travel providers selling Australia have actively worked with consumers to generate sales, and visitors to the destination. As such they have a unique perspective on the impact of image and the value of image in stimulating visitation.

Much of the attention to destination image is based on a widely held belief that destination image is a critical factor in destination competitiveness. Tasci and Gartner (2007) observe that each destination has "image capital", that is a set of associations that consumers already have of the destination based on past experience and it is assumed that destinations with significant "image capital" enjoy a competitive advantage over destinations that are less well known or have fewer associations in the mind of the consumer. One aspect of this competitive advantage is the ability to attract visitors. It has been noted by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) that "in order to be successfully promoted in target markets, a destination must be favorably differentiated from its competition, or positively positioned in the minds of consumers". A review of the current literature reveals few examples of research directly addressing the relationship between the destination image and the consumer buying process which leads to visitation. It is noted that the consumer purchase decision for travel is a complex process (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2001) and several researchers have identified their own systems of describing the buying process (Mill & Morrison, 2002). Each of these models include similar components as they track consumers from initial awareness of the destination to their actual purchase and "consumption" of the destination and so for the purpose of this study

we will refer to one of the simplest of the models “AIDA -Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action”. In recognizing consumers have different information needs as they progress through their buying process it is reasonable to posit that image creation agents will play different roles in each stage of the process. As Mill and Morrison (2002) note that “wise marketing managers realize that different marketing strategies are appropriate for different stages of the buying process”. This study will examine how various image creation factors are perceived to contribute to awareness, desire and the commitment to the action of purchasing travel to a destination.

While destination image measures the set of associations held by the consumer of the destination, destination branding is the deliberate process of “positioning” specific sets of associations about the destination in the minds of a target market. As noted by Cai (2002) much of the destination image literature fails to distinguish between image formation, a process that incorporates both deliberate and non-deliberate image creation, and the deliberate branding process. It is important to remember that branding is undertaken by destination stakeholders with specific goals and objectives. In order to assess the effectiveness of the branding process several parameters must be established including the identification of a target market; the key elements of the positioning and how the branding is intended to impact the buying process. The creation of “destination image capital” in the absence of these types of criteria is an interesting phenomenon but not necessarily tied to destination branding. On the other hand, effective destination branding should, by definition, impact destination image. Although many image creation factors contribute to destination image there is reasonable consensus amongst academics and practitioners that destinations can be branded and several researchers identify destination branding as a means of creating competitive advantage (Baker & Cameron, 2008; J. Hall, 2004; Morgan & Pritchard, 2002; Murphy, Benckendorff, & Moscardo, 2007).

In most cases it is the DMO that is responsible for destination branding efforts for the destination and many articles refer to the key role that DMOs play in the destination branding process (Alford, 1998; Blain, Levy, & Brent Ritchie, 2005; Bramwell & Rawdig, 1996; Gilmore, 2002; D. Hall, 2002; J. Hall, 2004; Henderson, 2000; Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2003; Nickerson & Moisey, 1999; Parkinson, Martin, & Parkinson, 1994; Pritchard & Morgan 1998). Although DMOs are often charged with “destination branding” they are not the only actor in this process of destination image creation. An examination of the tourism system reveals a number of organizations that actively promote the destination and contribute to the image development of the destination. It is important to recognize while it is sometimes useful to consider the destination holistically, destinations are systems of products and services working in concert to provide the customer experience. This approach is supported by Buhalis (2000) who describes destinations as “amalgams of tourist products offering an integrated experience to consumers” and “a collection of suppliers and services”. Each of the constituent products of the destination has the potential to benefit from positive destination image. Channel members, including inbound tour operators, tour wholesalers, and travel agents specializing in the destination all potentially benefit from strong destination image. All these potential beneficiaries have a stake in ensuring the best possible image for the

destination and may play an active role in the development of the destination image through their marketing efforts. While none of the organizations may have a directive to “brand the destination” each undertakes marketing designed to strengthen the associations they perceive are most likely to stimulate travel to the destination and to their products. There has been some examination of the role of politics (Morgan, et al., 2003; Ryan, 2002) and power (Marzano & Scott, 2009) in the destination branding process but there remains considerable opportunity to examine the image building process and the relationships and drivers of the stakeholders involved in the process. Nevertheless, there is ample evidence DMOs are most likely to have a lead role brand development of their destination and be nominally responsible for the modification of destination image to meet destination brand identity expectations.

This study examines a number of key questions relating to the issues of destination image and branding from the perspective of key stakeholders in the delivery of passengers to the destination. Firstly, it tests the assumption that destination image is important in the attraction of visitors to the destination from the perspective of two commercial stakeholder groups. Secondly, it examines the contribution of a number of image creation formation factors to successive stages of the buying process from the perspective of key stakeholders in the sales process. Finally, the article allows some insight into the perceived role of the destination management organization to the Destination Image creation process. It uses the experiences of Australian product providers that are actively marketing in the United States and US based Australian travel providers to examine these issues.

METHODOLOGY

The study explored the opinions of senior management from two key stakeholder groups directly involved in the consumer purchase process of travel to Australia. The study examines the importance of destination image to their organizations, their perception the destinations status with the buying process and their perceptions of the contribution of a set of image creation factors to consumer buying process. The two stakeholder groups were chosen because they are the directly involved in the marketing of Australian tourism product in the United States and both groups spend relatively large amounts of their marketing budgets to convert consumer interest in Australia to sales for Australia. Additionally, both groups have direct contact with consumers and have a unique perspective on the consumer sentiment. The first group included management from travel wholesalers, companies that operate in the United States, aggregate Australian travel product and sell to consumers either directly or via travel agents. Depending on the size and scope of the wholesaler these individuals hold titles including President, Vice President of Marketing, Marketing Manager or South Pacific Manager or similar. The second group included management from Australian tourist products (i.e. hotels, attractions, tour operators) committed to the United States market. The managers in the target group have titles that include Owner, General Manager/CEO, Director of Sales, Business Development Manager, International Sales manager or similar. As noted; there were 24 wholesale company respondents and 76 Australian based companies

representing tour operators, hotels, attractions and other operators were represented. The overall response rate to these questionnaires was 35%.

Two online questionnaires were developed; one for the product and one for the wholesalers. The majority of questions in each instrument were the same to allow for comparative analysis between the two groups. The questionnaires were placed on specially developed websites; respondents completed the questionnaire online and response data was collected on the website and transferred to excel files for analysis in SPSS. The questionnaires were administered in late 2004. While it is noted that both product operators and wholesalers share some similar goals they also have very distinct perspectives. For this reason the results were examined looking at the whole group, which will be identified as “Australian Travel Marketers”, or where appropriate due to differences in response, by “wholesalers” and “tourism product”. It is important to emphasize this study does not directly examine consumer perceptions but is the stakeholder’s opinions and perceptions of consumer’s image development and motivations.

FINDINGS

Image and Consumer Awareness of the Destination

The first key result of the research was the recognition that destination image is important to these stakeholders. Respondents to the questionnaire rated “the importance of identifying their product with Australia or aspects of Australia” at 6.3 using a 7 point scales in which 1 was “strongly disagree”, 4 was “neutral” and 7 was “strongly agree”. Using the same scale the respondents rated “the importance of emphasizing “Australian-ness” of my product at 5.8. Similarly, the question was asked regarding their level of agreement with the following statement: “being associated with Australia assists my marketing efforts in the United States”. On a 7 point scale on which 1 was “strongly disagree”, 4 was “neutral” and 7 was “strongly agree” the combined group’s mean response was 6.15. It is noted that there was a significant difference ($t=-2.931$, $p=.007$) between the Australian product and the US based wholesalers on the response to this question. The Australian product agreed more strongly that the association with Australia assisted their marketing efforts (6.4) whereas the wholesalers were less likely to credit association with Australia as supporting their marketing efforts. One possible reason for this difference is the products “proximity”, both literally and figuratively, may lead them to overvalue their destination brand’s equity in the minds of international consumers.

According to the Australian Travel Marketers consumers are aware of Australia as a vacation destination. Respondents placed “awareness of Australia as a vacation destination” at 7 on a 10-point scale with 1 being not at all aware and 10 being very aware. It is noted that 85% of responses rated “awareness” at 5 or above on the scale. When examining the image creation factors considered by respondents to create awareness, and in later examinations of desire and intention to travel, the study focuses on indices created from various related information sources. For example, the factor “culture” is a composite of responses to the importance of “school and education”;

“documentaries and nature shows” and “current events and news stories”. The study focused on the contribution of these major information categories rather than the contribution of specific sources of information or any underlying dimensions or structure of the information sources. A complete list of the image formation agents and the indices developed for the study are shown in Table 1.1. When asked what were the most important sources of information contributing to the generation of awareness of Australia as a vacation destination the “word of mouth” index was rated highest at 4.66 on a 5 point scale in which 1 was “Not at all important” and 5 was “very important”. The next index in importance was “travel media” (4.24) followed by the advertising undertaking by the Australian Tourism Commission (4.11). The results of this question and two other questions examining image formation agents are presented in Table 1.5.

Table 1.1: Image Formation Agents

Index	Image Formation Factors included in the Index
Culture	School and Education Documentaries and nature shows Current Events and News Stories
Pop Culture	Movies Australian Celebrities Books – Fiction Music Sporting Events TV commercials – Australian or Australian Themed products.
Word of Mouth	Friends Family People who have traveled to Australia Australians they have met
Travel Media	Travel Guides Newspapers – travel stories Magazines – travel stories TV Travel Shows/Guides Online travel guides
Travel Advertising: Australian Tourism Commission	ATC campaigns – TV ATC campaigns – Newspaper ATC campaigns – magazine Australia.com Australia – Destination brochures
Travel Intermediaries	Travel agents Travel wholesalers – reservationists Airline Reservationists Online travel agencies

The index means were used in a series of regression analysis regarding the tourism marketer’s perceptions of the impact these image formation agents have in aspects of the buying process. The first of these examined the impact of the agents on developing awareness of the destination. The regression analysis exploring the relationship of the overall marketing communications dimensions on perceived awareness of Australia as a holiday destination in the US, resulted in a relatively low R^2 (.121) indicating that the model explains only 12% of the variance (Table 1.3). However, it does indicate the

Australian tourism marketers perceive WOM ($t=2.888$, $p=.005$) is the only set of information sources to have a significant influence on awareness of Australia.

Table 1.2: Multiple Regression Analysis of stakeholder's opinion of awareness of Australia as a vacation Destination on factors generating awareness.

	Regression Model		
	Awareness of Australia		
Marketing Communications Dimensions	Beta	t-value	Sig. t
Australian Culture	-.002	-.022	.963
Australian Pop Culture	-.162	-1.412	.161
Word of mouth	.320	2.888	.005
Travel media	-.141	-.893	.374
ATC travel advertising	.058	.338	.736
Other travel advertising	.110	.698	.487
Travel intermediaries	.064	.431	.667
Multiple R	.349		
R^2	.121		
F test statistic/ significance	$F=1.797$, $p=.097$		

Stimulating Desire and Intention to Travel to the Destination

Addressing the next stage of the buying process stakeholder responses showed they perceive the desire to travel to Australia is high. Respondents placed desire to travel to Australia at 8 on a 10-point scale with 1 being “no desire” and 10 being “very strong desire” to travel. It is noted that 78% of responses rated “desire to travel to Australia” at 6 or above on the scale. The “Word of Mouth” index rated as the most important sources of information contributing to the generation of desire to travel to Australia with 4.66 on a scale of 1(Not at all important) to 5 (very important). The components of the “word of mouth’ index include the influence of friends, family, people who have traveled to Australia and Australians they have met.” The next index in importance was “travel media” (4.1) followed by the advertising undertaking by the Australian Tourism Commission (4.0). These results are presented in Table 1.5.

The regression analysis exploring the relationship of the image creation factors with perceived desire to travel to Australia (Table 1.3) resulted in a relatively low R^2 (.102) indicating the model explains only 10% of the variance. As in the previous analysis it indicates the tourism marketers in the US market perceive WOM ($t=3.975$, $p=.000$) is the only factor to have a significant influence on desire to travel of Australia.

Table 1.3: Multiple Regression Analysis of perceived desire to travel to Australia of Australia as a vacation Destination on factors generating desire to travel to Australia.

	Regression Model		
	Desire to travel to Australia		
Marketing Communications Dimensions	Beta	t-value	Sig. t
Australian Culture	-.069	-.568	.571
Australian Pop Culture	.052	.406	.686
Word of mouth	.448	3.975	.000
Travel media	-.207	-1.202	.232
ATC travel advertising	-.137	-.795	.429
Other travel advertising	.222	1.193	.236
Travel intermediaries	-.010	-.068	.946
Multiple <i>R</i>	.409		
<i>R</i> ²	.102		
<i>F</i> test statistic/ significance	<i>F</i> =2.556, <i>p</i> =.019		

When asked what were the most important sources of information contributing to stimulate Americans to travel to Australia (Table 1.5), once again the “word of mouth” information sources index was rated highest at 4.5 on a scale of 1 (Not at all important) to 5 (very important).” The next index in importance was advertising undertaking by the Australian Tourism Commission (3.9) followed by the “travel media” (3.8). The final question in this series addressed the perception of how well Australian Travel organizations are doing at converting desire to travel to Australia to actual visitors. Respondents placed Australian travel companies at 6.1 on a 10 point scale with 1 being not at all well and 10 very well. The regression analysis exploring the relationship of the image creation factor indices on the effectiveness of Australian Travel Organizations to convert desire to actual travel (Table 1.4) resulted in a low R^2 (.186) indicating that the model explains only 18.6% of the variance. The result indicates the combined factors have an effect on the conversion process but none of the factors individually are perceived to have a significant impact.

Table 1.4: Multiple Regression Analysis of Opinion on effectiveness of travel organizations to convert desire to travel on factors generating travel decisions.

	Regression Model		
	Conversion to travel to Australia		
Marketing Communications Dimensions	Beta	t-value	Sig. t
Australian Culture	-.269	-1.775	.079
Australian Pop Culture	.200	1.409	.162
Word of mouth	.152	1.350	.180
Travel media	-.076	-.430	.668
ATC travel advertising	.256	1.403	.164
Other travel advertising	-.083	-.431	.667
Travel intermediaries	.261	1.777	.079
Multiple <i>R</i>	.432		
<i>R</i> ²	.186		
<i>F</i> test statistic/ significance	<i>F</i> =2.976, <i>p</i> =.007		

It is noteworthy that the Australian Travel Marketers considered “word of mouth” as the most important factor in the three stages of the buying process examined in the study. This result indicates that the Australia Travel marketers consider “organic” factors more important than induced factors in each of the stages of the consumer buying process. The importance of travel media across the three stages of the buying process reinforces the power of these endorsements and their value to the buying process. While travel media are perceived to have importance it is interesting to observe the relatively low levels of importance given to the “popular culture” index. The low values given by these stakeholders is in contrast to the considerable attention being given to movie related tourism marketing by both researchers and practitioners

It is noted the perceived value of the ATC’s marketing activities reduces as the Australian Tourist Marketers are queried about its impact at the different stages of the buying process. As noted in Table 1.5 the perceived importance of the ATC in generating awareness is 4.11 but this reduces to 4.05 in creating desire to travel and 3.89 in effectiveness to convert to actual travel. Friedman tests of these results show significant differences in the means (Chi-Square = 11.63; Asymp. Sig. = .003). At the same time the ATCs rank in contribution to these consumer actions increases. In generating awareness, the ATC is clearly ranked third behind word of mouth and other travel advertising; in “converting to travel” the ATC is ranked second behind “word of mouth”. In other words, although the ATC activity is seen as less likely to “convert to travel” in absolute terms it is more likely than all but one other factor to convert relative to the other factors in this set.

Table 1.5: Summary of information source indices and their role in consumer purchasing.

Image Creation Factors Index	Topic Average		
	Awareness	Desire	Travel
Culture	3.66	3.64	3.28
Pop culture	3.74	3.59	3.22
Word Of Mouth	4.66	4.66	4.47
Travel Media	4.24	4.08	3.83
Travel Advertising – ATC	4.11	4.05	3.89
Travel Advertising – Other	3.91	3.79	3.77
Travel intermediaries	3.84	3.62	3.72
Friedman Test			
<i>Chi-Square</i>	<i>170.683</i>	<i>171.999</i>	<i>170.417</i>
<i>Asymp. Sig.</i>	<i>.000</i>	<i>.000</i>	<i>.000</i>
<i>N</i>	<i>99</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>99</i>

Scale: 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very Important)

DISCUSSION AND OBSERVATIONS

This study provides evidence the destination image is important to members of the tourism destination system and channel. Both tourism product and tourism wholesalers selling Australian travel programs in the United States confirmed they consider “Australia’s image” as important to their sales and marketing effectiveness. This is an important finding as it provides a commercial rationale for the involvement of these stakeholders in the destination branding process. The findings also show that each of the stakeholder groups value the destination image at different levels showing that destination image is not a “constant” in the marketing activities of these channel members. These findings also provide some insight into the political challenges of developing destination branding strategies. It shows that Destination image is important to the stakeholders and they have a vested stake in its success. It indicates they don’t believe their own marketing activities are particularly successful at either generating awareness, desire to travel or conversion of desire to actual travel. It also indicates that while the stakeholders recognize ATC has a role in the process its constituents do not consider the DMO to be a particularly important factor in the image development process.

Another important result is the acknowledgement that different image creation factors contribute in different ways to the success of the destination. Based on these findings it seems there is a perceived hierarchy of image creation factors in the consumer buying process. At the top of the hierarchy and perceived to be most important to the process is “Word of Mouth; followed by travel media and advertising and then by culture

and popular culture. Using Gartner's (1993) terminology of image formation agents these results suggest "solicited and solicited organic" image formation agents have greater weight in the buying process; that "induced" image formation agents are perceived to be less important and that factors such as culture and pop culture, which were described by Gartner as "autonomous" image formation agents, are considered least important in the consumer buying process. As noted, the importance of the ATC marketing activities was perceived to increase as the consumer moved along the buying process. It is interesting to note that the ATC (ATC, 2004) acknowledge the different functions of different types of marketing in the 2004-2009 Corporate Plan. In that plan they outline a plan that includes three distinct marketing communication types: "Brand" – the positioning and promotion of Australia in international markets; "Brand co-op" – the promotion of Australia's brand with partners and "Retail/Conversion" marketing activity. In separating the brand activities from conversion activities they recognize that different marketing messages are required at different stages of the consumer buying process.

The experience of the Australian travel industry in the United States does provide some key insights for destination marketers in general. Although ATC can only directly control its own advertising message it has the ability to influence several of the image creation factors. Travel media can be influenced by effective public relations campaigns and this study validates the efforts of DMOs in public relations. DMOs focus on public relations is supported by the high value placed on travel media in the image creation process by stakeholders. It has been acknowledged previously that public relations have great potential to communicate key destination marketing messages (Dore & Crouch, 2003; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). Another image creation factor the DMO can influence is the advertising of travel companies associated with the destination. These findings reinforce the value of DMOs working with other companies that advertise travel to Australia. Although the "travel advertising – other" image formation index is ranked behind the "travel advertising – ATC", it is clear that by coordinating a consistent message these two indices support each other. Finally, as social network marketing becomes more common new tools are available to DMOs to manage "word of mouth". Destinations are creating web based platforms to encourage consumers to give their personal testimony about the destination. The process of stimulating "word of mouse" is being used destination marketers to influence "word of mouth" image creation.

It has been noted that Destination Branding and the intentional development of Destination Image association is a challenging process. This study provides insight into the factors that drive image development and provide DMOs with insights into the best resource allocation for branding. Based on this study it is clear budget should be allocated to "word of mouth/mouse" and Public Relations activity as well as traditional marketing activity. The study also provides some insight into the stages in the consumer buying process that are most likely to be impacted by destination brand. The study suggests the effects of destination image are most impactful earlier in the buying process in raising awareness and generating desire for the destination. This suggests that other marketing activities may be more effective at driving conversion of interest to purchase. The study also reinforces the Destination Branding creates value for not only the DMO itself but stakeholders in the sales of tourism product. Destination branding therefore provides a

common ground for collaboration between these stakeholders and the DMO. As noted, branding is not a panacea for all marketing problems but used appropriately it can be an effective tool for destination marketers.

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UNDERSTANDING TRAVEL MOTIVATIONS OF CHINESE TRAVELERS TO THE USA

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ABSTRACT

The US-bound Chinese market has demonstrated great potential for growth, especially after the two countries reached the ADS (Approved Destination Status) agreement in December 2007. The objective of this study is to investigate potential Chinese travelers' motivations to visit the USA. Using a survey approach, the study identified five factors which may motivate potential Chinese travelers to visit the USA, including 'ego-enhancement', 'international exposure', 'communication', 'financial considerations' and 'additional opportunities'. This study also examined differences in each motivation factor among potential Chinese travelers with different socio-demographic backgrounds, suggesting significant relationships between travel motivations and social-demographic factors. The findings contribute to the body of knowledge on the emerging Chinese outbound market and have practical implications with regard to marketing strategies and product design targeting this promising market.

KEYWORDS: Chinese, USA, Travel motivation, Demographics

INTRODUCTION

Travel to foreign countries by Chinese citizens officially started in 1990 when the State Council approved the 'Provisional regulations on management of organizing Chinese citizens to travel to three countries in South-East Asia', which allowed visiting relatives tours to Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. Later, the choice of destinations was gradually expanded not only to other countries in Asia but also to countries in other continents.

The government's relaxation of the rules for traveling overseas responded to the desire of the Chinese to travel abroad. As reflected by the old Chinese saying 'traveling for one thousand Li (equivalent to approximately 311 miles) equals reading ten thousand volumes of books', there is an innate value on travel in Chinese culture (Jang, Yu, and Pearson 2003).

While relaxing government policies empowered the Chinese to travel internationally, sustained economic growth strengthened their financial ability to do so. A solid middle class has emerged as a result of economic reforms since 1978 and become the backbone of consumption across China (Jang et al. 2003; Li 2007). Unlike their middle-aged counterparts in most developed markets, Chinese tend to be young consumers between 25 to 44 years old (Ernst & Young 2005; McKinsey 2006).

Under such circumstances, the development of China's outbound tourism seems inevitable. In only 15 years between 1993 and 2007, the Chinese outbound market grew more than tenfold, with the number of trips for private purposes alone jumping from 1.47 million to 34.92 million. During the same period, the trip-related spending of the outbound Chinese increased by 965 per cent to 29.79 billion US dollars, putting China in the fifth place in the 2007 ranking of international tourism spenders (Nielsen 2008).

The momentum is expected to maintain. In 2000, the World Tourism Organization (hereafter WTO) predicted China to be the fourth largest source of outbound tourists by the year 2020. An updated estimate of the authority indicates this prediction may turn into reality five years earlier in 2015. In terms of total outbound travel spending, China is likely to jump into the number two slot by 2015 (Lee 2006).

As of January 2008, a total of 134 countries and regions have received the Approved Destination Status (hereafter, ADS) for Chinese outbound tourism. Introduced in 1995, the ADS system is based on bilateral tourism agreements by which a government allows self-paying Chinese tourists to travel for pleasure to its territory within guided package groups and with a special visa. Generally, ADS countries enjoy such positive effects as the possibility of active promotion as a tourism destination in Chinese media and the opportunity to receive a larger number of Chinese tourists (Arlt 2006).

China and the USA did not reach an ADS agreement until December 2007. As a former non-ADS country, America had been described as an elusive destination for leisure travelers from China (Arlt 2006). The probability of visa grants to private Chinese individuals was rather low (WTO 2003). Despite the high hurdles to enter, the USA was one of the popular destinations for Mainland Chinese citizens (Jang et al. 2003). Many studies ranked the country among the top choices for outbound Chinese travelers (Arlt 2006; Cai, O'Leary, and Boger 2000; Kim, Guo, and Agrusa 2005).

The number of Chinese travelers to the USA has been growing, and its growth rate has surpassed that of the total US inbound market in eleven out of the past fourteen years from 1994 to 2007. Among the three exceptions, one happened in 2003 when the outbreak of SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) in China limited the mobility of the Chinese to certain extent. However, the growth rate of the US-bound Chinese market has lagged behind that of the total China outbound market in eight out of the fourteen years. While China's share in the total US inbound market has demonstrated a general trend of increase, the US-bound share in the total China outbound market has reduced from 2-5 per cent in the 1990s to less than 1 per cent in the recent years.

It has become apparent that the USA has great potential to capture a larger share of the booming Chinese outbound market. Xu (2005) divided destination life cycle for Chinese outbound market into four consecutive periods and labeled them 'introduction', 'growth', 'maturity' and 'decline' respectively. North America was positioned at the starting point of the second period, confirming the growth potential for the USA as a destination for Chinese outbound travelers. With the first group of Chinese leisure tourists making their trip to the USA in June 2008, the ADS agreement between the two countries is expected to bring more customers to the US tourism industry. The number of US-bound Chinese visitors will reach 579,000 by 2011 as per a forecast by the US Department of Commerce, nearly 50% more than the 2007 record.

The future success in exploiting the Chinese outbound market builds on an understanding of the market, especially when a number of countries turn their eyes toward this lucrative market and enlarge the pool of destination choices for Chinese outbound tourists. Knowledge of China, Chinese culture and Chinese people is a prerequisite for effective marketing on China outbound business (Xu 2005).

Chinese outbound travel itself is a recent phenomenon that just began to take shape around two decades ago. As a result, academic research on the Chinese outbound market does not have a long history. Relevant studies have appeared since only the mid 1990s (Jang et al. 2003). Among them, much of the attention has been directed to such popular ADS destinations as Hong Kong SAR (e.g., Hsu and Crofts 2006; Lo, Cheung, and Law 2004; Zhang and Lam 1999) and Australia (e.g., Li and Carr 2004; Pan 2003; Pan and Laws 2001), while studies in relation to the USA are relatively less. Furthermore, among the studies on the US-bound share, most focus on the profiling of Chinese tourists (Cai et al. 2000; Cai, Lehto, and O'Leary 2001; Jang et al. 2003). Only one study has explored Chinese travelers' motivations to visit Hawaii (Johanson 2007).

Therefore, this study attempts to contribute to the body of knowledge by investigating Chinese outbound tourists' motivations to visit the USA. More specifically, three objectives are involved: 1) to identify the important attributes that motivate potential Chinese tourists to visit the USA; 2) to determine the influential dimensions underlying the motivation attributes; 3) to explore any differences in travel motivation between potential Chinese travelers with different demographic background. The findings in this study are expected to facilitate a better understanding of the needs and demands of potential Chinese travelers and give implications to industry practitioners in such areas as marketing strategies and tourism product design.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourist Motivation

Many scholars have long been exploring the driving force behind tourists' travel decisions, which is a fundamental area in tourism studies and basic to tourism development (Pearce 2005). Although there are other variables (e.g., perceptions, cultural

conditioning) that may contribute to explaining tourist behavior, motivation is a critical element and initial point (Fodness 1994; Pearce 2005). Insights into tourist motivation could be used for a number of purposes including market segmentation (Sangpikul 2008), product development (Rittichainuwat, Qu, and Mongkhonvanit 2008), service quality evaluation (Isabelle 2004), image development (Huang and Hsu 2005), and promotional activities (Zhang and Lam 1999).

While the importance of tourist motivation has been agreed upon, the difficulties in studying it have been noted as well. Unlike the purpose of travel, which tends to be public, self-explanatory and frequently measured, the motivations or underlying reasons for travel reflect private human needs and wants, which are covert, diverse, subject to change and difficult to measure (Pearce 2005).

Yet, the difficulties have not dampened efforts in investigating tourist motivation. Most discussions have tended to revolve around the concepts of 'push' and 'pull' (Crompton 1979). 'Push' factors are internal drives that cause tourists to seek activities to reduce their needs, such as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, prestige, and social interaction (Gnoth 1997; Huang and Hsu 2005; Klenosky 2002). They deal with tourist motivation per se (Dann 1981). On the other hand, 'pull' factors refer to destination-generated forces and tourists' knowledge about a destination (Gnoth 1997). They represent the specific features or attributes of the destination which induce tourists to go there, such as sunshine, beaches, sports facilities, and cheap airfares (Dann 1981; Klenosky 2002).

Traditionally, push and pull factors have been thought useful for explaining two distinct decisions made at two separate points in time: the desire to go on a vacation, or 'whether to go'; and the choice of destination, or 'where to go' (Crompton 1979; Klenosky 2002). For instance, Dann (1977) noted that a tourist's actual decision to visit a certain destination is consequent on his/her prior need for travel. Accordingly, he inferred that push factors precede pull factors logically, and often temporally.

Nevertheless, it was argued that push and pull factors should not be considered as operating entirely independent of each other (Klenosky 2002). Uysal and Jurowski (1994) highlighted the interaction between the two factors, suggesting simultaneous examination of tourist motivations and destination attributes. Crompton (1979) contended that push factors, which he named socio-psychological motives, may have potential to direct a tourist toward a particular destination and be useful for explaining the choice of destination in addition to the initial desire to take a vacation.

Researchers mostly agree that tourist motivations are derived from and influenced by travelers' internal personality and psychographic characteristics as well as external social/cultural forces (Huang and Hsu 2005). Factors such as 'escape', 'novelty', 'cultural experience', 'social interaction' and 'prestige' are commonly cited in motivation literature (Kim and Prideaux 2005). However, a universally agreed-upon conceptualization of the tourist motivation construct is not yet available (Fodness 1994; Huang and Hsu 2005).

In addition to the attempts at answering the general question of ‘why tourists travel’ or ‘why tourists visit a particular destination’, researchers have embarked on more specific studies to determine motivations for international travel from a certain country/origin or cultural background. The importance and necessity of such research have been confirmed by the findings of many cross-cultural studies on tourist motivation, which indicate the existence of differences in travel motivations between tourists from different countries/origins or cultural backgrounds even when they choose to visit the same destination (Kim and Lee 2000; Kim and Prideaux 2005; Kozak 2002; Yuan and McDonald 1990).

A review of literature indicates that some motivation factors (e.g., ‘knowledge’, ‘relationship enhancement’) are common for Chinese outbound tourists in spite of the destination they choose. The dominant cultural values of the Chinese people are believed to play an important role in shaping their preferences and expectations as international travelers (Mok and DeFranco 1999). On the other hand, some motivation factors appear to be more destination-specific (e.g., ‘accessibility’ for Hong Kong SAR, ‘a wish to visit new places’ for New Zealand, ‘unique culture/history and unspoiled romantic beauty’ for Hawaii).

The Mainland Chinese outbound market has already become a significant and indispensable part of international tourism. As much of the previous research on travel motivations has focused on tourists from the USA and Europe (Kim and Prideaux 2005), this emerging market has been relatively under-researched.

METHODOLOGY

Research Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire was used as the research instrument for this study. The first section consisted of 29 travel motivation attributes. Respondents were asked to rate the importance of each attribute in motivating them to visit the USA on a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being not important and 5 being very important. The section was designed primarily based on the literature review. In addition, a threaded discussion about motivations to visit the USA was initiated on a popular Internet forum in China, and the information gathered from the discussion was used in developing the motivation attributes. The second section asked for information regarding specific travel plan, such as expected time to travel, intended length of stay, primary purpose of visit, planned mode of travel, and estimated travel spending. The last section dealt with the socio-demographic background of the respondents. The variables included gender, age, occupation, level of education, marital status, household income, and number of previous visits to the USA.

The questionnaire was initially devised in English and then translated into Chinese by a graduate student who is proficient in both languages. A back translation process was undertaken to ensure the quality of translation (McGorry 2000).

Sampling and Data Collection

The survey questionnaires were distributed to nearly 500 Chinese residents in Beijing and Shanghai. The two cities were selected as the place to conduct the survey for three reasons. First, they are two major markets for Chinese outbound travel, especially outbound leisure tourism beyond Hong Kong SAR, Macao SAR and neighboring border areas (Arlt 2006; Sparks and Pan 2008; Wang and Liang 2005). Second, they are the more affluent cities in China, housing a consumption class with an increased level of disposable income (Guo, Kim, and Timothy 2007; Sparks and Pan 2008). Third, they are among the nine municipalities and provinces in Mainland China to which US-bound group tours were open, the other seven being Tianjin, Hubei, Hebei, Hunan, Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Guangdong.

Two approaches were used to access the respondents. The first approach was made possible through the support of two travel agencies handling outbound travel services, one in Beijing and the other in Shanghai. Everyone who visited the two travel agencies to inquire about outbound travel was included in the target population for this study.

In addition, the researchers approached twenty companies based in Beijing and Shanghai to recruit their employees as survey participants. There are mainly two reasons for adopting this approach. First, with steady and relatively high income, these employees normally belong to the middle class who are financially able to travel abroad. Second, being constantly exposed to the outside world at their jobs, they tend to demonstrate great interest in overseas trips. A total of thirteen companies, including five in Beijing and eight in Shanghai, agreed to assist with the survey. They undertake business in different disciplines such as energy, banking and real estate, and range from stated-owned corporations to foreign invested enterprises.

Under both approaches, only those who expressed an interest in the USA as a travel destination and the willingness to take the survey were asked to complete the questionnaire. All the questionnaires were collected on site by the travel agency representatives or the company contact persons depending on the approach. A convenience sampling method was applied in the data collection procedure, which lasted for a two-month period from January 2009 to February 2009. In total, 486 questionnaires were obtained, 325 from Shanghai and 161 from Beijing. However, 27 of them were excluded from further data analyses because of too many unfilled items. The final sample comprised 459 usable questionnaires.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the SPSS for Windows 17.0. Three steps were involved in the procedure. First, descriptive analysis was employed to determine frequency distributions of the sample in terms of socio-demographic background and travel plan. Another purpose was to find out the relative importance of each motivation attribute and identify possible leading attributes influencing the future travel demand for the USA. Second, an exploratory factor analysis was performed on the 29 motivation attributes to address the research objective of exploring the influential dimensions underlying potential Chinese travelers' motivation to visit the USA. The results were also used to construct scales for analysis in the next step. Finally, the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to examine any differences in travel motivation between potential Chinese travelers with different socio-demographic backgrounds.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic background of the study sample. There was a slightly higher proportion of females (50.5%) than males (48.4%). A majority of the respondents were between 21 and 40 years old (82.5%). More than half (60.3%) were married. The respondents were mostly well-educated, with 70.8% holding a 4-year college degree or higher. In terms of occupation, company employees composed 67.3% of the sample, followed by technicians (9.8%), professionals (7.6%) and students (5.7%). Most respondents (83.6%) earned more than RMB50,000 (equivalent to USD7,321 at the time of the survey) annually. Over 80% of the respondents indicated they had never been to the USA while respondents with previous travel experience comprised 16.5%.

Table 1. Socio-demographic Profile of Respondents

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent (%)</i>
Gender		
Male	222	48.4
Female	232	50.5
No response	5	1.1
Age		
20 and below	6	1.3
21-30	220	47.9
31-40	159	34.6
41-50	40	8.7
51-60	19	4.1
61 and above	8	1.7
No response	7	1.5
Marital status		
Married	277	60.3
Single	177	38.6
No response	5	1.1
Education		
4-year college degree and above	325	70.8
3-year college degree	109	23.7
Vocational school/high school	18	3.9
Middle school and below	2	0.4
No response	5	1.1
Occupation		
Government officer	8	1.7
Professionals	35	7.6
Company employee	309	67.3
Technicians	45	9.8
Business owner/self-employed	10	2.2
Housewife	7	1.5
Student	26	5.7
Retired	10	2.2
Others	4	0.9
No response	5	1.1
Annual household income		
RMB50,000 and below	58	12.6
RMB50,001-100,000	142	30.9
RMB100,001-150,000	82	17.9
RMB150,001-200,000	53	11.5
RMB200,001 and above	107	23.3
No response	17	3.7
Number of visits to US		
Never	379	82.6
Once	51	11.1

More than once	25	5.4
No response	4	0.9

Travel Plan

Over 60% of the respondents showed an intention to visit the USA in the near future. Only 10.9% of the respondents indicated they would stay in the USA for one week or less. Most of the respondents expressed a preference for longer stay, with 53.6% selecting 8-14 days, 19.8% selecting 15-21 days, and 14.6% choosing 22 days or more. Would-be vacationers dominated the sample. Those who declared business/convention and VFR as the primary purpose of US trip accounted for 8.9% and 8.1% respectively. The sample was almost equally distributed in terms of planned travel mode: 36.2% voted for partially package tour, 33.1% for package tour, and 29.8% for independent tour. With regard to travel spending estimates, 44.2% fell into the RMB30,001-60,000 range. A slightly less proportion (43.8%) of the respondents expected spending below the range while a much smaller proportion (10.9%) believed they would spend above the range.

Travel Motivation

Table 2 illustrates the descriptive statistics for the 29 travel motivation attributes contained in the survey. Their mean scores ranged from the highest value of 4.23 to the lowest value of 2.74. Their standard deviations generally centered around the value of 1. 'Personal safety during the trip', 'natural attractions', 'to rest and relax', 'to learn new things and broaden my horizon', and 'to experience a different culture and lifestyle' played an important role in motivating potential Chinese travelers to visit the USA. On the contrary, four motivation attributes turned out to be unimportant with mean values lower than 3 include 'to investigate the education system', 'going to places where my family/friends want to go', 'to meet and interact with American people', and 'the opportunity to visit my relatives/friends at the destination'. However, the standard deviation for 'the opportunity to visit my relatives/friends at the destination' had a high value of 1.185, the highest among the 29 motivation attributes, suggesting the existence of a significant subsample who rated it as an important travel motive. The other two motivation attributes which had standard deviations higher than 1.1 were 'shopping' and 'special promotions'. Accordingly, the sample might include subgroups with different views regarding the importance of the two motivation attributes.

Table 2. Descriptive Analysis of Travel Motivations

<i>Motivation Attributes</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Personal safety during the trip	4.23	0.852
Natural attractions	4.15	0.784
To rest and relax	4.03	0.852

To learn new things and broaden my horizon	3.92	0.873
To experience a different culture and lifestyle	3.90	0.856
Overall quality versus price	3.77	0.979
To visit international cities	3.67	0.884
Visiting a destination that would impress others	3.62	0.923
To visit places I have always wanted to visit	3.62	0.978
Visiting historical attractions	3.61	0.968
The rising value of RMB against USD	3.58	1.009
To see the largest developed country in the world	3.56	1.048
Entertainment opportunities	3.53	0.985
Special promotions	3.53	1.107
Ease of communication at the destination	3.43	0.916
To discover new places and things available in the USA	3.36	0.906
To share my travel experience with my relatives/friends after returning home	3.27	0.976
To fulfill my curiosity about the United States	3.26	1.048
A change from my daily routine	3.26	1.002
To visit an English speaking country and practice English	3.25	0.964
Shopping	3.18	1.121
To spend time with my family/friends	3.15	1.083
To experience the capitalist society	3.15	0.998
Travel agent's recommendation	3.05	1.062
To seek adventure and excitement	3.04	1.020
To investigate the education system	2.95	0.993
Going to places where my family/friends want to go	2.82	0.996
To meet and interact with American people	2.79	1.005
The opportunity to visit my relatives/friends at the destination	2.74	1.185

Underlying Dimensions of Travel Motivation

The 29 motivation attributes were factor analyzed to determine the underlying dimensions of travel motivation. The Bartlett's test of sphericity proved to be significant with a value of 4675.470 ($p=0.000$). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index of sampling adequacy was 0.86, well above the threshold of 0.6 for a good factor analysis. Both statistical measures confirmed the factorability of the data.

Principal components method with varimax rotation was employed in the factor analysis. A cut-off point of 0.4 was used to retain items in the interpretation of a factor. Items with low factor loadings or high cross-loadings were dropped from further analysis.

The process was repeated for several times until no more items were to be eliminated. The data finally yielded five factors with eigenvalues greater than one, explaining 58.58% of the variance in the original data set. Each factor was then tested for reliability by Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

The results are displayed in Table 3. A total of 20 motivation items were retained. The five factors extracted from the analysis were labeled 'ego-enhancement', 'international exposure', 'communication', 'financial considerations', and 'additional opportunities', each containing three to five items. Their Cronbach's alpha coefficients mostly exceeded 0.7, with one exception of 0.58 for 'additional opportunities', suggesting that the motivation items within each factor had moderate correlation and could be regarded as internally consistent and stable.

Table 3. Factor Analysis of Travel Motivations

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Factor loading</i>	<i>EV</i>	<i>% Var.</i>	<i>α</i>
Factor 1: Ego-enhancement		5.35	26.72	0.77
Visiting a destination that would impress others	0.79			
To learn new things and broaden my horizon	0.65			
To rest and relax	0.65			
To visit places I have always wanted to visit	0.65			
To share my travel experience with my relatives/friends after returning home	0.63			
Factor 2: International exposure		2.00	10.02	0.72
To see the largest developed country in the world	0.78			
To visit international cities	0.76			
To experience a different culture and lifestyle	0.70			
To experience the capitalist society	0.51			
Visiting historical attractions	0.47			
Factor 3: Communication		1.55	7.76	0.78
To visit an English-speaking country and practice my English	0.80			
To meet and interact with American people	0.74			
Ease of communication at the destination	0.67			
Factor 4: Financial considerations		1.54	7.71	0.75
Overall quality versus price	0.82			
The rising value of RMB against USD	0.75			
Special promotions	0.75			
Factor 5: Additional opportunities		1.28	6.38	0.58
Entertainment opportunities	0.65			
Shopping	0.64			
The opportunity to visit my relatives/friends at the destination	0.60			

To investigate the education system in the USA	0.52	
Total variable explained		58.58
Total scale reliability		0.89

Travel Motivation Differences by Socio-demographics

One-way ANOVA with Turkey post-hoc tests were performed to examine whether significant differences in travel motivation existed between potential Chinese tourists with different socio-demographic backgrounds. The five underlying dimensions of travel motivation were included in the analysis as dependent variables while the independent variable was each of the socio-demographic factors including gender, age, marital status, education, annual household income, and previous US travel experience.

Significant differences were found between male and female respondents in the ‘ego-enhancement’ domain and the ‘financial considerations’ domain. In both cases, females were more motivated than males. Three age groups were also compared. It turned out that a significant difference existed in the ‘communication’, with potential travelers aged 30 years old or under showing more interest in this particular motivation factor than those aged 41 or above.

With regard to marital status, there were significant differences between single and married respondents in the ‘ego-enhancement’ domain and the ‘communication’ domain. Singles placed more importance on the two domains of travel motivation than married Chinese. Respondents with different education backgrounds appeared to have different opinions regarding the importance of the ‘ego-enhancement’ and the ‘international exposure’. Potential travelers with lower levels of education (3-year college degree or below) were less motivated by these two factors than those with higher levels of education (4-year college degree or above).

In terms of annual household income, a comparison was made between three groups of the sample: the lower group with an income equal to or less than RMB100,000, the higher group with an income equal to or greater than RMB200,001, and the middle group who earned an amount ranging between the former two groups. There was a significant difference in the ‘communication’. The lower group had more communication needs than the middle group. Moreover, a significant difference existed in the ‘financial considerations’. The lower group was more motivated by this factor than the higher group. A significant difference in the ‘financial considerations’ domain was also revealed between respondents who had previous US travel experience and those who had never visited the USA. More importance was attached to the factor in the case of the latter group.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary objective of the study was to investigate potential Chinese travelers' motivations to visit the USA. In order to address the research objective, a survey was conducted containing 29 travel motivation attributes developed on the basis of literature review as well as an online discussion with Chinese residents.

A descriptive analysis of the 29 travel motivation attributes revealed that 'personal safety during the trip' and 'natural attractions' played the most important role in motivating Chinese travelers to visit the USA. The result coincides with the finding by Kim, et al. (2005) that 'safety' and 'beautiful scenery' are the two most important destination attributes in the opinion of potential Mainland Chinese tourists. Other high ranking motivation attributes included 'to rest and relax', 'to learn new things and broaden my horizon', and 'to experience a different culture and lifestyle'. Given the traditional Chinese view on travel as an intellectual undertaking (Arlt 2006), it is not surprising that potential travelers from China placed great importance on learning something new and experiencing something different. On the contrary, a few motivation attributes, including 'to investigate the education system', 'going to places where my family/friends want to go', 'to meet and interact with American people', and 'the opportunity to visit my relatives/friends at the destination', appeared to be relatively unimportant in motivating Chinese travelers to visit the USA. However, there might exist subgroups who can be largely motivated by these attributes. For instance, 'the opportunity to visit my relatives/friends at the destination' was an important travel motive for the 8.1% of respondents who would plan a VFR visit to the USA.

An exploratory factor analysis was also performed, reducing the original 29 travel motivation attributes to 20. Five dimensions emerged as underlying factors motivating potential Chinese travelers to visit the USA, namely, 'ego-enhancement', 'international exposure', 'communication', 'financial considerations', and 'additional opportunities'. Socio-demographic groups in terms of gender, age, marital status, education, annual household income, and US travel experience were compared for any differences in each of the five dimensions.

The 'ego-enhancement' dimension is seen in travel motivation studies on Chinese tourists to other overseas destinations such as Hong Kong SAR (Zhang and Lam 1999) and Singapore (Kau and Lim 2005), though it might be termed in a somewhat different way (e.g., 'prestige'). The high value that Chinese people put on face/status was believed to be the cultural roots for the prevailing importance of this dimension among Chinese outbound travelers (Mok and DeFranco 1999). While it is generally agreed that 'ego-enhancement' or 'prestige' is an important motivation factor behind Chinese tourists' decision to travel abroad, this study found it to be particularly and predominantly important in motivating Chinese travelers to visit the USA. In the eyes of potential Chinese outbound travelers, the USA is perceived as a destination which has enormous brand value to transfer to their own ego. Significant differences were found in the 'ego-enhancement' dimension between potential Chinese travelers with different gender, marital status, and level of education. Females, singles and those with higher education

background were more motivated by this factor than their respective counterparts. As the US-bound Chinese market was predominated by males and married travelers (Chen 1998; Cai et al. 2000), it is no surprise that females and singles, with less opportunities to travel to the USA, placed more importance on the 'ego-enhancement' dimension. On the other hand, though most US-bound travelers from China were well-educated (Cai et al. 2000), proving more opportunities for the Chinese with higher levels of education to visit the USA, the tendency for the more educated to care more about face/status might explain their higher ratings on the 'ego-enhancement' dimension than the less educated.

The 'international exposure' dimension reflects potential Chinese tourists' interest in the culture, history and political system of the USA as well as the lifestyle of American people. While the dimension has things in common with the 'knowledge' factor Zhang and Lam (1999) identified for HK-bound tourists from Mainland China and the 'exploration' factor Kau and Lim (2005) identified for Singapore-bound Chinese travelers, the focus is on the unique identity of America as a global power. Influenced by Confucian thinking, Chinese people see virtue in learning from others. As the Confucius saying goes, 'if I am walking with two other men, each of them will serve as my teacher. I will pick out the good points of the one and imitate them, and the bad points of the other and correct them in myself'. Most of the history of Imperial China has evidenced a welcome for foreigners who came to present wares, tribute, ideas, religions and technologies (Arlt 2006). Now that Chinese residents have been empowered to travel abroad, they avail the opportunity to learn through travel. As one of the most developed countries in the world, the USA is possessed with advanced technology, innovative ideas and a lot other things potential Chinese travelers are interested in knowing. The study indicated that a significant difference existed in the 'international exposure' dimension between potential Chinese travelers with different education backgrounds. Those with higher levels of education showed more interest in this motivation factor. They are generally more exposed to the outside world as they advance in education, which in turn arouses their interest in exploring more about the outside world.

The 'communication' dimension captures potential Chinese tourists' desire to mingle with local people at the travel destination and develop their skills in a foreign language. The emergence of this motivation factor may be largely attributable to the socio-demographic profile of the sample, which was characterized by a large percentage of young and well-educated Chinese respondents who often speak English as a second language. Over the past two decades, China has seen an increasing interest in foreign language learning. Schools specializing in foreign language training have appeared one after another. English courses have been included in the elementary school curriculum. Language, previously a barrier for Chinese tourists to visit the USA has gradually shifted its role into a motivator with the emergence of a young middle class in China. This study found significant differences in the 'communication' dimension between potential Chinese travelers with different age, marital status and annual household income. As expected, young Chinese below the age of 31 were more motivated by the factor than the age group over 40. Singles also showed more communication needs than married Chinese. Consistently, the group with lower household income, which is presumed to be primarily composed of young singles whose household income is simply their own

income, placed more importance on the ‘communication’ dimension than the middle income group.

The ‘financial considerations’ dimension suggests that financially favorable conditions or offers may also motivate potential Chinese tourists to visit the USA. Travel to the USA as a long-haul destination often means more commitments in terms of money and time on the part of Chinese tourists. A high-quality trip worth the money spent is therefore expected. Not surprisingly, a significant difference was found in the ‘financial considerations’ dimension between different income groups, with the higher one being less interested in financial incentives such as a favorable currency exchange rate and special promotions compared with the lower one. Moreover, there were significant differences in this dimension among potential Chinese travelers depending on their gender and previous US travel experience. Females and those with no US travel experience were more motivated by the factor.

The ‘additional opportunities’ dimension covers other opportunities available at the destination such as gaming, shopping and visiting theme parks. It is the only factor that has no relationship with any demographic variable, indicating common opinions about the motivation factor among potential Chinese travelers in spite of their gender, age, marital status, education level, annual household income, or US travel experience.

In addition to an investigation of potential Chinese travelers’ motivations to visit the USA, this study examined their specific plan of making the trip. There are two findings of interest: a preference for longer stay and a surprisingly low interest in package tour. A preference for longer stay seems understandable as the USA is a long-haul destination with a variety of attractions. While it is unlikely to make frequent US-bound trips in most cases, potential Chinese travelers often wish to have a thorough tour. On the other hand, it is unexpected that only about one third of the respondents chose package tour as their planned travel mode, given that Chinese travelers were known for having the overwhelming preference for traveling in groups by joining package tours (Mok and DeFranco 1999). A possible explanation would again be the sample characteristics. Without any language problem, well-educated young Chinese normally prefer partially package tour or independent tour whereby they have the deciding power on the itinerary and travel partners.

Currently, there is an evident lack of research on the US-bound Chinese market despite its great potential. Most empirical studies in this regard used data collected prior to 2000 (Cai et al. 2000; Cai et al. 2001; Jang et al. 2003). With the exception of one motivation study in the case of Hawaii (Johanson 2007), there is virtually no research probing into the forces driving Chinese tourists to visit the USA. Therefore, this study can be claimed as one of the first attempts to investigate potential Chinese tourists’ motivations to visit the USA. The findings in this study are expected to provide insights into the needs of potential Chinese travelers and extend the body of knowledge on the emerging Chinese outbound market.

In addition, the findings in this study have several implications for industry practitioners targeting the Chinese outbound market. First, with ‘ego-enhancement’ turning out to be the most important motivation factor, icon attractions which can communicate brand value to potential Chinese travelers should be used to promote the USA as a destination of prestige. It is important for the USA to strengthen its position as one of the most prestigious destinations for leisure Chinese tourists since recognition of destinations can be changed over time (Arlt 2006). Second, the emergence of the ‘international exposure’ dimension implies that US-bound tours should be marketed in China as intellectually stimulating through exposure to a foreign environment with impressive advancements in various areas. Package tours are to incorporate accesses to major international cities in the USA. Third, special tour packages could be designed to meet the ‘communication’ needs of young Chinese travelers, who are expected to be the main force of future outbound demand in China. Fourth, while favorable financial offers may motivate Chinese travelers to visit the USA, it is important to maintain the quality of tourism products and services. Chinese travelers will continue to be attracted to visit the USA when they perceive high value in the trip even though it involves more travel expenses compared with short-haul destinations. Fifth, tour packages with relatively longer stay should be the focus in future tour product design. Finally, the demographic differences identified in travel motivation indicate that potential Chinese outbound market can not be treated homogenously. Diversification should be taken into consideration when tourism products are designed.

Nevertheless, this study has limitations. First, it used a convenient sampling method and therefore the results obtained may not be generalized to the overall Chinese outbound market. Future studies could expand the geographic coverage in data collection because residents in other areas such as Guangdong Province may have different travel motivations. Second, the majority of respondents in this study were relatively young. In order to gain the views of a broader range of age groups, future studies could attempt to get a more representative sample and examine any likely generational difference in travel motivations.

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CONGRUITY AND DESTINATION IMAGE: AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH FOR TRAVEL DECISION-MAKING

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ABSTRACT

This study integrates the concepts of congruity and destination image in a theoretical model to examine travel decision-making. Applying this model in the context of cruise tourism, the study investigated the effects of self-congruity and functional congruity on travel intentions. It was found that both rational and emotional dimensions of congruity positively influence travel intentions.

KEYWORDS: Self-congruity, functional congruity, destination image, travel intentions, cruising

INTRODUCTION

Decision-making studies are multi-disciplinary in nature and have evolved from a wide range of fields including psychology (e.g., Harmon-Jones, 2000; Oyserman, Fryberg, and Yoder, 2007; Pablo, Petty, and Barden, 2007), sociology (e.g., Howard, 2000; Pierce et al, 2003; Lawler, Shane, and Yoon, 2000), marketing (e.g., Simonson, et al, 2001; Cotte and Wood, 2004; Mandel, 2003), communication (e.g., Homer, 2006; Till and Baack, 2005; Katz 1973), and so on. Although different theories or conceptual models (e.g., Theory of Planned Behavior by Ajzen 1991; Goal Hierarchy of Motivation by Bettman 1979; Elaboration Likelihood Model of Persuasion by Petty and Cacioppo 1980; Brand Personality by Aaker 1997) have been proposed for explaining consumers' decisions, no one unifying theory has been agreed upon by scholars to fully explain decision making (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Simonson et al (2001, pp. 251) suggested that this might be because "consumer behavior is too complex to be meaningfully captured in a single model." Alternative approaches may enhance our understanding of decision making from different ways. The current study proposes an alternative model which utilizes both congruity theory and destination image to assist in explaining travel decision making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different factors influencing tourist decision making have been identified in past research including travel motivation (Kim and Chalip, 2004; Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979), information search (e.g., Bieger and Laesser, 2004; Fodness and Murray, 1999; Vogt and Fesenmaier, 1998), memory (e.g., Braun-Latour, Grinley, and Loftus, 2006), perceived quality and value (e.g., Petrick and Backman, 2002; Petrick, 2002), destination image (e.g., Pike, 2002; Litvin and Ling, 2001; Park, 2006), and so on. Both internal (e.g., travel motivations, novelty, and personality) and external (e.g., group influences, cultural backgrounds, and destination images) factors have also been examined in this line of research. One of the observations derived from this literature is that the majority of studies have assumed that tourists make decisions rationally without considering the hedonic nature of their decisions. Decrop and Snelders (2005) developed a decision-making typology in which they identified six different types of vacationers: habitual, rational, hedonic, opportunistic, constrained, and adaptable. This typology implies that decision making can be diversified across different individuals, and that both the rational and hedonic nature of decision making should be incorporated into the analysis of travel decision making.

However, scholars usually consider decision making as a rational process which involves multiple stages (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005) in which consumers logically derive their final decision. For instance, Crompton (1992) and Botha, Crompton, and Kim (1999) proposed a destination choice model in which people narrowed their choices from awareness set, initial consideration set, and late consideration set to final destination choice. Based on Assael's (1984) work, Vogt and Fesenmaier (1998) introduced an information search model in which the information search process is comprised of five stages: input variables, information acquisition, information process, brand evaluation, and purchase. Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) summarized previous decision-making studies and suggested that people usually go through the following steps when making a travel decision: 1) recognizing the need of making a decision; 2) identifying goals; 3) formulating choice sets; 4) collecting information on each choice; 5) making a choice among the alternatives; 6) purchasing and/or consuming products/services; and 7) post-purchase evaluation.

Although these models present a logical hierarchical process of decision making, some scholars (e.g., Petrick, Li, and Park, 2007; Crompton and Ankomah, 1993; Opperman, 1998) have suggested that not everyone follows all the steps scripted above. People are more likely to skip some stages of decision making when they are brand loyal (Petrick, Li, and Park, 2007), have previous experience (Opperman, 1998), are familiar with the products/services (Prentice and Anderson 2000), have social influences (Petrick, Li, and Park, 2007), are involved in decision-making process (Crompton and Ankomah, 1993), and/or their decisions are routinized (Crompton and Ankomah, 1993). Petrick, Li, and Park, (2007) studied decision making of cruisers and found that Crompton's (1992) destination choice set model, which is a multi-state decision-making model, did not explain the phenomenon. This implies that the traditional multistage approach may not be

applicable to explain tourists' decision making due to its sensitivity to the factors mentioned above.

Another observation of the traditional multistage approach is that most models focus on describing the process of decision making rather than explaining why people make certain decisions. Crompton (1992, pp. 432) highlighted this drawback in his seminal paper examining the destination choice set model in stating: "The choice structure taxonomy is not an explanatory model, because it does not explain the role of internal and external forces that shape the choices." Situated in the congruity (Sirgy, 1986) and destination image (Gartner, 1993) theories, the current study seeks to not only include both rational and emotional aspects of decision making in one model, but also address the fundamental motives which are needed for engaging people in the process.

Destination image

Edward Mayo (1973) examined the role of image in destination choice and used three destination attributes to assess auto vacationers' images toward destination regions: scenery, congestion, and climate. He indicated that a tourist "psychologically 'maps' the alternative destination areas and, all other things being equal, chooses that destination that comes closest to the ideal" (pp. 216). This seminal idea initiated many destination image studies.

Today, destination image researchers have generally reached a consensus on the important role of destination image in tourist decision making (Beerli and Martin, 2004). Tourists often formulate their images toward different destinations based on the information received from various sources over time. The images are formed according to their own interpretations and thus, may not represent objective reality (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; MacKay and Fesenmaier, 1997; LaPage and Cormier, 1977). Nevertheless, tourists make their choices based on these images, and destinations with favorable images are more likely to be chosen for travel (Alhemoud and Armstrong, 1996; Gartner, 1996).

Gartner (1993) suggested three constructs of destination image: cognitive, affective, and conative, in which cognitive image is formed based on beliefs or knowledge of a destination; affective image refers to subjective feelings or emotional responses of individuals toward a destination; and conative image refers to the behavioral intention of an individual or their likelihood to visit a destination. Scholars have further suggested that both cognitive and affective images influence intentions to visit a destination (e.g., Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Holbrook, 1978; Stern and Krakover, 1993). Figure 1 depicts the interrelationships among these constructs (Model 1).

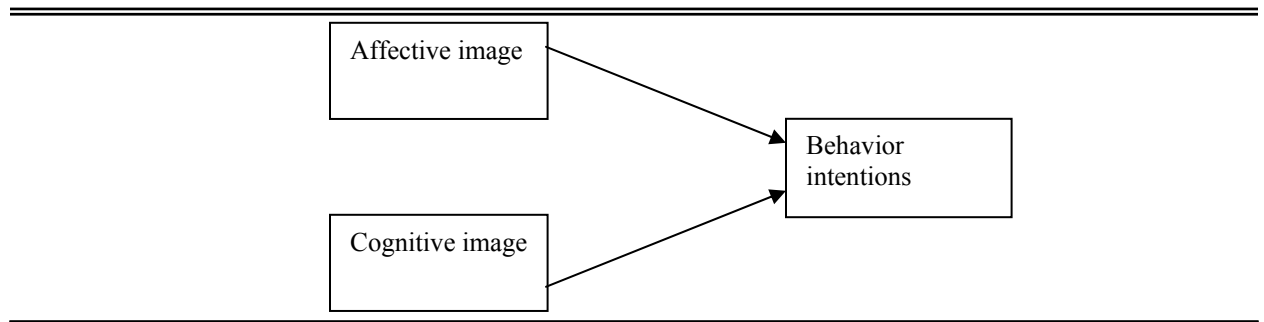


Figure 1. Model 1: cognitive image, affective image, and behavioral intentions

These destination image studies (e.g., Fakeye and Crompton, 1991) imply that intention to visit a destination occurs when people hold a favorable image toward the destination. However, the mechanism behind this relationship remains unexplained. Baloglu and McCleary (1999, pp. 869) suggested: “little empirical research has focused on how image is actually formed...” It is thus still unclear why people prefer to visit a destination over another and how people choose among all destinations with positive images. This study is intended to address these concerns by applying self-congruity theory, which argues that a particular destination is chosen not only because its positive image, but also more importantly, because it matches tourists’ self-images and contributes to their psychological well-being.

Self-congruity theory

Self-image congruence is defined in marketing research as “the match between consumers’ self-concept (actual self, ideal self, etc.) and user image (or personality) of a given product, brand, store, etc” (Kressmann et al., 2006, pp. 955). The congruence between the perceived image of a product and self-image can lead to preference of the product and thus, result in purchasing behavior. In other words, people tend to behave congruent to their self-images (Mannetti, Pierro, and Livi, 2004).

Two types of congruity have been identified in past research: functional and self-congruity, in which functional congruity refers to the knowledge aspects of congruity and self-congruity refers to self-expressive or emotional aspects of congruity. Functional congruity is “the match between consumers’ ideal expectations of utilitarian brand features and their perceptions of how the product is perceived along the same features” (Kressmann et al., 2006, pp. 955). In other words, purchasing decisions are based on people’s evaluation of the costs and benefits of a transaction. The utilitarian need motivates people to buy products in which benefits are perceived to outweigh costs. People cognitively weigh the pros and cons of a behavior based on their subjective knowledge.

Although functional congruity is a simple approach, it has been criticized for insufficiently explaining consumer behavior. Researchers (e.g., Chon, 1992; Levy, 1959;

Landon, 1974) have suggested that there are other dimensions beyond functional utility, and that functional congruence fails to explain symbolic expressive consumption behavior as consumers often prefer to buy products that reflect their self-images instead of being functionally oriented.

While some scholars (e.g., Mannetti, Pierro, and Livi, 2004) have treated self-congruity and functional congruity as competing theories, others (e.g., Sirgy, Grzeskowiak, and Su, 2005) have suggested that these two approaches are complementary, and that integrating them can better explain product preference and choice. Sirgy et al (1991) and Sirgy and Su (2000) further proposed that self-congruity can influence functional congruity. This implies that consumers who experience congruence between product image and self image can distort their evaluation of a product's functional congruity in a positive direction. Figure 2 integrates both types of congruity in a single model (Model 2).

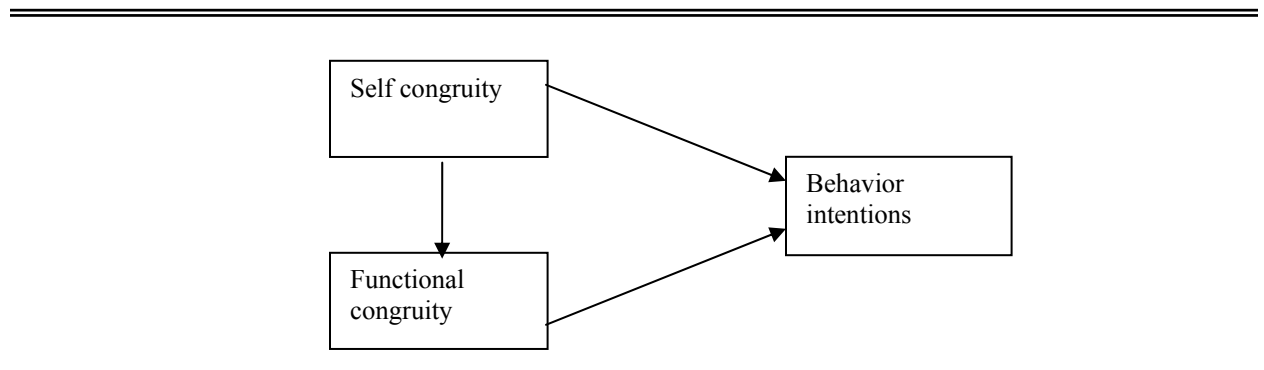


Figure 2. Model 2: Self-congruity, functional congruity, and behavior intentions

An integrative decision-making model

Although the self-congruity concept was first proposed and developed in social psychology, it has been useful in explaining various consumers' behaviors. Past research has suggested that self-congruity theory can be used to predict behavioral intentions (Mannetti, Pierro, and Livi, 2004), product evaluations (Barone, Shimp, and Sprott, 1999), consumer satisfaction (Magin et al., 2003), brand loyalty (Kressmann et al., 2006), and brand preferences (Aaker, 1999).

Tourism is one of the new arenas in which self-congruity theory has been examined. According to Beerli, Meneses, and Gil (2007), Chon (1992) was the first to apply self-congruity theory to the context of tourism. Comparing self-image with destination image, he found that higher satisfaction was correlated to higher agreement between self-concept and destination image. Goh and Litvin (2000) and Litvin and Goh (2002) also examined the predictability of self-congruity on pre-trip visitation interest and purchase proclivity. They found that the data supported the role of self-congruity in a destination image context.

Sirgy and Su (2000) provided a more integrative model of destination image, which revealed the interrelationships between destination environment, destination visitor image, tourists' self-concept, self-congruity, functional congruity, and travel behavior. Although the analysis was comprehensive and the model followed the logic of self-congruity theory, their proposed model was not empirically tested. They proposed that self-congruity can be a useful approach for explaining why people visit a particular destination. Following this logic, Kastenholz (2004) examined destination-self-congruity's influence on travel intention in a rural tourism context and found support for the self-congruity hypothesis.

The most recent research to have applied self-congruity theory to the study of destination image was conducted by Beerli, Meneses, and Gil (2007). This particular research tested not only the congruity between destination image and actual and ideal self-concept, but also investigated the effects of two moderators on self-congruity: previous visiting experience and involvement in leisure tourism. In summary, these studies have indicated that there is an increasing tendency in destination image research to characterize destinations as human-like and to explain tourists' visiting intentions as a function of congruity between their self-concept and perceived destination image. The self-congruity theory can also be a useful construct in which the hedonic nature of travel decisions can be taken into consideration.

Although previous research has demonstrated that self-congruity can be a useful approach to understanding destination choice, its applicability is constrained by limited empirical support and investigations in this area. Also, the discussions of self-congruity are often not conducted in the context of destination image literature and thus, there is disconnect in the conceptualization and measurement of self-destination image congruity.

Applying the congruity theory to the context of destination image, self-congruity refers to the match between tourists' self-concept (actual self, ideal self, social self, and social ideal self) and their perceived image of a destination (modified from Kressmann et al's, 2006 definition of consumer self-congruity). Functional congruity refers to the match between tourists' ideal expectations of utilitarian destination features and their perceptions of how the destination is perceived along the same features (modified from Kressmann et al's, 2006 definition of consumer functional congruity). Figure 3 displays an integrative model (integrates Model 1 and Model 2) of travel decision-making based on the above conceptualizations.

Based on the above, the specific hypotheses tested in the current study are:
H1: The congruity between self-images and affective destination images influence people's travel intentions. The more congruent images are, the more likely people would like to travel to a destination.
H2: The congruity between idea functional images of destination attributes and cognitive destination images along the same attributes influence people's travel intentions. The more congruent images are, the more likely people would like to travel to a destination.

H3: Functional congruity is positively affected by self-congruity. People who have higher congruence between their self images and affective destination images are more likely to have higher functional congruity toward a destination.

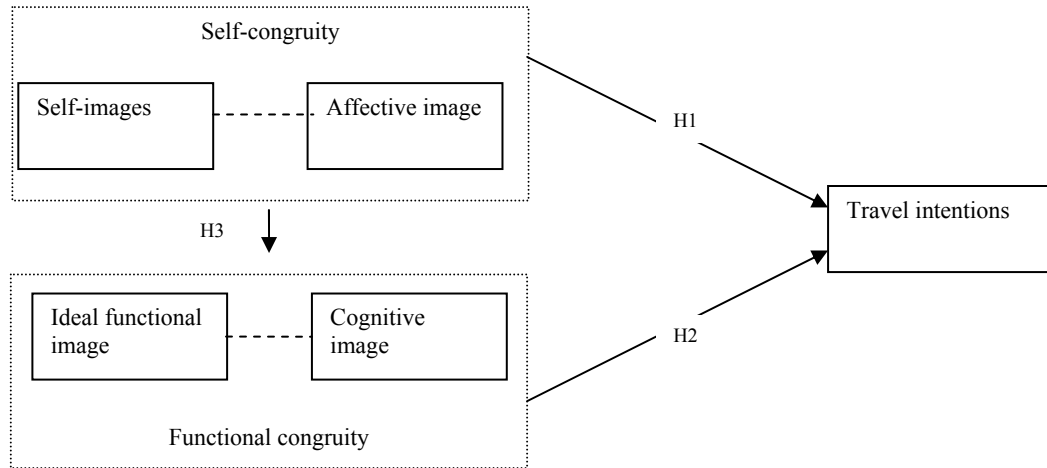


Figure 3. Model 3: Destination-self-congruity model

METHODOLOGY

The proposed model was tested in the context of cruise travel. Early research on cruise travel focused more on economic aspects of cruise lines (Dwyer and Forsyth, 1998; Henthorne, 2000; Vina and Ford, 1999) while later studies have paid more attention to psychological aspects of passengers such as their revisit intentions (Petrick, Tonner, and Quinn, 2006), loyalty (Petrick and Sirakaya, 2004), and price sensitivity (Petrick, 2005), and social aspects such as social space, interaction and liminality (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005), tourist bubble (Jaakson, 2004), and globalization/macdonaldization (Weaver, 2005). Yet, there is a lack of investigation on tourist decision making regarding cruise travel. Although Petrick, Li, and Park (2007) empirically examined the decision-making process associated with cruise vacations, the study was exploratory and was embedded within the framework of the choice set model, which is a multistage decision-making model. This study hopes to gain a better understanding of cruise vacation decision making by proposing an alternative decision-making model and empirically testing the model in the context of cruise travel.

The current study adopted the comprehensive procedure of developing measures recommended by Churchill (1979). Semi-structured interviews with a small sample were conducted as an initial step of the study. The intent of the interviews was to derive

measurement items for the interested constructs. Convenience sampling was used to select both cruisers and non-cruisers for the study. An item pool was formed for the constructs of interest based on the interview results and literature reviews. The list of measurement items was then submitted to a panel of experts. The panel judged the applicability of the measurement items to the study. The list was then recompiled based on the expert panel's opinions and according to which, a draft of the questionnaire was then designed and a pilot test was followed with a sample of undergraduate students (N = 293). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed on the data collected to determine the dimensions of the scales. The resultant measurement scales were further validated with data collected from an online panel study. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was then performed with Analysis of MOment Structures (AMOS 7.0) to determine the overall fit of the proposed model with the data, including the causal relationships between major variables measured, and the influences of constructs of interest on behavioral intentions.

Nine items were retained from the measurement development process for measuring self-congruity. They included: Arousing-Sleepy, Exciting-Gloomy, Pleasant-Unpleasant, Relaxing-Distressing, Enjoyable-Not enjoyable, Comforting-Uncomforting, Calming-Annoying, Fun-Boring, and Adventurous-Unadventurous. For the functional congruity construct, thirteen items survived from the measurement development procedures and resulted in a three-factor structure. The factor loadings for all measurement items in the study were above .4 and the Cronbach's Alphas for all factors were greater than .7.

7-point semantic differential scales were used to measure each dimension of self-congruity. For instance, when measuring the congruity between actual self-image and affective cruising image for the "arousing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 sleepy" dimension, respondents were asked to choose the most appropriate number to best describe their feelings toward cruising and their actual self-image respectively (questions asked separately). Consistent with the literature (Birdwell, 1968; Ross, 1971; Dolich, 1969), "D-measure" was used to measure self-congruity in which the absolute arithmetic difference between the two concepts along the same measurement item was computed. "0" refers to high congruence while "6" refers to low congruence between the two concepts. For the purpose of consistent direction of scaling and easier interpretation, the data were reversely coded so that "6" referred to high congruence and "0" referred to low congruence.

The same data cleaning procedures used for self-congruity were applied to functional congruity. The distances between the ideal functional image of cruising attributes and cognitive destination image along the same set of attributes were computed and reverse coding was performed.

To measure the dependent variable, this study adopted Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman's (1996) measurement of behavioral intentions. Similar to Lee (2005), four modified items were included in the measurement scale: I'll say positive things about

cruising to other people; I intend to cruise in the next 3 years; I'll recommend cruising to others; and I'll encourage friends and relatives to go on a cruise.

FINDINGS

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was performed in AMOS to test the proposed model and hypothesized relationships among the constructs. The fit of the proposed model was examined with the following fit indices: Chi-square (χ^2), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (Steiger and Lind, 1980), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI) (Bentler, 1990). The model was tested with each of the four types of self-congruity (i.e., actual, ideal, social, and social ideal self-congruity) separately, and the fit indices (RMSEA, NFI, CFI, GFI, and AGFI) suggested that each of the four models had an acceptable fit to the data (Table 1).

Table 1. Estimation of Fit Indices of the Proposed Model

Model AGFI	χ^2 (df)	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	GFI
Actual self-congruity model .897	760.2 (167)	.063	.933	.947	.918
Ideal self-congruity model .883	844.2 (167)	.067	.938	.950	.907
Social self-congruity model .891	801.8 (167)	.065	.931	.945	.913
Social ideal self-congruity model .876	884.6 (167)	.069	.933	.945	.902

Further effort was invested in testing the hypothesized relationships among the constructs in the overall model. Hypothesis 1 examined the relationship between self-congruity and travel intentions. It was hypothesized in the study that there would be a positive relationship between these two constructs. Results revealed that this relationship was statistically significant ($p < .001$). The standardized regression coefficients for the impacts of actual, ideal, social, and social ideal self-congruity on travel intentions were .201, .411, .195, and .353 respectively. The positive regression coefficients signal positive influences of self-congruity on travel intention as predicted in hypothesis 1. Thus, hypothesis 1 was supported.

Hypothesis 2 tested the relationship between functional congruity and travel intentions. It was hypothesized in the study that functional congruity would have a positive influence on travel intentions. This relationship was supported by the data ($p < .001$) and suggests that people who have higher congruity between their perfect image of cruising attributes and cognitive image of cruising along the same attributes are more likely to travel than those who have lower congruity. The standardized path coefficients were .295, .410, .304, and .247 respectively for the models with different types of self-

congruity (i.e., actual, ideal, social, and social ideal self-congruity). Thus, hypothesis 2 was also supported by the data.

Hypothesis 3 was concerned with the relationship between self-congruity and functional congruity. It was expected in the study that the experience of congruity between self-images and destination images would distort the evaluation of functional congruity toward the destination. The AMOS output suggested that this was the case. The paths between functional congruity and all four dimensions of self-congruity (actual, ideal, social, and social ideal self-congruity) were positive (.216, .303, .176, and .258) and statistically significant ($p < .001$). This indicates that the higher the congruity people experienced between their self-images and destination affective image (i.e., self-congruity), the more congruent they perceived their perfect images of cruising attributes and cognitive images of cruising (i.e., functional congruity). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was also supported.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative methodologies to understand the influences of self-congruity and functional congruity on travel intentions and to develop measurement scales for the constructs of interest. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both cruisers and non-cruisers. In addition to past literature, the interviews provided another source of information for developing measurement scales. The developed measurement items were reviewed by a panel of experts to establish the face validity of the scales, and were pilot tested with undergraduate students. The reliability and validity of the study's measures were further examined with the data yielded from an online panel survey.

Following measurement scale development, three hypotheses were tested. Hypothesis 1 suggested that there was a positive relationship between self-congruity and likelihood of travel. This hypothesis was supported by the study. Along with previous self-congruity studies in tourism (e.g., Beerli, Menesses, and Gil, 2007; Kastenholz, 2004; Sirgy and Su, 2000), this study confirmed that the implications of self-congruity are not limited to tangible goods. Rather, it can be extended to travel experiences.

However, unlike previous studies in which measurement of self-congruity was dominated by actual and ideal self-congruity (e.g., Goh and Litvin, 2000; Magin et al, 2003; Chon, 1992), four types of self-congruity were tested in the current study: actual, ideal, social, and social ideal self-congruity. It was found that for each unit increase of self-congruity, ideal self-congruity led to higher increases in travel intention than other types of self-congruity, followed by social ideal self-congruity, actual self-congruity, and social self-congruity. This finding suggests that ideal and social ideal self-congruity are better predictors of travel intentions than actual and social self-congruity. It is thus postulated that ideal images of cruising are more likely to be successful in cruise advertising, than either actual or social-self images. Additionally, since most past studies (e.g., Goh and Litvin, 2000; Kressmann et al, 2006; Chon, 1992) have only used social

self and actual self-congruity in the measurement of self congruity, future analyses of self congruity should also use ideal measures.

The second hypothesis tested the positive influence of functional congruity on travel intentions and was supported by the study. Combining the evidence from previous studies, this finding suggests that both rational (functional congruity) and hedonic (self-congruity) aspects of motivation should be considered when modeling travel decision-making. Observing that most past studies have separated the discussion of these two approaches, Sirgy, Grzeskowiak, and Su (2005) suggested that consumer behavior can be better explained if these approaches are treated as complimentary rather than competing theories. This study corresponds with this claim and suggests that integrating both streams of research can enhance our understanding of travel motivation.

Hypothesis 3 suggested that functional congruity was positively influenced by self-congruity. The data suggested that this was the case, as results provided evidence for the interaction between self-congruity and functional congruity predicted by Sirgy et al (1991) and Sirgy and Su (2000). Thus, understanding of the relationship between both constructs is more likely to present a more holistic picture of travel motivation. However, the low amount of variance in travel intentions explained by self-congruity and functional congruity (15.3%), and the low percentage of variance in functional congruity explained by self-congruity (4.7%) imply that further investigations will be needed to discover other predicting variables which may have better predicting power than congruity constructs.

Implications

Traditional decision-making models have usually interpreted tourist decision-making as a multistage process through which tourists derive their travel decisions logically and rationally without considering the hedonic aspects of decisions. Taking another approach, this study included both rational and hedonic aspects of motivation by investigating how self-congruity and functional congruity influence travel intentions. While both refer to travel motivations, self-congruity is the hedonic component of motivation while functional congruity refers to the rational aspect of motivation. Past studies have often separated the discussion of self-congruity and functional congruity, while the current study incorporated both to hopefully present a broader picture of decision-making

Another theoretical contribution of the study is the provision of a theoretical and conceptual framework for studying destination image. Although there is vast research on destination image, a thorough literature review found that no explanations have been provided for the influences of destination image on decision-making. With the addition of self-congruity, in the current study, it was found that a cruise is chosen not only because of its positive image, but also because it matches tourists' self-images and contributes to their psychological well-being.

The significant relationship between self-congruity and travel intentions implies that marketers should understand the images that target markets hold about themselves, and to promote destinations in ways which can enhance, maintain, or reinforce travelers' self-images. For instance, to respond to one's actual self-congruity, promotional materials could portray a cruise vacation as a mode of travel in which people can do things they feel comfortable with based upon their true self. To respond to ideal self-congruity, promotional message could first state what people want themselves to be, followed by highlighting how a cruise can help them realize their ideal self.

The higher path coefficients of ideal and social ideal self-congruity over other self-congruity constructs suggests that people perceive that cruising offers them the opportunity to be the person they most want themselves to be and be the person they would most like other people to perceive them as. In other words, cruising may be perceived by the market as a type of vacation which can release one's inner self and/or be their ideal self. The desire to be themselves and the inability to realize this in their ordinary life could be what motivates people to go on a cruise. Therefore, incorporating this message in promotional materials is likely to be effective in attracting this target market. To do this, the liberation on a cruise could be compared with the mundane life in an ordinary environment in order to entice people to cruise.

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IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO VISITATION OF RURAL CULTURAL HERITAGE MUSEUMS: AN AUSTRALIAN CASE

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ABSTRACT

The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum, located in north-west Victoria, Australia, has experienced a decrease in visitation in recent years and as a result, management are seeking to gain an understanding of potential visitation barriers in order to overcome future reduced visitation levels. The research explores in particular the perceived barriers identified by a potential day-tripper market from the surrounding regional centre of Bendigo, which is a new market for the Museum, the role marketing currently plays in attracting visitation and the sources of marketing related information the potential visitor market finds most useful and easily accessible. A case study approach was adopted with face to face interviews conducted with potential visitors to the Museum. Preliminary results will be presented from primary research conducted in association with the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum. The barriers identified by potential visitors from the Bendigo region are evaluated, along with consideration of the role of a range of marketing activities to increase visitation levels. Recommendations for future tourism and marketing related initiatives for the museum are also provided.

KEYWORDS: Barriers; Marketing; Motivations; Perceptions; Pioneer Settlement Museum

INTRODUCTION

The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum, located in north-west Victoria, Australia, has experienced a decrease in visitation in recent years and as a result, management are seeking to gain an understanding of potential visitor barriers in order to increase visitation levels. When the Museum first opened it attracted tourists in excess of 300,000, however now the Museum only attracts approximately 35,000 to 40,000 visitors per year (Till, 2007). The Museum provides visitors with a walk back in time, presenting rembrandts from the pioneer settlement era and also serving as a means for the local region to preserve artefacts of its founding culture and history.

This research examines the barriers identified by potential visitors from the Bendigo region towards the historical Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum (SHPSM) as a rural cultural heritage attraction and additionally, Swan Hill as a tourist destination. The Museum is seeking to determine the reasons behind this reduced visitation by researching specifically;

1. What the potential visitor market's perceive to be barriers for visitation to the museum;
2. The role marketing currently plays in attracting visitation and how this may be improved;
3. Sources of marketing related information the potential visitor market finds most useful and easily accessible;
4. Potential future tourism and marketing initiatives for the museum.

The results of this preliminary research may be used to facilitate future initiatives to promote development of and increase visitation to the SHPSM.

BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH

Cultural and Heritage Tourism

Many definitions exist in relation to cultural tourism and often the definition used will relate to the context to which culture is discussed, whether political, tourism or marketing orientated (Hausmann, 2007). Highlighted in the literature by a number of researchers (McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; Hausmann, 2007; Silberberg, 1995; Richards, 1996; Bonn et al, 2007) however, are a number of common elements.

Firstly cultural tourism is a form of special interest tourism where commercial interests are of primary consideration often followed by cultural heritage management. Secondly, cultural tourism utilises cultural and heritage sites and offerings to its visitors. Tourist needs and uses versus other possible target groups must be considered and often conflict arises between the different users of these cultural assets. Thirdly, cultural tourists often consume a wide range of cultural related services and experiences. The needs and the wants of the tourist must be satisfied and therefore the cultural asset must be carefully customised and transformed in a way that will meet these needs. Often it is during this transformation and meeting of tourists needs process that conflict will occur with those responsible for heritage management. Issues of overuse and asset deterioration may result in decreased visitation and consideration to withdraw the cultural asset from commercialisation altogether may occur. Finally, cultural tourism must consider the preferences and motivation of the tourist. Not all tourists are motivated by learning, self exploration and experiential reasons (Hausmann, 2007). Silberberg (1995) suggests that rather it may be more sensible to explain cultural tourist motivation as being on a continuum of tourists who are 'highly motivated' to those tourists who are 'less motivated'. Similarly McKercher and Du Cros (2002) devised a cultural tourist typology to explain cultural tourist motivation. Tourists are categorised as purposeful; sightseeing; serendipitous; casual or as an incidental cultural tourist. Depending on the degree to which tourists are motivated by culturally related activities will depend upon their responses to specific marketing activities displayed by these cultural sites and destinations.

Cultural tourism is a complex phenomenon as previously discussed and heritage tourism may be considered a sub-class of cultural tourism (Zeppel and Hall, 1991; Prideaux and Kininmont, 1999). Artefacts, buildings, traditions, museums, monuments

and festivals representing the past all constitute heritage tourism. According to Bonn et al (2007), 'heritage and cultural tourism encompasses visiting a number of cultural or heritage orientated facilities, including museums, aquariums, performing arts centers, archaeological digs, theatres, historical sites, monuments, castles, architectural relics, religious centers and even zoos' (p. 346). The focus of heritage tourism goes beyond simply an interest in the past, also incorporating the natural, historic and cultural value of a destination (Boyd, 2002).

For the purpose of this research cultural heritage tourism is defined in accordance with that of Hausmann (2007), 'visits by people from outside the host community, motivated either entirely or to a certain degree by cultural offerings and values.....of a particular destination' (p. 174). A destination may be considered as a region, community or institution and a balance must be achieved between the conservation of these cultural assets and the needs and wants of the tourist.

Motivations for Visitation

A tourist destination or attraction must understand why it is that tourists visit their site to ensure they best satisfy their needs and wants. Tourists are motivated to travel for differing reasons. Each visitor seeks a specific set of characteristics and attributes in a tourist attraction or destination (Bonn et al, 2007).

Tourists have developed a desire to be closer to nature and visit 'authentic' destinations in recent times (Hall & Lew, 1998). This has lead to many tourists wanting to be integrated with the local residents and their culture (Hall & Page, 2006). In recent years cultural heritage attractions have undergone reformation, where once attractions were designed for tourists to purely 'look'. Nowadays more emphasis is placed on the tourist's ability to interact, 'transforming them into places of instruction and educational centers, as opposed to display houses' (Cook, 2001: 346). Typically cultural tourists are inclined to be female, older, better educated, earn more than the average traveller, will spend more on holidays, stay longer and have a higher participation rate than other types of tourists (McKercher and Cros, 2002). Differing degrees to which tourists are motivated to undertake and participate in culturally related activities exist and must also be considered.

Hausmann (2007) outlines in her research a typology of cultural tourists constructed from a combination of research (Silberberg, 1995; McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; Richards, 1996). The 'highly motivated people' are those tourists who travel specifically to a destination for a cultural experience such as a museum or a festival. The 'people motivated in part' are those tourists who travel to a destination because of its cultural offerings but also take the opportunity to take in additional attractions or visit family or friends. 'People with other primary interests' visit a destination for a primary purpose such as for business or to attend a conference and will also engage in heritage and culturally related activities. 'Accidental visitors' are those who visit a destination with no intentions at all of visiting a cultural site, however may do so as a result of other activities being cancelled or friends taking them along with them. Lastly there are those

tourists who will not visit a culturally related destination or site under no circumstances whatsoever.

Poria, Butler and Airey (2006) alternately consider defining tourism sub groups, such as cultural and heritage tourism, based on the 'tourist perceptions of a site relative to their own heritage' (p. 51). These researchers argue that often the same activity may be considered under various tourism sub-groups. For example a visit to a winery may be classified as wine tourism, gastronomic tourism, rural tourism, heritage tourism and cultural tourism. Also confusion may exist in relation to the tendency for sub-tourism groups to be further categorised, for example heritage tourism broken down into rural heritage, cultural heritage, built heritage, natural heritage, ethnic heritage and culinary heritage. Poria, Butler and Airey (2006) based their research on examination of visitation patterns through exploring the link between individual and site. These researchers found that 'tourist perception is the key to the understanding of visitation patterns' (p. 51).

Barriers to Visitation of Cultural Heritage Attractions and Sites

Identified within the literature is the growth of interest in visiting rural heritage sites in the late 1990s, however also highlighted were issues relating to these types of attractions being able to successfully capture a greater share of the market, mainly their inability to effectively 'communicate their messages to potential visitors' (Prideaux & Kininmont, 1999). Recent visitor trends (Tourism Australia, 2007) indicate that since 2006 the number of domestic overnight cultural and heritage visitors has grown by 11%, while total domestic overnight visitation remained flat over this same period. The cultural heritage tourism market primarily consisted of domestic visitors with domestic day cultural and heritage visitors having increased by 15% the year ended 2006. This provides great opportunity for such attractions to appeal to the day tripper segment as a new potential target market. Victoria is the second most popular State for domestic visitors while New South Wales is the most popular State for both domestic and international cultural and heritage visitors (Tourism Australia, 2007).

Barriers to visitation of cultural heritage sites, including museums, identified within the literature include the fact that many of these attractions do not consider themselves as a tourism player, many lack government assistance and are reliant upon the goodwill of local sponsors, benefactors, unpaid volunteers, situated in a rural location with many only accessible by car and often the lack of funding also results in amateur displays and the inability to preserve artefacts (Prideaux & Kininont, 1999). Location of cultural attractions may be within a remote or unattractive area which ultimately reduces the chances of successfulness in terms of attraction of tourists, however 'development of linear or circular touring routes is one way of overcoming locational disadvantages' (McKercher et al, 2002, p. 4). Many cultural attractions encompass a combination of unique features of the destination that reflects its history and surrounding environment (McKercher et al, 2004). Often the decision to pursue cultural attractions is made without total 'knowledge of potential impacts or requirements for a successful product' (p. 1). It is naïve for the operator to believe that the local cultural asset automatically will become a primary attraction according to McKercher et al (2004).

Barriers may also be linked to success factors associated with cultural and heritage sites and attractions. A number of common characteristics associated with successful cultural attraction development are highlighted in the reviewed literature. These features include; must be interesting, unique, appealing beyond the local heritage community, be of value and relevance to the tourist, must effectively tell a story, offer a participatory experience, be of a quality standard, offer an authentic experience, show a direct link from the past to the present and making it a spectacle or special event (McKercher, 2002; McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; Gallagher, 1995).

The Tourism Council of Australia (1998) has outlined seven factors that should be taken into account when investing in cultural tourism; whether the product or service will create enough demand, accessibility to the market place, potential competitive advantages over existing products, life expectancy of the product, the size of the investment required, the target market, and the period for return on investment. Additional factors relating to supply and demand management strategies (Yeoman and Leask, 1999) and physical accessibility (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 1996) should also be considered. The absence of these characteristics outlined above may be considered as barriers to visitation also.

Marketing of Cultural Heritage Tourism Attractions

Similar marketing principles may be applied to the marketing of cultural heritage sites to that of marketing a commodity or service. Potential target market/s must be identified taking into consideration tourist wants and needs and a marketing mix must be devised for each individual target market selected. The marketing mix includes the elements of product, price, promotion and place of distribution (Pride et al, 2008). The product being the cultural site or attraction, the price relating to the cost associated with visiting, promotion employed to increase awareness of the attraction and its associated offerings and place being the location and the ability for potential tourists to access the attraction. Organisational goals must also be considered within this process to ensure these are being met suitably as well as satisfying the needs of the tourists.

Through the increased understanding of the market segment's needs and wants, an appropriate image of the destination can be formulated. Whilst the markets needs are important, the image must also be formed on reality and authenticity otherwise visitors will be dissatisfied (Beerli & Martin, 2004). The image of a destination may be formed through various sources including overt (advertising), covert (the use of celebrities in advertising), autonomous (media reports, television shows), organic (friends and relatives) and the visit itself (Beerli & Martin, 2004). Whilst a destination has little control over some of these elements, they need to utilise overt sources to formulate the most accurate and desirable images possible. Brochures and other marketing tools play an important role for tourists when deciding where to travel therefore they need to be designed and distributed to a clearly defined target market (Molina & Esteban, 2006).

Due to the nature of the tourism industry being constructed of a number of related sectors, partnerships and packaging may also be considered a key factor in both

development and marketing activities (Hausmann, 2007). Successful development of such partnerships and tourist packages demands effective relationship development between the various operators involved (Hu and Ritchie, 1993). Objectives and partnering arrangements need to be stipulated before the collaboration process can begin. Three possible partnerships identified within the literature include those of; between cultural products of the same type; cultural products of differing types and; cultural and non-cultural products (Hausmann, 2007). Partnerships between cultural products of the same type is the most common, examples include museums partnering with other museums and often a 'museum passport' may be developed to encourage visitation to all those involved in the program. A museum packaging themselves with a castle or another historical site is an example of partnerships being developed between cultural products of different types. Developing these types of packages creates broader appeal and often represents greater value for money to the tourist. The final type of partnering is between cultural and non-cultural products including other attractions, hotels, sports activities and retail precincts. This type of partnering can expand potential visitation by attracting those tourists who may be less interested in visiting cultural and heritage sites (Hausmann, 2007).

Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum Background

The SHPSM is situated in Swan Hill, located 336 kilometres north-west of Melbourne on the Murray River in Australia. It is classified as a rural city by the Australian Bureau of Statistics with a municipality population of 22,000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). The museum was established in 1963 as an avenue for Australians to learn about their heritage. It represents the history of the pioneering days from the 1830's to the 1930's in the Murray-Melba region. It began operation as the Swan Hill Folk Museum, which was and still is currently under the Pioneer Settlement Management, one of the largest outdoor Museums in the Southern Hemisphere (Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum, 2008).

In addition, the Museum is the home to a collection of Anglo-Saxon artefacts, exceeding twenty thousand, which range from documents, photos and maps through to buildings, paddle steamers and agricultural equipment. These artefacts are more specifically categorised in relation to; transport, immigration and cultural diversity, communication and agricultural technology, indigenous culture, rural lifestyles and Australian's at war. The museum site is set on seven acres and this area consists of approximately fifty historic buildings including a Bank, Post Office, Saddlery, Chemist Shop, Confectionary Shop, Original Homesteads and a Music Shop. According to the former Museum Director Robyn Till (2007), when the Museum first opened it attracted tourists in excess of 300,000, however now the Museum only attracts approximately 35,000 to 40,000 visitors per year.

Reasons behind this decrease in visitation may be partly due to the highly competitive tourism industry. Similar attractions in Victoria including Sovereign Hill (located at Ballarat), Coal Creek (located at South Gippsland) and the Central Deborah Mine (located at Bendigo) all compete for a similar market. Numerous attractions in the Swan Hill region closed down in the 1980s which decreased the pull of Swan Hill's tourism product. The Museum has survived this downturn because of the unique

collection in its possession and the support they have received from the Swan Hill Rural City Council. Currently the Museum aims to attract seniors, coach companies and service clubs, families with children, schools and enthusiasts in the areas of tractors, engine history and paddle steamers (Chalmers, 2008).

These markets have all been sustainable in the past and often generate repeat business however, management of the museum are now looking to expand their target market segments to attract day-trippers as well. Perceptions of this new potential market relating to any barriers to potential visitation must be determined to assist the Museum in developing strategies to assist in marketing and increasing visitation.

METHODOLOGY

The Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum was selected as a case study and used as the basis for investigation into the perceptions of potential tourists towards the rural cultural attraction in order to increase future visitation. For the purpose of this research a case study method was adopted and within this framework face to face questionnaire surveys were conducted with 233 local Bendigo residents.

Fifteen likert-scale questions were included in the survey pertaining to various potential barriers and heritage tourism interest levels as highlighted in the literature, along with interest in visiting the Swan Hill region (listed in Table 1 below). Respondents were also asked to identify any additional potential barriers via an open ended question. Potential attributes to entice visitation were also focused on with a number of attributes identified within the literature provided in the form of a multiple choice question where respondents were instructed to select as many attributes as they felt relevant. A number of possible responses were also provided regarding the information sources that respondents use when deciding where to take a holiday to assist in identifying future advertising mediums. Respondents were provided with the opportunity to submit additional comments at the conclusion of the survey which enabled possible topics or issues being discovered that the researcher may not have initially considered. Basic visitor profile information was also obtained.

Quantitative data from the questionnaire surveys was subjected to preliminary basic descriptive statistical analysis to gain insight into the data. The relevant data was also analysed qualitatively in accordance with the reviewed literature.

RESULTS

Perceptions of Swan Hill and the Pioneer Settlement Museum

This research examines the barriers identified by potential visitors from the Bendigo region towards the historical Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum (SHPSM) as a rural cultural heritage attraction and additionally, Swan Hill as a tourist destination. Data relating to firstly whether potential tourists from the Bendigo region consider Swan Hill to be a tourist destination they would visit, and secondly, the consideration of whether the travelling distance to Swan Hill from Bendigo is reasonable for a day trip

was gathered. 36.5% agreed that Swan Hill was considered a tourist destination with 7.7% strongly agreeing.

The results relating to the day trip distance potential however counterbalance one another with 33.9% regarding Swan Hill to be too far to travel to visit only as a daytrip and 33.9% disagreeing with the statement. Although respondents regarded Swan Hill to be a tourist destination, a total of 42.5% agreed that they had little interest in travelling there for tourist purposes, 31.8% disagreed. This percentage increased to almost 40% however when asked whether respondents would be interested in visiting the SHPSM if it were part of an accommodation and dinner package, an additional 14.2% strongly agreed with this proposition.

The corresponding mean for each likert-scale question is outline below in table 1, with 1 strongly disagreeing and 5 strongly agreeing with the statements.

Table 1: Mean Response for Likert Scale Statements

1=Strongly Disagree 5=Strongly Agree	MEAN
LEARNING ABOUT THE HERITAGE OF DEST INTERESTS ME	3.53
I ENJOY TRAVELLING TO RURAL DETINATIONS	3.77
WHEN TRAVELLING I LIKE TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES INVOLVING HISTORY & CULTURE	3.30
A MUSEUM NEEDS TO BE EDUCATIVE & INTERACTIVE IN NATURE FOR ME TO VISIT	3.72
I REGARD SWAN HILL TO BE A TOURIST DESTINATION	3.27
THE RISING PETROL PRICES IS A BARRIER FOR CHOOSING TO TRAVEL TO SH	3.42
I REGARD SWAN HILL TO BE TOO FAR TO TRAVEL TO VISIT ONLY FOR A DAYTRIP	2.99
I THINK HISTORIAL MUSEUMS ARE GENERALLY BECOMING OUT OF FASHION AS A TOURIST DESTINATION	2.94
THE RISING INTEREST RATES IS A BARRIER FOR CHOOSING TO TRAVEL TO SH	2.82
I HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN TRAVELLING TO SWAN HILL FOR TOURIST PURPOSES	3.18
I HAVE LITTLE INTEREST IN VISITING HISTORICAL MUSEUMS	2.77

I WOULD BE INTERESTED IN VISITING SHPSM IF IT IS PART OF AN ACCOMM & DINNER PACKAGE	3.44
I WOULD PREFER TO ENGAGE IN OTHER TOURIST TYPE ACTIVITIES BEFORE VISITING A HISTORICAL MUSEUM	3.27
I AM INTERESTED IN VISITING SWAN HILL IN THE NEXT 12 MTHS	2.97
I AM AWARE OF THE SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES AVAILABLE AT THE SHPSM	2.64

Barriers to Visitation of the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum

Respondents indicated they generally agreed to enjoying learning about heritage of a destination and travelling to rural areas, resulting in 50.2% and 51.9% agreeing respectively. However when presented with the statement ‘when travelling I like to participate in activities involving history and culture’ the largest percentage margin fell in neutral (35.2%). This indicates that although those interviewed may agree to have an interest in heritage and rural destinations, they do not necessarily engage in heritage/culture specific type activities. This suggestion is supported by the responses provided relating to whether respondents would prefer to engage in other tourist type activities before visiting a historical museum. 31.8% agreed with this statement while 10.3% strongly agreed. In regards to determining whether generally respondents considered historical museums were becoming out of fashion as a tourist attraction, 36.5% disagreed with 3.4% disagreeing strongly. 25.8% agreed with 6% strongly agreeing and 28.3% were neutral in their response. In support, when respondents were asked whether they have little interest in visiting historical museums 42.9% and 7.3% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

Bendigo respondents indicated that in general much potential for visitation to historical museums and sites do exist, however specific visitation to the SHPSM appears to be less popular. Just below 37% of respondents identified the rising petrol prices in Australia as a barrier for choosing to travel to Swan Hill however, the rising interest rates at the time of data collection appeared to have minimal impact amongst respondents. Table 2 indicates the additional potential barriers respondents identified qualitatively in association with visitation to the SHPSM.

Table 2: Potential Barriers of Visitation to the SHPSM

IDENTIFIED POTENTIAL BARRIER	PERCENTAGE %
Distance/location	22.7
Lack of knowledge of what’s at the museum	9.4

Costs involved including entry & travel	28.7
Busy lifestyle	9.9
Lack of complementary activities in the region	5.0
Closer alternatives available	2.2
Aimed at older market perceptions	4.4
Perceived as boring/lack of interest	13.3
Weather	4.4

Barriers ranged from more specific factors such as distance, lack of complimentary activities in the Swan Hill region, perceived as boring, little awareness and the paddle steamer not consistently operating to those in more general of lacking time and money, busy lifestyle and museums often being perceived as aimed at an older market. Those surveyed were asked to reveal the last time they visited a pioneer settlement museum (not necessarily the museum in Swan Hill), the highest response (16.7%) fell within the last five years, followed by within the last ten years (15.5%). 37.8% indicated that they had never visited a pioneer settlement museum at all. These results indicate that overall there is still a reasonable level of interest in visiting historical museums which provides the SHPSM with the opportunity to increase the level of visitation to their tourist site.

Marketing Activities of the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum

The SHPSM currently aims to attract seniors, coach companies and service clubs, families with children, schools and enthusiasts in the areas of tractors, engine history and paddle steamers. According to Hausmann's (2007) typology of cultural tourists, these markets would be considered to consist of a mixture of highly motivated, people motivated in part and people with other primary interests.

In terms of reaching the selected target market, a number of issues appear evident. The research indicated that there appears to be a general lack of awareness of the services and activities available at the SHPSM. 35.2% respondents agreed that they were unaware of these fully with 16.3% strongly agreeing. Due to a lack of funding the SHPSM primarily markets themselves through their local visitor information centre, their website and brochures. These mediums on their own have not been effective in reaching their intended target market according to the survey results. Respondents identified key sources of information that they rely on for informing them of such tourism related activities. These sources included the internet 65.9%, friends and relatives 74.2%, brochures 39.9%, travel agents 21.5%, newspaper advertisements 24%, news articles 25.8%, past experiences 55.8% and other sources 5.2% (comprising of the RACV travel magazine, radio, travel shows, visitor information centres and word of mouth.

These quantitative responses were also supported by a number of qualitative responses. It appears that many respondents not necessarily weren't interested in visiting the SHPSM but rather they knew very little about it and its offerings. If someone is unaware of an attraction they cannot be expected to visit it. This finding supports

previous research conducted by Prideaux and Kininmont (1999) into situations where tourists are unaware of the existence of attractions. Many respondents who had previously visited the museum also indicated they had an enjoyable experience at the time and would be interested in visiting again but were unaware it was still open and what tourist activities it was operating. In order to increase awareness levels of the SHPSM, the museum may need to reconsider their current means of informing potential tourists of their activities and better utilise these sources identified by respondents.

Marketing Activities to Overcome Identified Barriers to Visitation

Closely linked to the interest level of cultural and heritage tourism related activities is the potential for visitation by specific types of cultural tourists to the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum. The SHPSM appears to be attracting those '*people motivated in part*' and '*people with other primary interests*' of the cultural tourist typology proposed by Hausmann (2007). Many respondents indicated the need for there to be complimentary activities in the region for them to make the trip to Swan Hill and extend their stay to overnight. The marketing activities of the SHPSM must be developed to incorporate these types of cultural tourists, packaging attractions to increase tourism pull to the Swan Hill region. Day tripper tourists are unlikely to visit Swan Hill unless they have a few attractions and activities to visit and engage in to make their trip worthwhile. The relatively low marketing budget of the SHPSM may be boosted through joint marketing with other complementary tourist type activities.

Respondents identified their preferred sources of information in relation to planning for a holiday. As the results indicate below in table 3, word of mouth via friends and relatives (74.2%) and the internet (65.9%) are major sources of holiday information. A quality tourist experience must be delivered in every way to generate positive word of mouth from those who have previously visited the museum. Emphasis also needs to be placed on the local population of Swan Hill and its surrounding region, to not only encourage their visitation to the heritage attraction, but to also recommend to their visiting family and friends to pay a visit. The internet is fast becoming a popular means of obtaining travel information and one that the SHPSM can quite easily utilise within their marketing activities. Web links need to be established beyond the local business community to larger regional centres, particularly to those of new and existing target markets. Brochures remain an affordable option for the SHPSM and appear to be a source that potential visitors seek information from (39.9%). Brochures currently are primarily distributed in the local Swan Hill region via the visitor information centre and surrounding local businesses. The distribution of brochures must be extended into the larger regional cities and also in metropolitan visitor information centres where potential origin markets exist.

Table 3: Preferred Information Sources

INFORMATION SOURCE	PERCENTAGE %
Internet	65.9%
Brochures	39.9%
Travel Agent	21.5%
Travel Magazines	20.2%
Newspaper Articles	25.8%
Newspaper Advertisements	24%
Friends & Relatives Word of Mouth	74.2%
Past Experiences	55.8%

Swan Hill's relatively remote location also provides great opportunity to develop circular touring routes from the Bendigo region, incorporating a number of sites to attract and transform those potential tourists willing to travel to rural/remote areas into actual participants.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of this research indicate a number of potential barriers for visitation and also highlight's the importance for the museum to focus its marketing activities towards this Bendigo day tripper market segment more effectively. The research results clearly identify levels of interest from the potential market segment, however the museum need to overcome the recognised potential barriers. These barriers included a lack of interest in actual participation in cultural and heritage activities and rising fuel prices. Respondents indicated a reasonable interest level exists in visiting attractions, such as the SHPSM, however problems arise in the conversion of interest into actual participation. Sources of marketing related information considered useful and accessible included the internet, friends and relatives, brochures, RACV travel magazine, radio, travel shows, visitor information centres, word of mouth and past experiences. Marketing the SHPSM appropriately through these identified mediums and working with similar cultural and heritage attractions in the area may assist in raising awareness and increasing overall visitation to the Swan Hill region. Packaging, along with development of circular touring routes may be useful tools to encourage visitation for a short-stay or day-trips.

The general consensus reached by many respondents is that the awareness level of the SHPSM and its offerings must be increased dramatically. Many respondents who had previously visited the SHPSM had a favourable visitor experience but were unaware of the current activities of the museum. Promoting the museum beyond the local visitor information centre, website and brochures via overt advertising in sources identified by respondents may also result in raising its attraction and activities profile and encourage increased overall visitation.

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MANAGING CUSTOMER VARIABILITY IN THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

To survive in the highly competitive golf course industry, managers must accurately identify the variables that attract and retain golfers. Research indicates that, due to golfers' various time constraints, a critical variable is the pace of play, i.e., the time required to play a round. In addition to competitive pressures, another challenge faced by golf course managers is variability in customer capability, or skill level. Through its impact on pace of play, such variability can damage both the efficiency and quality of the service delivery process. Based on Frei's (2006) framework, which suggests that an appropriate strategy for managing capability variability is to target customers on the basis of their capabilities, this paper advocates a focus strategy that targets experienced golfers. Importantly, such a strategy represents a marked deviation from popular golf course management practices, such as player development initiatives. By catering to experienced golfers, golf courses can (a) alleviate golfers' time constraints, (b) increase throughput (i.e., rounds played), (c) enhance the customer service experience, and (d) grow revenues by increasing golfers' wallet share.

KEYWORDS: customer inputs, customer variability, focus strategy, pace of play, participation constraints, service operations management

INTRODUCTION

As nations across the world shift toward service economies, the need for new management theories to guide service providers is becoming increasingly apparent. One of the greatest challenges faced by service managers is variability in service delivery, which is attributable primarily to variability in customer inputs. In the golf course industry, a critical consideration is capability variability, or differences in skill level. Such variability impacts the pace of play on the golf course, which can be detrimental to both the efficiency and quality of the service delivery process. Research suggests that, rather than pursuing popular player development initiatives, golf courses should employ a focus marketing strategy based on skill level. By targeting experienced golfers, golf courses can (a) alleviate golfers' time constraints, (b) increase throughput (i.e., rounds played), (c) enhance the customer service experience, and (d) grow revenues by increasing golfers' wallet share.

SERVICES OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT

Definition of Service

Without a doubt, the world is becoming a service economy. Of the 153 nations on which the World Bank collects data, services account for more than half of gross domestic product in 38 (World Bank, 2009). In the United States, the service sector now accounts for more than 83% of nonagricultural employment, a statistic that is expected to increase to 86% by 2016 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). Although there is great need for new theories to guide service managers in improving the efficiency of service delivery, research in operations management has failed to devote adequate attention to this challenge.

One reason for this neglect of service operations research is a lack of consensus on a general classification of services operations (Metters & Marucheck, 2007). For example, there is a basic conflict regarding whether services should be defined by industry or by process. Governmental statistics have historically defined services by industry, i.e., anything that is not manufacturing or extraction (agriculture, mining, etc.) is a service (Sampson & Froehle, 2006). Such a classification actually understates the prevalence of services, as it ignores the service processes (e.g., accounting, finance, etc.) conducted by manufacturing firms (Metters & Marucheck, 2007).

Service processes are often distinguished from manufacturing processes on the basis of intangibility, simultaneity, perishability, heterogeneity, and customer contact (Metters & Marucheck, 2007). However, the limits of this differentiating framework are being questioned. Metters and Marucheck (2007) suggest that mass-manufactured custom products, such as the shoe “mi Adidas,” may better fit these characteristics than a standard service industry product like life insurance. Based on the unified services theory, Sampson and Froehle (2006) propose a process-oriented definition that considers the magnitude of customer inputs into the production process as the distinguishing difference between manufacturing and services. Even this framework is not entirely clear, however, as the definition of “customer” is complex and may extend beyond the actual consumer (Metters & Marucheck, 2007).

Managing Capacity and Demand

Services, which often involve simultaneous production and consumption, cannot use inventory to match capacity with demand (Sasser, 1976). Because services cannot be inventoried, management of demand is particularly time-sensitive. Specifically, the service production process must predict the rate of both customer arrivals and customer participation in service delivery (Bowen & Ford, 2002). If customer arrivals are not accurately predicted, excess capacity (resulting in increased costs) or inadequate capacity (resulting in lost customers) may occur. Although the presence of customer inputs tends to keep variable costs low for the service provider, it also tends to make fixed costs a larger fraction of total expenses. Due to this high operating leverage, services will be more cost-competitive if they have higher utilization levels (Sampson, 2001).

The time-sensitive nature of services is highlighted by the Theory of Swift, Even Flow, a classic theory of operations management. According to this theory, the more swift and even the flow of materials or information through a process, the greater its productivity

(Schmenner & Swink, 1998). Schmenner (2004) applies the theory in a service context, suggesting that the path to increased service productivity is through a reduction in both variation and relative throughput time. Throughput time represents the interval between availability for use and completion of the service encounter, while the concept of variation includes both irregular demand and variation in the provision of the service (Schmenner, 2004).

Managing Customer Co-production

A distinguishing characteristic of services is that customers are often intimately involved in the production process. This element of co-production is a critical consideration, because customers' inputs can influence their service experiences, as well as the experiences of other customers (Frei, 2007). Research suggests that when customers are part of the organization's production process, they must be managed just like other parts of the service delivery system (Ford & Heaton, 2002). Bowers, Martin and Luker (1990) suggest that customers can be trained, similar to how a company would train employees. Of course, customers are not as easy to train as employees, and, unlike employees, they have substantial discretion in their operating activities (Frei, 2007).

According to Frei (2007), motivating customers to perform desired tasks requires a complex mix of rewards and penalties. Frei classifies the techniques that service providers utilize to modify customer behavior into two basic categories: instrumental (the traditional reward and penalty approach) and normative (utilizing shame, blame, and pride). Similarly, Bowers et al. (1990) suggest that, like employees, customers must go through a socialization process that equips them to perform their roles in the service delivery process. Methods for socializing the customer as a "partial employee" include formal socialization programs, environmental cues, reinforcement, and observation of other customers (Bowers et al., 1990).

Customer co-production must be accommodated not only in the service production process, but also in the production setting. Bitner (1992) first introduced the term "servicescape" to emphasize the impact that setting can have on the customer service experience. According to Bowen and Ford (2002), the service setting navigates the customer through the service experience, reinforcing desired behaviors and discouraging undesired behaviors. A primary component of both the service production process and setting is the employee, who often plays a major role interacting with the customer in the service encounter. In this role, employees must supervise customers' co-production, including assessing their abilities, motivating desired behaviors, training, and helping them evaluate the success of the co-production process (Bowen & Ford, 2002).

Managing Customer Variability

The unified services theory contends that variability in service processes is attributable primarily to variability in process inputs, specifically customer inputs (Sampson, 2001). A major question in service operations management has been how much customer-induced variability to allow in the process, given that efficiency and

quality (which have traditionally represented a trade-off) are the primary objectives (Metters & Marucheck, 2007). From an operations perspective, a service process cannot be as efficient as a manufacturing process, because variability cannot be entirely eliminated. Customer participation is a source of inherent variability that can result in delays and increased costs for service companies (Metters & Marucheck, 2007). Because customers are often inefficient co-producers, the customer contact model suggests that certain service processes should be isolated from the customer in order to realize the efficiency benefits of standardization (Chase, 1978). On the other hand, service processes must be capable of high variation to adjust to each customer's expectation of service quality (Pine & Gilmore, 1998).

Two relatively recent articles have addressed the operational challenges of managing customer variability. Xue and Harker (2002) introduce the concept of customer efficiency, which recognizes that customers' different abilities to co-produce a service impact the perceived quality and even the profitability of the firm. Indeed, it has long been recognized that variance in the customer's ability to participate complicates the predictability of the time required in the service experience and the service provider's ability to match capacity with demand (Booms & Bitner, 1981). Xue and Harker highlight another aspect of this challenge, suggesting that a customer's judgment of service delivery is based not only on how long it takes the firm to complete its part of the process, but also on how efficient the customer considers the use of his resources (especially time) to complete the service process.

One type of customer efficiency discussed by Xue and Harker (2002) is transaction efficiency, where the outputs of the service are defined as the number of transactions accomplished, and the inputs are the times expended by the customer and the firm in these transactions. Transaction efficiency is of particular interest when there is a capacity constraint on the service facility and congestion is costly for the firm. Xue and Harker suggest that a transaction-efficient customer base enables a firm to reduce its costs through shorter occupancy of the facility and reduced capacity congestion, as well as by consuming less employee labor and other resources in the service delivery process.

Frei (2006) highlights that traditional approaches to managing customer variability in services require a stark trade-off: either low-cost / low-quality or high-cost / high-quality. In contrast, Frei argues that strategies such as self-service and targeting customers for a focused service can influence customer behavior so that customers' perceptions of quality are high while the cost to provide the service remains low. Frei's first step in managing customer variability is to recognize the different forms it can take, including arrival variability, request variability, capability variability, effort variability, and subjective preference variability. After identifying the relevant type of variability, the service manager must then decide whether to accommodate it or reduce it. According to Frei, this classic trade-off can be overcome through uncompromised reduction (rather than classic reduction) and low-cost accommodation (rather than classic accommodation). Specifically, Frei suggests that a service provider can reduce the impact of customer variability without compromising the quality of the service experience by targeting customers on the basis of variability type.

THE GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

State of the Industry

Golf is big business in the United States. Since 1985, the number of American golfers has increased dramatically, from 19.5 million to roughly 30 million (Beditz & Kass, 2007). Long-term growth has been driven not only by population growth, but also by participation rate growth.² To accommodate rising demand, golf course investment exploded in the 1990s, with the number of golf facilities increasing almost 40% (Beditz & Kass, 2007). However, since 2000, growth in demand has leveled off. The number of golfers has increased only slightly, and both the participation rate and total rounds played have actually decreased. As a result, the golf course industry has experienced excess supply in recent years, creating a situation of intense competition that requires managers to identify the variables that attract and retain golfers.

As with many industries, a relatively small number of customers drive the golf industry. These customers, called “core golfers,” include those age 18 or older who play eight or more rounds per year (Beditz & Kass, 2007). Core golfers are responsible for the vast majority of golf activity: 91% of rounds played and 87% of all golf spending (Beditz & Kass, 2007). Although the number of core golfers has stabilized in recent years at between 12 and 13 million, the percentage of total golfers that qualify as core has decreased (Beditz & Kass, 2007).

Constraints to Participation

A primary concern in golf course management is identifying the factors that constrain golfers from participating as much as they would like. Constraints to leisure activities (such as golf) are defined as anything that restricts one’s ability to participate in these activities or to spend more time participating (Jackson, 1988). According to Jackson (1994), analysis of constraints to leisure participation can be used to develop and implement management strategies in recreation, guiding management’s philosophy, policies, and marketing planning. Importantly, constraints do not necessarily block participation, but can prompt substitution of one activity for another (Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). Thus, golf course managers should consider leisure constraints not as insurmountable obstacles but rather as opportunities to refine their courses’ value propositions.

Research conducted by KPMG’s golf industry practice concludes that the explanation for decreasing demand in recent years is twofold: (1) Americans have more time commitments (e.g., increased working hours), and (2) golf courses are designed to be too difficult (Kauffman, 2005). Both of these issues indicate time constraints, as more working hours mean fewer opportunities to play golf, and difficult courses take longer to play. Indeed, a 2007 National Golf Foundation (NGF) survey found that time constraints

² Participation rate is commonly defined as the percentage of the total population age six and older who play at least one round of golf in a given year.

ranked among the top reasons why golfers do not play more often (NGF, 2007a). According to Tiger and Howard (2007), a primary determinant of golf demand is the amount of time required to complete a round of golf. They suggest that if cycle time can be reduced, two benefits may result: (1) golfers can continue to participate, even if they have other time commitments, and (2) the number of rounds played (i.e., throughput) can be increased.

Revenue Management

Revenue management is the application of information systems and pricing strategies to allocate capacity among customers (Kimes, 2000). Although research in revenue management has previously addressed industries such as hotels and airlines, the golf course business is similar enough to these industries that golf courses should be able to benefit from revenue-management principles. The application of revenue management is most effective for operations with the characteristics of relatively fixed capacity, perishable inventory, and demand that is variable and uncertain (Kimes, 2000). Kimes (2000) describes how each of these attributes can be identified in some form within the golf course industry:

Relatively fixed capacity. A golf course's capacity is measured by its hours of operation, which are largely dictated by daylight hours.

Perishable inventory. Golf course inventory is not its supply of carts or equipment, but rather time, specifically the time during which a hole is available. If a hole is not occupied for a period of time, that portion of inventory disappears without generating any revenue.

Variable demand. Golf course demand is highly variable, peaking on weekends, during summer months, or at particular times of the day.

Given the above factors, the primary goal of revenue management in the golf course industry is to generate the maximum throughput in the playing time available (Tiger & Howard, 2007).

Pace of Play

In addition to the revenue management challenges faced by most service providers, golf course managers must also deal with variability in the length of time golfers require to play a round, commonly referred to as "pace of play." From an operations management perspective, golf throughput is a stochastic system wherein random events (e.g., lost balls, weather conditions, poor shots) and interactions (e.g., waiting behind other groups) greatly impact the pace of play (Tiger and Howard, 2007). In this way, golf course operations are similar to other complex systems (e.g., a manufacturing plant or a hospital emergency room) where performance is impacted by variability and interactions, two critical factors in revenue management (Kimes, 2000). Furthermore, a golf course is a terminal system, having a definite beginning and end as a

function of daylight (Tiger & Howard, 2007). In terminal systems, performance is particularly sensitive to the system's initial conditions. For a golf course, a slow group early in the day can wreak havoc for the rest of the day in terms of rounds played (throughput) and round length (cycle time).

In addition to golf course efficiency (i.e., throughput), pace of play also impacts the time required to play a round, which has been identified as a primary constraint to golf participation (Tiger & Howard, 2007). According to a recent NGF survey (2007b), it takes an average of four hours to play an 18-hole round of golf. Regardless of how long it actually takes to play a round, 78% of the survey's participants said their pace is about right, 20% said it is too slow, and 2% said it is too fast. Thus, it appears that the majority of golfers are satisfied with their pace of play. Still, of the 20% who said their pace is too slow, 76% indicated that it bothers them and 20% play less as a result. Importantly, the time required to play a round is impacted not only by a golfer's own pace of play, but also by the pace of golfers around him (both before and behind).

Yet another critical consideration is the impact of pace of play on the golfer's service experience. Research indicates that pace of play is a primary source of frustration on the golf course, both for slower golfers who are pressured to speed up and faster golfers who are forced to wait (Post, 2007). In his book, "Playing Through: A Guide to the Unwritten Rules of Golf," Post (2007) devotes an entire chapter to the subject of slow play, providing various tips for adjusting one's own pace of play. According to Post, "Much of avoiding slow play in your game is a function of being aware—really aware—of how your behavior is affecting golfers around you... We have a responsibility to our fellow golfers to be more conscious of our actions and to adjust them, if necessary, in order to achieve the goal of playing a four-hour round" (p. 75). Of course, because not all golfers practice such etiquette, pace of play is largely out of the individual golfer's control.

Skill Level

Pace of play is impacted by a golfer's skill level, which can range from beginner to expert. In golf, a player's skill is measured by his *handicap*, which indicates how many strokes over par he should be able to score. It is used to calculate a net score from the number of actual strokes, thus allowing players of different skill levels to compete fairly. The challenge for managers is that golfers with higher handicaps (i.e., less-skilled golfers) tend to have more variability in their golf scores, creating more variability in their pace of play (Bingham & Swartz, 2000). A survey of more than 18,000 golfers conducted by Frankly Consulting (2005) found that, as golfers' handicaps increase, the distance they hit the ball decreases and length of time required to play a round increases.

Given the impact of skill level on pace of play, longer courses (in terms of yardage) face a particular challenge. The Frankly Consulting survey (2005) found that not only do less-skilled golfers (indicated by higher handicaps) hit the ball shorter distances, they also prefer shorter courses. Furthermore, even among higher-skilled golfers, the preferred course length was less than 6,600 yards. These findings support the

notion that today's golfers are operating under time constraints that explicitly affect their consumer behavior.

Another finding of the Frankly Consulting survey (2005) was that, of the top six reasons why people quit playing golf, three are directly related to lack of playing abilities and skill. The authors attribute this finding to the fact that golfers often overestimate their abilities and play courses that are inappropriate for their skill level. Most courses have been designed for the *scratch golfer*,³ who represents less than 1% of the golfing population, and have been adjusted for the rest of the population by simply moving the tees forward (Frankly Consulting, 2005). Not only do longer courses take longer to play, they are also more expensive to maintain, thus requiring higher green fees. Of course, higher green fees discourage casual players from playing more often and beginners from taking up the game.

MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Focus Strategy

A variety of strategies have been developed to address the challenges of capacity and demand management in services. For example, reservation systems can be used to moderate demand during peak periods, while price promotions can be used to stimulate demand in slow periods. The golf course industry has already embraced these strategies, in the form of scheduled tee times and special rates (e.g., lower weekday, evening, or winter rates). However, the problem of variability in customer inputs, which has been shown to reduce both the efficiency and quality of the service process, has received little attention among golf course managers. Contrary to common industry practice, recent research suggests that a focus marketing strategy can serve to enhance not only the service delivery process of the golf course, but also its competitive position.

The unified services theory suggests that a service provider can enhance its competitive position by focusing on certain customer inputs and/or utilizing those inputs in different ways (Sampson & Froehle, 2006). This concept applies to all three of Porter's generic strategies: cost leadership, focus, and differentiation. Most golf courses employ either a cost leadership strategy or differentiation strategy to reach a broad target market. For example, to combat weakening demand in recent years, the industry has focused on "player development," i.e., developing new golfers in a variety of demographic groups (e.g., women, children, minorities, etc.). Of course, soliciting new customers is neither the only, nor the most cost-effective, way to grow revenues. A golf course can also seek to enhance its "wallet share," i.e., the percentage of customers' total rounds that it captures. Research indicates that the lower a course's price point, the higher its average wallet share and the lower its number of unique customers (NGF, 2007a).

³ One who shoots par or better.

Increased wallet share can be accomplished through a focus strategy, which seeks to meet the specific needs of a narrowly defined target market. According to Frei (2007), to create a valuable service offering managers must decide which attributes to target for excellence and which to target for inferior performance. Such choices must be based on customer needs, by identifying the service attributes customers consider important and then delivering excellence on those attributes (Frei, 2007). The goal of this process is to identify customer operating segments, or customers who share a common concept of excellent service. Once a target operating segment has been found, managers must design a new offering or adjust an existing one to accommodate that segment's preferences (Frei, 2007).

Frei's (2006) framework suggests that a focus strategy can be appropriate for service providers faced with substantial customer variability. Of the five different types of customer variability described by Frei, the most relevant to the golf course industry is capability (or skill) variability, which directly impacts the pace of play. As an example of uncompromised reduction, Frei suggests that companies can reduce the impact of variability on their operating environments without compromising the service experience by targeting customers on the basis of variability type. Thus, to reduce capability variability, managers should target customers on the basis of their capabilities. Frei cautions, however, that it can be difficult to identify where customers fall on the scale of variability, and there may not be sufficient demand within a given customer segment to sustain a business.

Successful implementation of a focus strategy requires the service firm to identify a set of customers with similar customer inputs and expectations and then design the service process to accommodate those inputs and expectations (Sampson & Froehle, 2006). In the golf course industry, experienced golfers (also known as "core golfers") constitute such a target market. As discussed previously, they have similar customer inputs (e.g., higher skill level) and similar customer expectations (e.g., prefer a faster pace of play). Due to their higher frequency of play, experienced golfers represent a valuable target market with a high potential for growth in wallet share (NGF, 2007a).

According to Kotler, Bowen, and Makens (1996), market segments must be measurable, substantial, actionable, and accessible if they are to be successfully targeted with a focus strategy. While past research on golfers has segmented participants by loyalty, attachment, demographics, and lifestyle, perhaps a more relevant dimension for segmentation is one based on actual behavior (Petrick, Backman, Bixler, & Norman, 2001). A market segmentation tool that has been found to create measurable, substantial, actionable, and accessible groups of recreationists based on behavior is experience use history (Petrick et al., 2001). Past experience can be defined as the "sum of accumulated life experience a recreationist has within a particular recreation activity or style of participation" (Virden, 1992, p. 6). The effect of past experience is reflected in the skill level of the recreationist, as well as how he makes decisions about which leisure opportunities to utilize (Petrick et al., 2001). Virden (1992) recommends that segmenting participants by experience level is a valuable method for leisure service providers (such

as golf, tennis, and fitness facilities) to improve the effectiveness of their marketing efforts.

Managing Pace of Play

In addition to targeting experienced golfers, golf courses can take specific measures to reduce capability variability. According to Kimes (2000), a strategic tool that golf course managers can use to manage demand (and thus revenue) is duration management, which attempts to control the length of time customers take to play a round. As discussed previously, unpredictable duration of customer use (determined in part by capability variability) inhibits the ability to manage revenue. Although golf course managers cannot improve a golfer's skill, Kimes suggests several means (both instrumental and normative) for exerting control over round duration:

Golf carts. Although most golf courses charge for cart rental, carts may speed up play enough to justify a reduced fee during periods of peak play. Alternatively, courses could require the use of carts during such times.

Signaling. A component of duration management involves signaling players that it is time to move to the next hole. A variety of implicit and explicit signaling devices can be utilized, with the risk that some explicit devices may create customer irritation. Some courses post playing times in an attempt to exert peer pressure on slow players, and most courses use "marshals" to remind such players to pick up the pace.

Separate playing times. Another strategy to improve pace of play is to offer separate playing times for beginners. Such segregation might ease the frustration that experienced golfers feel when following beginners and the tension that beginners feel when being followed by experienced golfers.

Tiger and Salzer (2004) use discrete event simulation to show that the *shortest processing time dispatch rule*, a common technique of operations management, can be applied in the golf industry to improve throughput and cycle time. Specifically, they tested the impact of restricting early tee times to faster golfers, finding that significant improvement in throughput can be achieved by such a strategy, particularly during congested periods. For example, they found that scheduling fast golfers (defined as 25% faster than an average round duration of 4.5 hours) early in the day increased throughput by 17%. To identify faster golfers, Tiger and Salzer introduce a new measure—the time handicap. Similar to a golfer's scoring handicap (which measures skill), the time handicap would measure a golfer's ability to play quickly. The time handicap could also be applied to individual golf courses, providing an additional means of differentiation.

CONCLUSION

In the 21st century, the U.S. golf industry faces the dual challenges of stagnant demand growth and excess supply. To survive in this highly competitive environment, it is imperative that golf course managers develop strategies that attract and retain golfers.

One such strategy, which has been heavily promoted by industry leaders, is player development within non-traditional demographic groups. Unfortunately, it will take time to realize the benefits of such initiatives—time that many struggling courses do not have. Furthermore, player development programs are simply too expensive for most courses to implement and maintain. In other words, what is best for the industry as a whole may not be best for the individual golf course, which faces its own unique set of constraints.

At the individual course level, managers must identify the variables that impact demand within their respective target markets. Research indicates that, due to golfers' various time constraints, one such critical variable is the time required to play a round, which is largely dictated by the pace of play on the golf course. Similar to many service industries, golf courses experience substantial variability in customer capability, or skill level. Through its impact on pace of play, such variability can damage both the efficiency and quality of the service delivery process.

Operations management theory suggests that an appropriate strategy for managing capability variability is to target customers on the basis of their capabilities. This involves identifying customers with similar capabilities and then designing the service process to accommodate their inputs and expectations. In the golf course industry, experienced golfers (also known as “core golfers”) constitute such a target market. These golfers have similar customer inputs (e.g., higher skill level) and similar expectations (e.g., prefer a faster pace of play). Due to their higher frequency of play, experienced golfers represent a valuable target market with a high potential for growth in wallet share.

By catering to experienced golfers, golf courses can (a) alleviate golfers' time constraints, (b) increase throughput (i.e., rounds played), (c) enhance the customer service experience, and (d) grow revenues by increasing golfers' wallet share. Importantly, such a focused strategy represents a marked deviation from popular golf course management practices, including player development initiatives, which seek to reach a broad target market. Of course, this is not a “one-size-fits-all” solution, and each individual course must determine where its customers fall along the spectrum of skill/experience and whether sufficient demand exists within the target segment. Although additional research is required to confirm its practical efficacy, a focused marketing strategy may improve not only the service delivery process of the golf course, but also its competitive position.

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DESTINATION MARKETING ORGANIZATION (DMO)
IN ACTION: A CASE STUDY OF DEVELOPING
MARKETING STRATEGIES FLORIDA THROUGH
FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The study reports on qualitative research project undertaken for Florida's official destination marketing organization (DMO), Visit Florida. The goal of the study was to explore issues of concerns of Florida's tourism industry's identified by intermediaries who sell Florida as a leisure destination. The study also aimed to expand and develop new marketing strategies for Florida, which in recent years experienced declines in tourism arrivals. Data were collected through a series of focus groups from members of the Visit Florida's Trade Advisory Board. The participants disclosed several issues of concern that might have a future impact on Florida's position in the leisure destination marketplace. These include: economic environment, transportation challenges to and within Florida, catering special needs for certain market segments, competition of rival destinations, lack of exposure to local markets, lack of destination knowledge by consumers and the trade industry, and misperception of Florida's image (e.g. weather, increased crime, etc.). Other issues that were raised by the participants included consumers' wants and needs in the future, the competitive advantages and disadvantages of Florida's tourism products, and the role of Visit Florida in the travel trade industry. The findings could be used to enhance and improve existing Florida's marketing strategies and develop new marketing and sales campaigns. The findings provided a first phase for future qualitative and quantitative marketing research of Florida's leisure market.

KEY WORDS: Florida, leisure market, qualitative research, focus groups.

INTRODUCTION

The following is a case study report of a marketing research project undertaken for the official destination marketing organization (DMO) of the State of Florida, Visit Florida, during the fall of 2008. The case study describes the process of developing research questions, data collection, evaluation and analysis during a series of focus groups held with members of the DMO's advisory board (Stake, 1995). This case study provides an example of "what really happens" in a large destination marketing organization (DMO), prior to making strategic decisions. The author would like to thank Visit Florida for providing permission to use the data in an academic setting.

Yin (1984) defined the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yin, 1984). Case study research provides a better understanding of a complex issue and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

Critics of a case study methodology believe that the study of a small number of cases or individuals can offer no substance for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Some also believe that the intensive exposure to study a particular case may bias the findings.

THE RESEARCH FRAME OF REFERENCE

Visit Florida is the official tourism marketing corporation for the state of Florida. The DMO (Destination Marketing Organization) promotes tourism to Florida through sales, advertising, promotions, public relations, new product development and visitor services programs. As a public/private partnership Visit Florida has more than 3,400 tourism industry partners and four major strategic alliances with *American Express Travel Related services*, *AirTran Airways*, *Dollar Rent A Car* and *The Hertz Corporation* (Visit Florida, 2009a). Visit Florida publishes periodical statistics about visitation patterns to the State of Florida.

In 2008, 82.5 million visitors arrived to Florida. Over one half of the visitors arrived by air (51.9%), and the remainder arrived by other modes of transportation, mainly private cars (Visit Florida, 2009a). Top origin U.S. domestic markets in 2007 were Georgia (10.9%), New York (10.3%), New Jersey (5.5%), Illinois (5.0%), and Ohio (4.9%). Top International markets in 2007 were: Canada (2.5 million), United Kingdom (1.4 million), South America (872,000), Germany (248,000), Japan (64,000), and Australia (60,000) (Visit Florida, 2009a).

Historically, the major purpose of U.S. domestic visitors visiting Florida by was leisure (83.0%). In 2008, their average length of stay was 5.3 nights, and top activities of domestic visitors while in Florida were shopping, beaches, touring/sightseeing and visiting to a theme or an amusement park (Visit Florida, 2009a).

However, after several years of steady annual arrival increases, the number of visitors coming to Florida in 2008 declined by 2.3%, compared to the previous year. Preliminary estimates of the number of visitors to Florida for the fourth quarter of 2008 (October-December) reflected a visitor decrease of 13.6%. This decrease in visitors' arrivals might be attributed to the global economic crisis, mortgage foreclosures, tightening credit markets and bailouts. Consequently, many consumers changed their vacation patterns and at the same time many companies canceled meetings and conventions (Visit Florida, 2009b).

With a population of approximately 17 million, The Florida's natural resources include 1,800 miles of coastline and 1,200 miles of sand beaches. In addition, Florida

has more than 11,000 miles of rivers, streams & waterways, approximately 7,700 lakes greater than 10 acres, and about 4,500 islands Greater than 10 acres.

The State's tourism's infrastructure includes 370,000 hotel rooms, 700 campgrounds with about 100,000 campsites, and 19 major commercial airports, and 14 deepwater ports. Florida has approximately 1,250 golf courses, more than any other state (State of Florida, 2009). Tourism has also had a major economic impact in Florida. In 2007, Florida's tourism industry generated direct and indirect economic impact of US\$ 65.5 billion. The tourism industry employed directly 991,300 employees (Visit Florida, 2009a).

RESEARCH GOALS

The decrease in tourism numbers was a major concern for Visit Florida as well as members of the tourism, hospitality, and travel industry. In late 2008, Visit Florida Corporation launched a series of studies in an attempt to expand and develop new marketing strategies for future marketing and promotional campaigns that will result in retaining and increasing the current U.S. domestic leisure market.

The goal of this case study is to report on the process of the first phase of a qualitative marketing study by revealing and analyzing issues of concerns raised by a sample of tourism trade intermediaries that sell the State of Florida as a leisure tourist destination to tour operators, travel agents, and the public at large. The group of intermediaries consisted of members of the Visit Florida's Trade Advisory Board.

More specifically, the research project aimed to generate ideas from the Visit Florida Trade Advisory Board that will "keep Florida positioned as a top travel destination." The Board would be solicited to "analyze, critique and provide feedback regarding a wide range of operational sales and marketing issues impacting Florida, Visit Florida and the travel trade community" (Visit Florida, 2009c).

METHODOLOGY

The Focus Group Method:

A focus group is a qualitative research technique involving the use of in-depth group interviews designed to disclose perceptions and opinions on a defined issue involving carefully chosen participants who share common characteristics (Krueger & Casey, 2000). Participants in a typical focus group are selected because they are likely to have something to say on the specific topic under study, although not necessarily they may be is a representative sample of a specific population. The group focuses on a specified topic and participants are selected on the criteria of association with the topic, have similar socio-demographic characteristics and would feel comfortable talking to a moderator and each other (Richardson & Rabiee, 2001).

Focus groups are widely used in many forms of applied research including needs assessment, program evaluation, curriculum development, product or service design, and

market research (Krueger & Casey, 2000). The "data" from focus group studies are verbal remarks made by the participants in response to the moderator's questions and from other participants' comments. In addition, other field notes are an important component of the data, especially nonverbal behavior in the group (Krueger & Casey, 2000). For example, silence following raising a controversial issue of concern in the group may be a noteworthy discovery that could draw significant conclusions.

There are many methods for analyzing focus group data discussed in the academic literature (e.g. Bloor, 2001; Krueger & Casey, 2000; Krueger, King & Morgan, 1998). Contemporary literature on focus group data analysis concludes that the focus group is not simply a data gathering technique where data are analyzed by content according to a particular theme. Moreover, as a result of participants' interaction, significant communication and other signals and signs emerge. These processes can be identified by repeat readings of the transcript and tracing back on each participant's comments in the context of other participants' statements.

An understanding of the group's dynamics is also important for focus group researchers in two respects. First, it can help the researcher identify the conditions that promote interaction and the open discussion among the participants, as well as their views and experiences within the group. Second, it can assist the researcher in the analysis of the data through an understanding of what happened in the group as well as why it might have happened.

Sampling and Data Collection:

The data were collected through a series of focus groups held over a period of a day and a half. Twelve participants met at a hotel in Key Largo, Florida the night prior to the launch of research project. A short social gathering aimed to introduce the participants to one another and to be an "ice breaker" prior to the launch of the research project.

The group focus group discussions took place during the following two days. The discussions were held in one of the hotel's meeting rooms. The group room was neutral in color with one large conference table comfortably seating up to 16 people in the center of the room. In addition, there was a white board, easel and flipchart and 4x5 foot screen for slides or movies mounted at the front. There was also wall space around the room so written comments from the flip chart and other items could be posted around the room. The technology supporting the focus group included an Internet connection, as well as a computer hook up for presentation.

The discussions were held between 08:30 AM-5:00 PM during the first day and between 08:00-12:30 PM during the second day. Several breaks were given during the sessions and the participants gathered at night for a social dinner. To get cross section views from the diverse population, representing different sectors of the intermediaries and the trade industry, it was necessary to conduct multiple sections.

FINDINGS

The raw data were analyzed using several interpretations in an attempt to find linkages between the research goals and the outcome of the several discussions. Throughout the analysis the researcher was open to new insights, though it should be noted that in any qualitative research, a researcher's bias is possible. The analysis adopted a funnel approach, where general broad terms were introduced first and then focusing on specific issues of concern. The data is presented according to the major themes that emerged in the data analysis process.

General Profile of the Respondents

The participants were 2008 appointed members of the Visit Florida Trade Advisory Board comprised of representatives primarily located in Florida from six trade organizations: American Automobile Association (AAA) Auto Club South, American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), Outside Sales Support Network (OSSN), The Travel Institute, Travel Leaders and Virtuoso Limited, as well as representatives from four suppliers (Disney Destinations, Florida Keys & Key West, Tampa Bay & Company and Universal Orlando Resorts). The participants were all experienced travel professionals with experience of over ten years. The gender distribution between females and males was 30% and 70%, respectively.

Current Issues Facing the Travel Industry That Might Impact Domestic Tourism to Florida

The following issues of concern were raised by the respondents as a possible impact on Florida's position as a top travel destination. These issues were found to be important as marketing campaign could be used to educate and change misperception of potential customers.

- Economic issues in the U.S. and Europe. Europe was raised as a major concern since the European Community is the key international market for Florida.
- Transportation challenges to the State of Florida were another major concern for the participants. In particular, concerns associated with reduction of air service capacity to the various Florida airports, capacity reduction in other intra-state modes of transportation, the increasing price of fuel. In addition, the respondents also raised apprehension with the image and impact of the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at various airports in Florida and elsewhere.
- The participants also introduced challenges for specific market segments that might need additional support in terms of infrastructure, local public opinion, and marketing campaigns. In particular individuals and groups with special needs (accessibility), senior citizens, and youth faith-based organizations.
- Since 1851, the U.S. was hit by an average of 17.7 Hurricanes per decade. During the 1991-2000 period, the United States was hit by 14 Hurricanes, 5 of which were major storms (National Weather Service, 2009). Whether the storms hit Florida or not, the image of Florida as a target for tropical storms still remains a major issue of concern for potential travelers.

- Competition was another theme that emerged in the group discussion. Consumers' discretionary time is scarce and many vacations alternatives impact arrivals to Florida. The concept of competition was associated with other rival destinations (for both snow birds and non-snow birds), cruises departing from non-Florida ports (e.g. Mobile, AL; Galveston, TX; Charleston, SC), other theme park destinations, and all-inclusive destinations. The participants also pointed out that Florida has not been positioned as a "sophisticated Destination" and new destinations are emerging, especially Las Vegas.
- Lack of exposure to local markets was also brought up as a challenge. The trade industry was concerned that Florida's tourism industry, as well as its numerous destination marketing organizations do not direct a lot of resources to market the State to local regional markets.
- Other image issues associated with the state of Florida were also raised as a concern. While they may not directly impact travel pattern to the State, they might have an impact on visitation. These include environmental issues like oil drilling, growing sugar in the Everglades, and green tourism operations by the tourism and hospitality industry.
- Other issues of concern already mentioned may include the misperception and image of weather, increased crime, lack of availability of airline seats, the perception that Florida is a seasonal destination, and long driving distances to and within the State.
- A large number of respondents also addressed some concerns with the Florida tourism industry product issues like the quality of labor hired to work in the industry, over-supply of hotel rooms, and slow development of tourism and travel infrastructure due to investment restrictions by financial institutions.
- Finally, the trade experts also concluded that although Florida is a major tourist destination, hosting over 80 million visitors per year, there is a lack of destination knowledge by consumers and sometimes the trade industry as well. In other words, many consumers do not know for example that driving from Miami to Orlando is not a matter of a short distance.

What Would Consumers Want in the Future?

- The participants acknowledged that society is changing. Therefore, generic marketing of the State of Florida would need to address multicultural and non-traditional markets. This will consequently result in the repositioning of the Florida's product.
- Marketing executives, both at the DMO level as well as the industry should look more carefully on the needs and wants of the younger generation.

- Technology is changing and therefore, the process of seeking information is changing.
- Consumers want to participate actively in experiences like Kayaking, air boats in the Everglades, and hands-on environmental programs.

Florida as a Tourism Destination: What is or would be Selling?

The respondents mentioned that Florida as a tourist destination “has been selling” to a few potential market segments and other external variables.

- The participants described the State of Florida as a “taken for granted” destination. Florida has been perceived as an affordable and an accessible destination to all market segments “like Levi Jeans.” Jeans history has been associated with Levi Strauss who was credited with inventing jeans. Eventually in the 1950s people asked for denim jeans or just as often - Levi's jeans (Weston-Thomas, (2009). Florida, like Levi jeans has been associated with tourism, yet not a luxury or a lavish product, but rather a tourism product that is within your means and obtainable to all market segments.
- Florida’s strength was perceived in its diversity. Suppliers are diverse (small businesses versus large corporations) and consequently, the current intermediary market could address different market segments.
- The selection of Florida as a tourist destination depends on the geographical region of origin markets. The participants mentioned that Florida has had an “emotional attachment” to residents of the Northeast U.S., much more than residents of the West Coast.
- Florida has a potential for the Intrastate traveler. Going to different and unique destinations in Florida would enhance tourism. The majority of the participants agreed that Florida has a numerous “hidden Jewels.”
- The participants stressed throughout the discussion several times that Florida has no luxury image like other destinations in North America and overseas. Florida’s resort and spas industry has small potential for taking always loyal markets from other destinations. Developing a luxury market image would be beneficial for the State.
- Some participants raised the potential of Florida as an entertainment destination. This would include mega entertainment events like concerts, music festivals, spectator sports, and other amusement events.

How can Visit Florida help the Travel Trade Market Florida?

- Through market research, help intermediaries better understand the decision making process of the Florida visitor. Does the consumer want to travel to Florida or is it agent's recommendation?
- Understand and educate travel agents, tour operators and other intermediaries that sell the State. Marketing and educational efforts should also be directed within the State. In addition, there is a need to educate agents on suppliers that offer unique experiences.
- Find niches for Florida and prioritize them, especially focus on Florida in themed areas.
- Offer rewards and reasons to sell Florida to the trade. What is the bait for selling Florida?

CONCLUSIONS

Case studies are complex because they generally include multiple cases within a study. Focus groups produce high quality of data if they are employed for the right purpose. The research project aimed to generate ideas from the Visit Florida Trade Advisory Board that will "keep Florida positioned as a top travel destination." The Advisory Board provided feedback for the State official marketing organization that would generate a wide range of sales and marketing strategies that would impact Florida.

The focus group process reported was a case study that illustrated travel research that could be a foundation for a more extensive qualitative and quantitative research project. The initial findings could be used to explain the current state of affairs of Florida tourism, build upon existing marketing strategies, develop new marketing and sales campaigns, and provide solutions to the declining number of visitor arrivals to the State.

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TOURISM AND THE LOCAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN SMALL
CITIES AND TOWNS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF
THE BLACKSTONE VALLEY, RHODE ISLAND

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the perception of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) on tourism development in the Blackstone Valley, Rhode Island. Local SMEs foresee business opportunities via tourism, yet often do not fully recognize their potential role within it. Also examined is the role of the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (BVTC), a state designated organization to promote tourism in the Blackstone Valley, Rhode Island, and has led tourism development efforts for two decades to revitalize the economics and livability of place. The study concludes that local community involvement, including the SMEs, still remains more in the realm of 'participation' rather than 'empowerment', partly due to the lack of government funding programs and/or communication and partly due to the lack of understanding of tourism's potential in many SMEs. The BVTC, while respected by most SMEs, is being urged to have a more innovative and strategic role in developing tourism assets instead of the implementer role traditional tourism organizations engage in.

KEYWORDS: BVTC, communication, SME, tourism development strategy

INTRODUCTION

The Blackstone River Valley is an area of about 400,000 acres located between central Massachusetts, and northern Rhode Island. The region has 24 communities, 15 in Massachusetts and 9 in Rhode Island. Like much of New England, after the decline of its textile industry it experienced economic distress and high unemployment. By mid-1950s it became an economic and socio-cultural wasteland reflecting impoverishment, social

instability and extensive environmental degradation. Tourism was proposed to help revitalize the industrial base of the Blackstone Valley and improve the quality of life of its residents. Toward this goal the Rhode Island Economic Policy Council, or the RIEPC, presented a state-wide study report stating that tourism has the potential to help revitalize the Blackstone Valley (BV) but only if the State enhanced accessibility and developed exciting attractions combined with the strong involvement of the private sector to create a competitive cluster, leading to “positive spillover impacts on all members of the industry” (RIPC, 1997). The report stated that supporting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) was essential as it is fundamental to the State’s economy and a strong collaboration between both parties needs to exist.

The Rhode Island Blackstone Valley Tourism Council (BVTC), a state-designated and sponsored nonprofit organization, was established in 1985 to initiate and coordinate tourism asset development and marketing programs and activities aimed at economic development and job creation in the Rhode Island communities of the BV. It is responsible for creating and implementing a comprehensive regional sustainable tourism development plan to promote economic development via tourism within Blackstone Valley (Billington, 2004). BVTC bases its approach on the geotourism and civic tourism model of place development which is aimed at improving the geographic, social and economic layers of a local community; i.e. to improve the quality of life of the local population via tourism (BVTC, 2007a,b). It emphasizes the empowerment and well-being of the local community (Holecek & Fridgen, 2002) and strengthening SMEs via community participation in order to allow for easier adoption of and transition to new ideas and opportunities (Cole, 2006; Tosun & Timothy, 2003). The Blackstone Valley has a story to tell, the genesis of the American Industrial Revolution, and resources that visitors can enjoy (e.g. historic old factory buildings, museums, nature and mixed cultural communities) but lacks a single primary tourism asset. Therefore the BVTC employs a micro-clustering strategy of bundling many assets throughout the BV whose effectiveness is dependent on an active and aware SME community.

Today the tourism industry in the BV is based on the relationship between governmental agencies, including the BVTC, and many SMEs. The BVTC estimates that the BV annually hosts over a million visitors. In 2006 tourism accounted for 4-15% of total employment per community and tourist spending was over \$100 million. Nevertheless we have very little information on the perceptions and viewpoints of the local tourism business owners on the direction of tourism development in the BV and of the vision and model of the BVTC. This paper presents the opinions of randomly selected tourism related SME owners and managers on these questions. This paper focuses on first level of interpretation, the theme level; later papers will address higher order interpretations.

RESEARCH METHODS

Qualitative research methodology was used to assess the perceptions of local tourism business owners and others working in tourism on tourism development in the

Blackstone Valley. We were interested in understanding their perceptions in five areas: a) the economic situation in the BV; b) tourism development in the BV; c) the BVTC's influence on tourism development; d) other government tourism programs and initiatives; and e) business opportunities. In-depth semi-structured interviews in which fixed questions were asked (see below), but the interviewees were allowed to express their thoughts and ideas on topics not covered by the questions were used to identify factors which affect respondents' opinions and perceptions on the existing tourism industry (Kayat, 2002). Lepp (2007) and Westwood (2007) pointed out that this method allows for the injection of new and often unexpected ideas and allows the interviewees to freely express their points of view. Hernandez et al., (1996) said that the main advantage of in-depth interviews is that a better understanding of respondents' thinking and attitudes on key issues could be obtained than with structured interviews. A 14 group question questionnaire was created and asked to all interviewees (Table 1) plus additional follow up questions asked if needed per interviewee.

We randomly selected 20 potential candidates from various tourism related industries using the member's list from the Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce (NRICC, 2007). Sixteen people agreed to be interviewed who represented different types of tourism SMEs. In addition we interviewed three government officials involved in tourism industry development in the nine Blackstone Valley communities (Table 2). Government officials were included not only to act as reference sources on programs and initiatives geared towards local tourism related businesses, but also as measuring points to identify any inconsistency between the private and public sectors' perceptions. With the exception of two, all interviewees held positions which involved decision-making in their respective organizations. The interviews were digitally recorded (averaged approximately 30 minutes but several were over an hour) and transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis was used to gain insights into the answers. Over the 19 interviewees, we found considerable redundancy in the expressed opinions.

Table 1. The 14 question groups asked to all interviewees.

1. We know that the Blackstone Valley region has experienced a severe economic decline after its prime textile industry shifted to the South. Can you describe what type of economic and business trends your community has encountered in the past for economic development? How do you see tourism as a vehicle for such development?
2. Can you please tell me briefly what your organization does in tourism? Why was it established? What is your position in the business?
3. Please list the strongest economic sectors in the Blackstone Valley. Where do you place tourism? Do you see this list changing in the future?
4. What kind of government initiatives and processes are currently in place which support the local tourism industry?
5. What percentage of your tourism business relies on local vendors?
6. Is your business affected by seasonality in tourism visitation?
7. The Blackstone Valley Tourism Council is responsible for promoting tourism in the region in various ways, from direct activities, such as festivals and tours to indirect activities such as real estate development. Have you established a relationship with

- the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, and why? Have they had an impact on your business? If so, how?
8. Tell me a little about the impact of tourism, both good and bad, on your community.
 9. What type of support is your tourism business receiving from the local/State/federal government?
 10. Do you think the approach, such as taxation programs, development programs, job generation programs, etc., the local government is taking on old mills and buildings is effective? Do you think the local community will benefit from this? Do you think they can do more?
 11. How does your town differentiate its tourist assets in comparison to neighboring towns?
 12. How do you find the tourism infrastructure system in your area? Is it efficient? Do you think out-of-town visitors find it useful?
 13. If you were to make any changes to the current tourism model, what would it be and why?
 14. Lastly, would you continue to invest in tourism, and why?

TABLE 2: THE BACKGROUND OF THE 19 INTERVIEWEES

Interviewee Code	Sector	Location	Gender
AB #1	Agriculture	Cumberland	Female
AB #2	Agriculture	North Smithfield	Female
RL #1	Tourism and leisure	Lincoln	Male
RL #2	Tourism and leisure	Pawtucket	Female
RL #3	Tourism and leisure	Woonsocket	Male
RL #4	Tourism and leisure	Pawtucket	Female
GT #2	Government	Pawtucket	Male
GT #3	Government	Woonsocket	Male
GT #4	Government	Woonsocket	Male
LB #1	Lodging	Glocester	Male
LB #2	Lodging	Pawtucket	Male
LB #3	Lodging	Woonsocket	Male
RE #1	Real estate	Lincoln	Female
RT #1	Restaurant	Woonsocket	Male
MG #1	Manufacturing #1	Cumberland	Male
RB #1	Retail business #1	Cumberland	Male
RB #2	Retail business #2	Glocester	Male
RB #3	Retail business #3	Woonsocket	Female
RB #4	Retail business #4	Woonsocket	Male

RESULTS

A. The economic situation in the Blackstone Valley examined how local businesses perceive the region's present socioeconomic situation. After experiencing

consecutive years of economic depression, most businesses are beginning to see positive changes in the region and the tourism industry is helping in this. Three issues emerged: rejuvenation, economic sustainability and social stability.

There was a positive resonance on the issue of rejuvenation. Interviewees felt the reuse of abandoned old buildings were beneficial to their community. However, there was a sense of disconnection possibly associated with the lack of opportunity by some locals to directly engage in the utilization or redevelopment of these buildings. On the issue of economic sustainability, several interviewees questioned whether the changes are sufficiently sustainable, including tourism, to elevate the local economy to the next level.

B. Perceptions on tourism development examined how local businesses perceive the evolution and progress of the tourism sector in the BV. The interviews covered issues ranging from the affects of tourists on the towns, comprehension of what is the tourism industry, tourism investment and funding and infrastructure needs. Many business owners believe that due to the BVTC's efforts, tourists are visiting the BV. Historical heritage tourism, especially explaining the BV's role in the American Industrial Revolution, has played a valuable role in revitalizing the region. Phrases such "a lot of history," "a bit of history," "historical" and "incredible amount of historical value" were commonly used to emphasis this point. Most interviewees acknowledged the presence of at least one tourism activity or asset, such as the tours, museums, arts festivals and walking tours and agreed that tourism, while not the single strongest economic sector of the Valley, ranks among its top five sectors. When interviewees were further queried if they anticipated tourism to play a major economic role in the future, opinions mostly gravitate between 'having potential' and 'remaining at the present state'.

A point mentioned by several interviewees was the competition the BV's tourism industry faces from Providence and Newport. They feel that the assets located in the BV are 'less' compared to those located in Providence or Newport, and are often overlooked and under marketed by the state. A recurring theme was the underdeveloped main streets and downtown areas. Responses centered on the insufficiency of activities and places not only for local residents, but also for tourists who visit the area for extended period of time. Despite the necessity to improve these, several interviewees emphasized that it was also important to maintain the integrity of place.

The comprehension level on what is tourism differed among the interviewees. The majority of interviewees linked tourism to business opportunities and economic enhancement, but not to improving quality of life for the residents. Several classified tourism only as sightseeing activities for leisure visitors, separating business-related visitors from tourism. It appears that many local businesses were not fully aware of the relationship between economic and tourism development, as well as not fully recognizing their potential role in it.

Nearly every local business interviewed commented that they would continue to invest in tourism. A majority foresees business opportunities and is aware that if properly developed and marketed tourism can have an increasing positive economic impact on

their communities. Government officials similarly backed this perception providing that there is sufficient funding. Of those interviewed, each stated that they were doing as much as they could to support the region's economic development, as well as the BVTC's program. Although interviewees showed no strong opinions against the fundamentals of tourism investment, negative perceptions were directed to taxation programs, government support programs and development funding and investment programs.

All interviewees were asked if they would make any changes to the current BVTC's tourism model. The majority support the current model but several commented that changes need to occur including:

1. More support and funding from State government
2. Enhance and/or change marketing and promotional strategies
3. Communication transparency
4. Enhance and/or develop transportation system in the region
5. Further develop present attractions, and increase number
6. Change American lawsuit culture which hinders rapid economic development

The first two items were areas most interviewees felt needed change. The third item is fundamental to maintaining the local communities' involvement in the region's economic development.

C. The perception on the BVTC tourism development model examined how local businesses perceive its efforts and accomplishments in tourism development. The general opinion was very positive. Most interviewees acknowledge and recognize what the BVTC has done and its leadership in rebuilding the region's economy and image particularly their strength in tourism advocacy, promotional activities and tourism asset development. They express an understanding of the role of the organization under the region's economic development scheme. Phrases such as "great asset," "active," "innovative," "very involved," and "wonderful" were used to describe it. Interviewees indicated that the BVTC is well established, transparent in their operations, and recognized as an important institution in the region. Most interviewees had a high degree of trust towards the organization.

The issue of partnerships was also examined. The majority of the interviewees answered that their businesses had established some form of partnership, or are in the process of establishing one with the BVTC. Partnering with the BVTC seems to have led several businesses into establishing 'sub-partnerships' amongst themselves. Such situation seemed more prevalent amongst those businesses more directly involved in tourism. Regardless of the marketing efforts that the BVTC provides, some interviewees mentioned the limitations of the organization's operational capabilities. A few interviewees, closely following or involved in the activities of the BVTC, felt that it should concentrate on 'higher' or 'macro' level activities.

D. Other government tourism programs and initiatives examined the perception of the interviewees on non-BVTC governmental help in the BV's redevelopment and tourism efforts. Most perceived that much of the Federal and State support and funding

for tourism development has been funneled to major tourist destinations such as Providence and Newport and very little to the Blackstone Valley. All government officials interviewed agreed that funding was an issue, and likewise understood the limitations on growth that this causes. However, it was noted that they would like to see tourism evolve to where it can be self-sustained since “ultimately it is an economic activity,” and not dependent on “seed money from non-profits or heritage programs”. In spite of the lack of support at the Federal and State level, interviewees acknowledged the efforts made by their respective local government offices.

Many of the interviewees commented on the issue of government communication on funding for tourism development. The majority were unable to clearly define any government initiative or programs which support the tourism industry in the region. The two most referred programs were the hotel taxation and the arts initiative programs. The hotel taxation program in Rhode Island collects 6% from all public lodging establishments which have more than three rooms while the art initiative supports young artists and art related tourism businesses. Government officials acknowledged that a lack of communication exists in informing the local community about their programs.

E. The perceptions on business development examined how local businesses perceive the progress and growth of their operations and the opportunities to develop new tourism businesses. Most local businesses interviewed were small scaled self-employed entities that have been in the region for many years. For the most part, local business people believe that opportunities exist for tourism development in the region. Several people commented that they had either recently started a new business or enhanced their business operations. These people noted that they utilized local government programs as well as the BVTC’s marketing resources.

Several interviewees said that barriers exist in developing businesses within the BV. As mentioned earlier, some feel that there is insufficient funding to fully develop a tourism industry. It was viewed that unless a business was involved in the arts, farming or other government-led initiative, not many options were readily available to encourage small-scale business development. Despite the existence of various business support programs, such as fire safety loan programs and small business loan programs, local governments do acknowledge the difficulties for businesses in tourism to develop in the region. It also signifies possible missed opportunities for a community to become more economically vibrant, as well as hinder tourism development.

DISCUSSION

An underlying issue of this study is what direction is the BV’s tourism sector heading towards under the leadership of the BVTC? In general, the perceptions expressed by the interviewees do not project any strong negativity or hostility towards the direction and model that the BVTC has taken them. On the contrary, it is mostly one of respect. Business owners credit the BVTC for raising the profile of the BV, as well as to recognize tourism’s potential to generate and enhance economic activity for the region.

Yet, it can not be denied from the perceptions uncovered in this study that the local community is looking for guidance to reach the next level of economic development.

Much of what was perceived as problems by local businesses is beyond the BVTC's sphere of responsibility, such as the lack of government support, funding programs and incentives for small businesses. Most interviewees not only work in the region, but also have been lifelong residents who have experienced the gradual rejuvenation of the region. As mentioned earlier, the disconnection perceived by some local businesses not only originates from weak communication between tourism developers, government and other stakeholders, but it can also be argued that it stems from a deep-rooted emotional rejection conceived through the region's bleak contemporary history. Copping (2005) writes that inviting local communities to observe their heritage assets helps strengthen their emotional connection to the assets and encourages the communities to advocate and promote such assets. She also notes that this helps retain economic activity within the community.

The *Doors Open* initiative, a program started in Europe in the early 1990s engaging local residents in the preservation and awareness efforts of local heritage sites, was first introduced in the BV as the *Footsteps in History* event in 2005 (BVTC 2007a). The event involved the 24 Blackstone Valley communities, hosted by several agencies, including the BVTC, and prominent corporations. Yet, it is important to note that this program was only mentioned by one interviewee who was involved in the event, while no others referred to it when queried about current government initiatives and processes supporting the local tourism industry.

The 1997 RIEPC report had forewarned that the management segment of tourism infrastructure is layered by organizations devoted to their regional tourism promotion and development activities but lack the flexibility to collaborate in a state-level policy development and implementation scheme. It criticized the RIEDC for its weak leadership and coordination in bridging the differences between the groups, and also the State's funding structure which only distributes tax revenues to more active tourist regions. The report noted that local businesses perceived that the "overall problem is that neither the State nor the regional tourism promotion agencies adequately listen or are responsive to their needs" (RIEPC, 1997). Brunetto & Farr-Wharton (2007) note that SMEs require a degree of trust when deciding on government programs which supports our findings of a lack of communication and accessibility between government and SMEs may be hindering tourism development. They also recommend that tourism development efforts be actively led by the private sector in order to diffuse bureaucratic problems, and give this sector ownership of these efforts. The European Commission (2003) noting that SMEs have a tendency to not communicate its views to the government due to the lack of time and resources and size of their operations; thus, leading to their low involvement in policy and law making.

It can be argued that establishing a tourism business is relatively easy as no formal education, skill sets or capital is required. Most of the small local businesses participating in this study were self-employed with less than 10 employees. Only a few

have the expertise and financial resources to undertake, for instance, marketing and promotional efforts. As a result they often rely on the BVTC's well-established promotional marketing and distribution services to cover this gap. Much of BVTC's operations are based on developing and implementing tourism programs and activities, yet the perceptions stated by both local businesses and local governments indicate that BVTC's services are being sought in a more collaborative and facilitating role. Local governments see the need for BVTC's presence and tourism expertise at the decision-making level, while local businesses, particularly those involved in tourism event implementation, seek this through collaborative methods. Although to date, BVTC has worked in various capacities, the survey suggests that this model is placing great strain on the organization's resources which could possibly lead to stagnant results for the BV tourism industry as frustration and disappointment by local businesses, though still small, are beginning to surface.

Tourism has evolved over time, from 3S mass tourism to the present civic and geo-tourism models. It can be said that for some communities, tourism development is a pseudonym for economic development. When a community perceives itself as being the tourism 'product,' its participation is imperative in realizing a self-sustaining industry. Full synchronization and understanding between planners and beneficiaries towards achieving the overall economic development vision can be difficult to reach. It has been argued that the participation of all stakeholders is unrealistic due to the difference in objectives each have. However, Billington (2004) noted that synchronization can occur when all sectors of the community adhere to social responsibility. In other words, economic development is generated from a community's collective effort. If tourism is to be equated to such development, then tourism equates to being a collective effort. The initial physical revitalization of the Valley can be interpreted as such. But the question now is how does this synchronization continue evolving with a growing economy?

This study confirmed that local tourism businesses have to some degree established partnerships not only with the BVTC, but also with each other. One interviewee explained that it has developed partnerships with several restaurants and retail stores which have created new business opportunities and will further increase them in the future. This practice helps not only to create opportunities but also to expand the concept of tourism in the community. However, it was hinted that partnerships are limited to businesses in interrelated sectors which may hinder the exploration and exploitation of new business opportunities.

Considerable research has been carried out on sustainable tourism and its sub-types over the last two decades. The concept of sustainability is now welcomed and implemented by many communities. Geotourism has further pushed the boundaries of tourism allowing local residents and businesses, especially SME, to participate in the development of a destination which both residents and visitors can enjoy. However, such involvement still is usually based on 'participation' and not 'empowerment'. Schilling (2006) argues that 'empowerment' is merely another component in most sustainable tourism models. His civic tourism model not only emphasizes the importance of collective effort by all stakeholders regardless of their degree of involvement in tourism,

but what they can contribute to create a place. Thus, the notion of partnerships corresponds to this scenario and can contribute to success.

CONCLUSION

This study found that the BVTC's strategy has influenced local SMEs to consider or integrate tourism into their business activities. Yet, it was found that not only SMEs size and limited resources prevented them from further seizing new business opportunities, but other substantial issues inhibit their growth. Low comprehension level on the relationship between tourism development and collective economic growth may explain why more partnerships between businesses have not been established, including with the BVTC. Low availability of government funding and developing incentive programs may be discouraging the development of entrepreneurship in the region. Geotourism may be an adequate model to revitalize a region or community and develop the 'initial' infrastructure; however, once achieved a strong integration of local businesses and community is needed to further sustain the tourism development of the region.

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THE SANCTION-IMPOSING PROCESS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM. A HISTORICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the notion of administrative sanctions in Greece's tourism sector. It reviews and analyses the sanctions imposed by the administrative bodies on the main types of enterprises comprising the sector in hand. Those enterprises are the following: accommodation providers (hotels, campings, apartments and studios, forest villages, time sharing accommodation, accommodation for foreigners, nudist accommodation), youth hostels, infrastructure for special interests' tourism, travel agencies, Rent A Car and Rent A Moto enterprises, tourist shops, tourist guides and, lastly, tourist buses and tourist trains.

KEYWORDS: Administrative sanctions, tourism enterprises, Appeals' Committee

INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as a sector providing services that aim at people's recreation, is very dynamic and constantly evolving. Entrepreneurship, due to tourism's variety and fancy, creates and offers new forms of recreation (Mylonopoulos, Mentis and Moira, 2003:74-75). Tourism is a multidimensional social phenomenon, with very important economic, social and environmental aspects, governed by a variety of legal rules.

The state's intervention in tourism is vivid and constant in all of its dimensions, which results in the existence of a variety of statutes composing the legal framework of tourism, statutes that appear only at the beginning of the 1920's. Of major importance to the tourism phenomenon are the enterprises composing the tourism sector, in other words the economic units that provide services to tourists, services such as transfer, lodging, alimentation, entertainment etc. The pillar for the lawful function of tourist enterprises is law 2160/93 (gov. gazette 118/A') concerning regulations about tourism and other provisions, the so-called tourism law (Euthimiatou – Poulakou, 2006:27). According to that law, the tourist enterprises are the following: tourist accommodation (hotels, complimentary accommodation and camping sites), youth hostels, installations of special tourism infrastructure (e.g. conference centres, skiing centres, and marinas), travel agencies, car rental agencies and tourist shops.

Immanent to the public administration's action is the institution of imposing sanctions (Lytras, 1984:9) to those who break the law. The framework of administrative sanctions must be crystal clear, so that the trust in the relation between the state and the citizens is kept, and lawfulness is preserved. To achieve that target, the public

administration involved in tourism has set the respective framework of administrative sanctions, so that the operation of tourist enterprises is controlled, and thus the country can develop in the specific sector. The basic state institution that controls tourist enterprises and imposes administrative sanctions is the Greek National Tourism Organization (G.N.T.O.), which is a Legal Entity of Public Law, overseen by the Ministry of Tourism Development, even though during its existence since 1929 it has been overseen by a number of different Ministries.

The sanction-imposing system involves those administrative sanctions imposed by the state tourism institution (G.N.T.O.) on the enterprises violating the provisions of the touristic legislation. Touristic sanctions involve reprimands, fines, provisional suspension of the operating license, final suspension of the operating license, revocation of the appointment of the tourist lodging's manager, downgrading of the tourist lodging's classification, closing down the tourist enterprise and demolition of arbitrary buildings.

HISTORICAL COURSE

The historical course of the sanction-imposing process in the tourism sector could well be separated into three basic periods.

The first period of is placed in the decade 1930. In the dues of that decade, statutes were placed in force that concerned those tourist enterprises that provided tourists with services of lodging and transport. By those statutes, the administrative sanctions that concern the operation of hotels and travel agencies are set. Thus, as far as hotels are concerned, sanctions such as the suspension of the operating license, the revocation of the operating license and the closing down of the hotel were introduced. The sanctions imposed varied depending on the gravity of the violation. As far as travel agencies were concerned, administrative sanctions such as the provisional and final suspension of the operating license, as well as fines, were provided by the law.

The second period of the sanction-imposing process in the tourism sector is placed in the 1970s. In the middle of this period, statutes that concern travel agencies and hotels are set, but also – for the first time- they include tourist buses and guides. By the sanction-imposing system of this decade, new forms of sanctions are set, such as reprimands, the provisional suspension of the license to exercise the profession, the suspension of the license to circulate buses, downgrading of the tourist lodging's classification and revocation of the approval of the manager's appointment. The third period is placed in the decade 1990 and it is marked primarily by the tourist law 2160/1993 that establishes the operation license for the tourist enterprises. In the sanction-imposing system of this period, the dominating administrative sanction is the fine. The provisional and final suspension of the operating license, the suspension of the license of tourist trains and the closing down of tourist enterprises supplement the sanctions of the above mentioned period.

THE FIRST PERIOD OF THE TOURIST SANCTION-IMPOSING PROGRESS

The first legislative regulation as regards the imposition of administrative sanctions in the field of tourism was the Compulsory Law 431/1937 (gov. gazette 10/A) concerning provisions regarding the control of hotels and the protection of their clientele. That law set out the following administrative sanctions:

- a) The revocation of the hotel's operating license for a time period up to two months, if the hotel collected a sum bigger than what had been determined (article 1). The sanction was imposed by the Undersecretary of Press and Tourism, after consenting statement of the Committee of article 3 of the above mentioned law. In the committee (responsible to examine the prices that each hotel and boarding house declared), the following parties participated: the Directors of the three Tourist Directorates of the Ministry of Press and Tourism, the Director of Tourist Police or their legal substitutes, a Head of Directorate or Department appointed by the Undersecretary of Price Control Service, and the competent Head of Department of the Tourist Organisation Directorate as rapporteur.
- b) The revocation of the operating license for hotels, boarding houses, or inns if these did not comply with the terms and regulations determined by the relative laws, decrees and circulars, if they violate repetitively the provisions concerning hygiene, cleanness and internal regulation, or if they systematically accept customers that suffer from contagious illnesses (certified by local authorities, community doctors or other competent services). The sanction was imposed (after first calling the law-breaker to conform), by decision of the Undersecretary of Press and Tourism, after prior statement of the Committee responsible for the issuing of operating licenses (article 9, par. 1).

That committee consisted of the Directors of the three Tourist Directorates of the Under Secretariat of Press and Tourism, the Director of Tourist Police or their legal substitutes and the Head of Department of the Directorate of Tourist Organisation responsible for the hotels, as rapporteur.

- c) The revocation, irreversibly, of the hotel's operating license if the Director businessman or the Director employee had been condemned within the last three years (article of 3 of Compulsory Law 1108/1938 added this time period) on theft, misappropriation, marketing and use of narcotics, fraud and generally on violations of provisions that concern white slavery and promotion to prostitution, as well as for offences at the morals. The provision is also valid if he occupied a person, related to him or not, that had been condemned for the above violations of the law (article 9, par. 2).
- d) The closing down of the enterprise, by decision of the Undersecretary of Press and Tourism, if the hotel owner did not assemble the required qualifications, as well as if the hotel used a prohibited name.

Compulsory Law 864/1937 concerning the constitution and operation of tourist or travel agencies and concerning tourist and excursion associations, sets out the terms and conditions on the legal operation of tourist agencies. According to article 3, if the provisions laid are violated, the provisional or final revocation of the operating license of a tourist or travel agency can be decided.

In addition, article 13 sets out the following sanctions:

- a) Fine from 100 Drs up to 10.000 Drs (from €0,29 up to €29,34), with the possibility of doubling the fine in case of relapse within the same year. The fine constitutes public income.
- b) Provisional deprivation of the operating license of the tourist or travel agency or of the right to represent them (the tourist or travel agency) for a time period of 15 days up to 3 months.
- c) Final suspension of the license.

The two last sanctions are imposed by the Tourist Police.

Compulsory Law 1108/1938 (gov. gazette 77/A), concerning the modification and completion of Compulsory Law 431/1937 and other provisions, stipulates the revocation of the hotel's operating license, if the one in whose name the license was issued, doesn't supervise in person the operation of the hotel (article 2, par.1). However the possibility for a substitute to undertake that task is given, provided however that he possesses the qualifications necessary to exercise the profession (as they are stipulated in verse 4, article 8, Compulsory Law 431/1937) and after he has received the approval of the Under Secretariat of Press and Tourism.

In addition (article 2, par. 3) the prohibition of a hotel or boarding house's operation, by decision of Undersecretary of Press and Tourism, after proposal by the committee of article 11 of Compulsory Law 431/37, is stipulated, if it is judged that they provide systematically and professionally a place for lechery or they keep women of free morals, who accept or create nuisance to neighbours.

Moreover, according to article 2 par. 7 of the same law, the sanctions of Compulsory Law 431/37 (see 2.1.1.) can be imposed to the owners or directors of hotels that demonstrate improper behaviour to their customers or do not comply with the commands of the Under Secretariat of Press and Tourism as regards cleanness, decency and generally the good operation of their hotels. Also, the imposition of the above sanctions is stipulated for those who try with illicit means to extract customers of other hotels. In case of relapse into the above violations, the Undersecretary of Press and Tourism can decide to revoke the operation license that has been granted to the lodging.

THE SECOND PERIOD OF THE TOURIST SANCTION-IMPOSING PROCESS

Leg. decree 304/1969 (gov. gazette 195/A) concerning transport of people by buses of private use (article 1) stipulates that buses of private use intended to transport people, at a fare, can be used, after approval by the Minister of Transport or the competent Prefect, by hotels, consortia, or cooperatives of hotel owners, by air line companies and by enterprises of exploitation of hot springs and casinos. If it is ascertained that the vehicle is used for an aim different than the one it was placed in circulation for, the final suspension of its circulation license is stipulated, by decision of the Minister of Transport or the competent Prefect.

Law 393/1976 (gov. gazette 199/A), concerning the foundation and operation of travel agencies stipulates, in article 10, that the G.N.T.O. (or the Tourist Police, after a written order by the G.N.T.O.) controls and supervises travel agencies. In cases of breaking the law, the following sanctions are imposed by the competent Director of G.N.T.O.: reprimand, fine, provisional suspension of the operating license for a time period of up to six months, (and provided that a fine has been imposed three times within the same year) and final suspension of the operating license (provided that the provisional suspension of the operating license has been imposed twice within two consecutive years).

The above administrative sanctions are imposed after the offender has been called to a previous hearing, within a deadline of 15 days.

Law 642/1977 (gov. gazette 200/A) concerning the modification and completion of provisions of hotel legislation, provides, article 2, par.1, that to the hotel businessmen that do not obey the tourist legislation, decrees, ministerial decisions, provisions of regulations or commands of competent authorities, the following sanctions can be imposed: a) reprimand, b) fine, c) degradation of the hotel to the next inferior class (provided that three fines have been imposed within the same year), d) provisional suspension of the operating license for a time period up to six months (and provided that a fine has been imposed at least three times within one year since its first imposition), e) final suspension of the operating license (provided that the provisional suspension of the operating license has been imposed twice within two consecutive years) and f) provisional three-month revocation of approval of the responsible director, which can be altered to six months in case of relapse within the same year. One can observe by studying the above mentioned law that there exists a differentiation between the administrative bodies, as far as their competence to impose sanctions is concerned: the first two sanctions are imposed by decision of the competent Director of the G.N.T.O., while the rest by decision of the G.N.T.O.'s Secretary - General.

Even though the contribution of guides to the tourist development of the country is considered substantial, their activity as a tourist profession doesn't occupy the tourist legislation before year 1977. By Law 710/77 (gov. gazette 283/A), concerning guides, a number of issues as regards the general rules of licensing and exercising the specific profession is regulated. In cases of not observing the provisions laid by Law 710/77 and the statutes published for its implementation, the following administrative sanctions are imposed (according to article 12):

- a) Reprimand.
- b) Fine from 500 Drs up to 5.000 Drs (that is from €1,47 up to €14,67), deposited to the G.N.T.O.'s Fund and constituting its income.
- c) Provisional deprivation of the license to exercise the profession for a time period of up to six months, and provided that at least two fines have been imposed within the same year. The decision, by which the provisional deprivation of the license is imposed, is executed three months after issuing the decision that imposed the sanction.
- d) Final deprivation of the license provided that the provisional deprivation has been imposed twice within two consecutive years.

The administrative sanctions (a) and (b) are imposed by decision of the competent Director of G.N.T.O., the rest by decision of the committee of par. 5, article 12. That committee is consisted of five members that are determined with their substitutes by decision of the Minister that oversees G.N.T.O. These members are: the Secretary - General of G.N.T.O. as chairman, a member of the judiciary with a grade of at least Judge of Court of First Instance, an employee of the Ministry that oversees G.N.T.O., an employee of the Ministry of Employment (both of them at least of the B grade) and a representative of guides, who is selected by the Minister from a list of four guides that the Association of Guides indicates.

Law 711/1977 (gov. gazette 284/A) concerning tourist buses, stipulates, in article 9, the suspension of the circulation license of tourist buses of public use. The suspension takes place, by decision of the G.N.T.O.'s Secretary General, in the following cases: a) if it belongs to a travel agency and the operation licence of the agency is suspended, b) if, at the annual inspection, the bus is considered inappropriate for safe circulation, c) if 18 years have passed since its manufacturing, d) if it is auctioned.

In the article 15 of Law 711/77, the following administrative sanctions are set out for the offenders of the provisions of law and lawful acts published for its implementation:

- a) Reprimand
- b) Fine from 5.000 Drs to 25.000 Drs (from €1.467,35 to €73,37)
- c) Fine from 25.000 Drs to 100.000 Drs (from €73,37 to €293,47) in case the above fine (b) has been imposed three times within the same year. The above fines are deposited to the G.N.T.O.'s Fund and constitute its income.
- d) Removal of the right to issue a new license for the circulation of tourist buses of public use for two years, in case the above fine (c) has been imposed eight times within a time period of two consecutive years. The sanctions are imposed by decision of the competent director of G.N.T.O., after the offender has been called to a previous hearing, within a legitimate deadline, no shorter than seven days.

THE THIRD PERIOD OF THE TOURIST SANCTION-IMPOSING PROCESS

The decision 15463/1335/1993 by the Minister of Transports and Communications (gov. gazette 429/V) concerning the circulation of special vehicles (tourist trains) recognises the need for tourist trains to circulate, so that tourists can visit places where access is impossible for tourist buses. If the train is not supplied with the necessary bulletin of technical control, and after a month has passed, the suspension of the license and plates of tourist trains is stipulated.

2.3.2. Law 2160/93 (gov. gazette 118/A) concerning regulations about tourism and other provisions, introduces (article 4) the following administrative sanctions for specific law violations:

- a) Fine of 50.000 Drs (€146,73) per bed, to whoever operates, against return, a tourist lodging, without having it registered in the special registration list of G.N.T.O. Exceptionally, for camping sites, as well as for installations of special tourist

infrastructure, travel agencies, rent a car agencies and tourist shops, the fine imposed can be up to 5.000.000 Drs (€14.673,51).

b) Fine of 200.000 Drs (€586,94), if the person in charge of the lodging's operation does not have the license hanged at a noticeable and accessible part of the communal space in the reception of the lodging for the visitors to see, or otherwise at the nearest noticeable to the main entry of the lodging point.

c) Fine of up to 5.000.000 Drs (€14.673,51), to travel agents, that advertise tourist installations of a different type than the one mentioned in the contracts signed.

d) Fine of up to 500.000 Drs (€1.467,35) to the offenders of provisions concerning price lists. In specific, those who exploit tourist enterprises are obliged to submit each year to the G.N.T.O. their analytical price lists, and keep them invariable for a time period of at least 12 months from their submission. The declared prices cannot be inferior to the ones determined each year by decision of G.N.T.O.'s Secretary – General. This decision is published after a proposal from the competent institutions, submitted at the latest on the 30th June of the previous year. The Secretary – General's decision is published in the Official Journal of the Hellenic Republic.

e) Fine of 1.000.000 Drs (€2.934,7) to travel agencies and foreign enterprises' representatives, as well as to whoever signs contracts with tourist enterprises that haven't obtained the operating license, or who dispatch tourists to lodgings that operate without it.

Moreover, according to Law 2160/93, the following sanctions can be imposed to the businessman that operates any category of tourist enterprise:

a) Separately, a fine of 100.000 Drs (€ 293,47) for each violation, due to which a tourist was deprived of the hotel's services because of overbooking. No sanction is imposed however, if the businessman secured for accommodation in a hotel of the same region, of at least the same category, in time.

b) Fine of up to 200.000 Drs (€586,94), if due to lack or damage in the system of water supply or sewage system or in the lodging's installations in general, the area where services are provided or the area surrounding the hotel and all kinds of lodgings is polluted. In case of non conformity, within thirty days from the service of the decision, the immediate closing down of the hotel can be imposed, by decision of the G.N.T.O.'s Secretary – General, until the pollution has ceased. In this case, the exercise of any legal redress or aid does not have a suspending result. The measure is raised, by similar decision, after the interested party has applied for it and after the G.N.T.O.'s appropriate service has ascertained that the reasons that caused the situation have disappeared.

c) Fine of up to 200.000 Drs (€586,94), if the one exploiting a tourist enterprise omits to offer to his clientele services, comforts or goods that he promised or advertised in written, or if the offered services, comforts or goods are obviously of inferior category or quality.

To those having an operating license for camping sites, the following can be imposed, if Law 2160/93 isn't obeyed: (a) fine of up to 500.000 Drs (€1.467,35), (b) Provisional suspension of the operating license for a time period of up to six months (provided that at least three fines have been imposed within 18 consecutive months), or (c) final suspension of the license (provided that the provisional deprivation has been imposed within three consecutive years)

In case of relapse to any of the above mentioned violations of the law, the maximum limit of fine is doubled and in case of a second relapse, it is tripled. The administrative sanctions set out are imposed beyond and independently from the sanctions that may be stipulated by other provisions.

Law 2446/96 (gov. gazette 276/A) concerning the modification of Law 711/77 about tourist buses sets out the following administrative sanctions for those who violate the law:

a) Fine from 10.000 Drs to 200.000 Drs (€29,35 to €586,94), by decision of the competent director of G.N.T.O. In the case of a second violation within the same calendar year, the fine varies from 200.000 Drs to 400.000 Drs (€586,94 to €1.173,88).

The fines are imposed in favour of G.N.T.O. and are collected according to the provisions of the Code of Collecting Public Income.

b) Provisional suspension of the operating license for a time period of up to three (3) months, by decision of the Secretary - General of G.N.T.O., in case of a third violation within the same calendar year.

c) Final suspension of the operating license and deletion of the enterprise and its vehicles from the enterprises' registration list, as well as suspension of the circulation license, by decision of the Secretary - General of G.N.T.O., in case the previous sanction has been imposed for two consecutive years.

d) Revocation of the circulation license and removal of the state plates (tourist bus of public use), on written order by the G.N.T.O. to the competent Authority of Vehicular Circulation, in case the enterprise operates without the necessary license (article of 3 Law 2160/1993) and the corresponding registration of the bus to the enterprises' registration list. The return of the plates is possible after the re granting of the operation license.

Also, article 9 of Law 2446/96 stipulates that the circulation license of tourist buses of public use is recalled conclusively by the Ministry of Transports and Communications, by decision of the Secretary - General of G.N.T.O., in the following cases:

a) In the case of suspending the operation license of travel agencies or tourist enterprise of vehicular transport, the circulation license is also suspended, but can be re-granted, provided that the interested party recovers the operation license for the initial enterprise or for one of the two forms of enterprises legalised to execute transportation (travel agencies - tourist enterprises of transportation by coach)

b) If, at the annual inspection, the bus is considered inappropriate for safe circulation.

c) As soon as the bus's age limit is reached.

d) In case it is auctioned. In any case the bus is obligatorily revoked as merchandise, the previous holder, in whose name the circulation license had been approved, can ask for its replacement within one year from the day of the obligatory revocation. If the deadline passes, the right to substitute the bus can no longer be exercised.

Law 2636/98 (gov. gazette 198/A) concerning the constitution of companies for the organisation of artistic events and for the management of G.N.T.O.'s fortune, the constitution of the National Tourism Council and modifications of legislation on tourism,

in article 27, par. 2, imposes fines to whoever prompts and harasses in any way a person or a team of people to accept or reject a travel or transport service, services of dining or entertainment or tourist lodging or products of commercial shops.

The fine, from 200.000 Drs to 1.000.000 Drs (from €586,94 to €2.934,7), is imposed by decision of the Secretary - General of G.N.T.O. on each violation, depending on its importance. In case of relapse, the maximum fine limit is doubled. The same is valid also for whoever, without a license to exercise the specific profession, deals with a person or a team of people or negotiates or intervenes, with the aim of directing clientele to the above mentioned services or shops.

Law 2741/1999 (gov. gazette 199/A), concerning the Single Institution of Control of Foods, regulation of matters in the competence of the Ministry of Development and other provisions, provides the possibility of closing down a lodging, in case it operates without the necessary operating license. According to the above mentioned law, tourist enterprises of any category and form, operating without the stipulated by the provisions of law license, because it expired, was suspended or revoked, or because they were never granted a license, can be closed down, after a decision of the G.N.T.O., by its competent bodies with the assistance of police authorities.

Ministerial decision no *OIK. A-48191/3257/2000* (gov. gazette 1026/B) on technical specifications of tourist trains, preconditions of type approval, specialisation of the criteria determining the geographic circulation regions, preconditions and classification supporting documents and other details, in article 9, as this was reformed by ministerial decision no *T/7149* (gov. gazette B/931/23-7-2002), stipulates for those who don't observe its provisions the following sanctions:

- a) Fine of € 293.
- b) Double fine, that is to say € 586, in case of first relapse within two years.
- c) Suspension of the circulation license and the tourist trains' plates for a time period of 15 days, in case of second relapse within two years
- d) Suspension of the circulation license and the tourist trains' plates for a time period of six months, in case of a third relapse or more relapses.

In case the tourist legislation is violated, the sanctions provided in par. 6 of article 30 of Law 2636/98 are imposed (they are the ones mentioned above).

Finally, if the train is not supplied with the necessary bulletin of technical control, besides the other provided sanctions, the suspension of the license and plates is stipulated (as was also the case according to the decision 15463/1335/1993). They are returned after a bulletin of technical control in force is presented.

CONCLUSION

After the research, in a diachronic basis, of the framework of sanctions that the public administration of tourism applies, one reaches the conclusion that the tourist sanction-imposing system is scattered in various statutes. These are modified and supplemented, aiming at improving the operation of tourist enterprises and also aiming at

further tourism development. Moreover, one can observe an abundance of Ministerial Decisions and decisions of the Secretary - General of G.N.T.O. (published under authorisation of law) framing the sanction-imposing system, as these modify the fines and often "transfer" sanctions from a form of tourist enterprise to another.

Thus, a discrepancy between violation of the law and sanction is caused, and in general confusion is created for the citizen, influencing negatively the relations of public administration of tourism and tourist entrepreneurship, with unwanted impact to the consumers of the tourist product.

Potentially, in the modern socio-economic environment of tourism, the updating of administrative sanctions in correlation to the type of violation and depending on the form of tourist enterprise, as well as the coding of the sanction-imposing system of tourism, could contribute positively to the creation of a suitable climate in the relations of the state with tourist entrepreneurship, aiming at the further tourism development of the country.

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A STUDY ON THE TOUR PACKAGE CHOICE ATTRIBUTE BY LIFE STYLE -BASED ON JEJU BOUND JAPANESE TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT

Although the economic crisis due to the world-wide slump in financial economy recently, the strong yen against Korean won has caused more Japanese tourists to visit Korea. Such increased number of tourists, however, seems only temporary success as the fall of exchange rate of the Korean won against the Japanese yen. Under this circumstance, the aim of this study is to identify the changes in life style of tourists and features of tour package choice behaviors for Japanese tourists by reviewing previous studies on life style and tour package choice behavior. There by setting the market positioning of Jeju tourism and offering developing methods for tour packages and basic materials for marketing of tour package markets. Through the result of research, it is possible to develop practical strategies for consumer-oriented marketing by using the life-style as a psychological variable.

KEYWORDS: Attribute, Life Style, Tour

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the economic crisis due to the world-wide slump in financial economy has led to the decrease in import and export market and surge in oil price in Korea. In the meantime, surging exchange rate, especially, the strong yen against Korean won has caused more Japanese tourists to visit Korea.

According to 'the Statistics on Korea Immigration in 2008' released by the Ministry of Justice, the number of foreign visitors was around 6.823 million which was up to 6.2% comparing with the previous year and among visitors, the number of Japanese was 2.37 millions, accounting for about 40%(the Ministry of Justice, 2009). Keeping pace with the high exchange rate in won- yen, so as to attract more Japanese tourists who have affected significantly Korea's tourism industry and its overall trend of inbound visitors, the Korea Tourism Organization and the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism had launched an exchange rate marketing campaign and developed special tour packages for visitors to Korea, ascertaining their continual efforts in tourism marketing in the year of 2009(the KTO, 2009).

Such increased number of tourists, however, seems only temporary success due to the dramatic fall of exchange rate of the Korean won against the Japanese yen, so those efforts are insufficient enough to draw more Japanese visitors in the long term. In fact, since last August of 2008 when economic downturn deepened, the number of Japanese tourists as well as other foreign visitors at Jeju Island has decreased for the consecutive four months (The Jeju Tourism Organization, 2008). The reason for such decrease in the number of Japanese tourists can be found in various aspects but, basically, it's because Jeju tour packages are short of tourist's expectations for package contents and services and don't meet the demands of them.

In order for Jeju to draw Japanese tourists as well as other foreign tourists continually, it is crucial to measure tourists' personal inclination and psychological change, thereby developing and preserving tourist facilities and resources which fit tourists' various tastes and it is a good time for Jeju to introduce the special marketing skills which can fully identify visitors' characteristics thereby designing and selling the tour packages dependent on those identified ones.

Many researchers have studied a lot using psychological factors such as perception, attitude, personality, personal value, and life style (Muller, 1991 ; Madrigal & Kahle, 1994 ; Zins, 1998). Of them, it is the study on life style that can give broader view on the psychological behavioral features, life patterns, and preferences of tourists (Kim, Seo & Lee, 2008). Therefore, it is urgent to develop tour packages by exactly identifying changing life style of Japanese tourists. The aim of this study is to identify the changes in life style of tourists and features of tour package choice behaviors for Japanese tourists by reviewing previous studies on life style and tour package choice behavior. There by setting the market positioning of Jeju tourism and offering developing methods for tour packages and basic materials for marketing of tour package markets.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Life Style

Since the early 1960s, the concept of life style has been studied vigorously by researchers such as Lazer (1963), and until now the study on life style has been proceeding in the field of marketing and consumer behaviors in the United States. Life style can be used as a standard of market segmentation and helpful in terms of the management of marketing because it is the strong explanatory variable which can describe the contextual effects of individual participation in comprehensive and explicit way and even the implicit habitual behaviors with persistency and consistency (Shin, 2000).

Before the life style concept was introduced into the survey of travel market, most studies using demographical characteristics had been confined to such factors as age, income, education background, and gender. But these days, when consumers show various consciousness and their behavioral patterns radically change, the old method is difficult to be applied to the broaden and diverse changes of travel markets. So, the demand for the new method has arisen in order to get proper information about travelers and the alternative way is the introduction of life style concept into the market research.(James, Engel & Blackwell, 1990). What makes life style important in tourism marketing is that the analysis on life style can clarify what's different between the boundaries of tour markets, leading to the understanding of tourists' behavioral patterns. But, life style is not fixed one and changeable depending on tourists' value, belief,

attitude, and social circumstances(Duncan, 1996), requiring occasional analysis on the life style of targeted tourists for the effective marketing(Lee, 2005).

Because of this importance of life style, by using the structure of life style and personal value, some researchers have made attempts to provide the possibility to segment markets between tourists and potential tourists (Johar & Sirgy, 1995). The study of Abbey (1979) on life style showed that life style profiling was far more useful in finding out the preferences of travelers than demographical characteristics conducted through positive analysis. Studies on life style have been done a lot in Korea. Some(Lee • Yang, 2000 ; Lee, 2005) suggested tour package choice behaviors of Korean outbound tourists are segmented by their life style and some researchers(Kim • Lee, 2000 ; Lee • Shin, 2004) segmented the markets of senior tourists by analyzing their life style. Others(Jeon • Park, 2001; Lee, 2005 : Beak • Seok, 2007) found out that life style affected significantly on restaurant choice attributes related to dining industry. As shown above, it's really crucial to study life style in terms of tourists' decision making and behaviors as life style has a great effect on consumers' behaviors and purchasing of products and services, Although life style is acquired and affected by an individual's culture, social class, reference group, and family, it is specifically derived from an individual's internalized value system and personality and possibly affects on the behaviors of tourists(Lee • Yang, 2000).

Life style reflects all sorts of consuming patterns of foreign tourists and affects tour package for them. Therefore, by sorting out life style and identifying tour package choice attributes, it will be possible to provide segmented features by each type of life style. Such attempts to understand segmented market by life style make it easier to find out the new methods of developing tour packages and offer helpful materials for reducing foreign tourists' dissatisfaction.

Tour Package Choice Attribute

In studying choice behavior on tour package by tourists, it is recognized that the attributes of tour package are regarded as important criteria for purchasing decision, but previous related literatures failed to provide the obvious relationship between purchasing intention and behaviors (Park, 2006). That is possibly because the circumstances or situations which happen at the place and point of time that tourists purchase a tour package can alter their original purchasing intentions. With the limitation to explain such tourists' behavior changes, some attempts have been made to look into the reason of the problem and to examine situational effects on purchasing action (Belk, 1975).

Three important influential factors which affect consumers' product selection behaviors in the decision making process are personal, social and psychological influence. Personal influences are related to a demographical factor and a situational factor, and social influences include family's influence, social class, culture and subculture etc, and psychological influences involve perception element, motivation, attitude and personality etc (Pride & Ferrell, 1985). These factors indicate that consumers' purchasing behaviors vary depending on the circumstances and situations which happen at the point of time and place when selecting products even if each of consumer is different personally, socially, culturally, and psychologically.

There have been various studies on tour package choice attributes done by researchers. When it comes to foreign studies, Thomson & Pearce (1980) tried to classify tour markets by transportation based on foreign visitors to New Zealand and segmented choice factors. Kale, McIntyre & Weir (1987) studied on tour package choice attribute for young tourists, suggesting they preferred tour package which offered more free time,

flexible itinerary, accessibility to local culture, and splendid natural scenery. Stovall (1992) studied on key items when tourists chose a tour package. As domestic studies, Park Jung Min(2006) studied on the difference between outbound tour package choices by classifying the attributes of tour packages, and Yang Dong Kuk(2000) found out in his study that female tourists put more importance on attractiveness of tourist sites and peculiar sightseeing experience than their counterpart and tourists in their 40s considered tour agency's credibility important and those in 50s thought highly of cleanliness of tourist spot and prices. Meanwhile, there have been a number of researches on choice attributes of similar hospitality industry, especially hotel choice attributes. Gong Ki Yeul(2003) studied on the difference in hotel choice attributes by Japanese tourists' personal value. Ko Ho Seok(2005) examined the tourist life style and tour package choice behavior of Korean overseas travelers and classified life style factors into five types - active thinking type, open-minded type, culture activity-oriented type, tradition-oriented type, and pleasure-seeking type and drew tour package choice behaviors, dividing them into four factors - tourist activities, facilities, tour packages, and staff services, concluding that all the factors affected one another meaningfully.

Therefore, this study set up the hypothesis that there would be significant difference in tour package choice attributes dependent upon tourists' different lifestyle.

METHODOLOGY

Questionnaire & Data Collection

The questionnaire was made based on previous literature reviews, and after developing it. The final questionnaire included total 49 items - 10 items for demographic characteristics of respondents, 15 items for their life-style and 24 items related to tour package choice attributes. A total of 650 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to Japanese tourists who departed at the Jeju International Airport from December 8th to 27th in 2008. Among them, 617 questionnaires were valid and employed for analysis. In order to verify study model and hypothesis, SPSS 12.0 & WIN statistical program was utilized for factor analysis, cluster analysis, discriminant analysis and ANOVA.

Hypothesis

The objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between Japanese tourists' life style and tour package choice attribute. On some previous literatures, the study of Yoon(2001) showed that purchasing and purchasing behavior of outbound tour package affect significantly marketing strategies by type of life style, and Shin(2000) indicated the difference of tour package choice attribute on Korean outbound travelers by classifying life style. This study created questionnaire items on life style and choice attribute from the research of Yoon(2001), Shin(2000) and Stovall(1992). In order to find Japanese tourists' tour package choice attribute, this research set the hypothesis based on the literature reviews.

There would be significant differences in tour package choice attribute depending upon Japanese tourists' life style.

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS

General Features of Sample

Table 1 below reported demographical features of respondents drawn from 617 questionnaires which were used in the final analysis.

Table1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample

<i>Classification</i>		<i>Persons</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Classification</i>		<i>Persons</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	male	279	45.2	Marital Status	married	465	75.4
	female	338	54.8		single	146	24.6
Age	less than 30s	88	14.3	Level of Income	less than 1million yen	98	15.9
	30s	106	17.2		1-2million yen	38	6.2
	40s	81	13.1		2.01-3million yen	99	16.0
	50s	199	32.3		3.01-4million yen	115	18.6
	over 60s	142	23.0		4.01-5 million yen	127	20.6
					over 5.01 million yen	140	22.7
Education Background	more than graduate	37	6.0	Duration of Staying	one night and two days	16	2.6
	college graduate	336	54.5		two nights and three days	526	85.3
	undergraduate	31	5.0		three nights and four days	72	11.7
	below high school graduate	213	34.5		four nights and five days	1	0.2
Type of Tour	full package through tour agency	445	72.1	Airport of Departure	five nights and six days	2	0.3
	airtel through tour agency	134	21.7		Narita	162	26.3
	accommodation & rent-a-car through agency	1	0.2		Fukuoka	152	24.6
	individual tour	4	0.6		Kansai	152	24.6
	group tour without tour agency	6	1.0		Central	90	14.6
	airtel through airline	4	0.6		Nagoya	60	9.7
	others	23	3.8		Haneda	1	0.2
Total		617	100	Total		617	100

The verification of Reliability and Validity

Table2 The Analysis of Reliability & Validity of Life-style

Factors	Variables	Components			Communalities	Cronbach's alpha if item deleted	Cronbach's alpha
		1	2	3			
Progression & fulfillment seeker	enjoying knowledge acquirement	.885	.223	.123	.849	.862	.903
	enjoying observation and thinking	.863	.251	.174	.838	.860	
	interested in self advantage	.791	.302	.231	.769	.874	
	praising value in choosing products	.661	.363	.339	.684	.900	
Conservation & tradition seeker	having leadership within group	.198	.805	.126	.704	.823	.856
	respecting order	.397	.769	.098	.734	.796	
	praising influence on others	.162	.765	.348	.759	.818	
	putting priority on life by principle	.315	.732	.143	.655	.828	
Efficiency & rationality seeker	being considerate with others	.228	.183	.896	.889	-	.645
	valuing efficiency in exchange	.408	.456	.512	.637	-	
Eigenvalue		5.689	1.094	.735			
% of Variance		56.888	10.936	7.354			
Cumulative %		56.888	67.824	75.178			
KMO=. 899 Bartlett's test of sphericity approximate $\chi^2=2801.271$ p-value =.000							

Table3 The Analysis of Reliability & Validity of Tour Package Choice Attribute

<i>Factors</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Component</i>				<i>Communalities</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha if item deleted</i>	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>
		<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>			
price and quality	price of tour package	.858	.142	.085	.141	.784	.895	.917
	air fare	.810	.078	.041	.110	.675	.906	
	reasonability of package price	.790	.200	.132	.201	.723	.899	
	hotel rates	.776	.099	.168	.104	.652	.906	
	ease of getting	.764	.127	.042	.174	.632	.907	

	price information							
	eating price	.744	.216	.233	.055	.658	.906	
	quality for price	.740	.162	.142	.117	.608	.908	
attractiveness and convenience	accessibility of tourist spot	.144	.815	.192	.195	.760	.826	.871
	convenience of tourist spot	.238	.776	.084	.302	.758	.832	
	safety of airliner	.198	.734	.265	.192	.685	.837	
	attractiveness of tourist site	.172	.650	.266	.165	.617	.862	
accommodation and its quality	natural scenery and environment	.170	.631	.408	.151	.550	.849	.848
	cleanliness of accommodation	.189	.233	.835	.062	.790	.771	
	staffs" kindness and service quality	.118	.229	.771	.095	.669	.816	
	image of hotel	.149	.138	.769	.203	.674	.824	
	convenience of hotel facilities	.132	.413	.651	.197	.650	.810	
diversity of experience	special cultural experience	.122	.212	.077	.807	.716	.731	.810
	diversity of night tour	.170	.133	.083	.757	.627	.772	
	diversity of entertainment	.274	.254	.124	.722	.676	.739	
	convenience of shopping	.108	.206	.265	.668	.571	.782	
Eigenvalue		8.132	2.626	1.613	1.103			
% of Variance		40.659	13.132	8.066	5.516			
Cumulative %		40.659	53.790	61.857	67.373			
KMO=. 901 Bartlett's test of sphericity approximate $\chi^2=5361.154$ p-value =.000								

The Verification of Hypothesis

Table4 The Cluster Analysis & Discriminant Analysis of Life-style

cluster analysis	<i>life-style</i>	<i>Progression & fulfillment seeker</i>	<i>Conservation & tradition seeker</i>	<i>efficiency & rationality seeker</i>
	<i>cluster</i>			
	cluster 1 (n=150) : fulfillment & conservation	4.07	3.13	2.84

	group cluster 2 (n=238) : fulfillment & tradition group cluster 3 (n=192) : rationality & fulfillment group	3.13	3.09	2.83
	F-value (Prob.)	383.635	129.057	353.337
discriminant analysis	expected cluster actual cluster	cluster 1(%)	cluster 2(%)	cluster 3(%)
	cluster 1	149(99.3)	0(0)	1(0.7)
	cluster 2	5(2.1)	233(97.9)	0(0)
	cluster 3	2(1.0)	0(0)	190(99.0)

Table5 The Verification of Difference in Tour Package Choice Attribute by Life-style through Cluster Analysis

Classification		N of sample	Means	Standard deviation	F-value	P-value
price and quality	Fulfillment & conservation group	147	3.3848(b)	.43331	17.585	.000***
	fulfillment & tradition group	232	3.2629(c)	.57167		
	rationality & fulfillment group	186	3.5760(a)	.56637		
attractiveness and convenience	fulfillment & conservation group	147	3.5959(a)	.41576	5.790	.003**
	fulfillment & tradition group	235	3.4826(b)	.55639		
	rationality & fulfillment group	189	3.6561(a)	.58349		
accommodation and its quality	fulfillment & conservation group	148	3.7618(a)	.48122	14.232	.000***
	fulfillment & tradition group	231	3.4405(c)	.59388		
	rationality & fulfillment group	191	3.5995(b)	.62084		
diversity of experience	fulfillment & conservation group	146	2.9983(b)	.51402	4.139	.016
	fulfillment & tradition group	229	3.1179(ab)	.54989		

	rationality & fulfillment group	180	3.1875(a)	.69810		
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1) * $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.001$

2) Duncan's multiple comparison was employed for post hoc analysis (the formation of each subgroup ($a > b > c$) was shown meaningfully different within 5% of level of significance)

CONCLUSION

This study intended to find out tourists' behavior psychology when they chose tour packages and among various variables. The influence of life-style on tour package choice attribute was examined by cluster analysis, and ascertained whether there was considerable difference in each cluster, especially targeting for Japanese tourists who visited Jeju. Consequently, this study is suggesting useful implications to help attracting more Japanese tourists to Korea and Jeju.

When it comes to the results of the analysis, first of all, three factors were identified as ones related to Japanese tourists' life-style. Each factor was progression & fulfillment seeker, conservation & tradition seeker, and efficiency & rationality seeker were labeled based on the study done by Ko (2005). The result of factor analysis on tour package choice attribute reported that tourists considered price and quality, attractiveness and convenience, accommodation and its quality, and diversity of tour experience as key factors when they pick up tour packages. Such results were similar to those of the previous study of the influence of the properties and distinctive features of tourist destinations on tourists' choice conducted by Yim, Ahn, Ha & Bak (2005) which confirmed Japanese tourists preferred the convenient transportation, attractiveness, and excitement among the properties of tourist sites, implying that those results could be beneficial in designing marketing strategies on tour package for Japanese travelers to Jeju.

Through the cluster analysis on life-style, the differences among tour package choice attribute were analyzed and as the result, rationality & fulfillment cluster showed higher mean value than the fulfillment & tradition cluster and the fulfillment & conservation cluster, suggesting the needs of the strategies for designing tour package for those cluster. As for attractiveness and convenience of tour package and accommodation and its quality, the fulfillment & conservation cluster had higher mean value than the others, so it is needed to establish measures aiming at this cluster.

This study found out the life-style of tourists affected significantly the tour package choice attribute and therefore, by using the life-style as a psychological variable, it is possible to develop practical strategies for consumer-oriented marketing. To satisfy tourists in tourism industry means to create more new customers by word of mouth and satisfying the new customer will guarantee constant profit without spending additional marketing costs by making tourists revisit and further reduce other expenses resulted from customers' dissatisfaction such as compensation costs.

In this regard, if the type of tourists who choose a tour package or tourist destination by their life-style can be segmented by tour cost, type, and level of income, it will be easier to develop more specific tour marketing. As strategic ways, for Japanese

tourists who visit Jeju, it is a perfect strategy to develop the ecotourism which introduces Jeju World Natural Heritage sites and offers tour packages for couple. The survey on demographic statistics showed the age of Japanese visitors who came to Jeju was higher, so the tour package which can offer cultural experience can be designed for seniors and female tourists who mostly decided which package to choose while making manuals for such programs and activating promotion. If these strategies can be utilized properly, it will be possible to design the new tour package which meets the demands of tourists and contribute to developing effective positioning strategies.

Based on the previous study on Japanese tourists(Han Yu Seok .Kim Seon Hee . Yoon Jae Hong,2007), so as to make tourists revisit Jeju, it is necessary to develop and foster the home-stay programs which can offer cultural experience by staying with Jeju islanders and take steps to expand the international exchange projects such as a foreign travel business, youth international exchange programs, foreign family supporting projects, international exchange projects of local government or school, supporting programs for volunteering translators and interpreters for international exchange events, and foreign language education supporting programs by local governments and schools.

Finally, this study was implemented by targeting only on Japanese tourists who visited Jeju not Korea within a short period of time. Therefore, it could not represent the characteristics of all Japanese tourists. In other word, it had such a limitation that it did not survey Japanese tourists in wider areas and longer period. It also drew smaller factors on life style related to previous researches in comparison of the number of sample and additional surveys on tour package choice and satisfaction, revisiting, and intention of recommendation were insufficient, indicating that further studies on those factors will surely lead to better results.

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DEMOGRAPHIC AND PSYCHOGRAPHIC SEGMENTATION AS TOOLS IN THE CHALLENGE OF HOSPITALITY MINORITY RECRUITMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research paper reports the findings of a survey of 2,300 hospitality majors at the University of Central Florida's Rosen College of Hospitality Management conducted in September 2008. A total of 443 students completed the survey, the objective of which was to develop demographic and psychographic segment characteristics of hospitality students. To determine if such demographic and psychographic differences exist between Caucasian and non-Caucasian (minority) students and to develop recruiting initiatives that might be sensitive to the research findings.

Variations in the demographic characteristics were reported, but were not statistically significant. Variations in household income and parents' educational attainment were evident between the two racial groups.

Both racial groups indicate a reliance on the internet and on-site visits for obtaining information about the hospitality program. Proportionally more minority students come to the hospitality program from other majors, predominantly the business program. This suggests an enhanced internet presence and the dissemination of information about the hospitality program internal to the university, especially in the business school.

Several areas for future research were indicated, including the comparison of demographic and psychographic characteristics with other hospitality programs in the USA; as well as a comparison of characteristics of Asian, African American and Hispanic/Latino hospitality students.

KEYWORDS: Caucasian, Minority, Non-Caucasian

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University of Central Florida (UCF) was established as the Florida Technological University by Bill 125 of 1963 to support of the Cape Kennedy Space complex. The first classes were held in 1968 at the Orlando campus, as well as at the Brevard and Daytona Beach centers. But in 1978 a wider education mandate was ratified by the State of Florida's Legislature. As part of the 10 state university system, UCF has an 11 county service area which in 2006 had a population of 3.7 million persons (Census.gov, 2008).

Hospitality in Central Florida assumed new dimensions with the opening of the Walt Disney World in 1971 and by 1984 the UCF initiated its hospitality program in the College of Business. Almost as a reflection of the importance of the vital role of hospitality to the Central Florida economy, the Rosen College of Hospitality Management commenced operation in 2004.

Florida's State University system dates from 1905 and the Buckman Act which created the existing state university system. The mandate of the state system is to support education and development in each college's catchment area. As such it is only to be expected that the ethnic composition of the population of these catchment areas be somewhat reflected in the ethnic composition of the university's student body. Minorities represent 24% of the 11 county catchment area's population. Orange County, where Orlando and the UCF main campus are located, is the largest population center with 1.043 million persons, and reports a minority population of 45% (21% Black and 24% Hispanic/Latino) (Census.gov). As of Fall 2007 the University of Central Florida remained predominantly white non-Hispanic, with 69.3% of its 48,699 enrolled students being Caucasian and 95% of its students having Florida residency status (UCFOIR, 2009). This at a time when the Hispanic/Latino and African American populations are increasing significantly, with growth rates of the former that are some of the highest in the state (Wright and Jasinski, 2006).

In 2005, the most recent year for which college disaggregated data is publicly available, it was indicated that Black and Hispanic/Latino enrollment for the Rosen College of Hospitality Management was below the average for UCF. For the purpose of this paper all non-Caucasians are referred to as minority. In 2005 UCF reported minority enrollment of 21.4%, while the Rosen College of Hospitality Management in that year reported minority enrollment of 17.1%. Other Colleges such as the College of Health and Public Administration reported minority enrollment of 27.5%.

With the growth in the minority population in the 11 county catchment area and the pivotal role of hospitality to the economy of Central Florida, why are minorities under-represented in the UCF Rosen College of Hospitality Management program?

THOUGHTS FROM THE LITERATURE

Anecdotal evidence suggests that minorities, especially African Americans, have a historical bias against the hospitality industry. Such bias is reportedly shaped by the history of African enslavement (Faulkenberry et. at. 2000) and where minorities are involved in the hospitality industry, they tend to be employed in the areas of housekeeping and maintenance. This assertion is most certainly worthy of investigation if for no other reason than to develop a scientific understanding of the nature of the challenge and to develop strategies to address such inclusion. Costen, Cliath and Woods (2002) in their study of 5,549 hotel managers in 552 properties found that minorities predominated in the housekeeping department and were least evident as General Managers, and Sales and Marketing Managers. This brings to the fore the question of whether there are issues of a lack of motivation on the part of minorities or whether there are institutional and organizational barriers to minority inclusion as was suggested by Allison and Hibbler (2002) and Shinew and Hibbler (2002). Makopondo (2006) suggests that creating racial and ethnic inclusions derives from creating partnerships and among other things, the establishment of genuine partnerships between key representatives of partner agencies and organizations (p.8).

Bradford and Williams (2008) in their study of African Americans and their perception of the hospitality industry indicates that students with positive views of the industry were more aware of the opportunities in the industry (p.7). This supports the O-Force and Rosen School of Hospitality Management Report (2003) which indicated that not only were positive views evident with regard to the hospitality industry, but it also indicated that high school counselors are a major influence in shaping such positive views and by extension the decision to embark on careers in hospitality. However, based on Bradford and Williams (2008), hospitality's association, and the perception of servitude still exists, especially where there is a lack on knowledge about opportunities, and especially management opportunities available in the industry. This is set against a background of work by Faulkenberry et al (2000) which indicates the disparities associated with tourism development in South Carolina and its association with servitude.

In summary, racial disparities exist. The dissemination of information about the opportunities; the creation of alliances and partnership; and through the collaboration with, and cooperation of high school counselors, such disparities might be addressed. In an effort to facilitate minority recruiting a consideration addressed by this research project is whether the demographic and lifestyle characteristics of minority students differ significantly from Caucasian students? Based such an assessment is there sufficient data to support on-going minority hospitality student recruitment initiatives? Although an examination of variations in student motivations and constraints might have been merited such research might better be conducted in focus groups and it is proposed that such be conducted as a subsequent phase to this research project.

METHODOLOGY

Goeldner and Ritchie (2009) in their discussion of tourism and market segmentation state that people are different; that these differences are measurable and comprehensible; that such differences manifest themselves in market behaviour which can be objectively measured resulting in relatively homogeneous groups of people. This is the underlying belief associated with market segmentation. To determine the target market and then attempt to reach only that market (p. 553). Although market segmentation and the associated use of demographic and psychographic segmentation has widespread application (Thomas, 2007) and has been used in hospitality and tourism marketing, there is little evidence to indicate its use in hospitality education recruiting.

This research project conducted an electronic survey of the 2,300 hospitality undergraduate students of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management in the Fall 2008. The objective was to document the demographic and psychographic characteristics of the hospitality undergraduate student population and then to determine if the minority student population varied significantly from that of the Caucasian population. The 18 question survey was divided into 6 parts and was conducted September 5 to 25, 2008.

Email is an official method of UCF communication and all students have an official email contact. Three email messages were sent to the full database of Rosen College undergraduate students. The first was an introduction to the survey; the second was a follow-up which was sent one week later and the third was a reminder sent one week before the closing of the survey. All emails contained a link to the survey and under the informed consent conditions students under the age of 18 were advised to self-select out of the survey. The electronic survey was delivered using Survey Monkey. The six parts of the questionnaire were as follows:

- Part 1: Demographic characteristics
- Part 2: Information about the hospitality major selection process
- Part 3: Lifestyle characteristics – sporting interests
- Part 4: Lifestyle characteristics – activities
- Part 5: Avocation, and
- Part 6: Educational path to hospitality

A total of 443 students completed the survey, a 19.3% response rate. This was considered to be an acceptable response. The section of the paper which follows presents data on the respondents': demographic characteristics; information about the hospitality major selection process; lifestyle characteristics – sporting interests and activities; and educational path to hospitality. A comparison is made between Caucasian and non-Caucasian (minority) respondents and these data are analyzed statistically were appropriate.

FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 443 respondents to the survey, 417 indicated a racial or ethnic group. Seventy eight percent were Caucasian and the remaining 22% were non-Caucasian. This

was a ratio of 3.58 Caucasians to 1 minority respondent. The survey's ratio was more comparable with that of the overall UCF ratio of 3.51:1, than that of the Rosen College of Hospitality Management's ratio of 4.55 Caucasian students to 1 minority student. Several reasons have been suggested for the response rate by minorities. These include the increased presence and visibility of minority faculty and minority students feeling more comfortable in participating in the research as well as the increased activity by the Rosen Chapter of National Society of Minorities in Hospitality.

Demographic Characteristics

Gender, age, income, type and value of housing, and education level are common demographic variables (Thomas, 2007). In this paper the demographic variables used are gender, age, University program level, household income and highest level of education attained by parents.

Table 1 indicates that the overall gender ratio of females to males for respondents was 3.21 females to 1 male. While there was a ratio of 3.29 females to 1 male for the Caucasian respondents the gender ratio for minority respondents was 2.96 females to 1 male, lower than that of the total survey and that of the Caucasian respondents.

TABLE 1: Respondents by Gender and Race

GENDER	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	Total Available	%
Female	250	76.7	68	74.7	318	76.3
Male	76	23.3	23	25.3	99	23.7
TOTAL	326	100.0	91	100.0	417	100.0

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

Although there was a variation on the basis of gender for the different populations, Chi square statistical test confirms that there is no significant statistical difference between the Caucasian and minority respondents in the survey on the basis of gender ($\chi^2 = 0.145$ at 3 degrees of freedom at the 95% confidence level).

The UCF Office of Institutional Research (UCFOIR), 2008 indicates that overall for UCF the gender ratio is 1.23 females to 1 male, and for UCF's undergraduate level, the ratio was 1.21 females to 1 male. This suggests that the gender ratio of the survey was comparable with that of the Rosen College. Both the gender ratio for survey respondents and that of the Rosen College indicate a higher level of female enrollment than overall for UCF. This pattern of female Caucasian predominance is in keeping with the restaurant industry (National Restaurant Association, 2009) which indicated that in 2007, 57% of first line supervisors/Managers and service workers in the restaurant industry were female and that the 30% were either Hispanic or African American.

The age pattern of the respondents seemed consistent across both racial groups. Overall the largest percentage of respondents was between the ages of 18 to 20 years old,

49% for the overall study, 49% for the Caucasian respondents and 48.9% for the minority respondents. Of interest was the 9.8% of the minority respondents who were in the 26 to 30 years of age range.

TABLE 2: Respondents by Age Range and Race

AGE RANGE	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
18-20	161	49.4	45	48.9	206	49.4
21-23	129	38.1	30	32.6	159	38.1
24-25	18	5.3	4	4.3	22	5.3
26-30	13	5.3	9	9.8	22	5.3
>31	4	1.9	4	4.3	8	1.9
TOTAL	325	100.0	92	100.0	417	100.0

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

The variation on the basis of age for the different populations was again not statistically significant, ($X^2 = 9.35$ at 4 degrees of freedom at the 95% confidence level).

There is no comparable data overall for UCF or the Rosen College to indicate whether the survey's findings are comparable with the age distribution of the institution. Further investigation might well be merited to assess whether there is indeed an "older/non-traditional" cadre of minority students who are coming into the hospitality program having either first attended community college, transferred from another major or, returned to college after a break.

Most of the respondents (71.6%) were Juniors or Seniors (see TABLE 3). This distribution did not vary significantly between Caucasian and non-Caucasian respondents ($X^2=3.11$ with 3 degrees of freedom). Overall the 2008 UCF enrollment 66% of students were either Juniors or Seniors. Although Freshman represented 12.9% of the survey respondents, this category represented 17.0% of the 2008 UCF student body.

TABLE 3: University Program Year by Race

	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
Freshman	42	12.9	12	12.9	54	12.9
Sophomore	49	15.0	16	17.2	65	15.5
Junior	113	34.7	39	41.9	152	36.3
Senior	122	37.4	26	28.0	148	35.3
TOTAL	326	100.0	93	100.0	419	100.0

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

What is evident from the data to this point is that there are similarities in demographic characteristics suggesting that overall, both Caucasian and Non-Caucasian students might be drawn from similar populations.

While it is acknowledged that students may not have accurate data on their parents' income, given that student funding opportunities do require that they report this household income, the estimates reported in this survey may not be a totally inaccurate. Another consideration is whether the respondent is reporting their parents' income along with their own or whether they are part of their own family and reporting that household income only.

The median category, 19.2% of respondents was, \$70,000 to \$99,000. What is evident from Table 4 is that while 62.5% of Caucasian students were from households where the total estimated household income was more than \$70,000, the percentage of minority students from households with similar income was 39.6%. In addition proportionally twice as many minority students as Caucasian students came from households where the income was in the range of \$20,000 to \$39,000. Minority students come from households where income is lower than their Caucasian counterparts.

TABLE 4: Respondents Estimated Household Income by Ethnicity						
HOUSEHOLD INCOME	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
Less than \$10,000	15	4.9	7	8.1	22	5.6
\$10,000-\$14,000	9	2.9	2	2.3	11	2.6
\$15,000-\$19,999	8	2.6	5	5.8	13	3.3
\$20,000-\$29,000	11	3.6	11	12.8	22	5.6
\$30,000-\$39,000	26	8.4	10	11.6	36	9.1
\$40,000-\$49,000	11	3.6	4	4.7	15	3.8
\$50,000-\$59,000	13	4.2	8	9.3	21	5.3
\$60,000-\$69,000	23	7.4	5	5.8	28	7.1
\$70,000-\$99,000	62	20.1	14	16.3	76	19.2
\$100,000-\$149,000	62	20.1	9	10.5	71	18.0
\$150,000-\$199,000	30	9.7	5	5.8	35	8.9
\$200,000-\$249,999	8	2.6	1	1.2	9	2.3
\$250,000 or more	31	10.0	5	5.8	36	9.1
TOTAL	309	100.0	86	100.0	395	100.0

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

What this might indicate is that minority students come from two different segments with regard to household income. Additional research is indicated to determine if there are significant differences between African American students and Hispanic-Latino students' household incomes.

Approximately 25% of respondents were the first member of their family to attend college. This proportion was higher for minority students (33.3%) compared with 22.2% for Caucasian students (See Table 5). A family tradition of college education suggests a more supportive environment to the needs of student. In addition there may also be implications for student retention rates and degree completion. This when combined with household income might reflect increased financial stress on minority students.

TABLE 5: First Person in Your Family to go to College						
	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
YES	72	22.2	31	33.7	103	24.7
NO	253	77.8	61	66.3	314	75.3
TOTAL	325	100.0	92	100.0	417	100.0
(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)						

Associated with being the first person in the household to attend college, is the highest level of education attained by parents. Tables 6 and 7 indicate that for both parents, the median category was a College degree, 38% of mothers and 29% of fathers. Overall 23.6% of fathers attained a graduate degree, but the data indicates that fewer minority students had parents who graduated college than their Caucasian counterparts. This has an implication for career and study habit support that can be provided by the family. Such support assists in college completion. At an even more basic level is the financial support available from the students' households.

TABLE 6: What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your MOTHER?						
	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
Grammar school or less	1	0.3	2	2.2	3	0.7
Some high school	3	0.9	8	8.8	11	2.6
High school graduate	51	15.6	18	19.8	69	16.5
Postsecondary school other than college	17	5.2	6	6.6	23	5.5
Some college	69	21.2	22	24.2	91	21.8
College degree	132	40.5	27	29.7	159	38.1
Some graduate school	6	1.8	0	0.0	6	1.4
Graduate degree	47	14.4	8	8.8	55	13.2

TOTAL	326	100.0	91	100.0	417	100.0
(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)						

TABLE 7: What is the highest level of formal education obtained by your FATHER?

	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
Grammar school or less	1	0.3	6	6.7	7	1.7
Some high school	7	2.2	5	5.6	12	2.9
High school graduate	55	17.1	15	16.9	70	17.0
Postsecondary school other than college	22	6.8	2	2.2	24	5.8
Some college	49	15.2	24	27.0	73	17.8
College degree	98	30.4	24	27.0	122	29.7
Some graduate school	4	1.2	2	2.2	6	1.5
Graduate degree	86	26.7	11	12.4	97	23.6
TOTAL	322	100.0	89	100.0	411	100.0
(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)						

In summary, the demographic characteristics of the survey indicate that minority and Caucasian students had similar levels of representation in the survey with regard to gender, age, and program year. Proportionally more minority students came from households with lower income, were the first persons in their families to attend college and where their parents highest level of educational attainment was below that of their Caucasian counterparts. The minority students appear to come from two income groups and merits examination to determine if such variation is between African American and Hispanic Latino student groups.

Information about the hospitality major selection process

The survey asked students to rate the level of importance of each of 14 variables with regard to their importance in their decision to major in hospitality. The Likert scale used ranged from 1 being the least important to 5 being the most. Table 8 indicates the mean weighting for each of the variables.

TABLE 8: Relative importance of each of the following in influencing your decision to major in hospitality
(AVG Rating)

	Caucasian	Non-Caucasian	TOTAL STUDY
Parents	2.59	2.23	2.51
Relatives (other than your parents)	1.93	1.93	1.93
Other family members or family friends	2.04	1.88	2.01
High school counselor	1.39	1.53	1.42
High school teacher	1.62	1.66	1.63
Previous experience working in the industry	3.42	3.10	3.35
High school friends	1.79	1.77	1.78
College/University counselor	2.05	2.21	2.09
Perception of career opportunities	4.06	4.20	4.10
Enjoy working with people	4.43	4.41	4.42
Enjoy the challenge of the hospitality industry	4.16	4.33	4.20
Quality of the Rosen faculty and facilities	3.90	3.91	3.90
Friendliness of Rosen faculty, staff, & students	3.56	3.63	3.58
Other	2.92	2.79	2.90

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

What is indicated is that external variables such as the enjoyment of working with people, the challenge of the hospitality industry and the perception of career opportunities were the highest rated variables. Friends, teachers and the high school counselor were among the lowest rated influencers.

The pattern for obtaining information about the UCF Rosen Hospitality Management program was similar for both Caucasian and minority respondents. This survey segment of 7 questions asked students to rate the level of importance attached to each of the information provision methods. Table 9 presents the average rating.

TABLE 9: How did you obtain information about this program
(AVG Rating)

	Caucasian	Non-Caucasian	TOTAL STUDY
Internet/Website	3.5	3.2	3.4
Friends	2.2	2.3	2.3
College advisor	2.3	2.6	2.3
Newspaper or Magazine Article/Advertisement	1.5	1.6	1.5
Brochure from the Rosen College	2.7	2.8	2.7
Parents/Family	2.2	1.7	2.1
Rosen College campus visit	3.1	3.1	3.1
Talking with current Rosen College students or graduates	2.7	2.5	2.6
Other	1.9	2.2	1.9

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

The information gathering methods indicated by the survey respondents are similar to the patterns so aptly documented with regard to Generation Y (Baron et al, 2007; and Cairncross and Buultjens, 2007). They are technologically savvy and value their own experiences and those of their peers over those of parents and counselors. However, there is an underlying variation that merits discussion. Caucasian students have a higher reliance on Parents and Family as sources of information, possibly because of the higher education levels and higher college graduation rates of their parents. Non-Caucasian students have higher reliance on College Advisors. This suggests that marketing efforts directed toward attracting minority students should include college advisors.

Psychographic Characteristics

“Psychographic (or lifestyle) segmentation [is] based upon multivariate analyses of consumer attitudes, values, behaviors, emotions, perceptions, beliefs, and interests” (Thomas, 2007, 3). For the purpose of this assessment students were asked to indicate their sporting interests (Table 10) and their interests and activities in which they participate (Table 11). Football was the overwhelming sport of interest for both Caucasian and minority respondents. While swimming and diving ranked second for Caucasian students, this sporting activity ranked 7th for minority respondents.

TABLE 10: Sporting Interests by Ethnicity

Sporting Interests	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL	%
Baseball	54	20.6	14	17.1	68	19.8
Basketball	58	22.1	22	26.8	80	23.3
Cheerleading/dance team	63	24.0	26	31.7	89	25.9
Crew/rowing	8	3.1	5	6.1	13	3.8
Cross country	14	5.3	5	6.1	19	5.5
Equestrian	19	7.3	2	2.4	21	6.1
Field Hockey	2	0.8	0	0.0	2	0.6
Football	125	47.7	27	32.9	152	44.2
Golf	42	16.0	11	13.4	53	15.4
Gymnastics	36	13.7	16	19.5	52	15.1
Ice Hockey	27	10.3	2	2.4	29	8.4
Lacrosse	12	4.6	1	1.2	13	3.8
Soccer	63	24.0	27	32.9	90	26.2
Softball	39	14.9	8	9.8	47	13.7
Swimming/Diving	68	26.0	21	25.6	89	25.9
Tennis	62	23.7	20	24.4	82	23.8
Track and Field	24	9.2	15	18.3	39	11.3
Volley Ball	62	23.7	23	28.0	85	24.7
Wrestling	5	1.9	1	1.2	6	1.7
Other Athletics	60	22.9	26	31.7	86	25.0
TOTAL	262		82		344	

(Source: Authors' Fieldwork 2008)

Respondents were asked to identify all the interests and activities in which they enjoy participating on a regular basis. Overall the respondents indicated that their top 5 interests and activities were:

- Listening to records, tapes and C/Ds (60.6% respondents),
- Physical fitness and exercise (60.1% respondents)
- Travel within the USA (59.5% respondents)
- Foreign travel (46.2% respondents) and
- Self-improvement activities (43.6% respondents).

These were also the five activities with the largest level of involvement for both Caucasian and minority respondents. The relative importance was different for the groups. Foreign travel registered the largest amount of Minority interest while this category received the fifth largest number by Caucasian students. Listening to records, tapes and CDs was the largest interest for Caucasian respondents while it received the third largest level of involvement by minority students. What is evident is that overall there is little variation between the sporting and other interests between the different racial and ethnic groups of students. Additional research is merited to determine if such

variation exists between African American and Hispanic Latino students when compared with Caucasian students.

Avocation

Thirty areas of special interest or engagement were identified and presented to the students in the survey. The Honor Society and Community Service were the two areas which attracted the largest number of respondents. There was little variation on the basis of ethnicity.

TABLE 11: Area of Interest and Ethnicity

AVOCATION	Caucasion	%	Non-Caucasion	%	TOTAL	%
Honor Society	181	64.0%	45	54.9%	226	61.9%
Community service	173	61.1%	53	64.6%	226	61.9%
Homecoming, formal, or annual prom	110	38.9%	37	45.1%	147	40.3%
Club sports and intramurals	108	38.2%	31	37.8%	139	38.1%
Hospitality Association	104	36.7%	27	32.9%	131	35.9%
Religious	79	27.9%	22	26.8%	101	27.7%
Student government	76	26.9%	21	25.6%	97	26.6%
Drama/theater	76	26.9%	18	22.0%	94	25.8%
Cultural exchange or study abroad	56	19.8%	27	32.9%	83	22.7%
Foreign language club	53	18.7%	26	31.7%	79	21.6%
Outdoor recreation	59	20.8%	17	20.7%	76	20.8%
Chorus/choir	56	19.8%	16	19.5%	72	19.7%
Eta Sigma Delta Intl. Hospitality Mgmt. Honor Society	50	17.7%	20	24.4%	70	19.2%
Golden Knights Wine Society	50	17.7%	16	19.5%	66	18.1%
Band (including marching band and orchestra)	50	17.7%	15	18.3%	65	17.8%
Yearbook	44	15.5%	13	15.9%	57	15.6%
Business r entrepreneurship	43	15.2%	12	14.6%	55	15.1%
Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA)	29	10.2%	18	22.0%	47	12.9%
Student Cruise Industry Association	32	11.3%	10	12.2%	42	11.5%
School newspaper or magazine	31	11.0%	10	12.2%	41	11.2%
Math or science clubs	27	9.5%	13	15.9%	40	11.0%
Future theme park leaders association	31	11.0%	9	11.0%	40	11.0%
Visual art and design	23	8.1%	13	15.9%	36	9.9%
Hospitality Sales and Management Association (HSMAl)	22	7.8%	11	13.4%	33	9.0%
Debate	21	7.4%	7	8.5%	28	7.7%
National Society of Minorities in Hospitality (NSMH)	5	1.8%	20	24.4%	25	6.8%
National Association of Catering Executives	10	3.5%	11	13.4%	21	5.8%
School radio or television station	13	4.6%	7	8.5%	20	5.5%
Club Managers Association of America	14	4.9%	2	2.4%	16	4.4%
TOTAL	1626		547		2173	

(Source: Authors Fieldwork, 2008)

Journey to Hospitality

For one in three students Hospitality was not their first major (See Table 12). This ratio was higher for minority respondents. Business Administration was the primary major from which hospitality majors transferred. This was evident for both Caucasian and minority respondents, but more so for minority respondents.

TABLE 12: Was hospitality your first major?

	Caucasian	%	Non-Caucasian	%	TOTAL STUDY	%
YES	197	67.0	52	60.5	249	65.5
NO	97	33.0	34	39.5	131	34.5
TOTAL	294		86		380	
(Source: Authors Fieldwork 2008)						

CONCLUSIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This survey indicates that although there are variations in the background of Caucasian and minority students, their avocation and interests are very similar. With regard to recruiting, the survey indicates that students place significant emphasis on the internet and personal experience as sources of information, irrespective of their ethnicity. While conventional newspaper advertising may have served well in the past, consideration should be given to continuing the program of promotions in high schools with counselors, conducting more campus visits and promotional tours, supported by significant internet presence. Social marketing networks might be established in support of these initiatives, given the increased used of technology by students. Parents/Families provide relatively more information for Caucasian students while Counselors/Advisors were more important for Non-Caucasian students.

The transfer of students from other majors would indicate that there might be increased awareness of the program and the opportunities available in the hospitality industry across UCF but especially in the Business College.

More minority students come from households with less of a tradition of higher education than their Caucasian counterparts. Household income is also lower. Students from minority households may require additional information, counseling and financial support to create the new tradition of college education.

With regard to future research, new questions arise as to whether the demographic and psychographic characteristics of hospitality majors are similar to the majors of other colleges at the UCF. Are hospitality majors at different universities such as the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Virginia Tech, University of Massachusetts and Cornell University, similar to Rosen College UCF in their patterns of information gathering and journey to hospitality? More specifically related to minorities, do African American, Asian and Hispanic/Latino hospitality students at UCF have similar demographic and psychographic characteristics?

The minority population of Central Florida and the USA is increasing and an environment of inclusion is desirable. Hospitality education is one component of inclusion in this important economic sector.

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ONLINE RESPONSES TO A CHINESE POPULAR TV SERIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR FILM-INDUCED TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

Building on previous research on film-induced travel and cyberfandom, this paper analyzes the postings of fans of a new Chinese TV drama that has already spurred travel to a rather remote destination. The findings show that fans of the drama are deeply involved in its story and context and see travel to the locations of the drama as an important way to engage in a quest for meaning. Thus, travel is a prominent theme in their online postings and they also help each other plan their trips to the drama locations. In addition, their travel-related conversations show that motivations and activities at the destination are very specific to the context of the drama, suggesting that destination marketers need to understand what drives the particular fans to engage in film-induced tourism in order to be able to cater to their needs.

KEYWORDS: China; consumer-generated content; cyberfandom; film-induced tourism; online community; voluntourism;

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to investigate online responses to a very popular TV drama in China, *My Chief and My Regiment* (MCMR), in the context of film-induced tourism. Such an investigation is important as fans, and especially younger fans, increasingly use online media to engage in cyberfandom, which includes the discussion of potential and past travel to fan-relevant locations (Scarpino & Gretzel, 2008a).

Given that films are believed to “generate and sustain interest in a destination in a way which destination marketers cannot afford to do” (Tooke and Baker 1996, p.88), special attention is paid to film-induced tourism opportunities by destination marketers. There is also interest in the topic of film-induced tourism from a theoretical perspective, with scholars having studied motives of film-induced tourists, the impact of films on destination image, tourism behaviors and social distance, and the role of films as an effective tourism marketing channel (Beeton, 2001; Beeton, 2006; Busby & Klug, 2001; Cousins & Andereck, 1993; Croy & Walker, 2001; Han and Lee, 2008; Im and Chon, 2008; Iwashita, 2008; Jewell and McKinnon, 2008; Lin and Huang, 2008; Mestre, del Rey and Stanishevski, 2008; Riley, Baker & Doren, 1998; Riley & Doren, 1992; Tasci, 2009; Tooke & Baker, 1996; Young and Young, 2008). Scarpino and Gretzel (2008b)

investigated the specific role of online word-of-mouth in film-induced tourism, finding that travel-related conversations are quite extensive. However, Scarpino and Gretzel focused on functional aspects of these travel-related conversations. There is still a lack of research on the emotional attachment of these film-induced travelers to the dramas/movies/shows and the empathy they express with respect to fellow film-induced travelers.

The Internet has become one of the most important marketing communication channels in terms of tourism marketing (Wang and Fesenmaier, 2006). This is also increasingly true for destinations in China, as the Chinese online population continues to grow exponentially. In 2008, the volume of Chinese netizens who use the internet to search for travel information was 41.4 million for the month of September (iResearch, 2008). And the volume of both Chinese netizens and Chinese online travel bookings is estimated to experience significant growth at approximately 33% (iResearch, 2009). The growth of general Internet use in China is mostly driven by the need to express one's "right of speech", which is possible online due to the internet's anonymous nature. But the motives of Chinese film-induced tourists to engage in extensive online conversations have yet to be examined.

This paper chooses MCMR as an interesting case due to the following reasons: 1) MCMR has evoked an extremely hot debate among Chinese netizens, which has never happened before, and its audiences discuss the drama online with great passion regardless of favoring it or not; 2) MCMR has already spurred travel to Tengchong, the location of both where the show was shot at and where the real battle site of the story on which MCMR is based took place, even though it has been officially launched only in the beginning of 2009 and Tengchong is a remote destination in China not very familiar to the public; and 3) MCMR gives a deep insight into Chinese culture and its people far beyond just showing a historical story. This paper intends to explore the empathic involvement of Chinese netizens in MCMR by employing a qualitative 'netnography' or Internet ethnography approach (Kozinets, 2002) on their online conversations related to tourism.

BACKGROUND

Motives of Film-Induced Travelers

The definition of film-induced tourism was extended by Beeton (2005), referring to "on-location tourism that follows the success of a movie (or set), television program, video or DVD in a particular region". Regarding the motives of film-induced tourists, existing research has sought to align them with the personal seeking dimension of Iso-Ahola's (1982) model of tourism motivation (Singh and Best, 2004). Based on the research of Kim et al. (2007) and Lee, Scott and Kim (2008) it is proposed that people's involvement with a celebrity affects their perceptions of tourism destinations (familiarity, image, and visitation intentions). Kim et al. (2007) found that empathy to star actors or actresses contributed to Japanese's preferences for and involvement in Korean dramas and desires to visit Korean locations associated with these dramas.

Empathy

Empathy refers to a person's capacity to feel another person's feelings (Langfeld 1967, p. 138), and it is considered to be "an emotional response that stems from another's emotional state or condition and that is congruent with the other's emotional state or situation" (Eisenberg and Strayer 1987, p.5). Consumer research regarding empathy responses to film/dramas supports that empathy toward ads is an emotional response on the part of some consumers (Deighton and Hoch 1993; Wells, 1989). Attention has been paid to emotional involvement in films/dramas in multi-disciplinary research (Krugman, 1966–1967; Langfeld, 1967; Lavidge and Steiner, 1961; McGuire, 1978; Mick, 1992; Ray, 1973; Strayer, 1987). Escalas and Stern (2003) found that sympathy was the first and more easily achieved emotional response and empathy the later response of some ad viewers for some ad dramas. It is assumed that the more empathy fans of MCMR feel, the more inclined they are to have MCMR related conversations online, to travel to MCMR locations, and to help others plan their trips.

Online Communities

Online communities have been described as groups of people who utilize a specific website for a shared purpose (Marathe, 2002). Scarpino and Gretzel (2008b) found that online communities are extensively used in the context of film-induced tourism as fans share stories about their trips and plan film-induced travel using these online forums. Wang and Fesenmaier (2006) suggested tourism community organizers should try to use online communities as an important marketing communication channel. Due to the ability of "Netnography" to provide marketing researchers with "a window into naturally occurring behaviors, such as searches for information by, and communal word-of-mouth discussions between, consumers" (Kozinets, 2002), an investigation of emotional responses of film-induced travelers can be conducted by doing content analysis on online travel conversations in online communities dedicated to a film.

Study Context

MCMR is a highly popular 2009 Chinese TV series produced by Huayi Brothers Media Group in China. The series is about the Chinese National Revolutionary Army expeditionary force in Burma, fighting the Imperial Japanese army during the 1942 Battle of Yunnan-Burma Road during the Second Sino-Japanese War (Wikipedia, 2009). Tengchong is not only the shooting site of MCMR, but also the real battlefield. Today there are still many relics, tombs and veterans who survived and lived there for their remaining life. Tengchong is situated in the westernmost region of the Yunnan Province. It has great tourism potential due to its natural resources (volcanoes, hot springs, wetlands) as well as its culture and history. However, due to accessibility problems, tourism development has been limited in this region.

The story of the TV drama follows a small group of soldiers who had lost hope and were basically stranded when they ran into a mysterious man named Long who claimed to be their regiment commander. Under his command, the group rallied others to

join, regained honor and hope and managed to fight back fiercely against the Japanese. When the survivors made it back to the friendly side, they were shocked to discover that Long was not their chief at all, but merely a low-ranked officer who had stolen the insignia and uniform of a fallen commander. After court-martial, the swindler was, to the surprise of the soldiers, appointed their genuine regiment chief.

The drama has evoked very strong emotions among Chinese, including both positive and negative reactions. It has already received some rewards and is nominated for others. Importantly, it has spurred extensive online discussions among Chinese netizens, which serve as the basis for this research.

METHODOLOGY

Research Questions

In order to explore the empathetic responses of the fans, we conducted a qualitative ‘netnography’ or Internet ethnography (Kozinets, 2002) using fans’ online conversations in the forums dedicated to MCMR as the data. In order to understand the emotional and travel-related responses represented in a film-oriented online community, the following research questions were asked:

- 1) What topics do the Chinese audiences discuss most in their online conversations related to Tengchong?
- 2) What kind of empathetic responses to MCMR trigger travel to Tengchong?
- 3) What kind of feelings do they mention online after travel to Tengchong?
- 4) Are fans interested in the real historic background of the destination or only the story as presented through MCMR?

Data Collection and Procedure

Web Site Selection. Based on the criteria to select a Web site suggested by Kozinets (2002), the following list indicates our criteria to choose the drama-dedicated forum, named *Tieba of My Chief and My Regiment* (shortly named MCMR forum) as the online community of our study:

- 1) Forum members discuss film-induced travel and/or tourism directly or indirectly related to MCMR
- 2) Highest “traffic” of postings related to MCMR
- 3) Large numbers of discrete message posters
- 4) Detailed or descriptively rich data
- 5) Between-member interactions of the type required by the research questions

The MCMR forum was created and is currently administered by three persons on a platform provided free by Baidu, the most popular online Chinese search engine.

Data Extraction. In order to extract the online conversations related to travel to Tengchong, we used the search engine provided by the MCMR forum, imputing the keywords most related to Tengchong trips, such as “going to Tengchong”, “travel to Tengchong”, etc. Using 12:00pm on August 6, 2009 as the cut-off time, we were able to extract 452 relevant postings and manually divided them into 226 threads. It should be noted that MCMR officially launched on TV on March 5, 2009. As such, we divided the postings into two groups by the posting date when the drama launched. There are 122 threads, and within those 280 postings containing information related to Tengchong, posted after MCMR launched. Only those were considered for the analysis. An example for a forum post is provided in Figure 1.

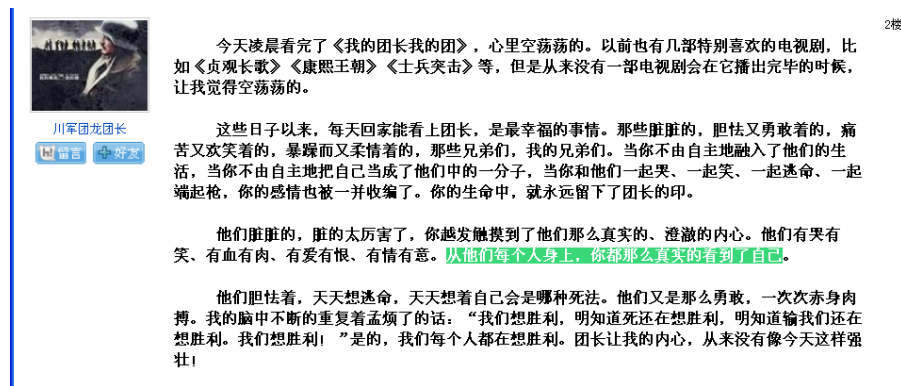


Figure 1. Example of Comment Posted on the MCMR Forum

Coding. Each thread was coded by the initial posting and was later confirmed through analysis of subsequent postings. Then, the posters of each thread were categorized based on their extent of empathy. Based on the scales of response empathy (Escalas and Stern, 2003), such as “I feel characters’ feelings were my own”, combined with words related to the extent of feelings or empathetic behaviors, we measure the extent of empathy. For example, “*I am totally occupied by MCMR and see myself in every figure.*” suggests a very deep degree of empathy, while “*leaving my boss flying into a rage, rushing on a flight to Tengchong with no turning back.*” represents extreme empathic feelings.

RESULTS

Up to 12:00pm on August 6, 2009, there were 33,494 threads, 1,041,578 postings, and 5,630 members. It should be noted that because MCMR is created by the same crew as that of another popular TV series, *Soldiers Sortie*, which has millions of fans who are called SS Fans for short. MCMR forum was created September 30, 2007, immediately after MCMR started its shooting. As such, unsurprisingly, observations found that there are a lot of members in the MCMR forum who migrated from the SS forum.

Six themes emerged from the analysis of the postings: 1) discussing the lines, plots and characters in the show; 2) sharing related personal experiences; 3) reflection; 4) publishing own novel derived from the original novel; 5) calling for travel to Tengchong; and, 6) tourism tips or travellogs. Information about the extent of theme-related postings,

their association with travel and the extent to which they contained empathy statements is summarized in Table 1.

Discussing the lines, plots and characters

From postings in this category, we can see a heated argument evoked by the broadcasting of MCMR. Those who dislike it criticize that they cannot understand the story and have doubts about the plot. On the contrary, those who like it became immersed in it very quickly and try their best to collect information about the battle. Also, given the drama's use of black humor, many fans do their best to unveil the metaphors in MCMR. They said they were deeply moved by the characters, lines and plots, and are very interested in further exploring the story. What they uploaded and discussed included interviews with the crew by other media, historical material, documentary films about the veterans, etc. Interestingly, the playwright of MCMR, Xiaolong Lan, seems concerned with what fans say and has posted comments and evaluated others' postings on the forum Web site.

Members compare their feelings to an addiction, as they consume the drama, novel and DVD over and over, log on to the MCMR forum every day, sing the theme song when cooking, use lines from the drama when they converse with others in daily life, suffer from insomnia, dream of the characters every day, and are unable to watch any other TV dramas. These feelings and quotes like *"In fact, from every character, I saw myself."* suggest the fans are in an empathetic stage.

Sharing related personal experiences

Interestingly, from a thread dedicated to discussing members' own feelings about MCMR from the perspective of their real occupation, we found that members are very active and include a lot of details about their personal experiences in their postings. Their experience varies, from teacher, students, self-employees, housewives, engineers, to the jobless and young people who have changed jobs frequently. However, they feel united in their feelings toward the drama. One member summarizes the sentiment: *"We love MCMR, unrelated to age, gender, education, experience. We all like it, with no reason"*.

Reflection

A lot of fans felt very empathetic with the show and its characters and wanted to share these feelings with others but also seize the feelings for reflecting on their own lives. They said they are the ones that MCMR really talks about. One member told a story about how he became totally submerged in the drama, started thinking about things he never thought about, how he suddenly felt like he was too comfortable, and that he realized he should not let time pass without showing responsibility for society. He also expressed a need to travel to Tengchong to honor the heroes. Deep emotional involvement with the show is quite obvious from the postings. Fans use phrases such as: *"tears flying, almost being internally injured, torturing the soul, see myself by watching MCMR."* These self-references reveal that fans understand the meaning behind the story

and apply it to their own lives. A lot of members point out that ...”MCMR aims at making people think and look deeply at their soul”. And they express that traveling to the sites will help them engage in even greater self-reflection.

Publishing own novel derived from the original novel

Interestingly, after MCMR showed for only 3 months, there are already some Tong Ren Works published on the MCMR forum. Tong Ren Works is a new Chinese term referring to various types of artwork, including poems, novels, pictures, etc., created by fans derived from the original drama, according to its background, casts or plots. Typically, members who created a Tong Ren piece were driven by their deep empathy. One member writes about his/her emotion at the beginning of his/her own novel which expands the story after the end of MCMR...”*The following story originated from my friend’s dream. Being crazy about MCMR and being deeply addicted to it, he cannot find any way to detoxify. One day, after he finished reading the novel of MCMR for the 17th time, he felt depressed and extremely sad and then fell into a dizzy sleep. During his dream, he did see, hear and feel a bizarre story related to MCMR*”. This Tong Ren work has been uploaded in a series of postings, one or several paragraphs posted each time, and attracted a lot of loyal members’ attention. Other members said they have the same feeling and communicated feedback or expectations regarding the plot to the author. The author also responded to them and discussed the story with them almost every day while he/she integrated the expectations into the continuing parts of the novel and even added new characters, who were given the net names of other members.

The connections between the fans seem to run deep as one member even asks for “leave” from the conversation because she will travel to Tengchong. She writes “*Tomorrow I will start my trip to Yunnan, and I have asked for leave to Liuchuang [the nickname of the thread’s author]. First, I will visit the elementary school donated by SS fans, together with over 50 other fans, then, I will go to Heshun Town in Tengchong, and then to Lijiang and Dali...It may take me more than 10 days or longer, but as I have no time restriction, I will go anywhere I want to go. So I will leave for a long time, see you!*”. According to her posting, MCMR fans who also are SS fans connect with each other in the real world in addition to the virtual community, and they show strong social responsibility for Chinese society as apparent in their donation of an elementary school in honor of SS fans. The quote also stresses the importance of travel for fans of the drama.

Calling for travel to Tengchong

Members indicate they are crazy for desiring to go to Tengchong but cannot wait to go there. They believe going to Tengchong is a useful way to help them deal with their deep emotional involvement with MCMR. Even though there are some obstacles, such as money, time, lack of understanding from parents or friends in their real lives, they want to travel to Tengchong “*to feel what the playwright has felt as well as to breath what martyrs have breathed*”. Most members claim they are serious in real life and have never been a fan of anything virtual before. For instance, one member wrote “*I have never had this impulse to go to a place that I must to go. In the moment of economic crisis and*

everyone worrying about sustaining their jobs, I put away my project regardless of it being in a crucial stage, leaving my boss flying into a rage, rushing on a flight to Tengchong with no turning back. This is a trip through the veil of time, not only for the purpose of solving my obsession about a story, but also to pick up a stretch of lost history, to express my grief, especially to find my missing energy deep in my soul". There are also some live travellogs with members broadcasting tips when they are in Tengchong. These fans talk to others about what they are visiting now, what they are shocked by, and so on.

Fans have posted a thread comparing gathering with other fans to going by oneself. Those preferring travel in a group think it is interesting to go with others who share the same feelings and want to visit the veterans to help them in honor of MCMR fans. However, they are worried about road safety and the leadership ability of the potential team leader. Many of them propose they will seriously consider a group size of 4-5 persons. Some members warned others that since they travel as MCMR fans, they do not want to see anything bad happen during the trip which would lead the media to hype about it, causing harm to MCMR or veterans. Those who want to go individually think Tengchong will be a great place to engage in more self-reflection. Even though they want to help veterans, they want to do it in a way that will not disturb their normal lives. Another reason mentioned with respect to individual travel is simply the lack of understanding of this behavior by those who are not fans of the drama. One member indicates: *"Now when I talk to people surrounding me that I want to go to Tengchong, they think I must be insane. They don't think they would have any fun visiting a tomb"*. Avoiding traveling to a place related to tombs is a Chinese tradition, which assumes tombs are not propitious. This suggests that MCMR makes fans engage in travel that is counter-intuitive to their cultural traditions.

In terms of activities during MCMR-induced trips, fans expressed their need for something meaningful as opposed to just fun. They want to *"find lost memories, discover the true history, mourn for the dead expeditionary army soldiers, visit the living expeditionary army veterans, and help veterans financially"*. One member mentioned: *"Every time when I think of them, I cannot help bursting into tears. I love the soul communication among MCMR, its playwright and us, and I love the veterans who we as an ethnic group owe! I think this is the feeling of the playwright when he stood in the underbrush of Mountain Song!!"* In addition to this, the postings indicated that fans want to stay at Heshun old town where the film was shot and explore the various shooting sites slowly.

The traveling time they prefer varies, but is often focused on Tomb-sweeping Day, May day and summer vacation. Tomb-sweeping Day is a traditional Chinese holiday in memory of who have passed away, May Day is a national holiday and summer vacation is long enough for most students to go to the remote destination. It should be noted there are also fans who have no time restrictions, as they are doing freelance work or they have paid annual leaves or they currently have no jobs at all.

Tourism tips or travellogs

Among the feedback postings, those fans who had been to Tengchong responded very enthusiastically. One states: *"There is a attendance book dedicated for MCMR fans at Yinghe Lodge"*. Most fans who propose a thread to write their travellogs indicate they went to Tengchong individually and quietly, as they just wanted to show their thankfulness, high esteem and indebtedness, and they thought about themselves quietly. Interestingly, the responses to these posts are also quite emotional, with members saying they were so moved by the travellog that they *burst into tears*.

From the travel tips, we can see that the popularity of Tengchong as a travel destination has dramatically changed. A lot of fans seem to be traveling there: *"5 or 6 groups visit daily according to the forester at Mountain Song"*, and unsurprisingly that even *"the fresh flowers in the Cemetery are always sold out"*. More importantly, we can see what fans were satisfied with and what they complained about. For instance, fans complained that *"some of the printings in War Memorial Museum are too fuzzy,"* and that parents who want their kids to understand the history of the place should not let them *"chase each other at the cemetery"*, etc.

Summary

In summary, the findings support our assumptions that MCMR fans show deep empathy and that their deep, sometimes even extreme, emotional involvement in the drama leads to strong desires to visit Tengchong. In Tengchong, they desire to engage in meaningful activities such as volunteering and self-reflection. They show special empathy towards the real veterans of the battle on which the drama is based. Depending on their motivation they either travel in groups or alone. When they come back from Tengchong, they show empathy again by helping others plan trips. However, unlike other fans, MCMR fans go beyond the immediate realm of the drama. MCMR-related travel becomes a quest for the truth, a kind of social responsibility to find out what really happened, and a quest for finding one's own calling.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Online conversations of fans not only provide important insights regarding film-induced travel motivations and behaviors, they also allow for an investigation of the emotional valence and intensity of responses to the drama as well as responses to actual film-induced travel. Such information is important from a theoretical point of view to inform our understanding of why and how film-induced travel happens. They also provide essential insights for destination marketers who need to gauge the emotional connectedness of fans with the destination in order to develop the right promotional appeals and products. An interesting aspect revealed through the results is the connection between film-induced tourism and voluntourism, which needs to be further explored. In general, the findings show that not all film-induced travel is the same. The fans of this particular drama have very specific needs that seem to differ dramatically from those of other fans who are mostly interested in film-related activities when at the destination.

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THE ROLE OF TRIP MOTIVATION ON CUSTOMER'S SATISFACTION AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION: A RURAL CULINARY TOURISM PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Farmer's markets play a critical role in connecting the sustainability and economic impact of an area with visitors to the community and locals interested in culinary tourism. This study explored the motivations of visitors at farmer's markets and investigated the relationship between key constructs such as motivations, satisfaction, and behavioral intention. A web-based survey questionnaire was based on measurement items from previous empirical wine and food festival studies and tourism research. The survey examined the push factors for a farmers' market visit, as well as the pull factors for the farmers' market visitors' motivation. Overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions were also measured by a five point Likert scale. The research shows that pull factors play a critical role in attracting culinary tourists. Specifically, data revealed that quality food and a good shopping facility were the most important factors for improving tourist satisfaction level. Quality food and a superior shopping facility could be pivotal to a successful business and sustainable tourism development. This study contributes to the understanding of culinary tourists' trip motivations with respect to a niche tourism market study. Limitations and future research directions are addressed.

Keywords: Culinary tourism; Farmer's markets; Food festivals; Locally produced food; Rural sustainability; Rural tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Rurality has been emphasized in many rural tourism studies. Lane (1994) argued that "rurality is a unique selling point of rural tourism." It can be viewed as the authenticity of a rural tourism destination. One of sustainable tourism's practical objectives is to maintain the sustainable development of tourism resources such as authenticity and rurality. The importance of this maintenance is the uniqueness of rural tourism contrary to commercialized mass tourism. Rural tourism is relatively small scale and based on natural and community-based social and cultural tourism resources. In rural

tourism, rurality encompasses a rural destination's social, cultural and geographical features. Specifically, rural culture, provided by a rural community is the primary component of rurality. The rural areas' social and cultural tourism resources serve as the main attraction for rural tourists and its delivery is provided by the local community.

A local area farmer's market is representative of a cultural and social tourism attraction for rural culinary tourists. The market connects tourists, the rural destination's residents, and the culture of a local society. The primary function of a local farmers market is to exchange agricultural products, however at the same time it plays a crucial role in presenting the resident's life and culture. In terms of culinary tourism, farmers' markets are considered one of three main components of culinary tourism (Smith & Xiao, 2008).

One main theme of a farmers market is the spontaneous branding of food product and local culture. Smith and Xiao (2008) suggested three categories for culinary tourism resources: local festivals, farmers' markets, and local restaurants. All three categories are based on the uniqueness of local culinary culture and are inherently branded with the destination. Farmer's markets can be considered a small scale food festival in terms of culinary tourism. The market focuses on locally produced food inherently branded and representative of the area's rural culture. Participants at the market gather and exchange tangible and intangible goods.

According to USDA (2008), the rates of farmers' market operations showed dramatic growth, increasing as much as 6.7% annually. For example, 1800 new farmers' markets have opened since 2003. This phenomenon has been backed by a U.S. government effort and agricultural policy assisting rural society and economy with sustainable development. These efforts are congruous with sustainable tourism's main goals. However, visitors to farmers' markets have their own motivations for frequenting markets. One of the local areas' marketing organization's objectives is to stimulate and promote farmers' market visits. Therefore, it is imperative to recognize farmers' market visitors, underlying motivation for attending farmers' markets. With respect to this practical research demand, this study had three research objectives:

- 1) To explore the underlying farmers' market visitors' motivations.
- 2) To investigate the hypothetical relationship between key constructs such as motivations, satisfaction, and behavioral intention.
- 3) To examine which motivations mainly influence tourist travel satisfaction and behavioral intention.

Contributions of this study were the understanding of culinary tourists' trip motivations with respect to a niche tourism market study. In regard to theory, this study investigated hypothetical relationships argued by previous culinary tourism researchers, reconciling research findings. Also, many marketing organizations related to rural and culinary tourism have been performing marketing programs. However, the effect and efficiency of the programs are still questionable. This study provides indicators and directions to marketing practitioners. The uniqueness of this study is that it encompasses

three existing tourism perspectives: rural, sustainable and culinary tourism. Farmers' markets have played a central role in simultaneously connecting these tourism industries. The common element in these tourism industries is the need for community support for success and sustainability. This study attempts to identify the main factors influencing tourist's travel related behavior and a relationship between tourist's motivation and tourism industry performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Motivation

Motivation has been studied by many scholars in various academias such as psychology, sociology, management, marketing, and tourism. The main research question regarding motivation has been "Which motivational factors affect human behaviors?" In tourism studies, core research issues have been "What makes tourists travel?" and "What do they enjoy?" (Dann, 1977; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Yoon & Uysal, 2005). Dann (1977) proposed a push and pull factor setting, and Crompton (1979) reexamined his framework. The push and pull factor framework has been widely accepted as a tourist motivation analysis tool. Push factors can be viewed as the internal force and energy which enable tourists take a trip and the pull factors are regarded as the unique attributes of a travel destination (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Jang & Cai, 2003; Kim & Lee, 2002; Park, Reisinger, & Kang, 2008; Uysal & Jurowski, 1994; Yoon & Uysal, 2005; Yuan, 2005). In various tourism settings, motivations have been extensively studied. Commonly found travel motivations are "Novelty seeking", "Escape", "Fun", "Relaxing", "Family togetherness", "Natural environment", "Exotic atmosphere" etc (Yuan, 2005). From the supplier side, a festival requires the involvement of the host community and local resident in order to fully satisfy festival attendees and tourists. At the same time, they need to know what tourists want and how their motivations are driven.

From the culinary tourism perspective, food is viewed as a main travel motivation for tourists (Ab Karim, 2006; Cohen & Avieli, 2004; Park et al., 2008; Roberti, 2008; Shenoy, 2005; Stewart, Bramble, & Ziraldo, 2008; Yuan, 2005). Since farmers' markets can be defined as small scale community based food festivals, previously identified food festival related motivational factors were very useful in recognizing culinary tourists' underlying motivations. Yuan (2005) identified four factors of wine festival related motivations (i.e. "Festival and escape", "Wine", "Socialization", and "Family togetherness"). Park et al. (2008) revealed seven motivations of wine and food festival attendees: taste, enjoyment, social status, change, meeting people, family and meeting experts. Shenoy (2005) emphasized the relationship between food itself and culinary tourists with five major motivations identified as purchase local, dine local, drink local, elite dining, and familiarity. Based on previous research's measurement items, this study reconciled and refined measurement items to identify culinary tourists underlying travel motivations.

Antecedent and consequences of tourists' satisfaction

A number of studies have tried to explain how customers perceive satisfaction and explore the relationship between satisfaction and key constructs. Behavioral intentions, a consequence of tourists' satisfaction, have been widely accepted as a key to sustainable business (Cronin Jr & Taylor, 1992; Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1980). Expectancy-disconfirmation theory (Pizam & Milman, 1993; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2001), norm theory (LaTour & Peat, 1979), and equity theory (Oliver & Swan, 1989) are the most representative theories to clarify customer satisfaction and its consequences. The expectancy-disconfirmation theory is the most widely accepted theory to explain consumers' satisfaction process. This theory says that consumers have their own expectation of products and services before they are consumed or provided, and compare outcome and performance against expectation. Confirmation occurs when outcome meet expectation and consumers are satisfied. If the outcome wasn't matched or is less than the expectation, consumers would feel disconfirmation and be dissatisfied (Pizam & Milman, 1993). Norm theory was proposed by Latour and Peat(1979). This theory emphasizes the role of reference in determining consumer satisfaction. Norm can be seen as an ideal standard, deserved product performance, or at least expected product performance (Sirgy, 1984).Equity theory explains a rationale of how customers' feel satisfaction from a comparison between how much the customer spends and how much the customer gains or benefits from a transaction. Oliver and Swan (1989) view the ratio between cost and benefit as an absolute indicator for a customer's satisfaction. These theories have agreed with the fact that customers have an anticipated product quality, benefit, service reference, and desire they want to meet. These constructs are surely related to customer motivation. In tourism, tourists' travel motivations are the main driving force behind tourism phenomena. It can be seen as what they want and the primary reasons by which they are driven.

Given that travel motivations determine current tourist decisions and satisfaction is accepted as a factor for tourists' future behavior, it can be assumed that there is a close relationship between travel motivations and travel satisfaction, as well as behavioral intention.

Based on previous empirical research and this rationale, the following research hypotheses are proposed.

H1: Push factors in culinary tourism will positively influence tourists' satisfaction level.

H2: Push factors in culinary tourism will positively influence tourists' behavioral intention.

H3: Pull factors in culinary tourism will positively influence tourists' satisfaction level.

H4: Pull factors in culinary tourism will positively influence tourists' behavioral intention.

H5: Culinary tourists' satisfaction level will positively influence tourists' behavioral intention.

METHODOLOGY

A web-based online survey questionnaire was developed to conduct this study. Measurement items were based on previous wine and food festival studies and empirical tourism research. The survey consisted of four parts. The survey first looked at the push factors for a farmers' market visit, and second examined the pull factors for the farmers' market visitors' motivation. Overall satisfaction and behavioral intentions were measured by five point Likert scales. Demographic variables were also collected. All respondents were asked whether they visited farmers' markets in the past year or not. Only those who visited farmers' markets were selected as survey participant. From part one (full factor motivation) to part two (push factor motivation), a five point Likert scale was used from 1 (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree). The third part, overall satisfaction and behavioral intention, for farmers' market visits and shopping experiences, were measured by a five point Likert scale.

Initially, eight potential push factors with 24 items were designed to capture culinary tourists' push factor(internal motivation) and two pull factors with 16 items were proposed to measure pull factor (external motivation). Push factors are related to a tourist's internal desires and psychological needs, which are materialized as "Socialization", "Excitement and Entertainment", "Family Togetherness", "Novelty", "Escape", "Cultural exploration – Knowledge/Education", "Prestige or social status", and Relaxation". Pull factors are related with the specific attributes of tourism behavior and objectives. In the farmer's market study, pull factor can be divided into two main factors such as locally produced food's characteristics and expected shopping experiences.

Two pilot surveys were conducted prior to executing main study in order to test the survey questionnaire items' validity. Both pilot surveys were conducted in an on-site survey at a locally produced food-related public seminar and regional, local community-based festival. The survey was conducted anonymously and voluntary. Twenty three usable pilot survey respondents were obtained and analyzed. After the pilot survey, some questionnaire wording was revised to reflect the farmers' market setting.

The main survey was conducted from March 1st to April 30th. Online survey questionnaires were randomly distributed through both a locally produced food related website and public e-mail address lists. It was a national survey spanning from the East to the West in the U.S. The number of usable responses was 248. To test the proposed hypothetical relationships between push factor motivation, pull factor motivation, satisfaction, and behavioral intention, structural equation modeling (SEM) and multiple regression were performed.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents descriptive information for farmers' market visitors. One of the questions from the survey was "In the past year have you visited a farmers' market?" Respondents who had been to a farmers' market in the last year were selected as the research respondents. Descriptive information showed that 30.5 percent were male and

69.5 percent were female. Age groups were equally distributed, with the median age group being “45-49”. Household income’s median range was “\$75,000-\$99,000”. Married couples account for 63.52 percent of the sample, and Singles are 32.78 percent. In terms of educational level, the mode is bachelor degree (41.15 percent).

Table 1. Exploratory Factor Analysis Result

Variables	Frequency (percents)	Variables	Frequency (percents)
Gender		Occupation	
Male	74(30.45%)	Professional/Technical	133(54.51%)
Femal	169(69.55%)	Clerical	10(4.10%)
Total	243(100.0%)	Military	1(0.41%)
Marital status		Farming/Fishing	3(1.23%)
Single	80(32.78%)	Homemaker	8(3.28%)
Married	155(63.52%)	Retired	21(8.61%)
Other	9(3.68%)	Student	18(7.38%)
Total	244(100.0%)	Owner/Self-employed	25(10.25%)
Age group		Manufacturing	2(0.82%)
18-29	41(16.94%)	Currently without work	3(1.23%)
30-39	60(24.79%)	Other	20(8.20%)
40-49	50(20.66%)	Total	244(100.0%)
50-59	54(22.31%)	Household income	
60+	37(15.28%)	Under \$25,000	15(6.22%)
Total	242(100.0%)	\$25,000-\$49,999	48(19.92%)
Education		\$50,000-\$74,999	42(17.43%)
High school graduate	21(8.64%)	\$75,000-\$99,000	41(17.01%)
Associate degree	20(8.23%)	\$100,000 or more	70(29.05%)
Bachelor degree	100(41.15%)	Prefer not to answer	25(10.37%)
Master degree	71(29.22%)	Total	241(100.0%)
Doctorate	28(11.52%)		
Other	3(1.23%)		
Total	243(100.0%)		

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted to indentify the underling motivation dimension. Table 2 presents the result of exploratory factor analysis. The proposed eight push motivation factors were refined into three motivation factors “Fun and Relax”, “Escape”, and “Family”, and the proposed two pull factors were divided into three motivation factors, “Food Quality”, “Shopping Experience”, and “Facility”.

Table 2. Exploratory Factor Analysis Result

Push factor	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha	Composite mean
Factor1: Fun & Relax		.871	4.4604
I enjoy the farmers' market.	.771		
I want to taste new food.	.740		
I believe that shopping at farmers' markets improves the local economy.	.804		
I want to taste locally produced foods.	.820		
Visiting the farmers' market is relaxing.	.548		
Visiting the farmers' market is refreshing.	.639		
Factor2: Escape		.847	3.6757
I want to change the pace of everyday life.	.831		
I want to escape from routine life.	.867		
I want to get away on the weekend.	.683		
Factor3: Family		.898	3.9867
I want to help my family learn about locally produced food.	.798		
I want to spend time with my family at the farmers' market.	.842		
I want my family to enjoy the farmers' market.	.838		
Pull factor			
Factor1: Food quality		.917	4.601
The quality of locally produced food is good.	.796		
Locally produced food is delicious.	.900		
Locally produced food is nutritious and healthy.	.784		
Locally produced food is fresh.	.773		
Factor2: Shopping experience		.745	3.600
Shopping at the farmers' market is convenient.	.761		
The location of the farmers' market is convenient.	.671		
Factor3: Facility		.863	4.165
The appearance of the facility is good.	.637		
The facility of farmers' market is clean.	.907		

By using SEM, the research hypotheses were statistically tested. The goodness of model fit provided criteria to assess statistical results (chi-square = 120.586, $p=0.000$, chi-square/df=4.158, GFI=.909, NFI=.927, CFI=.943, TLI=.912, RMSEA=.113). It showed relatively a good, goodness of fit except in RMSEA criteria. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is one type of model fit assessment indicator, which considers closeness of fit in the case of a model's estimation. Given that overall model goodness indicators are appropriate, the hypothetical relationship among visit motivation factors, satisfaction, and behavioral intention was well estimated and assessed. Structural parameter estimates and more specific statistical results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Structural Parameter Estimate and Test Result

Research hypothesis and path	Standardized path coefficient	Result
H1: Push factor ► Satisfaction	-.062	Rejected
H2: Push factor ► Behavioral intention	..100	Rejected
H3: Pull factor ► Satisfaction	.544*	Supported
H4: Pull factor ► Behavioral intention	-.134	Rejected
H5: Satisfaction ► Behavioral intention	.976*	Supported

Note : chi-square = 120.586, p=0.000, chi-square/df=4.158, GFI=.909, NFI=.927, CFI=.943, TLI=.912, RMSEA=.113 * p<.01

According to Table 3, structural parameter estimate and hypotheses test result, only pull factors affect the tourist's satisfaction level. Since satisfaction levels dominantly influence tourist's behavioral intentions, this is a very important finding. In order to examine each pull factor's influence on satisfaction level, multiple regressions were conducted and the result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Effect of Pull Factor on Satisfaction

Independent variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	SE	Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value
Intercept	1.231	.375		3.285	.001
Food quality	.423	.100	.289	4.215	.000
Shopping experience	.030	.053	.036	.567	.571
Facility	.269	.075	.270	3.609	.000

Note: F=29.669*, $R^2 = .267$ Adjusted $R^2 = .258$ * p<0.01

Even though the push factor's effect was statistically rejected in SEM, the researcher felt the need to look at the partial influence of push factors on satisfaction level. The results are presented in Table 5:

Table 5. The Effect of Push Factor on Satisfaction

Independent variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	SE	Standardized Coefficients	t	p-value
Intercept	1.990	.353		5.639	.000
Fun & Relax	.567	.099	.421	5.703	.000
Escape	-.116	.062	-.133	-1.866	.063
Family	.078	.075	.091	1.231	.219

Note: F=17.547*, $R^2 = .177$ Adjusted $R^2 = .167$ * p<0.01

CONCLUSION

This study explored the motivation dimensions of a culinary tourist's visit to farmers' market and the shopping experience. Three push motivational factors were detected, which were "Fun & Relax", "Escape", and "Family togetherness". Two major pull motivational factors, "Food Quality" and "Shopping Experience" were identified. The study also investigated the hypothetical relationships between visit motivation and key constructs, such as satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Contrary to the researchers' expectations, push factors, the tourists' internal force, did not affect tourists' satisfaction level. Given that most tourism marketing efforts

concentrate on stimulating culinary tourists' push factors, marketing practitioners should reconsider their marketing programs in terms of validity and effectiveness. However, the research shows pull factors play a critical role in the structural relationship between key constructs, and attracting culinary tourists to the farmers' market. According to the dominant tourists' satisfaction related theories, the customer/tourist compared expected performance or norm with the actual product quality or service performance. Pull factor can be seen as expected benefit and product quality. Several studies proposed the hypothetical relationship between motivation and satisfaction. However these had theoretical limitations in explaining how they are related. This study suggested a theoretical background to it and empirically tested motivation as a key reference for determining a customer/tourist's satisfaction level. Specifically, data revealed that quality food and a good shopping facility were the most important factors for improving tourists' satisfaction level. Providing quality food and a superior shopping facility could be pivotal to a successful business and sustainable tourism development. These factors cannot be met by a short term promotion, but can be obtained through a long term strategic plan.

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DETERMINANTS OF LODGING EXPENDITURE FOR RECREATIONAL FISHING TRIPS IN RURAL TOURISM

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ABSTRACT

This study examined recreational fishing tourists' lodging expenditure behavior in the context of rural tourism. The 2006 national survey data of fishing, hunting, and wildlife-associated recreation was analyzed. Through Heckman's double-hurdle modeling, the study aimed at understanding fishing tourists' two-step decision-making process: whether to participate in fishing tourism and how much to spend on the trip exemplified by lodging expenditure. The results showed that sample selection bias existed in two-step decision-making process, but the double-hurdle method could correct it. It was found that most of the respondents' socio-demographic variables and recreational activity-related variables were useful in estimating whether or not tourists participate in fishing tourism. Their income age, gender, and household size affected their lodging expenditure level. The findings suggest that marketing strategies should be designed differently at each decision-making step because key variables were differently working in each stage.

KEYWORDS: Double-hurdle Model, Fishing Tourism, Lodging Expenditure, Recreational Fishing, Rural Tourism

INTRODUCTION

The decline in Rural America has made a negative impact on rural communities since the 1970s in both economic and social terms. The 1980s farm crisis in the Midwest of U.S. in particular had significant ripple effects in rural society (Wilson, Fesenmaier, Fesenmaier, & Van Es, 2001). As an alternative to primary industries (i.e., agriculture) rural tourism has attracted a great deal of attention from community leaders, policy makers and tourism researchers (Fleischer & Tchetchik, 2005; Gartner, 2004; Hegarty & Przezborska, 2005; Lane, 1994; Loureiro & Jervell, 2005; Petrzalka, Krannich, Brehm, & Trentelman, 2005). Lane (1994) defined rural tourism as containing historical, cultural, or recreational activities in rural areas. One of the growth sectors of rural tourism is recreational outdoor activities in countryside (Lane, 1994; Loureiro & Jervell, 2005). This study focused on recreational fishing as a unique recreational form of rural tourism. As other researchers have noted, the recreational fishing tourists seek the specific

attributes, which could be acquired from nature-based tourism and rural tourism (Arlinghaus & Mehner, 2004; Ditton, Holland, & Anderson, 2002; Zwirn, Pinsky, & Rahr, 2005).

In North America, recreational fishing is one of the most popular outdoor activities. According to the American Recreational Fishing Association (ARFA), over 30 million people participated in recreational fishing and total 42 billion U.S. dollars were spent at the recreational fishing activities in 2006 (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 2007). Its economic contribution to rural areas is fairly obvious. Despite its popularity and contribution to rural economy, however, academic inquiries on recreational fishing tourism are limited. Particularly lacking is the research attention to the understanding of recreational fishing tourists' demand for various hospitality facilities such as lodging in rural communities. Lodging facility in rural areas is a major facility and investment for rural tourism. Lodging expenditure in recreational fishing accounts for relatively high proportion of total rural travel expenditure.

A key to sustainable development of fishing tourism is high level of participation rate of overnight fishing tourists in fishing tourism. This process can be simply described into two-step process: whether or not to participate in fishing tourism and how much to spend tourism expenditure on fishing trips. The purpose of this study is to provide a basic understanding of this decision-making process. Specifically, the objective of this study was to examine the effect of socio-demographic and recreational activity variables on fishing tourists' lodging expenditure behavior for each of the two steps.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism Expenditure

Academic research on tourism demand can be classified into two areas. One is to measure and analyze economic impact on destination as well as estimate potential benefits of it. The other is to explore factors that influence tourists' spending, and its primary objective is to maximize the potential economic benefit through providing detailed information about tourists' expenditure pattern to destination policy makers and management organizations (Bergstrom, Cordell, Ashley, & Watson, 1990; Cannon & Ford, 2002; Dardis, Soberon-Ferrer, & Patro, 1994; Downward & Lumsdon, 2003; Frechtling, 2006). A classical microeconomic model, which was derived from the Engel curve, has been utilized in this study in order to explain tourists' spending on travel. The economic model explains the relationship between income level and consumer expenditure. This relationship was also extensively examined in previous tourism studies, which argued that income is most influential factor for tourists' spending (Cai, 1999; Dardis, et al., 1994; Downward & Lumsdon, 2003; Jang, Bai, Hong, & O'Leary, 2004).

In tourism context, extant studies have examined socio-demographic variables in order to explain tourists' expenditure patterns and behaviors (Cai, 1999; Cannon & Ford, 2002; Dardis, et al., 1994; Downward & Lumsdon, 2003; Kastenholz, 2005). Dardis et al. (1994) examined factors to determine leisure expenditure level empirically by using U.S. 1988~1989 Consumer Expenditure Survey data(CES). They utilized the modified Engel

curve model in order to estimate the effect of household income and socio-demographic variables on leisure expenditures. The results showed that the most of independent variables including income, age, number of adults in household (i.e., household size), education level, race, and gender were significant, but the income effect on leisure expenditure was significantly different depending on income source categories. Cai (1999) analyzed demographic and socio-economic variables' effect on lodging expenditure on leisure trips. He used Tobit model as primary analysis tool to examine the market potential, showing the appropriateness of the Tobit method for analyzing current and potential tourism market. Cannon and Ford (2002) examined the relationship between demographic variables and tourists' trip preferences in visitors' spending in leisure activities, which were widely considered as main attraction for tourism and sources of economic impact on local economy and tourism industry. They argued that income level, socio-demographic variables and trip-related variables were primary factors to affect tourists' expenditure level. In general microeconomic studies, consumers' taste and preferences had been assumed as fixed factors, but in current consumer study, these factors are becoming more significant variables because a number of empirical studies reported potential contribution of taste and preferences in consumer expenditure model.

Most of tourism scholars have great interests in overnight tourists' spending rather than day trippers one because tourists make considerable contribution to local economy. In recent papers, censored regression models like Tobit analysis were used so that tourists' spending was examined by taking into consideration the effect of their likelihood of participating in tourism activities on the amount of spending. These models, however, had a limitation in interpreting tourists' spending behavior and pattern. In developing outdoor recreational activity-based tourism such as fishing tourism, destination marketers' main concerns are to attract the tourists and to encourage more spending at the destination. As such, it is important for marketers to know how potential tourists decide to participate in tourism and how much they spend. For example, Cragg (1971) attempted to combine efforts to explore both consumers' spending decision and spending pattern. He proposed the double-hurdle model as a sound tool for this purpose. The model considered two-step stages in consumers' decision-making process. These were whether to participate in deal and how much spend in deal (Newman, Henthion, & Matthews, 2001). Jang and Ham (2009) examined the relationship between socio-demographic variables and travel expenditure level by using the double-hurdle model. Researchers suggested that sample selection bias could exist when the expenditure model doesn't consider tourists' tourism participation decision. The double-hurdle model addresses this potential bias.

Fishing Tourism

Recreational fishing has been recognized as a popular leisure activity in western countries such as U.S. (Ditton, et al., 2002). Much has been written about it, but the existing literatures on recreational fishing have been dominated by natural resource management perspective. With the growing awareness of fishing tourism's economic contribution to the rural areas, tourism researcher have become increasingly interested in this subject. Ditton et al. (2002) estimated the impact of recreational fishing on travel destination communities. They defined the tourist as non-resident angler, showing that

generated economic benefits were unequally distributed by geographical characteristic and top five fishing tourism U.S. states (i.e. Minnesota, Florida, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and New York) gained considerable economic benefit from fishing tourism.

Moscardo et al (2001) examined socio-demographic variables' effect on the tourism demand within coastal and marine tourists. Empirically, they clustered coastal and marine tourists into nine groups by their nationality and participation rate on outdoor recreation, analyzing the potential demand for coastal and marine tourism. It revealed that it had significant difference among groups in terms of potential tourism demand. The extent to which tourists were specialized or involved in outdoor recreation could be crucial factors to influence tourists' behavior (Bryan, 1977; Ditton, Loomis, & Choi, 1992; Scott, 2001). Bryan (1977) suggested a conceptual framework of recreation specialization, trying to explain fishing tourists' tourism behavior. He specified fishing tourists into four groups such as Occasional, Generalists, Technique Specialists, and Tech-setting Specialists by the extent of recreation specialization, and suggested that recreation specialization could play a key role in determining tourists' tourism behavior. Graefe (1980) empirically tested Bryan's conceptual framework. He adapted the number of fishing days in last 12 months as surrogate variable to measure the extent of recreational specialization and involvement. The study verified that specialization in leisure activities influenced the tourists' tourism behavior.

Drawing on the approaches to recreational tourism demand studies as reviewed above, this study included income and socio-demographic variables as key independent variables in the two-step demand models to explain recreational fishing tourist expenditure behavior in rural destinations. In addition, the number of fishing days was used as a proxy variable for recreational specialization and involvement in consideration of the study by Bryan (1977). Fifteen hypotheses were proposed as follows:

- H1: Age affects fishing tourists' participation decision to fishing tourism.
- H2: Gender affects recreational fishing tourists' participation decision to fishing tourism.
- H3: Race affects recreational fishing tourists' participation decision to fishing tourism.
- H4: Marital status affects recreational fishing tourists' participation decision
- H5: Educational level affects recreational fishing tourists' participation decision H6:
Household size affects recreational fishing tourists' participation decision
- H7: Number of fishing days as proxy for recreational activity involvement affects fishing tourists' participation decision.
- H8: Income affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H9: Age affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H10: Gender affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H11: Race affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H12: Marital status affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H13: Educational level affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H14: Household size affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.
- H15: Number of fishing days as proxy for recreational activity involvement affects fishing tourists' lodging expenditure.

METHODOLOGY

This study used the secondary data from the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-associated recreation (NSFW). Original data set consisted of 21,942 observations, and was gathered from nine geographically divided regions. However, this study limited observations who were freshwater anglers so that it explored characteristic of fishing trips in rural areas. 9,639 freshwater fishing respondents were used in statistical analysis. The sample for this study included the 1,711 respondents who reported lodging expenditure on fishing trips. The authors defined them as fishing tourists and others as daily fishing trippers. In double-hurdle model, it consists of two-step stages. First is Probit model for fishing tourism participation model and the second is a censored regression model for estimating lodging expenditure (Newman, et al., 2001). The conceptual model can be specified as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 (1) \quad y_{i1}^* &= z_i' \alpha + v_i \quad \text{Participation decision (Probit model)} \\
 (2) \quad y_{i2}^* &= x_i' \beta + u_i \quad \text{Expenditure decision (Censored regression model)} \\
 y_i &= x_i' \beta + u_i \quad \text{if } y_{i1}^* > 0 \text{ and } y_{i2}^* > 0 \\
 y_i &= 0 \quad \text{Otherwise}
 \end{aligned}$$

Where $v_i \sim N(0,1)$ and $u_i \sim N(0, \sigma^2)$

y_{i1}^* : Latent variable indicating tourists' decision to participate in recreational fishing tourism
 y_{i2}^* : Latent variable indicating tourists' lodging expenditure
 y_i : Observed dependent variable – lodging expenditure per fishing trip
 z_i : Vector of independent variables in Probit model
 x_i : Vector of independent variables in censored regression model

Each model has common independent variables and unique independent variables. The functional models of each stage are as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 PR &= f(\text{age, gender, race, marital, edu, size, fwdays}) \\
 Lexp &= f(\text{income, age, gender, race, marital, edu, size, fwdays})
 \end{aligned}$$

Where, PR = tourism participation rate

Lexp = lodging expenditure per trip

Age = respondent age

Gender = respondent gender (man=1, woman=0)

Marital = respondent marital status (married =1, others=0)

Race = respondent race (white =1, others=0)

Edu = tourists' educational level (high school = 0, college (dschool1) = 1, graduate (dschool2) =1)

Size = household size

Fwdays = proxy for recreational activity involvement rate

Income = respondent household income

Underlying thought on these models is that tourism participation decision is mainly influenced by socio-demographic variable and recreational activity preferences; and tourists' lodging expenditure level is affected by economic factor (i.e. income) and socio-demographic variables. STATA version 10 was used in estimating coefficients of the double-hurdle model in fishing tourists' lodging expenditure level. Each coefficient in the double-hurdle model was statistically tested. Especially, inverse Mill's lambda was obtained by STATA option in order to examine whether sample selection bias exists or not.

RESULTS

At the first stage, 7,928 observations were censored because they didn't report lodging expenditure. At the second stage, 1,711 observations were utilized in order to estimate fishing tourists' lodging expenditure pattern. Chi-square statistics were 105.01 with 0.0001 p-values. Therefore, the model showed a good fit. Inverse Mill's lambda is -61.88 and significant, indicating that it has a sample selection bias, which is corrected through double-hurdle model. According to the descriptive analysis, the profile of a typical recreational fishing tourist in the U.S. is white male with an average age of 43 years. They are married college or university graduate. Average number of adults in household is 1.4 persons. Especially, it shows that fishing tourists that are in high level of household income are most frequently observed in the data set.

Table 1 Characteristics of Dependent Variable

<i>Lodging Expenditure</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Std.</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
\$ Per trip	77.28	179.08	.02	2052
Composition:	Cost for lodging at hotels, motels, cabins, lodges, or campgrounds, etc from January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006 on fishing trips.			

Descriptive sample statistics and dependent variable's characteristics are presented in Table 1 and Table 2. Average lodging expenditure per fishing trip is \$77.28 during 2006. Maximum amount of lodging expenditure per trip is \$2,052 and minimum amount is \$.02. Overnight fishing trip rate is used for dependent variable in the first stage model (Probit regression model). According to descriptive analysis, 17.7% of recreational fishing participants are fishing tourist and others are recreational fishing day tripper. Lodging expenditure per trip is defined as a dependent variable in the second-stage model (censored regression model), which explains tourists' spending. Because inverse Mill's lambda (which is a statistics to test a relationship between Probit model and censored regression model) is significant, it can be assumed that the result of Probit regression model affects censored regression model. That is, sample selection bias exists and it can be corrected through double hurdle model.

Table 2 Descriptive Information of Sample

	<i>Day tripper (N=7,928)</i>		<i>Tourist (N=1,711)</i>	
	<i>Frequency (%)</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Frequency(%)</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Gender				
Male	6,001 (75.69%)		1,345 (78.61%)	
(Female)	1,927 (24.31%)		366 (21.39%)	
Age		44.38		46.60
Marital status				
Married	5,594 (70.56%)		1,317 (76.97%)	
(Others)	2,334 (29.44%)		394 (23.03%)	
Education				
Graduate	745 (9.40%)		251 (14.70%)	
College or Some College	3,366 (42.50%)		815 (47.60%)	
(High school or less)	3,817 (48.10%)		645 (37.70%)	
Race				
White	7,361 (92.85%)		1,619 (94.62%)	
(Other)	567 (7.15%)		92 (5.38%)	
Number of Adults in Household		1.53 persons		1.40 persons
Household income				
Under \$10,000	213 (3.11%)		23 (1.52%)	
\$10,000-\$19,999	350 (5.11%)		49 (3.23%)	
\$20,000-\$24,999	322 (4.70%)		37 (2.44%)	
\$25,000-\$29,999	383 (5.59%)		55 (3.62%)	
\$30,000-\$34,999	444 (6.48%)		48 (3.16%)	
\$35,000-\$39,999	394 (5.75%)		84 (5.53%)	
\$40,000-\$49,999	768 (11.21%)		169 (11.13%)	
\$50,000-\$74,999	1,717 (25.07%)		354 (23.32%)	
\$75,000-\$99,999	1,007 (14.71%)		304 (20.03%)	
\$100,000 or more	1,250 (18.25%)		395 (26.02%)	
Missing value	1,080		193	

^a Parenthesis refers to a variable used as the reference group

Table 3 Results of the First and Second Stage of Double-Hurdle Model

	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E</i>	<i>Z (B/S.E)</i>	<i>P>z</i>
<i>Sample selection model (first stage)</i>				
Number of fishing trips***	0.003948	0.000513	7.69	0
Number of adult ***	-0.08508	0.02358	-3.61	0
Age*	0.002065	0.001115	1.85	0.064
Gender				
dsex	0.042663	0.036611	1.17	0.244
(female)				
Race				
White**	0.12827	0.063338	2.03	0.043
(others)				
Marital status				

Married*** (others)	0.112336	0.036483	3.08	0.002
Educational level				
College***	0.186471	0.032958	5.66	0
Graduate*** (High school)	0.363493	0.049986	7.27	0
Constant	-1.32681	0.099765	-13.3	0
<i>Lodging expenditure model (second stage)</i>				
Log of income***	35.16674	10.92958	3.22	0.001
Number of fishing trips ***	-0.83298	0.146902	-5.67	0
Number of adult **	18.24061	7.714066	2.36	0.018
Age***	2.042817	0.323653	6.31	0
Gender				
Male* (female)	-17.5582	10.50993	-1.67	0.095
Race				
White (others)	16.55658	18.20573	0.91	0.363
Marital status				
Married (others)	-16.9583	10.86668	-1.56	0.119
Educational level				
College	2.544054	9.727198	0.26	0.794
Graduate (High school)	21.3005	15.09411	1.41	0.158
<i>Model goodness</i>				
Inverse Mill's lambda***	-61.88	19.57146	-3.16	0.002
rho	-0.33927			
sigma	182.3909			
Censored obs =	7928			
Uncensored obs =	1711			
Wald chi2(9) =	105.01	Prob > chi2 =	0.0000	

*** 0.01 significant level, ** 0.05 significant level, * 0.1 significant level

The objective of this study is to examine the effect of socio-demographic and recreational activity variables on fishing tourists' lodging expenditure behavior. The result of the double-hurdle model provides test statistics for the hypotheses. The testing results are presented as follows:

Hypothesis 1 is supported. The coefficient of age variable is positive. It means that senior recreational fishing tourists are more likely to participate in fishing tourism.

Hypothesis 2 is not supported by findings. A gender difference doesn't exist in fishing tourism participation decision-making process.

Hypothesis 3 is supported by findings. The racial background is significant factor for participating fishing tourism. Compared to reference group, white is more likely to participate fishing tourism.

Hypothesis 4 is supported by findings. Marital status is a crucial factor in participating fishing tourism. Married couple is more likely to participate in fishing tourism than others.

Hypothesis 5 is supported by findings. The educational level is a significant variable in deciding to participate in fishing tourism. High level of education is more likely to participate in fishing tourism.

Hypothesis 6 is supported by findings. House hold size or the number of adult in household is significant variable in deciding to participate in fishing tourism. On the contrary to expectation, bigger size household is less likely to participate in fishing tourism.

Hypothesis 7 is supported by findings. The extent to which tourist is involved in fishing tourism is significant variable in deciding to participate in fishing tourism. People who frequently enjoy recreational fishing are more likely to participate in fishing tourism.

Hypothesis 8 is supported by findings. The income level is a significant variable in explaining lodging expenditure of recreational fishing tourists. The result confirmed findings of extant studies on the relationship between income and overall lodging expenditure.

Hypothesis 9 is supported by findings. Senior fishing tourists are more likely to spend more lodging expenditure on fishing trips.

Hypothesis 10 is supported by findings. Female fishing tourists tend to spend more lodging expenditure on fishing trips than male fishing tourist.

Hypothesis 11 is not supported by findings. The racial background is not significant in explaining recreational fishing tourist expenditure on lodging. This finding is partially congruent with previous studies which have shown that there is no difference between race groups in terms of lodging and visitor expenditure (Cai, 1999; Cannon & Ford, 2002).

Hypothesis 12 is not supported by findings. Marital status doesn't affect lodging expenditure on recreational fishing trips.

Hypothesis 13 is not supported by findings. There is no difference among sample groups in spending lodging expenditure on fishing trips.

Hypothesis 14 is supported by findings. House hold size or the number of adult in household is significant variable in explaining lodging expenditure on fishing trips.

Hypothesis 15 is supported the findings. The coefficient of fishing days is negative. It means that high level of recreational activity involvement leads to less lodging expenditure. The finding is inconsistent with the result of sample selection model. It can be assumed that the extent to which fishing tourist is involved in outdoor recreation gives different influence on each decision-making stages.

In the double-hurdle model, inverse mill's lambda (IML) is the most important statistics. When it is significant, it indicates that the sample selection bias exists but it is corrected in the model.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed how the characteristics of fishing tourists affected their decision to participate in fishing tourism and the amount they spent on lodging on fishing

trips. At the participation decision stage, most of the socio-demographic and recreation activity variables (i.e. age, number of adult in household, racial background, marital status, education level, and number of fishing day) were found to affect fishing tourists' participation rate. However, except for household income, age, number of adult in household, and number of fishing day, some other variables didn't affect fishing tourists' lodging expenditure level at the second decision stage. These variables include race, marital status, and educational level. The research findings showed that tourism marketers should carefully consider how to plan and implement a marketing strategy to attract tourists at each decision-making stage. For example, educational level is the most distinctive variable at first decision-making stage. Fishing tourists with graduate education are most likely to participate in fishing tourism. Household income is a most influential factor at the second stage (lodging expenditure model). Tourism markets should set up different strategies at each decision-making stage.

The findings of this study suggest that lodging services for recreational fishing trips was a normal good. Lodging demand increased as tourists' income level increased, although not proportionately. This finding reassures that income remains a valuable factor to study tourism and recreational demand. In fact, demographic characteristics of tourists in general are viable variable in all demand-oriented tourism research. These variables are particularly useful for segmentation purposes. They are resilient in understanding, describing, and accessing a unique market segment. For example, the current study reveals that there is a positive relationship between recreational fishing tourists' age and the lodging expenditure. Findings suggest that senior Americans could be a viable segment for recreational fishing tourism in rural areas. As more and more baby boomers enter their retirement phase, this could be a golden opportunity for rural destinations featuring recreational fishing activities and amenities. Senior tourists have unique trip preferences and needs, and therefore require corresponding services and facilities. Rural destinations should also benefit from the finding on the effect of marital status of lodging demand.

This study used a secondary data. Other variables not included in the model might contribute to the explanation of fishing tourists' spending behavior, although the model was statistically significant. This limitation can be addressed in future studies with primary data. One possible category of variables is recreational fishing tourists' motivations. Researchers in Minnesota reported that fishing tourists were seeking not only recreational benefits but also emotional values such as relaxation, nature appreciation, and escape (Gartner, Love, Erkkila, Center, & Fulton, 2002). This perspective has been supported by other studies (Finn & Loomis, 2001; Moeller & Engelken, 1972). Recreational fishing tourists are motivated by both catch and non-catch factors. Their non-catch motivations center on emotional aspects of recreational fishing (Pitcher & Hollingworth, 2002). Recreational fishing destinations in rural communities would benefit in their product development, marketing, and service provision when they have access to the knowledge on recreational fishing tourists' motivations in relation to their spending patterns on lodging, a major expenditure category for most tourists.

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EXPLORING VIRTUAL RECRUITING FROM EMPLOYERS' PERSPECTIVE USING "SECOND LIFE"

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ABSTRACT

In a constantly evolving economy it is crucial to think outside the traditional way and utilize newly emerging methods and technologies available for effective human resource management. One of such cutting edge technologies is Second Life (SL). It is a computer-based simulated virtual environment that allows global users to travel through the virtual space, meet and interact with people in real time, and leave with an impression that they have visited a parallel world that is interactive and full of opportunities. In the past two years, businesses have started exploring ways in which virtual worlds such as SL can be used for interviewing and recruiting people in real life. This study explores the trend of SL job fairs and evaluates the employers' perspective on the advantages and challenges of using it for Human Resource (Behrens) recruitment. Several crucial questions were asked from the top executives of businesses that have conducted job fairs in SL to understand the concept of virtual recruiting. The findings provide a better understanding of virtual job fairs from the perspective of recruiters.

KEYWORDS: Emerging Technologies; Human Resources; Virtual Job Fairs; Virtual Recruiting; Second Life

INTRODUCTION

In today's economy, there has been a growing importance of service in a product offering. That is, products today have a higher service component than in previous decades (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). Virtually every product today has a service component to it. The old dichotomy between product and service has been replaced by a service-product continuum. Many products are being transformed into services. In such a service economy, Human Resource Management (HRM) becomes extremely crucial. Human resources can provide businesses with a competitive advantage and thus, effective HRM is considered very important by the service industry. In a highly technological world, service companies often try to use cutting edge technologies to improve the efficiency of

their HR systems. The development of human resources through virtual environments has gained more importance with high tech advancements of our everyday lives. It is no longer a secret that online recruitment is more efficient than newspaper advertisements (Burns, 2007). Many businesses and organizations utilize cyberspace for job fairs and job postings, including smaller universities and medium size sole proprietorships (Behrens, 1998). Companies realize how critical it is to make the most out of the on-line recruiting. As the competition for talent is becoming fiercer, on-line recruitment is turning into a way to attract and keep the best of the best. Statistics show that over 90 % of large U.S. companies are conducting on-line recruitment and building internal on-line job networks (Cappelli, 2001). However, some groundbreaking companies are turning to external virtual networks or virtual worlds. One such virtual world is Second Life (SL).

Second Life (SL) is a computer-based simulated virtual environment that allows global users to travel through the virtual space, meet and interact with people in real time, and leave with an impression that they have visited a parallel world that is interactive and full of opportunities. It is a collection of various SL residents, communities, government embassies, educational institutions, some large corporations and some smaller companies (LindenLab, 2009). Second Life shows no signs of fading away any time soon. In fact, the number of corporations in the online parallel universe has risen to about 50, and the number of SL residents has grown virtually seven-fold to nearly 7 million in less than a year (McConnon & Jana, 2007). However, because anyone can open an account in SL, create an avatar (computer user's representation of himself / herself) or a digital version of their product, there is a high possibility of cyber-jacking of corporate events or intruders' in virtual meetings (Stein, 2006). Thus, only a few pioneering and risk-taking companies are opting to use SL virtual environment as a tool for interactive recruitment. Most of the companies that have utilized SL for virtual recruitment were among top 10 technology vendors, as reported by Wall Street Journal (WSJ, 2008). This explains why so many corporations are hesitant about this way of conducting interviews and collecting initial candidate data. It takes a big technological advancement and open mind to dive into SL job fairs. However, as Philip Rosedale, the founder and chairman of Linden Labs, predicts, SL is such an interesting alternative to the reality that in 10 years or so the largest fraction of internet traffic will be people walking around in virtual worlds like SL (Cave, 2008).

LITERATURE REVIEW

HRM and Technology

Increased globalization, information technologies, intellectual capital, and diversity encourage innovative approaches to human resources. Such innovative approaches include intellectual capital acquisition, development, and deployment through a network-based structure that is mediated by information technologies (Lepak & Snell, 1998). The need for human resources to go on-line not only has grown tremendously, but also became irreplaceable by any other traditional method. Most companies started addressing this need through informational career web pages, where interested browsers could learn more and apply for a position. Informative, detailed, attractive, and engaging

web pages became must haves for a successful company that wants to attract the best job seekers (Zusman & Landis, 2002). However, today the human resources industry goes above and beyond job postings through such web pages. Company marketing and branding occurs as well. One of the studies established that diversity and innovation are the two dimensions that are more frequently communicated via virtual medium (Braddy, Meade, & Kroustalis, 2006). Thus, we begin to see more and more interactive virtual establishments that project company's values, prognoses, and strategies, which reflect on the organizational culture and essence. There is a great demand for personalized communication that is tailored to the needs of individuals, if a corporation intends to create a sense of social relationship with an on screen recruiter (Stone & Lukaszewski, 2009). It is fundamental for individuals to receive a real time feedback on their fit with the organizational culture to find a particular organization and attractive opportunities available and keep their interest (Hu, Su, & Chen, 2007). Fortunately, the virtual interactivity of modern recruitment sources, such as virtual worlds, permits recruiters to provide applicants with almost instant response or feedback. Applicant's attitudes about a recruitment source transmit the effects of organization information (Allen, Mahto, & Otondo, 2007). It is only a matter of whether a company has been utilizing such opportunities to influence job seekers' outlook on the organization or not.

Second Life

An area of research that has received little attention from academic researchers is the use of virtual worlds, such as Second Life (SL), in recruitment. Philip Rosedale, who got an idea of a virtual Internet universe early in his teen age, founded SL. In short, his idea involved getting a bunch of computers together and somehow simulating the laws of physics. With time, Mr. Rosedale's vision turned into a colossal parallel world with unlimited possibilities of building dream gadgets, cars, houses, and stuff that one could only imagine before (Cave, 2008). Further on, Second Life enthusiasts emerged from some of the largest corporations, who started establishing their grounds in the parallel virtual world, where boundless opportunities allow holding product launches, promotional campaigns, employment branding and recruitment vehicles, marketing and human resources fairs. Although an interesting study was implemented by several researchers in the area of applicants' reactions to employer information that was delivered through web-based job fairs, no indications of employer's perspectives on such job fairs were noted (Highhouse, Stanton, & Reeve, 2004). Numerous companies such as GM and IBM started utilizing virtual worlds such as Second Life to build their brands, expand their outreach, and even cut down costs of employee searching and hiring process. They see numerous future possibilities in these virtual realities: virtual job tryouts, virtual resumes, interpersonal-based interactions within virtual worlds, and much more (Handler, 2007). It appears that more research and scientific studies were conducted in the area of Internet based recruitment in general rather than Second Life job fairs. This is unfortunate, because Second Life makes use of the most powerful aspect of the Internet: the ability to build communities, interact, learn and grow from such interactions with others in real time.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

As more and more United States based corporations opt for Second Life job fairs, an interesting area of study will be to explore the employers' perspective on virtual recruiting. Furthermore, by finding out what feedback corporations got from their interviewees and what in their opinion interviewees' perception of their company was after participating in SL job fair, it is possible to determine whether the company established a good connection with their targeted market or not; whether the interviews over the SL were as personal as in real life or not. Thus, the primary objective of this study was to identify the advantages, challenges, and future uses of SL virtual recruitment. The study aimed at exploring the employers' perspectives on SL recruiting. The employers were asked about the usefulness of SL; its complications; opportunities; and risks. The findings from this study would provide researchers a better understanding of virtual recruiting. The findings would also be extremely helpful for future virtual recruiters for more effective utilization of virtual worlds for human resource recruitment purposes.

METHODOLOGY

At first, a list of companies that have held virtual job fairs was compiled. It was found that ten companies had conducted SL job fairs: Accenture, EMC², EBay, Verizon, Sodexo, HP, GE Money, Microsoft, US Cellular, and T-Mobile. Most of the 10 companies that conducted SL job fairs were found to be technology-based companies that had little or no problem singling out several HR employees to focus on creating a virtual job fair with virtual brochures, virtual power point presentations, avatars of their personas, and virtual locations that best represent their corporate cultures. Data was gathered in the form of in-depth interviews with top management elites from various organizations. Elite interviewing has distinct advantages as the top executives of organizations hold strategic knowledge on leadership and assets (King, 1994; Lowe, 1981; Reinmoeller, 2004; Weed, 2003). Although it can be difficult to reach the desired elites to hold an interview, their knowledge and comprehensive perspective on events under study provides a rich and thorough source of data. Telephone interviews were conducted so that a more accurate, holistic, and evaluative perspective (as tacit knowledge) from each interviewee could be obtained. The interviewed corporations had all held their job fairs in between May and October of 2007. Questions were compiled to address the employers' experiences, thoughts and concerns regarding the SL job fairs that they held.

The interviews were semi-structured so that with a broad direction, the responses could trigger further questions from the interviewees. The interview questions were:

- Q1: When have you used SL for recruitment?
- Q2: How much ahead did you start planning the job fair?
- Q3: How many people were involved in SL job fair, planning, coordination, and execution directly and indirectly?
- Q4: What were some of the strengths in using SL? Explain.

Q.5: While you had the job fair, what were the challenges in using SL? Explain.

Q.6: What was your success rate: % applied / % interviewed / % hired?

Q.7: What were the interviewees' perspectives on the process?

Q.8: Would you feel comfortable in using SL for future recruitment?

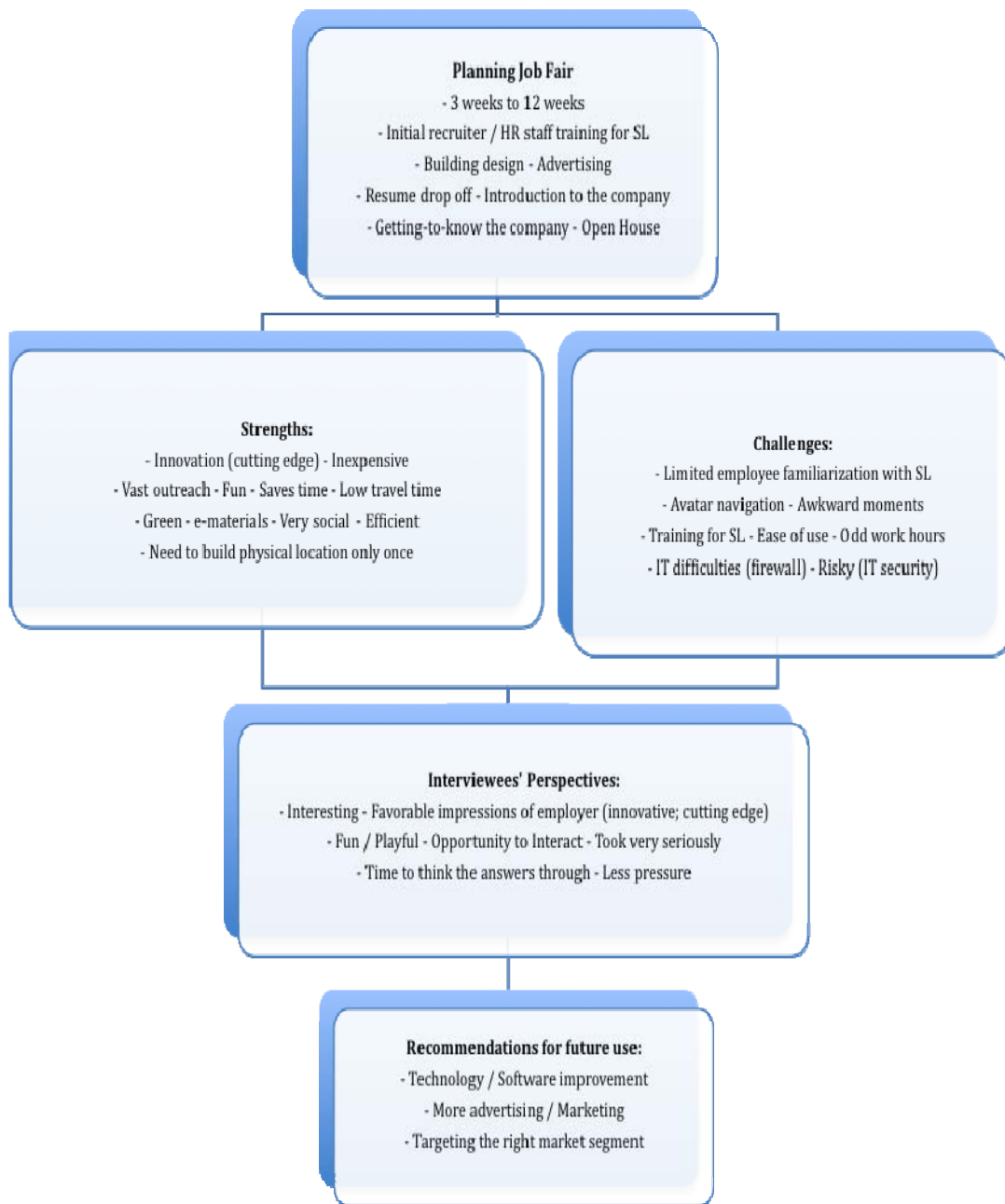
Q.9: What would you do differently if you used SL for a job fair next time?

The questions were unfocused and unstructured as the study was undertaken to explore issues that emerge from the interview data, typical of exploratory research.

RESULTS

All of the most important responses are assembled in a graph that visually illustrates the general trends in the acquired responses (see figure 1).

Figure 1. Companies' responses



One of the most interesting tendencies was time-efficiency. All respondents claimed that shipping materials, traveling to the physical locations, and creating brochures and presentations and then making printouts were much easier for virtual recruiting. However, all did mention that they spent quality time educating their employees, who were unaware of Second Life and its functions. The employees were trained on how to use the software and how to navigate the avatars, and so on and so forth. But once the virtual “island” or location was built, there was no need to change it or move it around. It is completely reusable for further job fairs. And that is exactly what some of the corporations did – they used their virtual space to hold several job fairs and

product-launching events. As one of the corporations' Vice President for employment, brand, and strategy development mentions, once the logistics were polished, it took only 10 days to promote their second SL job fair before it took place. They only had to brush on the recruiters' knowledge on how to navigate the avatars.

One peculiar difference between the respondents was that all three had drastically different number of recruiters or associates participating. However, all had roughly similar success rates with candidates that were interviewed: most companies have only been able to hire one employee on an average per job fair. Since most respondents were from high-tech companies in the world, it makes sense that they required less physical labor to start the SL use and conduct all the virtual interviews and recruit several candidates after face-to-face interviews. When respondents who were in charge of SL job fairs' organization talked about advantages and disadvantages of utilizing this high-tech method for job fairs, they all seemed to agree with several main points. One being that SL job fairs were extremely time and cost efficient, as well as green. One representative mentioned that SL job fairs offered amazing scale and outreach to the public that was not reachable beforehand. The main challenge that all respondents noticed was avatar navigation skills. Several awkward moments resulted from poor avatar manipulations. The job fair could not be launched before all recruiters and representative were familiar with what they were doing on SL with avatars of themselves. The next complication that sounded often was the ease of use – the software is still quite comprehensive and inexperienced computer user will less likely feel comfortable even to download SL. It turned out that there were two completely different opinions about the SL. One group perceived it as video gaming and did not feel contented to use it. And another group understood it was a piece of new virtual technology, however, did not choose to use it due to its complicated download and set up process. Therefore, if the barriers to get started with SL will be lowered for people who have little computer experience, it will be possible to get more SL job fair attendees. Furthermore, Sodexo representative brought up firewall issues as some of the highest challenges. At certain times the firewalls would not let people log on, join the SL, or do anything within it. Thus, there were multiple obstacles in existence that should be worked through. One of the interviewed companies came up with an interesting solution to one of those barriers. To limit the possibility of highly experienced and looked for candidates not being able to attend the job fairs on SL, they gave prospective attendees an option of creating an avatar for them. Such help was accepted very well among the attendees and they were able to use an avatar that would establish a positive first impression.

It seemed like a general trend among all three corporations to acquire just a few new employees through SL job fairs. Most of them admitted they decided to try this new medium without knowing what outcome to expect. And one of the interviewed companies' executives pointed out that the expenses for consecutive job fairs through SL are so minimal that it does not matter if you hire a single employee out of it or not. It is simply good enough to establish virtual grounds in SL for pure company marketing and public relations purposes. Merely by showing the virtual visitors what their company values stood for and what kind of business they were was to attract positive attention to the company, which encouragingly affected its perceived image.

According to the three corporations, most of the job fair visitors and interviewees enjoyed themselves throughout the SL job fair. Opinion about what kinds of people attend SL job fairs differed from corporation to corporation. Microsoft executive argued that most of the visitors have been previous SL users, whereas both Sodexo and EMC executives stated that most of the visitors were first-time SL users. Mainly it depended on the way the job fair was advertised. If the ad for the SL job fair was posted on-line only and there was a direct link to the web site to register, it would naturally attract more computer and network-confident people. While, if some new ads with web page addresses appeared on the recurring advertisements and commercials that a particular company did, it would attract more of regulars and people that do not normally go to a virtual world to make a good impression on a recruiter. An executive from Sodexo for example mentioned that their corporations, being an only hospitality company to have a SL job fair, used different promotional strategy when tried to attract the candidates they needed. In contrast to Microsoft and T-Mobile, which created completely new ads, they added a link to register for a SL job fair on-line to the pre-existing advertisements. This allowed focusing on the same pool of candidates they used to target, but giving them a wider array of options on how to contact the possible employer.

Several executives mentioned awkward moments among the avatars of employees and interviewees; however, it did not prevent people from enjoying the process. Although the avatar navigation takes some skills, it is definitely possible to acquire after several hours of practice. Both recruiters and job fair browsers had to go through the same before they learned how to walk, fly, or use any other mode of travel, how to pull anything out of their inventory or such. Therefore, both sides are patient and understanding of each other.

As most of the companies' executives suggested, the SL interviews were very similar to the ones we had over the phone. It is just too of a new concept. Furthermore, most people expected it to be exactly same as the phone interviews. In essence they were similar, but with several significant distinctions: people had a choice of whether to speak with their voice over cameras or to converse over a typewritten chat and such interviews were way more interactive. All SL job fair visitors that would like to be interviewed do not have to schedule a phone call, instead they can do it on the spot right at that moment in time. Thus, both phone and virtual SL interviews offer similar advantages of anonymity, but only the second medium offers instantaneous interactive first phase of evaluation, where one can act and react.

All three interviewed companies agreed that this type of job fairs have a big future ahead. When a few desirable software modifications take place, this type of method will be preferred, as wider masses of people will be utilizing virtual worlds for various purposes. Microsoft executive believed it was definitely an interesting way of getting to know candidates, who came from a pool of people who normally would not be reached. EMC executive believed the problem of a high barrier to enter a virtual world such as SL was the main reason why the use of it had not hit the ceiling yet. We are still in a world of "push" for this, where this type of technology is being forced onto population. While it is important to keep pushing it, it is also extremely important to outgrow this concept into a "pull" when it will be absolutely necessary to own an account in a virtual environment

like SL in order to maintain one's successful advanced status in a professional world. Furthermore, Web 2.0 such as Facebook and Twitter are just catching on with enterprises these days, therefore it might take another decade for the virtual worlds to become a part of regular life of corporations.

All three companies seemed to be positive about the fact that they should hold another SL job fair that would be beneficial to the company overall. When discussing what corporations would do differently during their next SL job fair, they seemed to navigate toward a more targeted promotion and advertisement of the fair. Microsoft executive said that they would advertise more to audiences that are specially aligned for those specific characteristics they are looking for in a candidate. Or Sodexho called it for a simplification. They believe the simpler the SL will become, the better it will be utilized among corporations as well as private sector. Thus, as mentioned earlier, they offered an option of creating an avatar for a job interview candidate. But after all, Sodexho executive agreed with Microsoft on the need to improve the marketing strategies – as they did not advertise the right position descriptions, hoping that a variety of people will show up, while they needed to specify that they looked for five plus years of experience. Thus, time was wasted on interviewing candidates that were not eligible for the position to begin with or candidates who were looking for something specific and found out it was not it after a lengthy process of getting through the SL start ups.

CONCLUSION

Regardless of its complications, such as firewall problems, virus threats, connectivity or trust issues, companies strive to establish grounds in virtual communities such as SL, as it is a great way to develop the brand and reach out to a different group of people, a group that is comprised of the global citizens (Quirk, 2008). We begin to see higher corporate involvement in SL. Human resources, along with marketing, brand development, and many other departments are seeking use out of it. Second Life HR has resulted in successful job fairs that allowed companies to connect with a fresh pool of candidates for future employment with them. Such networking events as SL job fairs allow people to connect on a more personal and at the same time professional manner. Furthermore, most interviewees claim financial and environmental efficiency that is associated with virtual career fair and job interviews. Regardless of how much the Second Life will be used for Career Fairs, it is definitely proving to be a groundbreaking environment for promotional, commercial, educational meeting and networking events. Therefore, there is a big future of possibilities ahead of us, global citizens of a virtual world, such as Second Life.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTRONIC TEXTBOOK USE AND COMPUTER SELF-EFFICACY: A CASE OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Applying the theoretical framework of self-efficacy, this study investigates the relationship between students' electronic textbook use and computer self-efficacy. A self-administered questionnaire was collected in two classes during the spring semester of 2009 at a private university in western New York State. A paired t-test and an exploratory factor analysis will be employed to examine the relationship. The findings of this study will be of great interest in academia because if a positive significant relationship is found between electronic text book use and computer self-efficacy, adopting an electronic textbook would be desirable as long as a majority of students have a high computer self-efficacy level.

KEYWORDS: E-text book; Computer Self-efficacy; Self-efficacy

INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges that professors constantly face is choosing a textbook that meets their needs and those of their students. The faculty member wants a textbook that gives the students the requisite knowledge; students want one that captures their interest, provides them with the material needed to pass an exam, and that is inexpensive. Over the past few years there has been a new factor in this equation: the electronic textbook (e-textbook). E-textbooks are available in a variety of formats and are inexpensive, but their use requires an understanding of computer technology. It is often assumed that the millennial generation expects technology-based study resources and has essential computer skills (Grant, Malloy, & Murphy, 2009). However, it is questionable whether the use of e-textbooks in teaching is appropriate. This is because students' understanding and use of computer are believed to play a critical role in adopting a technology in academia, including the e-textbook. Relatively few studies have directly examined the relationship between students' computer abilities and their use of e-textbooks; even fewer studies have examined this relationship in hospitality education. Thus, the purpose of the

study is to investigate the relationship between higher education students' use of electronic textbook and their computer use. More specifically, this study questions students' perceptions of computer skills and their acceptance or rejection of electronic textbooks. As e-textbooks become part of the academic mainstream, it becomes more important to understand students' perceptions of this format and their ability to use the technology associated with this method of course delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of computer self-efficacy (CSE) is based on social cognitive theory introduced by Bandura (1977). Self-efficacy was defined as an individual's confidence in his or her ability to perform a task. In explaining this construct, it was hypothesized that self-efficacy impacts a number of achievement variables. Activity choice is one such variable, where individuals with low levels of self-efficacy with regards to a specific task might avoid that task altogether, and individuals with a higher level of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in that activity (Bandura, 1977). The effort expended and the persistence of effort on a chosen activity is also impacted by self-efficacy (Bandura & Schunk, 1981). In this area, when obstacles are encountered, those with higher levels of self-efficacy increase the intensity of their efforts and are much more persistent in those efforts. Self-efficacy also has emotional effects (Bandura, 1982). Individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy are more confident in attempting behaviors and are less anxious about achievement than those with lower levels of self-efficacy.

Compeau and Higgins (1995) were among the first to examine the relationship between Bandura's theories and an individual's interaction with a computer and its accompanying technology. They defined CSE as an individual's perception of his or her ability to use a computer successfully. This early exploration of CSE began to lay the ground work for a number of scholarly endeavors to follow. One of the early findings was that self-efficacy does impact computing performance by the individual (Compeau & Higgins, 1995). They found that those individuals see themselves performing well with the computer to perform better than those that doubt their abilities.

Since its introduction, CSE has been the subject of numerous scholarly inquiries, including predictors of perceived competency (van Braak & Gloeman, 2001), the impact of aging on CSE (Reed, Doty, & May, 2005), and the impact of CSE on student usage of available technology (Isman & Celikli, 2009). These studies are nearly unanimous in the finding that the level of CSE an individual reports has a positive relationship with their usage of computing technology and applications. Van Braak and Gloeman (2001) examined the factors that impacted undergraduate students' perceptions of their CSE. The results of this study indicate that in undergraduates, self-reported CSE is depended upon five factors: the individual's attitude toward computers, computer "experience" expressed in time, the intensity of computer use, access to a computer within their home, and gender. In a study designed to examine the impact of aging on self-efficacy, Reed, Doty, and May (2005) focused on the relationship between age, CSE, and the acquisition of new computer skills. The results indicated that, regardless of age, people with strong

beliefs about their computing skills and ability to acquire new skills, are able to better perform computing skills and acquire new skills than those individuals with lesser beliefs in their abilities. In addition, positive affirmation and encouragement is of great importance on sustaining and increasing CSE in all individuals.

Isman and Celikli (2009) examined the relationship between access to computers and the level of CSE reported by students. In this study students from a College of Education were asked to self-report their years of computer usage, whether or not there was a computer present in their home, and demographic variables in addition to their perception of their level of CSE. The results of this study are consistent with those of van Braak and Gloeman (2001) and Reed, Doty, and May (2005), which indicated that as years of computer usage increased, so did the level of CSE. Yet, when examining more complicated computer tasks such as formatting their own computers, a significant number of students indicated decreased levels of CSE. However, a majority of the respondents indicated that they felt the computer courses offered at their institution did very little to impact their level of CSE. These results seem to indicate that one basic computer course is not sufficient for the wide variety of computer experience, knowledge, and usage that exist on college campuses today.

As technology advances and an increasing number of textbooks become available in e-textbook form, there is anecdotal evidence that more faculty members and publishers joining the move to that format (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2009). Recent studies have begun to examine this shift and its impact on higher education. Vernon (2006) revealed that while some students adapted to using an e-textbook, most students did not for reasons, including a preference for paper copies, time constraints associated with computer lab availability and computer portability, and their individual study strategies. In this study CSE was not directly examined, but these students indicating relatively high levels of computing ability also indicated more openness to the use of e-textbooks. A similar result was reported in Smith's (2008) study, which examined student preferences in e-textbook formatting and found that there were preferences for particular formats, based on factors such as delivery method and age of the learner. In this study, CSE was not directly examined either, but the ability to understand and use a specific delivery method was indicated as a variable impacting preference. In an examination of the usage of e-textbooks in a business curriculum, Lane-Losciuto (2006) found that while students were generally satisfied with e-textbooks, there was dissatisfaction with the ability to edit, mark, or annotate. Based on these studies, one research hypothesis will guide this study:

Hypothesis 1: Significant differences exist in higher education students' use of electronic textbook with respect to the following variables: (1) computer skills and knowledge, (2) acceptance or rejection of electronic textbooks, (3) internet accessibility, (4) electronic devices usages, and (5) socio-economic demographics.

METHOD

A self-administered questionnaire was developed based on the literature review. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: 1) electronic text book usage statements, 2) computer self-efficacy, 3) socio-demographic and computer accessibility. Data were collected in two classes during the spring semester of 2009, at a private university in western New York State. Samples were collected from two sections of a 100-level management and leadership course for students enrolled in tourism, hotel, restaurant, sport management curriculums. There were 75 students in total (36 students in Section A and 39 in Section B). These classes were sampled because their only text was an electronic textbook. The initial data collection was conducted during the first week of the semester. Students were asked to fill out the questionnaire voluntarily. Those who agreed in a survey consent form were asked to give the last four digits of their social security number and the first letter of their major. For instance, hotel majors gave an "H" and sports majors gave an "S." This information will be used to conduct a paired t-test for analysis. This data collection procedure was repeated during the last week of the semester. A total of 116 samples were collected: 57 at the start of the semester and 59 at the end.

Data will be coded in SPSS 16. Frequency and descriptive analyses will be employed to provide an overview of the respondents' socio-demographic profiles, their pre-and post electronic use and computer self-efficacy. The statistical tests to apply will be determined based on the measurement scales used to collect the data. If data were collected using a nominal scale, then they were tested using the Chi square or Phi coefficient test. Chi-square and Phi coefficient tests will be used to test the significance of group differences or correlations when data are reported as nominal scales. However, if data were collected using ratio scales, then they will be tested using paired t-test. A paired t-test will be employed to compare the means of the variables over time.

An exploratory factor analysis will be employed to (1) examine the large number of electronic text book usages and computer self-efficacy variables, (2) select a subset of variables from the larger set (14 electronic text book usages and 19 computer self-efficacy variables) based on which original variables had the highest correlations with the principal component factors, and (3) create a set of factors to be treated as uncorrelated variables for the purpose of handling multicollinearity in such procedures as further canonical analysis (Smith, 1995). Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) statistics (i.e., sampling adequacy) will be used to predict if the data would be likely to factor well, based on correlation and partial correlation. If a KMO is .60 or over, then it is acceptable to proceed with factor analysis. An eigenvalue will be used to measure the explanatory power of each factor in comparison to the original variables. In this study, factors with eigenvalues of 1.0 or higher only will be extracted and considered for further procedures. To extract the factors from the variables, principal component analysis will be also applied, because it can identify a linear combination of variables such that the maximum variance is extracted from the variables and then removes the first variance, and seeks a second linear combination which explains the maximum proportion of the remaining variance (Cramer, 1994). A varimax rotation commonly applied in social science

research will be employed, because it minimizes the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor and simplifies the interpretation of the factors. The inter-item reliability test (i.e., Cronbach's alpha) will be employed to determine the internal consistency of the items in each factor. Finally, canonical analysis will be applied to determine the relationships between factors of electronic text book usages and factors of CSE. The results of this analysis are to reveal which factors of electronic text book usages are highly correlated with which factors of CSE.

In sum, this study, building on the foundation laid by previous examinations of e-textbook uses and the concepts developed regarding CSE, will examine the relationship between undergraduate hospitality students' perceptions of their CSE and its impact on their use of an e-textbook. The findings of this study will be very important to academia and practitioners because if positive significant relationship would be found between electronic text book uses and CSE, adopting an electronic textbook would be more considerable as long as a majority of students have a high CSE level in class or vice versa. The relationships between electronic text book uses and other variables will also be revealed.

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SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PEDAGOGY & STUDENT-COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

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ABSTRACT

A dominate trend in tourism curricula development over the last decade has been related to addressing sustainability and involving stakeholders in planning and decision making, particularly community residents. Tourism curricula pedagogy methodologies are continuing to evolve to account for alterations in the landscape. Lacking resources, local expertise, and infrastructure have inhibited the development of rich cultural heritage experiences and stories in many rural communities and urban destinations like Texas though. Academic-community partnerships involving faculty and students become important avenues for taking up problem-solving activities and development of cultural experiences and interpretive stories of minority and diverse groups that have been marginalized historically. This paper aims to contribute to this important endeavor by disseminating student and instructor experiences gained in class and through an academic-community collaboration involving a contentious diverse cultural heritage project in Calvert, Texas.

KEYWORDS: Classroom Teaching, Student Development, Sustainability, Tourism Development, and Tourism Planning

INTRODUCTION

Tourism as a field of study is a relatively new addition to academia and has gradually been gaining acceptance as a legitimate endeavor, aided by an academic community that has emerged around it (Jansen-Verbeke, 2009). The understanding of tourism's role in relation to politics, economics, social issues, cultural issues, and the growing challenges surrounding sustainability makes this a multi-faceted and challenging topic of instruction and study. Gunn (1998) cites issues with tourism curriculum including the multitude of variables in tourism studies, the diverging definitions of tourism, the level of education and training in tourism studies, and issues surrounding tourism as an academic discipline. Tourism curricula, pedagogy methodologies are continuing to evolve (see, for instance, McIntosh, 1983; Van Weenen and Shafer, 1983; Jovicic, 1988; Tribe, 1997; Leiper, 2000) and our paper aims to contribute to this important endeavor by disseminating student and instructor experiences gained in class

and through an academic-community collaboration involving a diverse cultural heritage project.

Among various trends in tourism curricula development over the last decade, an important one relates to addressing sustainability and involving stakeholders in planning and decision making, particularly community residents (e.g., Solnet, Robinson, and Cooper, 2007). Busby (2003) discusses the real-world manifestation of sustainability issues via internships for students, and Jurowski (2002) believes sustainability must play an integral role in any tourism curriculum. A related call is for industry connection to student advancement (Crispin, & Robinson, 2001). Inui, Wheeler, and Lankford (2006) in fact believe that tourism in academia is ahead of industry in regards to sustainability. This is an especially relevant point with respect to student experiences at Texas A&M University, which is a land grant university in the US and exercises social responsibility via technology transfer from academia to society and communities (traditionally within the state but increasingly further).

Lacks of resources, local expertise and infrastructure have inhibited the development of rich cultural heritage experiences and stories in many rural communities and urban destinations like Texas, for example. Academic-community partnerships involving faculty and students become important avenues for taking up problem-solving activities and development of cultural experiences and interpretive stories of minority and diverse groups that have been marginalized historically. Greater attention and opportunities for visitors to experience these “missing” stories is needed in places like Texas, where demographics have shifted so that the minority Latino and Black population now comprise over 50% of the population; moreover, as agriculture and railroad services continues to decline, many rural communities have been seeking to diversify into cultural, heritage and nature-based tourism. Environmental and cultural sustainability are both important priorities for sustainable tourism curricula in such settings as Texas. Student-community partnerships provide invaluable experiences for students to apply, practice and gains sustainable tourism development and management skills, as shown below.

PEDAGOGIC PRINCIPLES & COURSE APPROACH

A core ‘management’ course at a recreation, park and tourism department in a land grant university in the U.S. lacked an instructor for Spring 2009. One of the paper’s authors was assigned to teach it, oriented towards the instructor’s specialization (sustainable tourism and destination management, collaborative planning), and a teaching pedagogy that included case studies, discussion-baseds seminar, and direct field-based management experiences. Both the instructor and the teaching assistant assigned to this course were trained in sustainable tourism development and planning. Previous offerings of this course did not contain the sustainability or the experiential dimensions added by the authors. This was the first time the instructor and teaching assistant were involved in this course.

RPTS 304 is a core required course aimed at providing key management principles to a broad range of third or fourth year students. The students’ interests and

specializations range from recreation, park, youth development, and community development to tourism. While listed as a writing intensive class with a 25 student maximum limit (departmental limit; the university recommended cap is 20 students), the small, stifling room held forty students this semester (Spring semester, mid-January to mid-May, 2009) due to scheduling challenges. This is generally a third year undergraduate course. The course this semester contained thirty-eight seniors and two juniors. The two field-based long assignments were therefore carried out by 10 groups of four students due to the larger than expected class registration. The pedagogic aims of this class are summarized under the following three categories:

Competencies, skills & values: Proactive inquiry and problem-solving, critical-thinking, reflection and analytical skills (see “course schedule”, which is attached as Table 1, for examples), collaboration, teamwork and small group conflict management, managing in local-global context (internationally); collaborative planning with NGO, industry and community partners; good writing skills, plus formatting and layout; interactive skills – discussion-oriented seminars. Core values included valuing excellence, diversity, honesty, and collaboration, along with an ethics of care and stewardship of human and ecological communities, and for the long-term sustainability of the built and non-built environments.

Core Principles: Strategic planning principles (including visioning, SWOT analysis, strategy formulation-implementation (together), sustainability oriented planning, monitoring (with sustainability indicators, formulation-implementation involving stakeholders and community residents as a key stakeholder), stewardship, managing diverse employees and diverse heritage for tourism, sustainable tourism (ST) principles (Hardy et. al, 2002; Jamal & Tanasee, 2005), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), general management principles, organization culture (Jones and George, 2009). Principles were practiced in the short and long assignments, and tested along with analytical and writing skills using real-world cases and situations.

Content: A standard management textbook was employed that was being used by an instructor who had taught the course the previous semester, and was teaching a parallel session with the same course this semester (Jones and George, 2009). This basic text book covered key topics including management theory, organizational structure and functions, human resources (with a separate chapter on managing diverse employees), financing and control systems, strategic planning, risk, managing in a global environment, etc. This was supplemented with additional topics related to sustainable tourism management (including destination management), using examples and cases from recreation, hospitality and tourism. Guest speakers provided “real world” insights as well. One was from a hospitality association (based in Houston) and a tourism industry association head (based in Austin), one NGO based guest speaker on climate change, one academic speaker experienced in tourism and the “new” IT empowered consumer, one outdoor recreation person who discussed trekking to the top of Mount Kilimanjaro and, lastly, an outreach specialist on nature tourism who engaged the

students in an interactive costing and business evaluation exercise. Some speakers also provided career and job placement information.

The pedagogic approach employed in this course also reflected other values, which included constant improvement, reflection, and interactive learning of these intangible aspects, rather than static results with no opportunity to improve grades on assignments (see Kunkel, 2002). Re-working assignments to get an improved grade was encouraged, and most students took advantage of this opportunity.

PROBLEM-SOLVING AND CRITICAL INTERACTIVE SKILLS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Reflective, interactive assignments and interactions

Weekly readings from the textbook, cases, guest speakers, and newspaper articles provoked thinking, questions, and discussion. Six short assignments, three long assignments, and a mid-term and final exam comprised the bulk of the grade requirements; bonus points were made available through interactive discussions and writing opportunities. Newspaper articles (specifically, the New York Times on-line), were a useful resource for interactive discussion and pedagogic learning and writing moments on local-global travel, as well tourism and recreation issues that were currently being debated. The articles were especially helpful in facilitating learning and generating discussion about ‘au courant’ topics such as the use of social networking sites and twitter by visitors at the internationally attended ‘South by Southwest’ festival in Austin, Texas.

One short assignment (SA #4, attached as Appendix A) asked students to reflect on their Spring Break (one week) holiday. The subsequent in-class discussion revealed the need for developing pedagogic tools to bridge the discomfort some students experienced with studying sustainability in class, but not wanting to implement their learning during travel (or at home) or to think about related ethical issues while on holiday. Of the three long assignments, two were field-based assignments with neighboring communities within a 45 mile radius.

The first long assignment (Assignment 1) addressed Hearne, a rural community in Robertson County, as a site-level planning exercise. Seventeen students attended the field trip. Camp Hearne, a fifty-acre historic WWII POW, was the focus of the trip and project. The camp currently consists of ten acres that are protected by a local NGO and forty acres that are owned by the local municipality. The forty-acre plot houses intermittent industry. The RPTS 304 students conducted a SWOT assessment and offered site level recommendations for a historic WWII POW site, in close collaboration with the local NGO whose mission was to protect and develop the POW camp for educational and tourism purposes. The SWOT analysis and recommendations from RPTS 304 students were provided to a park planning class whose instructor engaged students in designing recreational trails as well as a written grant proposal to raise funds for developing these trails (proposal submitted by the NGO on June 1, 2009).

Assignment 1 thus conveyed basic strategic planning principles and facilitated the learning of practical challenges facing rural communities that lacked financial resources and expertise. The students discovered that historic sites in need of conservation necessitated basic assessments via the development management tools such as indicators. Assignment 2 (Appendix B) initiated a dialogue between the students and faculty with a dualistic focus on managing sustainability and critically analyzing sustainability in six areas: ecological, economic, industry, social, consumers and institutional. It was a “dialogue” because the students were asked to hand the assignment in multiple times per Kunkel’s (2002) discussion on learning. They were asked to submit an assignment and were given the opportunity to repeat the assignment with on-going assistance until the assignment was correct.

The sustainable management function of Assignment 2 included three parts. First, students were asked to identify the mission statement, vision statement, corporate philosophy, position in the market, organizational culture, goals, and target market(s) of a company of their choice in the hospitality and/or tourism industry. This was intended to give the students insights into the company. Secondly, students were asked to create a sustainable distinct competitive advantage for their company based upon their knowledge of the organization. This allowed the students to demonstrate an ability to apply what they know about a company and situation to make decisions. Finally, students were asked to apply a theory from the class in order to guide the implementation procedure of their distinct competitive advantage. They were learning to apply a theory and an abstract idea to a real-world management situation in a company.

The rest of this paper focuses on the third long assignment (Assignment 3) as the key assignment that required students to undertake a problem-solving exercise related to developing diverse heritage using skills and competencies learned in class, plus employ sustainability principles in problem-solving and exploration of produce development ideas. Assignment 3 revolved around the untold story of a Hall of Fame baseball player, Andrew “Rube” Foster. Twenty-four students attended the field trip to Calvert, Texas, the birthplace of the legendary black baseball hero. The students participated in a community-based meeting, visited a local Bed and Breakfast, and observed two communities within Calvert: the white and black communities, which are segregated by a railroad track that runs through the middle of town. This academic-community collaboration was a “real-world” project, intended to address the location of a cultural marker being developed by the Texas Historic Commission to commemorate “Rube”. Future ideas for product development, marketing, and promotion were examined in addition to proposing location(s) for the marker.

The marker location was a problem-solving and inquiry-oriented activity that required critical analysis. Where the diverse community of Calvert wanted to place the marker being developed about “Rube”, and how they felt about promoting this story, was part of the exercise. Following principles learned about corporate social responsibility and sustainable tourism (both emphasizing community/societal well-being as a responsibility), planning and decision making had to include an early community meeting

to involve diverse residents with potentially different values and desires to promote stories set during America's segregation period.

As baseball is a well-loved, quintessentially American activity, it provides an opportunity to the local community of Calvert to provide visitors with a unique experience of this legendary black baseball hero "Rube". It also created a similarly constructive venue for the homogenous group of white Texan students in the class to engage actively in information gathering on Rube's background and activities, inquiry and problem identification, and the key principle of involving key stakeholders early in preliminary dialogue and exploration. The pedagogic hope was that this field-based exercise would reinforce the learning of these principles, including the social responsibility of assisting local communities with tourism-related development, and addressing the problems associated with developing (diverse) cultural heritage (see Smith, 2005).

Close assistance was provided by the main community partner who had suggested this project as mutually beneficial for the students and for the community. This individual is a well-respected community leader and was also the Historic Commissioner in the county at the time this class was negotiated. The partner facilitated a community meeting at a local restaurant called The Wooden Spoon. She facilitated the meeting with the help of a PowerPoint presentation, led the students on a tour through the parks and amenities in Calvert and liaised with students on product ideas suggested by the students, suggesting alternative ideas, and providing guidance and information to the students. The partner also informed and involved the local government (including council members) of the collaborative project, put out an information notice in the local Calvert newspaper and circulated a poster on the community meeting among local businesses, aided by the local Chamber of Commerce.

The project was important as diverse ethnic stories from marginalized populations, including Native American, Chinese-American, and African-American, have historically been excluded or remain poorly researched in Texas. Texas history books are slowly being revised to include these diverse voices and 'missing stories'. Narratives of "Rube" Foster and similarly important individual accounts of persons from marginalized populations offer great potential to bridge segregation history with the well-loved American recreation of baseball.

RESULTS: PART 1, FIELD TRIP AND MARKER RECOMMENDATIONS

The final report by the students was written in two parts. Part 1 summarized the field trip on April 7, 2009, to Calvert which include a tour of the relatively well demarcated ethnic division between the black community and white community (Main Street and the railroad divided the two areas historically), a short background of Calvert, and a recommendation on where to put marker. Quotes from the following two student groups illustrate the type of information that was provided:

In 1868, the City of Calvert was founded. The town was named after Robert Calvert, a large plantation owner who aided in the establishment of the railroad in Robertson County. At the end of the Civil War many of the citizens were

relocating to the town from their nearby plantations. They built beautiful mansions as well as churches, a pavilion, a courthouse and jail. Calvert continued to grow and prosper into the late 1800s. The town flourished from cotton and cattle until around 1900 when the population began to decline. (Group F)

Calvert is a town that is divided into two different sections, with these sections come many unanswered questions and blurred agendas... Calvert is split into two sections, the affluent or “white” side and the poor or African-American side. There is a controversy at the center of the town (Group I)

The second portion of the final report focused on the April 7 field trip to examine the town’s attractions, services and amenities, and attend the community meeting at the Wooden Spoon (Figure 2). The NGO leader lead the students around town and facilitated the meeting as well as a meal at the same restaurant after, so that students could engage in discussion with locals that had stayed behind to talk. Overwhelmingly, students stated they learned new information about a town that is in close proximity to their home but not well-known to the students prior to this assignment. As one student group observed:

Calvert appeared to be a run-down Texas town that is in need of revitalization. The main attraction to Calvert are the beautiful historic bed and breakfasts located around Virginia Field Park on the east side of town. The bed and breakfasts provide the community with tourists that stay overnight and spend their money within the area. There are two parks located in Calvert. They are Virginia Field Park and Payne Kemp Park. Virginia Field Park is a beautiful park, located on the east side of town. This park is surrounded with live oak trees, tourists, and large plantation homes. Payne Kemp Park is in west side of town and is in the bad area. The economic state in this area is very poor and does not have much to offer the community, other than its use for community members that live near the park. (Group B)

A common thread strewn through all group papers were the students observations of a bed and breakfast tour and discussion provided by the plantation home’s current owners on the “White” side of town.

His business is located across the street from Victoria Park, which is where he believes the marker should be located. He advertised the park as an area where people used to play baseball, however in a later conversation he mentioned that the African Americans were not allowed in that park and would have been forcefully removed from the park. This led us to believe...(Group J)



Figure 2: Location of the community meeting at the Wooden Spoon, Main St., Calvert, Texas
(photos courtesy of the authors)

Finally, students felt the location of the marker could be a point of contention as different opinions were evident among the stakeholders they encountered. Furthermore, the student groups differed considerably on the placement of the marker. Two groups were unable to come to an internal decision on placement of the marker. All groups provided reasoning for their recommendation on marker placement. Of the ten groups proposing marker locations no student groups recommended placing marker on the “White” side of the tracks. Four student groups argued for placing it on the “Black” side of the tracks. Four student groups suggested placing the marker on Main Street. One group recommended the High School and one group did not offer a final location but gave detailed input for each of the three locations (White and Black sides and Main Street). Reasons were given by students for each, for example:

There are several pros and cons, advantages and disadvantages to placing any information or products about Andrew “Rube” Foster on the right or the left side of the railroad tracks. In order to understand this difficulty, Calvert is a national historic district and the segregation between blacks and white still obtains a prominent dividing line between the two. (Group I)

We believe that the Texas Historical Marker should be placed in a neutral, central location on Main Street. Because we are not sure exactly where “Rube” Foster played when he lived in Calvert, a central location along the dividing line would

be best. This location provides access to all citizens of Calvert, as well as the visitors. (Group J)

Although the three possible locations discussed above all have their strengths, the area that is recommended for the marker is near Calvert High School. The high school is a community center of sorts. It is the only high school in the town, and everyone has some stake in it, whether they attend, have a child that attends, or extended family attending. During the community meeting, the idea of building a softball field was strongly voiced. If the field is built to the north of the school, near the existing track, it would give the students the opportunity to play baseball/softball, as well as learn about 'Rube' and his contribution to the sport of baseball.

This exercise built on the problem-solving steps learned in class, as well as sustainable tourism management principles including proactive planning, corporate social responsibility, ethics (including community well-being), and stewardship of natural and cultural resources). The multi-option locations chosen by the student groups, and the reasoning provided by the student groups, reflected critical analysis and also showcased the difficulties of the project as the groups were split amongst the locations.

PART 2: PRODUCT IDEAS

According to Wagner and Lemons (2009), students learn best when there is/are active participation, teamwork, knowledge construction, a calm environment, goals set by faculty with student input, challenges, a connection to what students feel is real-world applicable, and when feedback is received. Calvert A3 was designed to accomplish maximize learning according to this model. For example, students had input in product choice. Each group voted on their chosen “product” with ideas including: a mobile exhibit depicting Rube Foster’s achievement, mural painted on a wall by a local artist showcasing Foster’s baseball history, a brochure, and even a miniature baseball field memorial to Foster.

The students gained a number of important competencies and skills related to developing, planning, and managing a diverse cultural heritage. A couple of quotes illustrating product ideas are excerpted from student reports, plus an interpretive poster developed by one student group (Figure 3):

In consideration for the nature of the mural, a local artist should collaborate with the city in determining the actual finished design of the mural. (Group A)

Each group was responsible for one product development task...our group developed a product exhibit that will be displayed at the Brazos Valley African-American Museum. The story of Rube Foster is very important to the African-American community of Calvert, TX and should be articulated in a manner that is involving those stakeholders who stand to be most impacted by the development of this cultural heritage. (Group G)



Figure 3: Interpretive poster board developed by one student group (Group I)

A NOTE ON LIMITATIONS

There were limitations to the project and the understandings henceforth. First, community stakeholders were not involved other than via a singular community meeting at which one dozen community members were in attendance. Of the attendees, most did not speak, a couple showed up late, sat in the back of the room, and left early. A couple of the Black residents spoke up regularly, and appeared well acquainted with Rube's story, through close relatives that had interacted directly with the community. Greater and more involvement in the development, marketing and management of Rube's cultural heritage will be needed from the diverse residents.

A second limitation dealt with the implementation of the products. The project stayed at the strategy formulation stage. Furthermore, no follow-up occurred due to time constraints. However, students learned detailed strategic planning principles and implementation/monitoring. This was accomplished via class case studies, assignments on collaborative community-based planning, and assignments based on the utilization of indicators for monitoring. The development and operationalization of indicators was primarily transmitted to the student via assignment #2.

Assignment #2 (depicted in Appendix B) asked students to create indicators in the following topics for six sustainability focuses of real world companies: ecological, economic, industry, social, consumers and institutional. The students had difficulty conforming their critical analysis ability to include the application of indicators to sustainability practices. Yet, upon completing the assignment and re-doing the assignments until they completed it with a grade they believed would suffice the students had learned sustainability practices. This is evidenced in their application of what they learned about indicators to the Calvert project.

Finally, although there has been no follow-up by students there will be a follow-up with the community. We plan to meet with the Chamber of Commerce, council members, and members of the African-American community that were present at the Wooden Spoon. We will present exploratory class results and suggest developing a

strategic marketing plan to be undertaken this Fall as a collaborative planning exercise. The collaboration will include key stakeholders in the community as well as a graduate class in heritage tourism.

4. CRITICAL REFLECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

Student reflections

Students were invited to raise concerns, issues, and reflections throughout the semester. In class discussions facilitating reflection on issues, learnings and topics were conducted. Reflections were also requested through short assignments. The students were invited to participate in an in-class written reflection on the last day of class (with bonus points offered as an incentive), looking back over the semester, and forward into the future. Forty reflection papers were submitted on the last day of class. They were overwhelmingly comprehensive, in-depth, and thoughtfully addressed. Questions required contemplating and commenting on the textbook, course content and learnings, and on skills desired. Lastly, the students were asked to envision their desired career or job position five years hence.

On the textbook, student opinions ranged from finding it useful and clear, to recommendations for using a textbook that addressed recreation and park management (in addition to tourism management, such as Edginton, Hudson, & Lankford, 2000). With respect to the topics covered in class, many commented on the value of the strategic planning exercises and activities, and felt it would be useful in their future careers. The majority of students felt that the sustainability-oriented learnings were valuable (only one commented that there was too much focus on sustainability, as he had studied this in other classes – this student was not a major in our department).

Asked about other skills that might be needed by the students, several asked for more practical experience in implementing sustainability principles, and indicators, a couple mentioned the need to gain more human resource management skills. Lastly, the students were asked to envision where they would be career-wise in five years. The top jobs were: employee of adventure tourism business, mission trips and mission trip planning, marketing in hospitality, business owner, CVB marketing, military service, event planning, community development programs, consultant in hospitality and/or tourism industry with a focus on sustainability, youth development counseling, and hospitality management.

AUTHORS' REFLECTIONS (ON THE INSTRUCTION AND PEDAGOGY SIDE)

Following Wagner and Lemons (2009), the approach taken was one that would maximize student learning via: active participation, teamwork, knowledge construction, a calm environment, goals set by faculty with student input, a challenging environment, a connection to what students feel is real-world applicable, and timely feedback. As evidenced in the following table, the student learning experience meets criteria set forth by Wagner and Lemons (2009):

Classroom goals	Method of achievement in RPTS 304
Active participation	On-going dialogue in class between students, guest speakers, professor, and teaching assistant in class and in office as well as in the field on two assignments. Time provided for teams to meet in and out of class. Students communicated directly with community members as needed as well.
Teamwork	Students were placed into groups. Two of the three major assignments were completed in teams of four. A team attitude was fostered by the professor and teaching assistant.
Knowledge construction	Some memorization required, but main focus was applying knowledge to situations and learning new knowledge through in-class debate, discussions, reflection and real world case analysis and assignments
Calm environment	The classroom lacked the stress of many management courses. Students knew they could turn assignments in multiple times for feedback and grade improvement. They were well informed that knowledge and learning were primary, and developing good skills related to sustainable management, planning and development.
Goals set with student input	Students had input and decision making voice on their projects. For example, they were allowed to choose their company and focus for assignment #2 and their "product" for assignment #3.
A challenging environment	Students were challenged to improve in multiple areas, from their writing style to their critical analysis abilities, as well as with dealing with diverse cultural issues in project management ("Rube" assignment)
Real-world applicability	The assignments did not need a connection bridged to real-world applicability. The assignments were real-world projects. The students interacted with community members as well as tourism industry stakeholders, and also worked on case studies that were based on real situations.
Timely feedback	Students received feedback as quickly and thoroughly as possible throughout the semester, in writing as well as through face-to-face meetings that we requested. Often, papers emailed in the evening were graded and returned within a day so the student could begin working on a subsequent draft of the paper.

Table 1. Classroom goals (Wagner & Lemons, 2009) and methods for achieving them in RPTS 304

An important part of tourism management is destination management, as the students learned and commented on in their final reflection papers. In Texas, a theme of "the destination...it's all about the experience" has to consider the diverse ethnic heritages that are part of the historic richness of this area. Developing and telling the many "missing stories" is a key priority for sustainable tourism planners and destination managers. While many rural communities are not endowed with the financial resources or knowledge required to engage in conservation and development of the diverse cultural heritage present in Texas, academic-community partnerships involving faculty members and students have resulted in the development of historic inventories, business, resident and visitor surveys (on-site and on-line), plus specific products such as a prototype,

interactive community website for visitors and residents to share stories of the community's rich cultural heritage.

Developing experiences of diverse heritage such as the African-American experience, and the Camino Real National Historic Trail, with its rich history of Native American, Mexican, and Hispanic mobilities, is a crucial priority and student-community collaborations such as the one described in this paper provide for necessary transfer of technology and assistance from the university to residents, businesses, governments and communities, as well as mutually beneficial experiences and outcomes for students and other stakeholders. Such actions thus help land grant institutions in the US to fulfill their social responsibility to stakeholders and citizens.

However, it is interesting to note that no student mentioned anything about the "Rube" Assignment 3, neither ambivalence nor complaints, other than about the time constraints attached to the "Rube" project (which got mobilized a little later than anticipated as various actions had to be initiated on the community side). One student mentioned in the final reflection paper that it might have been better to focus on one field assignment and do it in-depth, while another felt more field trips and less in-class work would provide for more effective learning. Engaging students in community-based collaborations for developing diverse heritage, even one with as good a story as that of an American (black) baseball hero, can generate positive information (e.g., product ideas and mobilizing some local attention and participation in discussing the cultural marker and long untold story of Andrew "Rube" Foster). At the same time, such academic-community partnerships clearly require very careful planning and management, guided by sustainable tourism principles, if the experience is to prove mutually beneficial for visitors, students, residents and others who have a "stake" in the cultural heritage.

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APPENDIX A

RPTS 304 SPRING 2009: SHORT ASSIGNMENT 4 (SA#4) (EXCERPTED)

Over the Spring Break this week, some of you are traveling elsewhere, while a few of you are here in Aggieland. For SA#4, provide a well-organized, thoughtful *reflection paper* on your interactions, experiences and observations as related to the recreation, park, tourism and hospitality (RPTSH) industry either here if you remained in Aggieland or as related to your out-of-town travels. Include the following four points:

- (i) A brief overview of your travels if you went elsewhere (destination, accommodations), or mention staying in town if you remained here.

(ii) A review of your encounters with service providers in the RPTH industry, e.g., managers or employees at hotel front-desks, coffee shops, recreation/tour organizers (including tour guides). Focus here on interesting or challenging encounters that impacted your experience with the RPTH provider(s), include pertinent observations of service that stood out for good or not so good reasons.

(iii) Add a critical “management” reflection to the above (e.g., whether the provider is addressing sustainability issues; is there a recycling or towel/sheet re-use policy in the hotel room you might have stayed at? Did the RPTH provider exhibit any actions that demonstrate corporate social responsibility)? Add your opinion on the organization-related behaviors you observed.

(iv) As you reflect on the Spring Break week, consider your own comportment, values and ethics from a managerial perspective: Did the type of “critical” reflections you provide in response to above arise during your travels or everyday encounters, or only in response to SA#4? In other words, did sustainability and management related principles gained from your RPTS program (including RPTS 304 thus far) influence your recreation, leisure and/or travel experiences, activities and observations over Spring Break? Please discuss.

APPENDIX B

ASSIGNMENT 2: UNDERSTANDING THE MARKETPLACE IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM INDUSTRY

The Logistics

Assignment #2 is a group assignment due _____. Submit a stapled hard copy in class. The business report should be single-spaced, double-sided, and in APA format. The following sections should be included:

- cover page,
- table of contents,
- executive summary,
- proper sub-headings and paragraphs for the sections explained below,
- reference list,
- and appendices

Also send a hard copy to XXX and XXX. Although there are recommended page limits you should focus on being concise and including all relevant information.

The Rules

For this project you will choose an organization focused in the hospitality and tourism industry in the United States. Some possibilities would include: a hotel, a hotel company, an airline, a convention and visitor bureau, or a wholesale agent such as Priceline.

Part I. (1-2 pages). Describe the organization. At a minimum you should identify the mission statement, vision statement, corporate philosophy, their current position in the

market, their organizational culture, who their customers are, what their goals are, who their target market is, and other information pertinent to the company. Hint: Most of this information can be found on the website of a publicly traded company.

Part II. (3-5 pages). First, you should identify or create indicators that measure the level of sustainability for your organization in each of the following areas:

- Ecological
- Economic Community
- Industry (Tourism, Rec and Park, airline, etc.)
- Social Community
- Consumers
- Institutional

The book chapter from Sirakaya, Jamal, and Choi (2001) “Developing Indicators for Destination Sustainability” will assist you a great deal in the creation of indicators (especially pages 420 and 423). A similar appendix is recommended. Second, once the indicators are identified you should conduct an analysis of the organization’s sustainability practices in relation to your set indicators. Is your organization being sustainable, or not?

Part III. (2-3 pages). Identify an opportunity that works two-fold: will make the organization more sustainable and would function as a distinctive capability of the organization. Explain:

- what makes it a distinctive capability (include organizational attributes, open/closed organization, will this differentiation give the organization first-mover advantage, etc.)
- and how it is a competitive advantage.

Part IV. (2-3 pages). Describe and explain the management techniques necessary for implementation of the new idea in your organization. The addition of an organizational chart as an appendix would assist in relaying your message.

Part V. (1-2 pages). Finally, offer a conclusion that summarizes your information, including why the new idea will assist the organization in the current marketplace

TRANSACTIVE MEMORY THEORY APPLIED TO INFORMATION EXCHANGE IN A TOURISM ORGANIZATION: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

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ABSTRACT

This paper proposes a framework to examine the communication network in a tourism organization, looking into the effectiveness of information exchange patterns among members in fulfilling group tasks. Transactive memory theory and social network analysis serve as the theoretical and methodological foundations. Three research propositions illustrate how transactive memory theory can be used to better understand knowledge exchange and learning in tourism organizations. Implications for research and management are discussed.

KEYWORDS: Communication and information exchange; Transactive memory theory; Social network analysis; Organizational learning

INTRODUCTION

The success of organizations depends to a great extent on the effective communication and transfer of information among employees, as organizational knowledge is to a large extent distributed among its members. Thus, it is critical to determine what fosters and hinders effective communication and information exchange in organizations. This is especially important for processes that require group work. A substantial number of organizations is actively taking advantage of group forms of work (Devine et al., 1999, Yan & Louis, 1999). Underlying the positive view of group work is the assumption that performance can be enhanced if individuals with different knowledge and skills cooperate. However, group processes can be rather complex. As Hollingshead points out, "People in groups often must decide who knows what, coordinate who will do what, pool information, reconcile differences of opinion, and try to reach agreement" (Hollingshead, 2001:1080). Existing research has proven that group performance is better if expertise in the group can be correctly identified and if tasks are assigned accordingly (Hollingshead, 1998a; Littlepage 1997).

Issues of effective collaboration and information exchange are especially prominent in tourism. The tourism industry is a very information-intensive industry (Werthner & Klein,

1999) that delivers complex products which require the coordination of a multitude of entities. Most importantly, the tourism industry is fragmented in nature (Leiper, 1990; Palmer & Bejou, 1995; Wang & Fesenmaier, 2007). Although information exchange is critical, there are often barriers such as high labor turnover, a multi-cultural workforce, seasonal employment, low skills and low pay, etc. Further, tourism organizations are often dispersed geographically, making it difficult for teams to function unless processes are carefully managed and supported by technologies. In addition, the tourism industry consists mostly of small organizations in which group work is often assumed but not actively managed. Given these factors, it is beneficial for tourism organizations to establish effective TM systems to achieve organizational objectives.

To understand the structures and processes of team information-processing, transactive memory theory has made significant contributions (Moreland, 1999), and social network analysis serves as a powerful tool to analyze the flow of information. Together, they can shed light on organizational processes that are based on distributed knowledge. This paper proposes a conceptual framework to analyze the information flow in tourism organizations based on transactive memory theory (TM) and social network analysis. In the next section, TM and social network analysis are briefly reviewed. After that, research propositions with regard to information exchange patterns and TM effectiveness are derived and discussed. Last, empirical research and managerial implications are presented.

TRANSACTIVE MEMORY(TM) THEORY

Information and knowledge transfer processes within organizations are becoming increasingly complex. Thus, understanding knowledge creation and learning in organizations is a central issue. TM theory explains how an organization or organizational unit becomes a “knowledge-acquiring, knowledge holding, and knowledge-using system” (Wegner, Giuliani & Hertel, 1985: 256). The basic components of a TM system are individuals’ memories and the communication between these individuals (Wegner, 1987). Individuals divide their labor for gathering, storing, and retrieving task-relevant information. Rather than needing to know everything, individuals are responsible for maintaining and updating the knowledge in their own domain. When tasks tap into knowledge from different areas, individuals do not act independently; rather, they form a TM system through interactions among themselves and by identifying who knows what information. Thus, individuals rely on other system members serving as repositories for information outside their own domains (Wegner, 1995). Put differently, when individuals need information in others’ areas of expertise, they consult those experts instead of having to learn the information themselves. In a TM system, it is not important to know a lot of content, but it is crucial to know where expertise and information reside.

A TM system becomes active when individuals have an information need and start identifying the domains of expertise of other group members from whom they could obtain the needed information (Wegner, 1987). Directory updating, communication to allocate information and communication to retrieve information are three key processes pertinent to the TM system (Wegner et al., 1985). Wegner describes directory updating, or expertise recognition, as the process by which team members map out the distribution of expertise

throughout the team (Wegner, 1987). In order to complete a task, team members must have clear cognitions of whom to query for expertise or information outside their own areas and to whom to deliver new incoming information associated with other domains. Communication to allocate information is characterized by a team member forwarding new information outside of his or her domain(s) of expertise to the member specializing in that area who is more qualified to store it (Wegner, 1995). Communication to retrieve information involves requesting information from those who have previously, either formally or informally, been identified as experts in the respective domain. Team members benefit from a TM system in not having to retain all information. Moreover, they can readily utilize relevant knowledge in a TM system when needed by simply retrieving this information from others through communication.

Transactive memory theory emphasizes task-oriented and distributed expertise domains (Mohammed & Dumville, 2001). Therefore, it is an appropriate construct to examine the extent to which a team gathers information. Researchers have found that by identifying expertise of self and others, groups can improve their performance (Hollingshead, 1998a, 2000; Liang, Moreland & Argote, 1995; Littlepage, Robinson & Reddington, 1997; Moreland, 1999). Although TM theory was originally developed for exchanges in the context of close relationships (Wegner, 1987) and small, well defined groups (Liang et al. 1995), it has been extended to settings where knowledge is distributed among people who belong to groups both inside and outside organizational boundaries (Anand et al., 1998). Additionally, it was proposed that in ad hoc knowledge collaborations, TM theory is not limited to the problem-specific collaboration, but can be applied for understanding the expertise of future collaborators (Moreland & Argote, 2003). Under any of the above mentioned circumstances, specific communication network patterns are expected to result if teams follow the processes underlying TM systems (Palazzolo, 2005). Thus, existing communication and information exchange networks within or across teams in organizations can indicate whether TM systems have been effectively realized. Also, it can be seen whether these network patterns overlap with relationships dictated by organizational charts and job descriptions or if alternative organizational structures have emerged in order to complete group tasks. While transactive memory systems are often studied in terms of the mechanism used by group members to encode, store and retrieve information from their individual transactive memory (Lewis, 2003), active transactive communication networks describe the underlying information exchange (King, 1998) and are therefore the focus of this paper.

Despite the increasing prominence of TM theory in the general organizational literature, the concept has so far not been studied in the context of tourism organizations, which are often very different from the manufacturing companies studied to establish TM theory.

APPLYING SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS TO TM SYSTEMS

Social network analysis is set of methods that can be used to map out and evaluate the transfer of information, aid, power, money, and other resources within organizational networks. In contrast to other analysis methods, social network analysis deals with

relational rather than attribute data and applies algorithms that do not require observations to be independent. Social network analysis can be multi-theory and multi-level. As such, it is able to examine structures in a team without losing richness of organizational data (Monge & Contractor, 2003). A social network is made up of social actors or nodes from a defined set with one or more relations between them (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The relations between actors in a given set are called ties or links. Nodes could be individuals, groups, organizations, or societies, and the ties may fall within a level of analysis (e.g., individual-to-individual ties) or may cross levels of analysis (e.g., individual-to-group ties) (Katz et. al., 2004). The specific configurations of ties in a network display a composite pattern of relationships among the nodes. Ties can measure a multitude of things, including communication between two nodes, information exchange relationships, affiliation with a group, etc. The relationships a node has within the overall structure of the network can provide important information regarding the node's ability to function within a TM system. For instance, since relationships are not always symmetric, reciprocal, voluntary, or public, different people within an organization or organizational unit have different access to information, or other benefits that relationships might provide (Berkowitz, 1982).

A network analysis is conducted by analyzing significant interactional and structural features of relationships and the extended structures that contain them (Barnes, 1972; Mitchell, 1969; Stokowski, 1990a). Interaction criteria include the nature and type of the relationship (communication, formal, affective, material and flow, cognitive etc.), the direction of the ties (directional or unidirectional, one-way or two-way) and the strength of the ties (the extent to which ties are intense and durable). Metrics for quantifying the network structure include the size of the network, network density (whether there are many or few linkages throughout the network), centrality (the extent to which actors have ties with others who are not directly connected) and closeness centrality (the extent to which actors are directly or indirectly connected to the rest of the actors in the network) and so on, depending on the analyzing level of the network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). Network features are hypothesized to be determined by the behavior of the social actors under study. Additionally, the intentions and abilities of social actors to influence relational situations are assumed to affect network structures and behavioral outcomes (Stokowski, 1992).

There is only a small body of published recreation and tourism literature which adopted social network analysis despite the fact the method was already introduced to the study of recreation and tourism behavior quite a long time ago (Stokowski, 1990a; Stokowski & Lee, 1991). According to the framework presented by Stokowski (1990a), earlier work using social network analysis in recreation and tourism contexts focuses on the structures of existing community relationships that foster recreation and tourism participation (Cobb, 1988; Eckstein, 1983; Stokowski, 1990b; Stokowski & Lee, 1991) and arrangement of visitors at recreation and tourist destinations (Allen, 1980; Levy, 1989). Studies of network structures within tourism-related organizations do not exist to the knowledge of the authors. Yet, they are important as organizations have to increasingly function as quick and adaptive learning systems in order to survive in dynamic environments. This paper lays out a conceptual framework for studying TM in the context of a tourism organization, using social network analysis as the methodological basis.

RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

TM effectiveness can be defined in multiple ways, for instance as awareness of others' knowledge. Moreland (1999) identified accuracy, agreement, and complexity as the three dimensions of interpersonal awareness of others' knowledge, in which complexity is defined in terms of specialization of expertise within the group and of the level of detail group members use when describing others' expertise. Austin (2003) echoed Moreland (1999) by describing the interpersonal awareness of others' knowledge as accuracy of knowledge identification, consensus about knowledge sources (agreement), and specialization of expertise. Built on task-expertise-person units, Brandon and Hollingshead (2004) conceptualized the effectiveness of TM systems as accuracy of expertise recognition, sharedness of knowledge (degree of agreement) and participation. Lewis (2003) pointed out that the aforementioned measures were highly dependent on information characteristics of tasks, and he further argued that specialization, credibility and coordination are manifestations of effective TM systems. The higher the level of specification, credibility and coordination are in organizational TM systems, the more effective the systems are.

Another way to look at effectiveness is to measure the resulting group performance. Group performance can be understood as the effectiveness and efficiency with which the group has achieved its goals and can be measured in multiple ways. For example, in the context of performing a specific group task, group performance can be measured by time taken to finish the task and quality of group operation or decision (Decker 1998; Liang et al. 1995; Ren, Carley & Argote, 2006). Austin (2003) measures group performance in his study by attainment of group goals, supervisor perceptions of group performance, and group member perceptions of group performance. Studies have empirically demonstrated that TM systems can have positive influences on group performance (Hollingshead, 1998a, 1998b; Hollingshead, 2000; Littlepage, Robinson & Reddington, 1997; Liang, Moreland & Argote, 1995; Moreland, Argote & Krishnan, 1996; Moreland, 1999). Earlier studies addressing this issue have been laboratory experiments driven by specific tasks such as assembling electronic radio kits (Hollingshead, 1998a; Liang et al., 1995; Moreland et al., 1996; Moreland & Myaskovsky, 2000; Rulke & Rau, 2000). More recent investigations of the beneficial effects of TM systems on workgroups in organizations have also been performed (Austin, 2003; Faraj & Sproull, 2000; Lewis, 2003; Rau, 2005). However, the effectiveness of TM systems in tourism organizations has not been studied.

While determining the effectiveness of TM systems is important, it is even more crucial to determine the factors that influence it. A total of three propositions deemed important in the context of tourism organizations were derived from the literature review on TM theory. They are outlined and discussed below.

Proposition 1: Patterns of information flow within a TM system should be congruent with the official organizational hierarchy in order to achieve greatest effectiveness.

TM theory assumes that at the point of TM system convergence with organizational hierarchies, group performance will be best (Brandon & Hollingshead, 2004).

Communication flows that occur through officially recognized channels are explicitly recognized and rewarded and thus continuously reinforced. If the official channels differ from those necessary to accomplish information exchange and collaboration, friction will occur. Also, only formal communication relationships will typically be visible and therefore actively managed. Informal relationships, while often highly effective, can lead to conflict. The infamous conversation at the water cooler between organizational members that do not have official communication relationships might be seen as idle chat when indeed it could be a necessary element of the TM system.

Proposition 2: TM system effectiveness in tourism organizations is maximized at a moderate level of communication network density.

Knowledge differentiation and expertise recognition are crucial to the effectiveness of a TM system (Monge & Contractor, 2003) and can be facilitated by communication. Although some prior research has shown that communication has positive impacts on TM system effectiveness (eg., Liang et al., 1995, Moreland, 1999) other research has not (Austin, 2000, Littlepage et al., 1995). However, communication is generally regarded as being positively associated with TM system effectiveness. Network density is a factor to determine the degree of communication needed to reach effectiveness. A certain level of communication network density is required so that a member will understand what another person knows and develop different and complementary expertise if they can rely on others to retrieve alternative information. However, it takes time and effort to discern who is good at what (Moreland et al. 1996), which means that more communication does not always yield positive results. The denser the network, i.e. the more direct communication ties exist among its members, the greater the effort required to maintain communication.

Proposition 3: TM system effectiveness in tourism organizations increases as communication bridging increases.

Bridging is another factor affecting the effectiveness of TM systems. According to Granovetter (1973), bridges are weak ties that are more likely to foster the exchange of information with outside groups. Wasserman & Faust (1994) define them as lines critical to the connectedness of the network, connecting groups which would not be connected if the bridge did not exist. Bridges have positive impacts on information exchanges by facilitating access to resources. An effective TM system in tourism organizations should have bridges so that complementary information to fulfill group tasks can be obtained. The general relationship between bridging and TM effectiveness is expected to be positive:

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for Research

The important question is of course what data can be collected and how in order to investigate how communication network characteristics influence TM system effectiveness. With respect to deriving formal structures, job descriptions and interviews are critical. As far as the transactive communication network is concerned, task-related

documents and interviews can be used to derive information about actual information exchange within the TM system. A very systematic approach is needed to gather network-related relational data. Network data can easily reach enormous dimensions if too many nodes are included. A snowball sampling technique can help identify the important nodes, beginning with a random employee who is a member of the group under investigation. Each interviewee will have to describe communication relationships with the other nodes presented to him/her. Additional information regarding the direction of the communication (one-way or two-way), the intensity of communication, and the types of information exchanged can be important factors that should also be elicited.

As far as methodologies are concerned, a study investigating the research propositions will likely have to take advantage of a multitude of methodologies, most prominently content analysis of the existing organizational materials and social network analysis to investigate the structural characteristics of the network. Both can be supported by using specific computer software.

Managerial Implications

By analyzing the underlying communication structures of a TM system, potential barriers to effective communication and information exchange can be identified, increasing the performance of the respective group. Findings from a study like the one proposed can also help identify needs not only in terms of restructuring but also opportunities to use technologies in the context of such teams. Results from TM research will further make the importance of managing knowledge in organizations clearer and will make collaboration as a value, or the lack thereof, very clear.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Transactive memory theory was been identified as a useful concept to evaluate knowledge needs, human and material knowledge repositories and communication flows. The research propositions provide a basis for applying TM theory within the tourism field by capturing the structural configuration of communication flows in organizations. While many other propositions can be derived, the three presented in this paper provide an important start in tackling questions related to TM effectiveness in tourism organizations. Given the lack of research in this area, the paper will hopefully spur interest in more organizational research in tourism and specifically TM-related research. As new technologies continuously become available as tools to support TM systems, the topic itself will increase in importance. Due to their specific characteristics, it will be especially beneficial to tourism organizations to be able to effectively implement these technologies. However, this will require profound knowledge of the organizational structures needed to support them.

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EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION THROUGH LONG-TERM OVERSEAS BACKPACKING

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ABSTRACT

Backpackers, a subculture of budget-oriented long-term overseas travelers, are part of a multicultural mobile community that is continuously exposed to cross-cultural experiences but how these experiences affect the traveler and their worldviews is little understood. The purpose of this research was to identify the perceived outcomes of long-term overseas backpacking experiences by U.S. backpackers. Utilizing grounded theory methodology, twenty-two backpackers from the United States, an underrepresented cohort in the backpacker literature, participated in semi-structured interviews focused on exploring the backpacker journey from conceptualization through reflection on the journey(s). Theoretical sampling was utilized which requires data collection until saturation is reached. Using the constant comparison method proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998), it was found the long-term overseas backpacker experiences mirrored the experiential education models by Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984) with the outcomes indicating a transformed worldview. Backpacking exposed participants to opportunities for interactions, with other backpackers and locals of destinations visited, creating an awareness of the worldviews of the self through exposure to the worldviews of the other. It was found the backpacker journey required risk, freedom, trust, openness, mobility, discomfort and dependency. Returning stateside participants indicated their recreated worldview led to changes in lifestyle to reflect more sustainable living, changes in career focus, and an increased awareness of the world and how their personal and professional decisions had global impacts.

KEYWORDS: Backpacking; Experiential Education; Globalization; Cultural Literacy; Grounded Theory

The United States populace and industry is experiencing profound changes as the effects of globalization reverberate throughout the world. As the United States becomes globally interconnected with people and institutions, it is argued the need for culturally literate and cross-culturally sensitive workers is imperative. Blinder (2008) argues that globalization may be leading the United States down the path to isolationism as many in the United States are seemingly ill-prepared or ignorant of the fact that the trajectory of globalization is inevitably leading to uncharted territories which the United States citizen is generally unprepared to respond to. Reflecting earlier work by Freire (1970), O'Sullivan (1999) views the formal institutionalized educational system in the United States as perpetuating an apathetic approach to preparing globally responsive citizens. It is argued that the new world paradigm requires a global perspective and cultural literacy skills that cannot be transferred solely through traditional classroom philosophies and methodologies but must be accompanied by physical exposure to overseas experiences that challenge socio-culturally grounded perspectives. Long-term overseas backpacking

offers one mode of educational delivery through which participants expand their global perspectives, learn cross-cultural skills, and increase their cultural literacy.

The purpose of this research was to identify the perceived outcomes of long-term overseas backpacking experiences by U.S. backpackers. Using grounded theory to explore the backpacker experience from inception through reflection allowed for the emergence of the perceived outcomes of the journeys. This holistic focus on the entire spectrum of the journeys from anticipation to reflects the work by Clawson and Knetsch (1966) and is one area in the backpacker literature that has been lacking with the majority of backpackers studies focused on the actual journey, at the expense of understanding the entire process from conceptualization of the experience through to reflection on the outcomes thereof.

Following Grounded Theory methodology, the tenets of theoretical sampling were followed with participants recruited via the volunteer section on Craigslist in major metropolitan areas. Participants were interviewed in urban areas including Seattle, Cleveland, Columbus, and Chicago. Semi-structured interviews were conducted resulting in twenty-two usable transcripts. Theoretical sampling continued until saturation was reached indicated by the lack of newly emergent concepts and categories. Data analysis was conducted utilizing the constant comparison method as suggested by Strauss and Corbin (1998), one of several methods to choose from when utilizing grounded theory. Constant comparison is an iterative process requiring continuous building and testing emergent and previously emergent concepts and categories. The core emergent category, a concept and category that is the umbrella of all other emergent categories was freedom. Freedom from socio-cultural restrictions, freedom to challenge existing worldviews, and freedom to explore were some of the emerging areas representing the core category. It was found the long-term overseas backpacker experiences mirrored the experiential education models by Dewey (1938) and Kolb (1984) with the outcomes indicating a perceived transformed worldview by the participants. Long-term overseas backpacking exposed participants to opportunities for interactions, with other backpackers and locals of destinations visited, creating an awareness of the worldviews of the self through exposure to the worldviews of the other. It was found the backpacker journey required risk, freedom, trust, openness, mobility, discomfort and dependency. Returning stateside participants indicated their recreated worldview led to changes in lifestyle to reflect more sustainable living, changes in career focus, awareness of cultural competency, increased self-efficacy to work with and in multi-cultural settings, and an increased awareness of the world and how their personal and professional decisions had global impacts. This research suggests that the long-term backpacking experience is a form of experiential learning resulting in cultural literacy that is perceived by the participants to prepare them to operate in multi-cultural environs and which according to the participants is not capable of being learned in a traditional classroom setting.

Cultural literacy in this research refers to the understanding and/or awareness of a different mode of operandi that needs to be internalized in order to operate with and within foreign cultures. It is based on understanding what to look for in interactions, how to approach situations with cultural sensitivity, and awareness of how one's own cultural

traits enter into most cross-cultural situations. Awareness of other cultures and their different approaches to cross-cultural interactions is considered a basic skill that workers in the United States should aspire to understand if the country is going to stay competitive in the global market. It is argued the competitive edge of American business is at risk as the benchmarks for the competitive edge arguably shift from knowledge to the knowledge of cultures. Business practices and global relationships and their outcomes are contingent upon successful communication between cultures where the power differential has been minimized requiring reciprocity between and among culturally disparate persons and groups. The importance of the need for cultural literacy and cross-cultural understanding through overseas experiential learning has been slowly integrated into university curriculum but it is argued here that cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication should be reinforced through an educational requirement that students live, work, or travel abroad for an extended period of time prior to graduation. Some universities have taken the helm in terms of realizing the importance of overseas experiences and the marketability of globally trained graduates. Mirroring the global mission of the University of Denver, plans are to eventually mandate the participation in study abroad programs by all students prior to graduation (Bollag, 2004). Princeton University is rolling out plans to have in place by the 2009-2010 school year a program where up to ten percent of their incoming freshman will spend a year, between high school and college, overseas where they will work on social-service projects (Newsmarker, 2008). According to the Institute of International Education, this program is purportedly the first of its kind in the country and will provide the “chance to serve others while learning about the world” (p.E3). It is argued that these two programs are at the forefront of what will be a larger movement towards mandating overseas experiences as part of an undergraduate education.

The long-term overseas backpacker experience, generally practiced by those in societies in which long-term overseas sojourns are socially and culturally accepted, has been shown to have minimal participation by those from the United States relative to many other industrialized nations (Kanning, 2008). One of the reasons for the low participation of backpackers from the United States in the backpacking subculture is the dearth of support and understanding by people and institutions unfamiliar with the practice, nor the potential benefits thereof. Legitimacy of the backpacker experience is identified as a perceived barrier to participation in long-term backpacking (Kanning, 2008). The possibility exists that people in places like the United States who want to participate in backpacking may not get the support, socially or financially, to partake in such experiences so they turn to study abroad programs to help legitimize their stay abroad. Institutions of higher learning have an opportunity to lend credibility to the practice through encouraging, or requiring, students to sojourn abroad.

Long-term backpacking comes in many forms with study participants indicating their backpacking experiences abroad were an amalgamation of work, volunteerism, and studying abroad. It can be argued that each of these experiences will lead to specific outcomes but through the eyes of the participants, all of these experiences fall under the umbrella of backpacking. It is argued that backpacking is both a type of travel and a form of travel exposing participants to experiences that according to Kanning (2008) requires

freedom, risk, trust, openness, mobility, discomfort, and dependency. These components are at the core of the long-term backpacking experience differentiating it from the traditional tourist experience. Backpacking is a type of peripheral travel participated in by a minority of U.S. travelers. Overseas travelers from the United States, in general, are aligned with mass tourism characterized by their pre-choreographed experiences designed to buffer them from the harsh realities that may be encountered by other types of travelers, such as the backpackers. It is argued here that this buffer may also contribute to a lack of immersion into communities and exposure to local cross-cultural experiences that are consistently identified in the literature as part of the backpacker experience. Backpacking as a travel style has been given scant attention by researchers in the past, it currently lags behind in relation to other tourism research, and it is in its infancy stage of inquiry (Cohen, 2004). The Backpacker Research Group (BRG), a branch of the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS), indicates, “of the 76 dated references relating to backpacker and youth travel, only 11 were published before 1990” (Richards & Wilson, 2004, p.4). Since 1990 there is a notable increase in backpacker research (Hannam & Ateljevic, 2008) indicated through the increase in journal articles and publications directly and indirectly relating to backpacker tourism. Cohen (2006) views this increase as solidifying backpacker research as a “recognized sub-specialty of tourism studies” (p.1).

Travel is an integral part of postmodern society empowering travelers to contribute to greater understanding between differing nationalities (Mings, 1988) while alternatively creating opportunities for misunderstanding. Misunderstanding between nationalities many times result from a lack of cultural sensitivity, disregard for social norms, or a generalized ambivalence to existing differences. Backpacking offers a reciprocal opportunity for global understanding and education through exposing the backpacker, alongside those visited, to different cultures and ways of interacting with and seeing the world. The numerous and diverse cross-cultural experiences occurring over the course of the backpackers journey were found to lead to a differing understanding of the world, understanding a person’s place within it, and the acquisition of cross-cultural skills needed to operate within it.

Educators have a responsibility to prepare students for a globally challenging world which requires skill sets and global acumen that in previously years arguably did not exist to the degree it does today. Through encouraging or requiring student participation in overseas experiences such as those expounded upon in this research, we are better equipping students to engage with and represent the United States on the world stage.

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DETERMNING FACTORS OF SATISFACTION ABOUT
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO
FROM AMONG
VACATIONERS WHO USED CVB'S AS INFORMATION SOURCES

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ABSTRACT

Vacationer satisfaction attracts the interest of tourism researchers because of its capacity as an indicator of important psychological outcomes of recreation activity. A priority of this study was the determination of the relationship between an overall satisfaction rating and appropriate satisfaction sub-measure statements related to vacationing. Discriminant analysis was selected to determine the essential sub-measures and their strength. The procedure produced a canonical discriminant function utilizing only three of the nine sub-measures. The strongest sub-measure responsible for the widest separation was the respondent's perception of the satisfaction of traveling companions. When companions were satisfied with the vacation, the respondent was also satisfied. When companions weren't satisfied, neither was the respondent.

KEYWORDS: Instrumental Attributes, Travel Motivation, Visitor Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Some tourism researchers view vacation satisfaction as a multi-dimensional construct. Borrowing from consumer researchers (Swan and Combs; Pizam, Neumann and Reichel), who proposed that satisfaction with a product performance is the outcome of evaluation based on the instrumental performance of the product (i.e., as the physical character of the product such as cleanliness) and on an expressive performance of the product (i.e., those factors which produce psychological responses from the user such as the degree of friendliness of the service workers). The latter developed a list of 32 items representing what was theorized to explain vacationer satisfaction based on consumer behavior and destination attractiveness literature and interviews with tourism experts, public officials, tourism entrepreneurs, civic leaders, and vacationers themselves. Factor analysis resulted in the following seven domains: beach opportunities, cost, hospitality, eating and drinking facilities, accommodation facilities, extent of commercialization (or the preferred lack thereof) and environment.

Lounsbury and Hoopes also investigated recreation satisfaction in the specific setting of a vacation. Pilot interviews with persons who had recently returned from a vacation resulted in an inventory of projected reasons for taking vacation and the benefits these people expected to receive from their vacation. The inventory was restricted to a listing of 20 items believed to measure satisfaction with different aspects of the vacation.

The areas of expected concern for these family vacationers included: accommodations; food; amount of money spent; how one's child (children) behaved; amount of fun and relaxation experienced; scenery; weather; pace-of-life; opportunities for engaging in favorite and new leisure activities; opportunities for being close to nature; socializing with other people; being alone; and getting away from home.

A vacation satisfaction measurement was created by Lounsbury and Hoopes by asking participants to indicate a single-item overall satisfaction rating plus a six-item composite measure of positive affective states which described how the person felt while on vacation. This was similar to the measure of global life satisfaction developed by Campbell, Converse and Rodgers. For the vacationers the "feeling items" were: contented, not moody, relaxed, not serious, and not worried. Scores for the items were factored with the overall satisfaction item to produce a composite seven-item vacation satisfaction profile.

As Buchanan notes, an expanded view of the recreation experience is essential to correctly discern not only the primary dimensions which contribute to satisfaction, but "secondary activities also engaged in (which) may significantly affect the overall collection of satisfaction ratings normally attributed to a single activity." Rather than identifying only direct, individual experiences of the activity, Buchanan advocates examining groups of scores that define the entire set of activities engaged in during a single recreation experience. For example, factors directly associated with vacationing plus those activities accompanying the entire experience were included in the calculation of overall satisfaction. Secondary activities found to contribute significantly to the satisfaction level of vacationers in the study included the pacing of the experience, the amount of relaxation the person felt had accumulated during the vacation, the chance for engaging in new recreational activities, and the conduct and satisfaction level of family members.

A select list of factors from the above studies were used in this study to determine the level of satisfaction of visitors to Albuquerque who used information obtained from mailed CVB materials.

THE SAMPLE OF VISITORS

The sample consisted of vacationers to Albuquerque, New Mexico during the summer. Subjects were divided into three groups: two control groups were used to measure any pre- or post-bias in answering the questionnaires, and one experimental group. At the end of May 750 subjects in the Experimental Group were asked to participate in two stages. Subjects were asked to complete and return the pre-trip questionnaire immediately if they were planning to visit Albuquerque during the months of June, July or August. If they were not planning to travel to Albuquerque they were instructed to return the questionnaire indicating their status as unlikely vacationers to Albuquerque for that summer.

At the end of August a second questionnaire packet was mailed to those subjects in the Experimental Group who indicated in the pre-trip questionnaire they would be visiting Albuquerque during the summer. This second questionnaire packet contained one post-trip questionnaire with a brief review of the study's purpose and importance.

Data on each subject in the experimental group was collected through two separate mailings, via a pre-trip questionnaire and a post-trip questionnaire. Matching pre-trip with post-trip questionnaires was accomplished by a two-step process. Each of the return envelopes was numbered and numbers appearing on the pre-trip and post-trip envelopes were the same for each individual. Each of the questionnaires also contained questionnaires inquiring about the birth date, gender, and zip code of the respondent. When questionnaires were returned, they were matched according to the number system on the envelopes and the socio-economic data contained within the questionnaires.

THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The initial step in designing the pre-trip and post-trip questionnaires was to identify factors (dimensions, sources, attributes) related to the vacation experience which are known to contribute to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

In the first stage of the study subjects were instructed to complete a pre-trip questionnaire by rating eight motivational statements and 21 instrumental attributes relating to the expectations of visiting Albuquerque. The post-trip survey asked subjects to rate the importance of the motivations and the 21 instrumental attributes based on their new, experiential knowledge of Albuquerque, plus one question was to determine the overall satisfaction rating of each subject with his/her vacation. Government or military travelers were excluded from the results. Nine sub-measures were rated by respondents in the post-trip questionnaire. Response rate was 44 percent.

Subjects in the pre-trip portion of the study were asked to identify the features considered to be important to tourists who visit an urban destination. These motivational aspects were rated using a seven-point scale ranging from *Extremely Important* to *Extremely Unimportant*, with *Neither Important or Unimportant* as the mid-point. The question "I am looking forward to this trip to Albuquerque because it will provide....." listed the following set of motives:

- 1) Career education
- 2) A chance to see new or unfamiliar things
- 3) Time to spend with friends or family
- 4) Business opportunities
- 5) A chance to learn about a different culture and area
- 6) A chance to be with people other than family or friends.
- 7) Relaxation
- 8) A pleasant climate

Then subjects were asked to rate their expectations of the instrumental attributes of the experience using a variation of the Delighted/Terrible Scale (Maddox). This scale measures the expectations, and later in the post-trip surveys the level of fulfillment, of the trip to Albuquerque.

Pre-Trip and Post-Trip Instrumental Attributes:

- 1) Scenic beauty
- 2) Interesting architecture
- 3) Friendly residents appealing festivals
- 4) Historic features
- 5) Shopping opportunities
- 6) Variety of restaurants
- 7) Religious significance
- 8) Quality of recreational facilities
- 9) Lodging facilities hospitality of tourism service workers
- 10) Networking opportunities with colleagues
- 11) Educational opportunities
- 12) Nightlife and entertainment
- 13) Fair Deal for my money
- 14) Business opportunities
- 15) Variety of sports facilities
- 16) Opportunities for rest and relaxation
- 17) Safety against crime

THE RESULTS

Aggregate results of Pre-trip motivation ratings and Post-trip fulfilled motivation ratings are presented in Table 1. The highest rated pre-trip motivation was “a chance to learn about a different culture or area.” Because of its climate, typography and general ethnicity, Albuquerque is a destination which is distinctly different from other regions in the United States. Tourism industry officials have capitalized on this divergence by developing several museums and a cultural center which provide presentations and interpretations of the history and current role of the Native Americans in the state, by preserving Old Town Plaza as the historical center of the city and by supporting and promoting state and federal monuments and parks in the surrounding area.

Curiously, when pre-trip and post-trip paired ratings of this motivation were compared, it was rated significantly lower in the post-trip questionnaire than in the pre-trip sampling. A possible explanation for this occurrence is that vacationers who made the trip to Albuquerque were able to discover not only the differences, but also the commonalities with their home locations. Along with its Native American and

Table 1. Aggregate Results of Motivational Ratings

	Survey Groups					
	Pre-trip n=264			Post-Trip n=162		
	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean(a)</u>	<u>Std. Dev</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Mean(a)</u>	<u>Std. Dev</u>
A Chance to Learn About a Different Culture or Area	1	2.08	1.0	2	1.95	1.1
A Chance to See New or Unfamiliar Things	2	1.98	1.0	1	2.10	1.1
Relaxation	3	1.80	1.3	4	1.72	1.4
A Chance to Get Away from the Daily Routine at Home or Work	4	1.61	1.5	3	1.83	1.2
Time to Spend With Friends or Family	5	0.73	2.0	5	0.99	2.1
A Chance to be with People Other Than Family or Friends	6	-0.26	1.7	6	0.13	1.6
Career Education	7	-1.07	1.8	7	-0.44	1.9
Business Opportunities	8	-1.14	1.8	8	-0.85	1.9

a. As measured on a Likert-type scale where 3 = Extremely Important; 2 = Very Important; 1 = Important; 0 = Neither Important Nor Unimportant; -1 = Unimportant; -2 = Very Unimportant; and -3 = Extremely Unimportant.

Spanish heritage, desert climate and mountainous borders, Albuquerque is a thriving American city with the urban conveniences of freeways, national fast-food and restaurant chains, international hotels, an active performing arts agenda, modern shopping centers, and more than 60 firms engaging in electronics and technology manufacturing. Discovering that Albuquerque was not as unique as what was expected may have influenced the post-trip responses of subjects.

Also registering as important in both groups were the motivations “relaxation,” “getting away from the daily routine,” and “time to spend with friends or family.” The remaining three motivations for both groups --- “a chance to be with people other than family or friends,” “career education,” and “business opportunities” --- recorded means in the “neither important nor unimportant” or “unimportant” categories.

Aggregate Pre- and Post-trip ratings of destination features appear in Table 2. “Scenic beauty” earned the top position in both listings by receiving a mean of 2.39 from Pre-trip respondents and a mean of 2.37 from Post-trip respondents. Scores indicate the scenic beauty of Albuquerque was expected to be “very good” by respondents before the vacation, and was gauged to be “very good” after the actual visit. The rankings for both groups are similar (rank correlation = 0.792) except for one instance. The major difference in rankings appeared with the feature “nightlife and entertainment.” The Pre-trip group rated his feature before going to Albuquerque as being “very good with a mean of 2.16 for a third place among the 21 features. Post-trip respondents rated “nightlife and entertainment” as being fair with a mean of 1.44 and 17th place among the 21 features.

Table 2. Aggregate Results of Pre-trip and Post-trip Expectation Ratings

	Survey Groups					
	Rank	Pre-trip(a) Mean(b)	Std. Dev	Rank	Post-Trip(a) Mean(b)	Std. Dev
Scenic Beauty	1	2.39	0.85	1	2.37	.97
Historic Features	2	2.16	0.86	3	2.23	.77
Nightlife & Entertainment	3	2.16	0.86	17	1.44	1.3
Pleasant Weather	4	2.13	0.88	2	2.26	.79
Opportunities for Rest & Relaxation	5	2.09	0.92	8	1.97	.90
Cultural Opportunities	6	2.08	0.87	5	2.08	1.0
Interesting Architecture	7	2.01	0.85	7	2.00	1.0
Hospitality of Tourism Service Workers	8	1.79	1.0	5	2.08	.83
Appealing Festivals & Fairs	9	1.76	.94	3	2.23	.97
Lodging Facilities	10	1.74	.98	9	1.82	1.2

Variety of Restaurants And Local Food	11	1.73	.99	9	1.82	1.1
Shopping Opportunities	12	1.70	1.1	12	1.68	1.1
Friendliness of Residents	13	1.68	.94	11	1.71	1.0
A Fair Deal for My Money	14	1.61	1.0	16	1.48	1.0
Safety Against Crime	15	1.50	1.2	18	1.43	1.1
Quality of Recreational Facilities	16	1.40	1.0	15	1.54	1.1
Educational Opportunities	17	1.28	1.3	14	1.58	1.1
Religious Significance	18	1.20	1.2	13	1.66	1.1
Association with Colleagues	19	1.12	1.3	21	1.07	1.4
Business Opportunities	20	0.94	1.2	20	1.08	1.3
Variety of Sports Facilities	21	0.85	1.2	19	1.12	1.2

a. The number of each group varies since subjects could elect to answer the question or indicate the question was not applicable. N for Pre-trip expectations varies from 98 to 263; n for Post-trip expectations varies from 43 to 159.

b. As measured on a Likert-type scale where 3 = Excellent; 2= Very Good; 1 = Fair; 0 = Average; -1 = Below Average; -2 = Poor; and -3 = Terrible.

As a group, Post-Trip respondents were “pleased” with their trip to Albuquerque as they recorded a mean of 2.30 for the Overall Satisfaction statement (see Table 3 for results). Also accumulating scores within the “pleased range were the satisfaction sub-measure statements relating to the satisfaction associated with the decision to go to Albuquerque (mean of 2.38), and the level of enjoyment associated with the trip (2.29). The remaining four satisfaction sub-measure statements rated on the Delighted/Terrible scale recorded means in the “mostly satisfied “ range. On a different scale, the satisfaction sub-measure statements related to the worthiness of the physical effort to take

the trip (2.34), the worthiness of the time involved to take the trip (2.48), and the option to recommend the destination to others (2.35) each received means in the positive range.

Table 3. Aggregate Results of Satisfaction Ratings

<u>Satisfaction Statements</u>	Post-trip Survey Group n=162	
	<u>Mean(a)</u>	<u>Std. Dev</u>
Worthy of Time Involved(a)	2.48	.82
Satisfaction with Decision to go to Albuquerque(b)	2.38	.86
Worthy of the Physical Effort Involved(a)	2.34	.89
Overall Satisfaction(b)	2.30	.87
Level of Enjoyment with Trip(b)	2.29	.82
Satisfaction of Traveling Companions(b)	2.06	.90
Conduct of Tourism Workers(b)	2.04	.84
Conduct of Other Visitors(b)	1.83	.75
Money Spent to Take the Trip(b)	1.73	.83
Recommend Destination(a)	2.35	1.1

a. As measured on a Likert-type scale where 3 = Definitely Yes; 2 = Yes; 1 = Reluctantly Yes; 0 = Maybe Yes; Maybe No; -1 = Reluctantly No; -2 = No; and -3 = Certainly Not.

b. As measured on a Likert-type scale where 3 = Delighted; 2 = Pleased; 1 = Mostly Satisfied; 0 = equally Satisfied and Dissatisfied; -1 = Mostly dissatisfied; -2 = Unhappy; -3 = Terrible.

Since the analysis was conducted between two groups of vacationers and their satisfaction scores (those who were “delighted” and respondents who were “less than delighted”), only one canonical discriminant function was obtained. A histogram of the discriminant scores of all cases locates each case along the function. The group centroid for respondents in the “delighted” group (Group 1) was 0.942. The group centroid for respondents in the “less than delighted” group was -0.848. The means are separated by 1.790 standard deviations along the composite of variables which make up the canonical discriminant function. Every case was assigned its place along the continuum according

to its score on the canonical discriminant function, which explained 100 percent of the variance. Chi square for the function was 76.907 (3 d.f.), which was significant to the 0.000 level.

The histogram displaying the dispersion of discriminant scores for cases of “delighted” vacationers shows these respondents to cluster . The distribution of discriminant scores for cases from respondents who received less than optimal satisfaction from their trip to Albuquerque is notable for its wide dispersion of cases scores encompassing the lower two-thirds of the continuum. This quality, plus the negative centroid value, strengthens the contention that distinct differences exist between respondents who were optimally satisfied (delighted) and those who were not. In question are the particular variables which create those distinct differences. The stepwise procedure produced a canonical discriminant function utilizing only three of the nine sub-measures. Those variables were the satisfaction of companions (SATCOMP), the level of enjoyment each respondent received from the trip (ENJOY), and the evaluation about the money spent to take the trip (MONEY). In comparison with the first two variables, the strength of MONEY was meager. The perception of the level of satisfaction of traveling companions contributed the most discriminating power to the composite function as it attained the highest coefficient (0.83233). Simply put, when companions were satisfied with the vacation, the respondent was also satisfied. When companions weren’t satisfied with the vacation, the respondent was also dissatisfied. Compared to other variables, the prominence of satisfaction of companions influencing overall satisfaction was unexpected.

SUMMARY

The results of the discriminant analysis underscore the concept of a hierarchy which permeates the satisfaction evaluation process as professed by Swan and Combs. On the one hand, expectations about destination features are thought of as specific and disconfirmation comes directly from comparing pre-experience expectations about the destination with performance. Expectations are likely to be skewed toward positive evaluations since an obvious assumption is that the destination compliments the interest of the vacationer. Otherwise, why would the location be selected for the vacation if it did not support features that were attractive to the potential vacationer? As Crompton points out, destination features are an important consideration of prospective vacationers because they serve as the criteria to select a particular destination over another. Destination features important to each individual must measure up to that importance level after the vacation for the individual to feel that the destination choice was appropriate.

On the other hand, the satisfaction judgment appears to be evaluated on a plane of comparison different than the one used to evaluate objective destination features. During interviews with vacationers to uncover pleasure travel motivations, Crompton discovered a distinction involving usage of instrumental and expressive attributes of the destination. He wrote: “It often became apparent that while initial concern and effort had been with

selecting a vacation destination, the value, benefits and satisfactions derived from the vacation were neither related to, nor derived from a particular destination's attributes. Rather, the satisfactions were related to the social or psychological factors unique to the particular individual or group involved (1979:41)."

A vacation, then, has a character and a complexity beyond the existence of the instrumental factors associated solely with its location. More likely, the choice of a vacation hinges upon the destination's features while vacation satisfaction depends upon the individual's ability to fulfill personal motivations. What is suggested is that the vacation represents a social event where the interplay among actors becomes the determiner of value. The vacation represents a time when and a place where relationships, whether they are among family members or friends, are enriched or enhanced (Crompton). With the mantle of routine responsibility discarded and the separation from varying time schedules suspended, persons traveling together are afforded the opportunity to enjoy those qualities which connected them in the first place. Appreciation of time and activities experienced together appears to be a primary factor on which satisfaction is judged.

The flow of interactions among group member which determines the satisfaction judgment lies outside the control of destination administrators. However, tourism planners and developers could find benefits in creating or maintaining an appropriate number and variety of attractions and support services to serve as comfortable settings where relationships between the vacationer and his/her companions could be strengthened.

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SATISFACTION OF INDIAN TOURISTS ON BANGKOK AREA HOTELS

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study are to identify Indian tourists' demographics and examine the level of satisfaction of Indian tourists on Bangkok area hotels. The findings show that Indian tourists are generally satisfied with the Bangkok area hotel's attributes. Particularly, the results show that the tourists are very satisfied with the cleanliness of hotel room and public areas, security, and physical appearance of the hotels, however less satisfied with the food of the hotel and English speaking skills of the staff.

KEYWORDS: Bangkok hotels; Indian tourists; Satisfaction; Tourist satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Satisfied consumers bring success to the business. They are likely to repurchase and recommend products to their families and friends. Therefore, understanding satisfied consumers' needs is critical. Thailand is a well known international travel destination. In 1991, the ancient cities in Thailand, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, were declared World Heritage sites by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Since then they have become attractive to international and domestic tourists (Peleggi, 1996). In addition to its well known historical attractions, Thailand also has an excellent reputation in world-class accommodations, especially the beach resorts in Phuket, Samui, Krabi, Pattaya, and Hua Hin. The World Tourism Organization (WTO)

(2007) reveals that Thailand has strong tourism growth potential. The country had a 20% increase of international arrivals and ranked third in Asia and the Pacific region to receive the high market share (US\$ 12,423 million) after China (US\$ 33,949 million) and Australia (US\$ 17,840 million) in 2006.

Deutsche Bank research (2005) reveals the top five Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates from 2006 to 2020, with India ranked as the highest growth center, followed by Malaysia, China, Thailand, and Turkey. India is one of the biggest potential outbound markets (expresshospitality.com, 2001). The statistic from the India Bureau of Immigration also shows that Indian outbound travelers form a lucrative market. Every year Indians travel to foreign countries in a large number, which has increased dramatically, reported at 6.21 million Indian outbound visits in 2004, 7.18 million in 2005, and 8.34 million in 2006 (Market Research Division of Government of India, 2007). Due to the country's economic growth, there are more middle class Indians who have more purchasing power than ever before. These Indian middle class consumers are well educated and fluent in English; therefore traveling to foreign countries is more feasible (ITB Berlin, 2007).

The Police Department of the Thai Immigration Bureau shows that Indian international arrivals increased by 15.89% or 443,528 arrivals in 2007, up from 382,702 arrivals in 2006. The majority of arrivals are by air (420,968 out of 443,528). Indian travelers spend an average of six days during their stays in Thailand. Thai and Indian governments cooperated in adding more flights between the countries with the goal to increase the number of seats to 10,000 per week within three years, resulting in more flights to Bangkok from Bangalore in 2006, and from Kolkata, and Hyderabad in 2007 (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2007).

This growth is a business opportunity for hoteliers to increase the market share, since there is a trend of increasing the Indian market that already has shown demand for travel and increased purchasing power to spend for the trips. Of the countries making up South Asia, Thailand has the greatest share of Indian travelers. To capitalize on this business opportunity, hospitality professionals need to study Indian travelers' satisfaction on Bangkok area hotels. However, there is no current research reported on the Indian travel market. This study, therefore, examined Indian tourists regarding their travel experience with the Bangkok area hotels to gain better understanding of Indian tourists' behavior.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data Collection

The study was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects prior to the field study. The sample was a convenience sample of 300 Indian tourists who visited the Bangkok area of Thailand during July 24-August 14, 2008. A self-administered survey was used to collect data at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok. The study was conducted during

different departure flights, days, and times to reduce bias. On average, 13 flights per day depart Suvarnabhumi International Airport to the following airports in India: Delhi Indira Gandhi International Airport, Calcutta Airport, Guwahati Airport, Bombay Santa Cruz International Airport, Hyderabad Airport, Madras International Airport, Bangalore Airport, and Gaya Airport.

Instrument Design

The questionnaire was available in English, Hindi, and Gujarati. The last two languages are the most widely spoken in India. The double translation method was used for the translation process by bilingual experts (English/Hindi, English/Gujarati). The questionnaire included demographics and level of satisfaction. Level of satisfaction of Bangkok area hotels was the five point Likert Scale ranged from one (1) indicating “very dissatisfied” and five (5) indicating “very satisfied”. The attributes were based on the studies of Kozak (2002) and Ngamsom (2001). The questionnaire was validated by researchers who were specialized in the area of consumer behavior. The questionnaire was then adjusted in content and format based on the suggestions of researchers and Indian tourists for content validity and reliability.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and means, were calculated.

FINDINGS

Sample characteristics were shown in Table 1. The sample size selected was 300. The total of 150 usable responses was obtained. The study found that Indian tourists who visited the Bangkok area were mostly males on an average age of 38 or in the early adulthood (20-45 years old) (Zgourides, 2000), most of them were married. Most of tourists were from Mumbai and New Delhi where Hindi language was widely used. Tourists were highly educated with bachelor’s and master’s degrees. The majority were self-employed and employed by companies. The household income was evenly distributed among all categories.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Indian Tourists.

<i>Demographics</i>		<i>N (150)</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Gender	Male	112	75.2
	Female	37	24.8
Marital status	Married	106	76.3
	Single	33	23.7
Residency (city of India)	Mumbai (Maharashtra state)	41	42.3
	Banglore (Kanataka state)	4	4.1
	Pune (Maharashtra state)	6	6.2
	New Delhi (Delhi state)	29	29.9

Punjab state	11	11.3
Rajasthan state	6	6.2

(table continues)

Table 1. (continued).

<i>Demographics</i>		<i>N (150)</i>	<i>(%)</i>
Mother tongue	Hindi	83	59.3
	Gujarati	10	7.1
	Marathi	10	7.1
	English	7	5.0
	Panjabi	6	4.3
	Others	24	17.2
Age	18-19	7	5.2
	20-45	89	65.9
	46-65	32	23.7
	66 and over	7	5.2
Employment status	Employed	53	35.6
	Self-employed	55	36.9
Employment status	Retired	11	7.4
	Student	19	12.8
	Housewife	8	5.4
	Other	3	2.0
Education	High school	17	11.4
	College	68	45.6
	Post graduate degree	40	29.5
	Doctorate/Professional degree	20	13.4
Household income	INR25,000-50,000	43	30.7
	INR50,001-75,000	23	16.4
	INR75,001-100,000	10	7.1
	INR100,001-125,000	17	12.1
	INR125,001-150,000	16	11.4
	INR150,001 or more	31	22.1

Note: Totals differ due to missing data.

Table 2 shows the mean scores of satisfaction levels on hotel/lodging attributes. The physical attributes of the hotel/lodging such as cleanliness ($M = 4.09$) or physical appearance ($M = 4.03$) were ranked the highest whereas the lowest attribute was the ability of the hotel's staff in speaking English ($M = 2.99$). This indicated that Indian tourists were more satisfied with the physical attributes of the hotels; however, they were neither strongly satisfied nor dissatisfied with the staff's ability to speak English. This finding is consistent with the previous results presented by Rittichanuwat, Qu, Mongkhonvanit, and Brown (2001) that Thailand was perceived with high standards for sanitation and cleanliness.

Table 2. Mean Scores of Indian Tourists' Satisfaction on Hotel/Lodging Attributes.

<i>Hotel/Lodging attributes</i>	<i>Mean</i>
Cleanliness of hotel room and public areas	4.09
Security at hotel	4.04
Physical appearance	4.03
Staff's helpfulness	3.93
Staff's courtesy	3.92
Services from hotel staff	3.81
Value for money	3.77
Staff did right job (no need to complain)	3.75
Quality of food	3.68
Knowledgeable and well trained staff	3.61
Western food in hotel	3.51
Indian food in hotel	3.09
Vegetarian food	3.02
Spoken English of hotel staff	2.99

IMPLICATIONS

Hotels should maintain the current standard of physical attributes such as cleanliness, security, and physical appearance with which Indian tourists were highly satisfied. However, improving the current hotel staff's ability to speak English should be more emphasized. Hotels may offer an English training program for their staff. Moreover, Indian food or vegetarian food should be provided in hotels for Indian tourists as well as vegetarian tourists from other nations.

LIMITATIONS

There are some limitations in this study including data collection and generalizability of the study. Access to travelers was limited due to airport policies. The researcher was allowed to collect data at other airport areas except the departure lounge at which the researcher thought that it was a good place to collect data since the respondents would have time to complete the survey. Furthermore, the sample was drawn from visitors who departed from Suvarnabhumi International Airport from July 24 – August 14, 2008. This may cause a possible non-representation for the year round tourists and tourists using other modes of transportation. It was difficult to generalize the findings to all Indian tourists since majority of Indian tourists were from Mumbai and New Delhi. In addition, a small sample size was not sufficiently adequate to allow an analysis such as segmenting Indian tourists by mother tongues or hometowns. Moreover, according to the Indian culture, Indians give highly respect to elders and family leaders. As the result, the family's leaders (males) were overrepresented in the study since the leaders predominantly filled out the surveys.

CONCLUSION

This study presents the results of the satisfaction level of Indian tourists on Bangkok area hotels. The results show that the tourists were very satisfied with the cleanliness of hotel room and public areas, security, and physical appearance of the hotels whereas having less satisfaction on the food of the hotel and ability of staff in speaking English. Researchers believe that this study presents the practical solutions that would open business opportunities and increase competitiveness for hoteliers who aim to catch a business trend of having wealth and well-educated Indian tourists as a target market. As the future directions, researchers will conduct a study on the satisfaction level of Indian tourists in competitive cities such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Kuala Lumpur, so that the hoteliers can use the findings to develop competitive marketing strategies.

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THE RESOURCE POTENTIAL FOR CULTURAL TOURISM OF THE
PUTHAI PEOPLE RESIDING AT BANPAO VILLAGE, BANPAO
SUB-DISTRICT, NONGSOONG DISTRICT, MUKDAHAN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research were 1) to study the potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the natural, historical, and cultural tourism of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, 2) to study the potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the cultural or community products of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, and 3) to study potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the beliefs, and traditional fair festivals of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province. This research was both quantitative and qualitative. The area for study was Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province. The research samplings were Banpao community leaders group and cultural tourists group comprised of 310 persons including; 10 community leaders, 100 home-stay tourists, 100 agricultural tourists, and 100 general tourists, selected by using purposive sampling. Interview and interview forms were used as the tool for data collection, then data analysis was made by SPSS, the statistical package for the social sciences.

The results of the study involving individual factors found that most of the cultural tourists group were males whose ages were between 30 – 39 years, and whose educational level consisted of having a Bachelor's degree. Their social status was married, their occupations were government officials/ state personnel and they used tour buses for traveling. As for the results of the research's involving the potential of tourism resources management on the aspects of natural, historical, cultural tourism or community tourism products, and traditional festivals, ten standards and 50 indicators were used for the accommodations in the rural culture (home-stay) to determine the quality. In summary the criteria was mostly at the highest level, but for the results involving local organizations being suitable for the community's tourism management, it was found that there was an administrative group for management in the form of a committee, and there was suitable pricing by means of a pricing classification scale for Thai tourists and for foreign tourists.

KEYWORDS: Tourism resources; Potential; Cultural tourism; Home-stay.

INTRODUCTION

At the present the tourism industry is important for economical, political and social development (Wanna Vongpanit, 2003: 19), especially for a developing country like Thailand. The government has a very important role with the tourism industry, therefore the promotion of tourism has been done to a great extent. To attract tourists and raise the community's awareness of its potential in the promotion and support of sustainable tourism the development of plans for tourism sources is necessarily made. For example, plans for ecological tourism and cultural tourism must be made to help extend income for the community together with the increasing of tourism sources in order to provide multiple choices for tourists.

Thailand consists of many races and tribes of people whose way of life is based on beliefs which have been used as guidelines by succeeding generations until they become part of the expressed culture in the form of rituals and ceremonies. These include how to build residences, native dress and food, spoken language and livelihood which show the ability of the beautiful artisans who are also considered as valuable resources of the country, and these most valuable resources of the community need to be brought together for further cultural development.

The E-San or northeastern region is the land of one of the old cultures of the world, the local E-San people consist of many tribes of people who immigrated there to settle such as the Thai E-San, Kha, Kazo, Yor, Kaloeng, Saek, Suay, and Puthai (Paitoon Meekusol, 1988: 1). These ethnic groups of people, except for the Thai E-San people, have differences in their tribes including customs, traditions and rituals, Puthai people, in general, have a better culture and livelihood than any of the others (Srisak Valliphodom, 1990: 272-273).

Mukdahan is considered a famous province in cultural tourism, because its culture has been in existence for a long time, it is the center of various races of ethnic groups, and it is also the boundary between Thailand and Laos PDR. Being a direct route to the Indo-Chinese peninsula, it is called the hexagon economic area. Apart from this, the cultural aspect Mukdahan province has the Thai culture of eight ethnic groups including the Kha, Saek, Kaloeng, Yor, Yoei, Zo, Lao, and Puthai. At present Mukdahan province has been promoting the community to use the culture as capital for tourism management by means of raising up Thai culture as a selling point to encourage tourists from different localities to come for cultural tourism. The cultural tourism is actually aimed at education, the way of life, customs and traditions, and the culture of the people's in the community (Chanwit Kasetsiri, 1997: 8).

As for cultural tourism being a new model for Mukdahan province, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Zone 4, encouraged the community to formulate cultural tourism which is, however, dependent on the cooperation of the Puthai villagers residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, because

there are a lot of Puthai villagers residing in this community, and they are the ethnic group who have still preserved the Phuthai culture up to the present, preserving such things as language and local dress, including various traditions and culture that are still being practiced (Dokjampa, 1999: 33). This community has cultural resources showing authentic Puthai natives, and it is the village with beautiful views surrounded by mountains, therefore, the Tourism Authority of Thailand, Zone 4, has encouraged the Banpao community to cooperate in conservative tourism formulation (Anurak Thanaklom, 2003: 3). There are 98 % of the Puthai villagers population living in the Nongsoong district. They have settled in five sub-districts of the Nongsoong district namely: Nonyang sub-districts, Phu Wong sub-district, Banpao sub-district, Nongsungtai sub-district, and Nongsungnuar sub-district of which the Banpao sub-district has numerous kinds of culture and the resources are still perfect for the development of cultural tourism (Surajit Chantarasakha, 1987: 68).

The model of cultural tourism is meant to cover historical, archaeological, and religious facets of tourism including cultural factors of the various kinds of tourism resources, the cultural tourism resources are always involved because they are the tourism resources derived from human-beings and are comprised of beliefs, faith, handed-down wisdom, inventions, ways of life and the living together of human-beings in society. As mentioned, these factors are what we should study, since they are beneficial for cultural tourism, in order to conserve the national cultural heritage and to achieve sustainable tourism. In addition to this, how to manage the cultural tourism should be integrated in with the different cultures. Good friendship needs to be attained between the various groups therefore, the concept of cultural tourism is a necessary concept linked with ecological tourism, that is to say; it is the basis for sustainable tourism. Cultural tourism is likely to set guidelines for environmental conservation which are the most beneficial and worthiest without any negative environmental effects (Sunee Lieopenvong, 2003: 62-63). The most important feature of the community culture is that the community itself becomes the owner, operator, heritage successor and builder without much investment, and purchasing. Owing to the fact that Thai society has mostly had a lack of management potential in cultural resources this becomes an important indicator to consider for tourism. However, if the cultural resources are in a clearly organized system, they will be processed as the community's products and help to solve economical problems at the grass-roots level (Jarin Siri, 2006: 5-6), and this will be a great advantage for local areas.

The current trend of cultural tourism is quite interesting for tourists because tourism helps others to learn about cultures different from their own culture, the important thing is that the study is about the history and background of the nation, and the culture of beliefs, thinking, and the community's way of life. Therefore, the researcher's team is interested in studying the cultural starting point of the community, that is to say; it is a study of the background and potential of resources for cultural tourism. This is aimed at using the study's results as a guideline for the development and planning of cultural tourism, and to create additional value for the national economy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1. To study the potential of tourism resource on the aspects of the natural, historical, and cultural tourism of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
2. To study the potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the cultural or community products of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
3. To study potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the beliefs, and traditional fair festivals of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.

SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

1. The research area is the Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
2. The population to be studied is Banpao community leaders group and cultural tourists group, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

1. To learn more about the background of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
2. Potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the natural, historical, and cultural tourism of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
3. Potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the cultural or community products of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
4. Potential of tourism resources on the aspects of the beliefs, and traditional fair festivals of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
5. Development of guidelines for cultural tourism resource management of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.
6. Information for tourism planning formulation of Mukdahan province and nearby areas.
7. Policy suggestions involving cultural tourism of Mukdahan province.
8. The educational example of the effects of cultural tourism on the ethnic group of the Puthai people.

FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESEARCH

The research team scheduled this framework to study the resource potential for cultural tourism of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province as follows:

Variables	Entrepreneurs	Tourists
Independent Variables	Sex, age, status, educational level, occupation, income per month.	Characteristics of tourists group
Dependent Variables	Potential of cultural tourism resource management in the form of home-stays, knowledge and understanding of home-stay tourism.	Opinion on potential of cultural tourism resources in the form of home-stays.

The Framework of Standards and Quality Indicators Natural and Historical Tourist Destination: 1 – 4 Cultural or Community Products: 5 – 8 Beliefs, and Traditional Fair Festivals: 9-10 (Total 10 standards, and 50 indicators)			
1. Residence	7 indicators	6. Environment	4 indicators
2. Food	6 indicators	7. Additional value	4 indicators
3. Safety	5 indicators	8. Marketing	3 indicators
4. Management	8 indicators	9. Beliefs	3 indicators
5. Activities	6 indicators	10. Traditional fairs	4 indicators

Analysis/ synthesis of the potential of tourism resources for cultural tourism of the Puthai people	
Theoretical background for analysis 1. Duty structure 2. Cultural ecology 3. Cultural expansion 4. Potential for rural development	Development of guidelines for the potential of cultural tourism resource in the form of home-stays of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan

Cultural Potential
Included: 1. Natural and historical tourism are as follows: 1.1 Natural tourism is as follows: 1. Soil, 2. Water, 3. Forests 1.2 Historical tourism is as follows: 1. Architecture, 2. Sculpture, 3. Painting 2. Cultural or community products 3. Beliefs and traditional fair festivals are as follows: 1. Beliefs, 2. Traditional fair festivals, 3. Ways of life

Concept
- The concept of potential and potential development - The concept of tourism resources - The relation between ecotourism and home-stay
Theory
Theory of cultural ecology Theory of cultural expansion Theory of potential for rural development

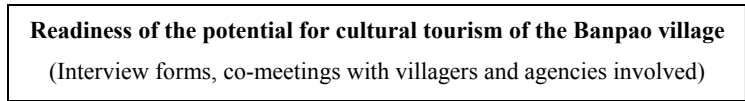


Figure 1. Framework for the research.

POPULATION: The population studied were Banpao community leaders group and cultural tourists group, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.

Research samplings: 310 persons were selected by using purposive sampling as follows:

Community leaders group: 10 community leaders were comprised of those who were scholars namely:

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------|
| 1. Director of Palangrat School | 1 | person |
| 2. Community scholars | 9 | persons |

Cultural tourists group: 300 cultural tourists were comprised of the groups as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----|---------|
| Home-stay tourists group: | 100 | persons |
| Agricultural tourists group: | 100 | persons |
| General tourists group: | 100 | persons |

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION AND HOW THE DATA WAS COLLECTED

This research was quantitative and qualitative and focused on the resource potential for cultural tourism of the Puthai people in ten aspects in Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province. Tools with structure and without structure were used for this research. There were meetings with villagers and the tourism agency of Mukdahan province. The research team designed and examined the correctness of the tools to be used for the research in the field as follows:

The tools used for data collection:

The tools used for the primary data collection were the interview forms comprised of questions made up according to the purpose of the research. The questions used were closed-ended questions, and open-ended questions, the criteria for answers consisted of five levels on a rating scale, with the highest, high, medium, low and the lowest as follows:

Part 1. The data of individual factors; sex, age, educational level, marital status, occupation, income, and leadership position in the community.

Part 2. The data involving the resource potential for cultural tourism developed from the standards of qualitative indicators and the standards of home-stays of the Office of Tourism Development B.E. 2548 (2005) scheduled for 8 standards and 43 indicators (Kittichai Charoenchai, 2005: 27-29). In this research work

the indicators on the aspects of beliefs and traditional fair festivals were grouped into two standards and seven indicators totaling to ten standards and 50 indicators on the interview forms with five levels of criteria specifications for the answer selection according to the rating scale consisting of the highest potential, high potential, medium potential, low potential and the lowest potential.

Part 3. The activities and suggestions for development of resources for cultural tourism came from the interview forms and meeting with the villagers consisting of data involving the important traditional fair festivals, various activities in the form of home-stays of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, and the suggestions for the development of the resources for cultural tourism in the community.

Instructions were give to build confidence for interviewing by means of a pre-test with five copies of the interview form given to the Sila villagers, Sila sub-district, Muang district, Khon Kaen province through the formula of the Coefficient Alpha according to Cronbach, the coefficient value was 0.9375. Then the interview forms were given to improve comprehension before using the ones for the real interview, this was appropriate for further data collection.

Data collection:

For data collection the research team decided to collect the data themselves by means of writing an official application letter to the president of the Banpao Administrative Organization, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province to request interviews of the local population, and ten community leaders who were comprised of persons with higher education, one director of the Palangrat School and nine community scholars. Additionally, there was data collection through interview forms for 300 cultural tourists, those tourists were comprised of 100 home-stay tourists, 100 agricultural tourists, and 100 general tourists.

Data analysis:

For this research the data analysis was made by use of a statistical package for the social sciences, SPSS, to help calculate the data by analysis for the following educational purposes:

1. The data involving individual factors: sex, age, educational level, marital status, occupation, income, and the position of the community leader was collected by use of the interview forms with closed-ended questions and a criteria specification for answers consisting of five levels on a rating scale. The statistics used were comprised of frequency distribution, and percentage distribution.

2. The data for the resource potential for cultural tourism: This system was developed from the standards of indicators, and standards of home-stays of the Office of Tourism Development B.E. 2548 (2005) specified as eight standards and 43 indicators (Kittichai Charoenchai, 2005: 27-29), this research was additionally developed. The beliefs and traditional fair festivals indicators were grouped into two standards and seven

indicators totaling to ten standards and 50 indicators. The statistics used for analysis were comprised of the mean, and standard deviation.

3. The interview forms and meeting with the villagers: To come to a mutual conclusion involving the organization of the tourism activity being culturally suitable, and to solicit suggestions for the development of resources for the cultural tourism of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, the data analysis was made by descriptive analysis.

SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. For the individual factors, it was found that most of the population were male and their ages were between 30-39 years, their educational level was having a bachelor's degree, their status was married, their occupations were governmental officials/ state personnel, and they used tour buses for traveling to home-stays in groups for the purpose of taking a rest this being in conjunction with the research work of Kittichai Charoenchai (2005: 112-115). Having studied the strategic development of marketing and the potential of tourism to impact rural culture (home-stays) at Bansasom, Poklang sub-district, Khongjiam district, Ubonratchathani province, it was found that most tourists were male (59.1 %), of those their ages were between 31-40 years (44.0 %), their educational level was having a Bachelor's degree (90.1 %), their occupations were governmental officials/ state personnel (74.2 %), and they went on vacation with their friends (55.6 %).

2. The standard of quality of the home-stays of the Puthai people, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province in various aspects was as follows:

For the home-stays it was found that there was high suitability; the bathrooms were clean, and the highest level had a strong structure in the camp. The places for sleeping were clean and comfortable in comparison with the community conditions. The villagers there had gotten rid of insects that were a health hazard through their own wisdom, and the weather helped with ventilation which, again, was in conjunction with the research work of Kittichai Charoenchai (2005: 112-115). Having studied the development guidelines of marketing and the potential of tourism to impact the rural culture (home-stay) of Bansasom, Napoklang sub-district, Khongjiam district, Ubonratchathani province in reference to the physical research work, the suitability was at medium level. The community had not expected income derived from home-stays only, the quality of the camp and places for sleeping were clean in comparison with the community conditions and the weather helped with ventilation, the rooms were well lit, and the bedspreads and sleeping accessories were changed regularly.

The food and dietetics were at the highest level. The water which was used for drinking and other uses came from a percolated water filtering system, and the kitchen utensils were clean and in a hygienic condition, this was in harmony with the research work of Thirakan Ritcharoenvatthu (2007: 81-82). The study and planning in the applied research of natural drinking water production of the Puthai people's community, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, shows that Venerable Phra Sawat Suwantrai had seen the importance of water management at Pha Khao Temple, this had

made villagers work together in their community and the natural resources were viewed as more valuable than they previously had been.

For the safety the suitability was at the high level, because the guards were prepared for emergency situations having first aid equipment on hand, this was also in harmony with the research work of Kittichai Charoenchai (2005: 112-115). After studying the guidelines of the marketing strategy development and the potential of tourism to impact the rural culture (home-stay) of the Bansasom, Napoklang sub-district, Khongjiam district, Ubonratchathani province, the suitability for this process was deemed to be at a high level, and the entrepreneurs had already made a practical schedule for the tourists.

The management was at the high level, because the guides or tour leaders did not expect to get income derived from home-stays only. The highest level was comprised of reservations and registration which had been made in advance. There were details about various fees and services that had been made by the committee managing the project who had been working with a group of the villagers, this was in agreement with the research work of Aree Naipinit and Thirachaya Maneenetr (2008: 54-56). After studying the participation of the community in tourism management of the Busai home-stay village, Wangnamkhieo district, Nakhonratchasima province it was found that there was a high level of participation by the community in the tourism management and this was in harmony with the research work of Mansperger, (1993: 990). The study of the effects of tourism on a minority groups' culture found that there were benefits to be gained by the minority groups living in the tourism areas, that is to say, employment opportunities would increase, while at the same time, the number of tourist within the community would be limited to preserve the existing economic plan of the society.

These results of the research were not in harmony with the research work of Anurak Thanaklom (2003: 121-124). The purpose of this research was to try to change the village culture from one formulated to conservative tourism, and to study the effects of tourism in the case study of the Banpao community, Villages no. 3 and 5, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province. It was found that having been introduced to conservative tourism, the community's way of life had been changed from one dependent on nature to one more dependent on tourism. The community became weaker in the aspect of community traditions because the number of people following the old traditions and customs decreased because of their involvement with tourism as mentioned.

The tourism activities were suitable at the highest level, that is to say, there were tourism activities involving local wisdom such as cloth and bamboo weaving, etc. There were traditional welcoming ceremonies, such as the Bai Sri Sukhwan ceremony (high morale offering) and others. There was entertainment and folk performances, tourism activities that did not destroy the environment, activities which promoted an exchange of learning-between tourists and local house owners, and there was the transmission of knowledge of legends and local history all of which was in agreement with the research work of Chalermchai Panyadee, and Thep Pongpanit (2002: 1-95). The

results of the assessment of the community's participation in tourism activities showed that the community had only developed schedules and procedures for tourism in the community although regarding how to manage or take care of tourism resources, and how to develop tourism skills in the community, including how to get income from the tourism, and its economical effects, an effective job had been done to make the community receive a higher average income.

For the environmental conditions it was found that the suitability was at the highest level, because the community's wooded area had been taken care of very well, this was not in harmony with the research work of Anurak Thanaklom (2003: 121-124), where it was found that the community had been developed too quickly, the villagers had mutually tried to conserve the environment but the tourism resources developed more quickly than before and the forest and stones that had naturally existed were destroyed, this caused considerable damage to the community.

For additional value it was found that the suitability was at the high level. There were souvenirs stores in the community, and there was increased opportunity for the population to develop more attractive products with a greater availability. There were products made from local raw materials and what was most promising was the opportunity to spread the culture of the community which was in harmony with the research work of Aranya Suwande (1995). The study of the economical and social effects of tourism at Kaeng Khut Khoo, Ban Noi, Chiangkhan sub-district, Loei province showed that concerning the economical aspects the villagers' main occupations involved things associated with tourism in place of farming and their income had increased.

The marketing promotion was found to be at the high level. The lists of names in the tourism manual of home-stays of the Ministry of Tourism and Sport were at the highest level. There was a spreading of information from the manual or dissemination papers for their tourism which was in harmony with the research work of Kittichai Charoenchai (2005: 112-115). As far as the guidelines for strategy development in tourism marketing having an impact on the rural culture (home-stay) of the Ban Sasom community, Napoklang sub-district, Khonjiam district, Ubonratchathani province, it was found that the potential for marketing promotion had a high level of suitability because there were lists of names in the tourism manual (home-stay) of the Ministry of Tourism and Sport.

Concerning beliefs the suitability was at the high level. There were beliefs concerning holy things including the belief that there were holy things that could protect the community's resources. These beliefs had been passed on to the youth, this was in agreement with the research work of Yaovapha Charoenruen (2006: 161-162). The study of the cultural tourism of the Banchang and Bantaklang villages, Krapo sub-district, Tatum district, Surin province revealed that the Kui people of Taklang village were still raising elephants and their culture of hooking elephants had been successful and the elephant culture had been preserved, this was in harmony with the research work of Surachai Chanabun (2007: 231-240). After studying the potential of cultural tourism management of the Ban Chiangian village, Khawao sub-district, Muang district,

Maharakham province, it was found that the tourism potential of Ban Chiangian village involved both legends and antiques.

Traditions had the highest level of suitability. There were traditional fairs that were had success which was in harmony with the research work of Rathitaya Hiranyahad (2001: 13-15). From the study of the development guidelines to increase the potential of cultural villages for tourism: A case study of Ban Nongkhao village, Tamuang district, Kanchanaburi province was in agreement with the research work on the theory of cultural expansion, it was concluded that the culture related to tourism included antiques, important places of Buddhism, traditional fair festivals, and this was in harmony with the research work of Surachai Chanabun (2007: 231-240). From the study of the potential and management of cultural tourism of the Ban Chiangian village, Khawao sub-district, Muang district, Maharakham province, it was found that the tourism potential on the aspect of cultural heritage involved legends and antiques, apart from this there were traditions involving worship to the spirit houses of ancestors who had passed away.

3. The development of guidelines for resource management of cultural tourism of the Puthai people residing at Banpao village, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province.

1. For the culture involving customs and traditions in the community in reference to the native or local dress of the Puthai Banpao people, males prefer to wear sarongs of long pants with blue shirts while females prefer to wear the women's sarong made of silk or cotton, with parallel colors of black and red with a black, buttoned blouse colored red on the neck and arms, and a red Praeva cloth on the left shoulder with silver ornaments. Their language is Puthai which is the unique language of that ethnic group. Their food is derived from a natural agricultural system without toxins, they use herbs as medicine and their residences are big security houses with a high space under them. Puthai dress is considered as customary and traditional and this was in agreement with the research work of Khiribun Jongwuthivet and Mariam Nilphan (2004). After doing a historical retrieving project on local culture and learning about the creation process of the community's potential in the areas of the Wanyai district, and Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, it was found that the quality of life of the Puthai people and their way of life came from their own specific model. They prefer to eat tasty food, their dress is unique, their residences, in general, are always raised up with a high space from the ground to the bottom of the house and the Yao method is used to treat their patients.

2. Concerning beliefs and passed down wisdom it was found that the Banpao were very successful in the tradition of Heet 12, other important traditions were Bun Phawet, and Bun Songkran. Apart from this they believed in the worship of their ancestors' spirit houses. How to get wisdom for success was derived from the village scholars, this was in harmony with the research work of Surachai Chanabun (2007: 231-240). After studying the potential of cultural tourism management of the Chiangian village, Khawao sub-district, Muang district, Maharakham province, it was found that the potential for tourism of Ban Chiangian was both in its cultural heritage, and beliefs such as how to earn a livelihood by being a herbal doctor.

3. Regarding the use of natural resources to facilitate tourism it was found that the natural resources in Banpao village, whether they were the forest, soil, capillary water, waterfalls, or peaks, were fertile and beautiful and this also was in agreement with the research work of Aranya Suwandee (1995). From the study of the economical and social effects derived from Kaeng Khut Khoo tourism, Ban Noi village, Chiangkhan sub-district, Chiangkhan district, Loei province, it was found that the villagers realized how to protect the environment, and they recognized that everyone had to keep the village cleaner and more orderly than before, this was in harmony with the research work of Thirakan Ritcharoenvatthu (2007: 81-82). After studying the applied research planning for natural drinking water production of the Puthai community, Banpao sub-district, Nongsoong district, Mukdahan province, it was noted that Venerable Phra Sawat Suwantrai saw the importance of water management at Tham Pha Khao's areas for community business and tourism.

4. The residences of the tourists had good personal security, and the houses as a whole, were strong and made of beautiful wood. The important thing was that those who were residents always kept them clean, this was in agreement with the research work of Khiribun Jongwuthiwet, and Mariam Nilphan (2004). From the research on the historical retrieving project of the local culture, learning about creating a process for community potential in the Wanyai and Nongsoong districts, Mukdahan province, it was found that significant features of the Puthai peoples' houses were their security, strength and the fact that the houses' floors were raised up high.

5. In reference to the cleanliness of the food, and the food containers the native food of the Puthai people it was tasty food and garden vegetables were used for cooking, this was in harmony with the research work of Khiribun Jongwuthiwet and Mariam Nilphan (2004). From the research on the historical retrieving project of the local culture, learning about creating a process to increase potential in the area of the Wanyai, and Nongsoong districts, Mukdahan province, it was found that the Puthai people lived their life in unique way, they lived with nature and preferred to eat tasty, self-grown food.

6. For safety management here was an Or. Por. Por Ror. (Volunteer group) Center to keep order in the village. Apart from this there were village guards assigned to protect the tourists, this was in agreement with the research work of the Tourist Authority of Thailand (1990: 22). In summary, for the village society, tourism meant improvement of convenient instruments to be more modernized and standardized. Some places were reserved for tourists, and the tourism management was still involved with the safety of the tourists as well.

7. The model of the home-stay entrepreneur management had group management in the form of a committee, the results of the study were in harmony with the research work of Aree Naipinit and Thirachaya Maneenetr (2008: 54-56). From the study on community participation in the tourism management of the Busai home-stay village, Wangnamkhieo district, Nakhonratchasima province, it was found that community participation was at the high level and a sustainable tourism source.

8. The tourism activity model five sets of performances, with networks at near by areas. There was an occupational demonstration show explaining the philosophy of the self-sufficient economy of the Banpao community. Apart from this there was a new model for forest hiking tourism which was in agreement with the research work done in foreign countries of (Harron, 1993: 1543). There was research done on tourism in the villages of the hill tribes involving hiking in the northern part of Thailand. For the analysis of new tourism it was found that new tourism involved groups of tourists interested in adventure hiking in the mountains and villages of the hill tribes. The results of the research reveal interest in a special kind of tourism in Thailand with more motivation for forest hiking.

9. The Environmental features of the village included mountains, rice fields, forests and a variety of biological living things, since Banpao village is located in the plain area between the mountains, it is surrounded by mountains to the East and West of the village. There are three seasons in Banpao, summer, winter and the rainy season which is in harmony with the research work of Yos Satasombat (2006: 1). From the research done on the variety of biological living things and local wisdom for sustainable development, it was found that these things, along with the ecological system, were important and fundamental features of the sustainable development of this area.

10. The souvenirs and native products of the villagers followed the principle of the self-sufficient economy of H. M. the king. There were also set up self-help occupational groups which produced souvenirs such as handmade Puthai clothes enabling the villagers to support themselves and to attain a sustainable life.

11. Concerning the models of marketing promotion and information it was found that government agencies had helped with the setting up of groups and funded leaflets for production and websites. Later on information was spread by word of mouth when the tourists came there to travel, this was in agreement with the research work of Kittichai Charoenchai (2005: 112-115). Regarding the guidelines of strategy development and tourism marketing's impact on the rural culture (home-stays) of the Ban Sasom community, Napoklang sub-district, Khongjiam district, Ubonratchathani province, it was found that the marketing promotion was at the high level.

12. Regarding the suitability of the various rates of service it was found that the pricing was according to the suitability of the tourism conditions in the form of home-stays and the prices were put into two categories; prices for Thai tourists and prices for foreign tourists, this was in agreement with the research work of Kittichai Charoenchai (2005: 112-115). As far as the impact that the guidelines of strategy development in tourism marketing had on the rural culture (home-stays) of the Ban Sasom community, Napoklang sub-district, Khongjiam district, Ubonratchathani province, it was found that the pricing potential was at the high level from which the entrepreneurs provided details of the fees and service charges to the tourists.

SUGGESTIONS DERIVED FROM THE RESEARCH

1. From the development research on the resource management of the cultural tourism it was found that regarding the protection of the culture, customs and traditions of their community the Puthai people succeeded commendably. However, with the increased communication and receiving of technology, including facilities made possible from the present social prosperity, there was some negative impact to the culture. This has made the younger generations lessen interest in the community's culture. Even though it may be a small matter now, it might become a problem in the future. The community must work together to develop guidelines for further preservation and improvement.

2. This research found that for the economical aspects, although the community received income from tourism and agriculture the expenditures also increased more than they had before. After receiving the technology and facilities used in the community, the income produced began to be insufficient. Because of this some of the laborers, particularly young people, began working in the big cities to increase income after the tourism and agricultural seasons ended. Therefore, the community must promote and increase its support for more local employment and a more self-sufficient economy must be developed.

3. This research found that the community had a lack of overall information at both the domestic and international levels. The community should contact the government or organizations which have agencies involved with tourism to learn how to better coordinate with home-stay communities and create networks for exchanging of knowledge, including methods to further develop the potential of sustainable tourism.

4. This research found that tourists visiting Thailand had a general lack of knowledge and understanding about proper etiquette for tourists, including learning about the community's culture. Therefore, the community should set guidelines concerning its culture, including clear prohibitions to keep its areas clean and protect the natural environment. This will help preserve the culture and conserve nature so the conditions can remain unchanged.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. The community should compare nearby tourism destinations to identify a suitable model to be used as a guideline for further potential development of the tourism potential in each community.

2. The community should study both the successful and unsuccessful communities in order to expand cultural and natural resources to be used for tourism and to develop the potential of tourism resources to be more sustainable.

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UNDERSTANDING VISITORS' ATTITUDES TOWARD FEES: THE CASE OF A PRIVATELY-LEASED NATURE TOURISM SITE IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

As privately-leased nature tourism sites spring out in protected areas in China, a number of management issues have been identified, including pricing management for visitor access and use. This study examines the relationship between visitors' attitudes toward fee and visitors' socio-demographic characteristics, behavioral patterns, and psychological attributes. Data used in this study were from an on-site visitor survey conducted at Tai Hu Yuan Scenic Park, Zhejiang, China. The results showed that 75% of visitors considered the current fee as reasonable (60 yuan). Logistic regression analysis showed that income, travel companion group, motivation, and satisfaction are important determinants of attitude towards fee.

KEYWORD: Attitude towards fee, Nature tourism, Governance, Private lease model, China.

INTRODUCTION

Nature-based tourism is growing in developing countries as a strategic industry towards environmental conservation and sustainable economic development in rural areas (Nenon and Durst 1993; Lindberg, Tisdell, and Xue, 2003). This type of tourism is based on the natural attractions of an area and the desire of people to immerse themselves in a rich natural, cultural, or historical experience. In China, nature-based tourism in protected areas and parks is often considered as soft ecotourism, which involves walking and sight-seeing in a natural setting (Su, Wall and Eagles, 2007). In addition to existing federal, provincial and regional tourism initiatives in China, private operators, rural landholders, and residents are increasingly engaged in tourism development. Innovative governance models have been promoted such as a leasing model, non-listed share-holding model, and public-listed share-holding model. Among the most popular models is the leasing model, in which private enterprise signs a lease contract with the local government authority to obtain the right to use, manage, and profit from the land for tourism for a particular period of time (Su et al., 2007).

As private leased tourism sites spread and cluster in protected areas, a number of management issues have emerged. These include 1) competition based on imitation and price cutting rather than differentiation and innovation 2) uneven levels of service quality; 3) the lack of awareness and funding for environmental protection; and 4) the lack of regulation of unwise development. Setting an appropriate charge for entrance fees to these sites has significant implications for visitor experiences, the fiscal sustainability of private tourism business, the conservation of public lands, as well as the growth of local community. To date, there is little understanding about visitors' attitudes toward the current entrance fees or willingness to pay for their access and use, especially at privately leased natural settings. Furthermore, limited information is available on general characteristics, behaviors and preferences of Chinese domestic nature tourists (Buckley, Cater, Zhong, and Chen, 2008). To fill these gaps, this study presents findings of a visitor survey of Tai Hu Yuan ecotourism park, Zhejiang, China. It provides baseline information about visitor profiles in private-leased nature tourism destinations. It also explores Chinese visitors' attitudes towards entrance fees and multiple dimensions of their attitudes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A number of onsite surveys have been conducted to understand Chinese domestic visitors to protected areas. It was found that Chinese visitors tend to be well-educated with high income and motivated to experience, enjoy and understand nature. (Zhang and Zhao 2005), which is quite similar to western visitors (Eagles and McCool). Different from western visitors, Chinese visitors' average length of stay is shorter (3-7 days). They are more likely to travel in organized package tours and learn about their destinations principally from traditional media such as newspapers and television (Huang, Chen, and Zhang, 2003).

Most studies on tourism demand have applied the concept of willingness to pay to examine people's attitudes toward fees. Scholars used the contingent valuation method, which employs hypothetical questions, to elicit respondents' maximum pay for a specific situation. Reynisdottir, Song, and Agrusa (2008) measured visitors' willingness to pay for entrance fees to natural attractions in Iceland based on the contingent valuation method. The results indicated that most respondents were willing to pay modest fees for these attractions. In a related study, Arin and Kramer (2002) examined divers' demand for visits to protected coral reef areas in the Philippines. They found that entrance fees are an important way to collect funds for supporting coral reef conservation. In addition, tourists preferred NGOs as the leading organization to collect and manage entrance fees. Vogt and Williams (1999) looked at the relationship between fee attitudes and spending preferences in the Desolation wilderness area. It was suggested that while recreation users were generally supportive of wilderness use fees, they preferred to use the fee more or "maintaining" than "improving" the services offered.

Previous studies have also looked at the determinants of visitors' attitude toward fees. These variables can be divided into four general categories: 1) socio-demographic attributes; 2) visiting patterns; 3) psychological factors; 4) context and resource.

Differences were found in the willingness to pay according to visitors' income, country of residence, length of residence, age, education. Deng and Bender (2007) found that local visitors are more willing than nonlocal visitors to pay bed taxes and more for higher quality tourism services in West Virginia. In an explorative study of recreation–amenity use in China, Jim and Chen (2006) suggested that willingness-to-pay for urban green space was significantly associated with income. A number of visiting patterns including number of previous visits, history of paying entrance fees, type of activities participated are also found as important indicators of attitudes toward fees. Using meta-analysis, Johnston, Ranson, Besedin, and Helm (2006) found that anglers who took fewer trips were associated with an increase in estimated WTP per fish. Vogt and Williams (1999) found that more experienced and familiar wilderness users were less supportive of user fees. More recently, studies have revealed several important factors that may lead to non-negative attitudes toward fees such as attitude towards environmental protection, levels of place attachment, perceptions of fairness, and social trust. For example, Togridou, Hovardas, Pantis (2006) revealed that parameters of visit evaluation were the most significant predictors of WTP. Last but not least, context and resource variables were linked to attitudes toward fees. Anglers' willing-to-pay was associated with type of species targeted (Ranson, Besedin, and Helm, 2006) and Land affiliation (Laarman and Gregersen, 1996).

Based on the literature on recreation and tourism studies, and consumer behaviors, there are two objectives for the current study. First, we investigated visitors' socio-demographic characteristics, behavioral patterns, and psychological attributes. Second, we modeled visitor attitude towards fee using logistic regression with selected variables from the three dimensions explored earlier.

METHODS

These data used in this study were part of a visitor survey conducted at Tai Hu Yuan Scenic Park, Zhejiang, China. The Park is named after the vast source of Taihu Lake, which adjoins Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Shanghai. The park is located in the forest region in Northern Zhejiang, where tourism development has been promoted for poverty alleviation and provision of alternative livelihoods for people living in and around forest areas. The main topography feature in the park is canyon terrain with steep valleys, hanging waterfalls, trickling brooks, and natural sceneries. The park area, which has a 98% forest cover, is home to various vegetation and endangered animals. The park offers tourists a wide variety of activities such as hiking, sightseeing, mountain climbing, boating, cableway, picnicking, Buddha worshipping, tea tasting, lodging, dining, shopping and so on. Tai Hu Yuan Scenic Park has been leased and managed by Hangzhou Tai Hu Yuan ecology tour co., LTD for more than 10 years. This private tourism company has also developed several other tourism sites in the surrounding area. The current entrance fee is sixty Yuan (equivalent to about nine US dollars).

The data collection period was from June to December 2008. Data were collected on both weekdays and weekends. Tourists were randomly approached at the gate, the restaurants, and the shuttle bus station. The mode of questionnaire administration was

mixed, namely in-person, self-administered, or a combination, depending on the situation and the respondent's interest in clarifying questions. The questions used in the current study included visitors' socio-demographic attributes (age, gender, income, and education), travel patterns (social group, repeat visit, length of stay), motivations, destination image, satisfaction of their experiences, and attitudes toward the current charge of entrance fees.

Descriptive statistics were used to explore visitor characters. Next, a set of logistic models were tested which regress attitude toward fees on measures of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, income), travel patterns (repeat visits, social group), and psychological factors (motivations and satisfaction). The dependent variable is a binary variable taking two values (1= too high, 0 = about right), which makes logistic regression an appropriate method to use. The general motivation for nature tourism includes 10 items originally. Exploratory factor analysis reduced motivation index into three categories: 1) appreciation and learning of nature; 2) escape from urban life and solitude; 3) relaxation and spend time with family. Using the similar procedure, destination image includes seven items was reduced to 2 dimensions: (1) services and facilities; and (2) scenic beauty. Among all independent variables, gender, travel companions, motivation, and destination image are categorical variables.

In a logistic regression model, the dependent variable is the logit (see below), where \ln is the natural logarithm and p is the probability associated with a given level of attitude.

$$\text{logit}(p_i) = \ln \left(\frac{p_i}{1 - p_i} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_{1,i} + \dots + \beta_k x_{k,i}.$$

Three models will be estimated. The first model includes only the socio-economic variables, and served as the baseline model. The second and third added more variables to the baseline model to determine the extent to which travel patterns and psychological factors contributed to explaining additional variance in dependent variable. We use variance inflation factors (VIF) to diagnose the potential for multicollinearity among the independent variables.

RESULTS

Visitor characteristics and behavior

The results to be presented are based on an onsite survey Tai Hu Yuan Scenic Park, Zhejiang, China. A total of 699 usable questionnaires were collected. As shown in table 1, the majority was first time visitors (89%), in some kind of organized tour (36%) male (60%), and above 55 years old (55%). Around half of them have some college education. Respondents' median monthly family income was 4000-6000 yuan. The social groups of visitors are diverse: 30% travel alone, 20% travel with organization employees, and 14% travel with family and friends. A quarter of respondents felt that the entrance fee was too high. The mean score of overall satisfaction reached 3.9 out of 5. Most visitors reported relaxation and family time (87%) and experience nature (65%) as their

motivations for nature tourism. Both scenic beauty (94%) and service and facility (80%) were important for respondents to choose THY as their travel destination.

Table 1 Visitor Characteristics and Behavior

Age (%)	
under 18	.5
18-24	3.3
25-34	13.2
35-44	23.1
45-54	5.1
55-64	26.6
65 up	28.2
Gender (%)	
Female	39.5
Male	60.5
Education (%)	
Junior high school	2.2
Senior high school	42.8
Technical school	7.2
Junior college	10.7
College	36.3
Graduate	.8
Monthly income (median)	4000-6000 yuan
Is this your first visit to THY (% Yes)	89
Social group	
Family and friends	14.4
Organization Employees	19.6
Organized tour members	36.2
Alone	29.9
Motivation (% Yes)	
Experience nature	65.2
Escape from urban life	7
Relax and family time	87.4
Destination image (% Yes)	
Scenic beauty	93.5
Service/facility	79.4
Overall satisfaction (mean score)*	3.9
Is the price of entrance fee too high (% Yes)	25

* 1= not at all satisfied 5= extremely satisfied

Logistic regression analysis

Before conducting logistic regression analysis, a correlation analysis was conducted to examine the possible multicollinearity between independent variables. No

VIF value larger than 3.0 was discovered. Table 2 displays the results of three nested logistic regression models of attitudes toward fee. Additional variables were added in each new model. The fit of nested logistic regressions is contrasted using the log likelihood ratio test (Bohrnstedt & Knoke, 1994). Model 1 includes only control variables to test the effect of demographic variables on attitude towards fee. As compared to Model 1, Model 2 adds two variables regarding travel patterns, namely travel companions and whether or not it's first time visit. Adding these variables significantly improves this model over Model 1 ($G^2 = -134.02$, $df=2$). Model 3 adds variables representing psychological factors, namely motivation, destination image, and satisfaction, which again significantly improves the model fit over Model 2 ($G^2 = -121.44$, $df=6$). As Model 3 has the highest overall fit, we focus on Model 3 to discuss the results and findings.

Table 2 Logistic Regression

Independent variables	Model1		Model2		Model3	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Gender	.74**	.22	.65*	.27	-.008	.33
Age	-.056	.07	-.02	.09	.13	.11
Income	-.36**	.12	-.11	.11	-.32*	.14
First visit/repeat visit			-.22	.40	-.34	.48
Social group Family and friends			2.85**	.39	2.20**	.57
Employee group			2.04**	.48	.80	.60
Organized tour			.91	.45	.16	.57
Overall satisfaction					-2.09**	.34
Motivation: Experience nature					1.32**	.31
Motivation: Escape from urban life					-.62	.43
Motivation: Relax and family time					-.11	.33
Site specific motivation: Scenic beauty					-1.55**	.37
Site specific motivation: Service and facility					.06	.21
Log likelihood	519.47		385.45		264.01	
R2	.07		.25		.54	

* $p < .05$ ** $P < .01$

A positive and significant logistic coefficient means that controlling for other variables in the equation, the independent variable increases the odds of being in the nonreference category (the fee is too high). Conversely, a negative significant coefficient implies that the independent variable decreases the odds of being in the nonreference category.

In terms of demographic variables, the results showed that income is the only negative significant predictor of attitude towards fees, meaning that a visitor with lower income was more likely to feel that the entrance fee is too high. Age and gender were not significantly associated with attitude towards fee.

Our model predicts that the likelihood of perceiving the fee is too high is curvilinearly (taking an inverted U shape) related to the social group of visitors and repeated visit. Our prediction is partially supported. The social group variable takes on one of four values: 1, indicating private tour with family and friends; 2, indicating organizational travel with employees and coworkers; and 3, indicating organized tour with travel agency; and 4 travel alone. For the purpose of this study, the outcome with the value of 4 is set as the comparison group in conducting logistic regression analysis. The outcome with the value of 1 has a positive significant coefficient in Model 3, suggesting that visitors traveling with family and friends privately is more likely to hold the perception that the fee is too high than visitors traveling alone. These data, however, provide no support to our prediction that repeated visit is associated with attitude toward fees.

The psychological factors are another determinant of attitudes towards fee. Overall satisfaction has a negative and significant coefficient in Model 3, suggesting that the more satisfied a visitor is, the less likely he/she will believe the fee is too high. Experiencing nature, one of the ecotourism motivation dimensions, is positively and significantly linked with attitude towards fees. This finding indicated that visitors with a focus on natural resource are more likely to consider the fee as too high. The other ecotourism motive dimensions, escape from urban life and relax and family time, do not have significant coefficients. Scenic beauty of the destination, a site-specific motivation, was also found to have a positive influence on attitude towards fee.

DISCUSSION

In this study we examined visitors' attitude towards fees and its determinants in nature tourism setting. Despite the fact that entrance fees for private-leased site are often higher than public sites in China, this study showed that majority of visitors still considered the 60 yuan fee as reasonable. One possible explanation might be that nature-based tourists tend to have higher income. Another explanation might be that major public nature-based tourism sites are heavily used. Issues such as crowding and user conflicts have negatively affected the quality of visitor experience. As a result, nature tourists are willing to pay more to access and use private destinations to relieve crowding. However there are not adequate data to make any infinite conclusions.

A series of nested logistic regression analysis supported our prediction that social-demographic characteristics, visitor behaviors, and psychological attributes are associated with attitude towards fee. Consistent with past studies, the negative effect of income on attitudes towards fee was supported by these data (Jim and Chen, 2006). Although no significant coefficients were found for age and gender, possible mediators between demographic variables and attitude towards fees deserves further attention. The data, however, provide no support on the relationship between repeat visitation and attitudes toward fees. Yet it should be noted that our sample is predominantly first time visitors which could affect the strength of the analysis. Visitors traveled with family and friends, compared with those travelling alone, were found more likely to perceive the fee as too high. This finding can be viewed as partially supported because past research has

suggested a linkage between group size and attitudes towards fee (Bohara, et al, 1998). The results indicate that visitors motivated for nature experience and scenic beauty are more likely to believe the fee is too high. Because of the lack of literature on this subject, it is not clear about the underlying cause of the association. However, some research has indicated that “hard” eco-tourists or wilderness recreationists prefer less infrastructure development and service provided within tourism destination. Since these tourists are less likely to use a lot of the facilities on-site, they may develop a negative perception about the fees charged. Last but not least, the results showed that overall satisfaction is an important predictor on attitude toward fee, which agreed with previous literature.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The purpose of this study was to understand Chinese visitors’ attitudes toward fee in private-leased natural tourism destination. The study results have theoretical and managerial implications. The study adds to a fairly limited body of research on visitors’ attitude toward fees in nature-based tourism in China. The study opens the door for more investigation into the relationship between attitudes towards fees and other factors (i.e., perceived crowding, motivation, and specialization). Evidence from this study showed that blindly lowering entrance fees is unwise for the long term sustainability of private business. The take home message is that private operators should be focus on product innovation, differentiation, as well as enhancement to attract and maintain visitors. Future research can use alternative methods such as contingent valuation of willingness to make comparisons with the results of the current study.

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THE IMPACT OF A GLOBAL MEETING CURRICULUM ON THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Meeting Professionals International is an association representing the meetings and events community with membership of about 24,000 belonging to 70 chapters and clubs worldwide. This initial analysis of MPI's global certificate training program and the correlation to perceived impact on the tourism industry is based upon a literature review of event-stimulated tourism, the author's three-time involvement in the development of a global meeting curriculum and course delivery, discussions with program participants in Qatar, and specific observations.

KEYWORDS: Credential; Curriculum; Events; Meetings.

INTRODUCTION

Why would an international association create and launch a global training program for the business meetings and events industry? How would they recruit curriculum developers and international trainers? Where would they “test-drive” a program? And, if successful – could the program’s attributes contribute to an increase in the quality of services provided to attendees, thus having a long-term impact on tourism?

Some of these questions were raised when Meeting Professionals International (MPI) decided to create the MPI Global Knowledge Plan, a ladderized global meeting and event curriculum sculpted for professionals at any point in their career. The decision to proceed resulted from a prediction made by FutureWatch 2009, a comprehensive report produced by Meeting Professionals International (MPI) and American Express which – despite the challenging predictions of the meeting industry, indicated an increase in meeting attendance of 3% in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. The same report relayed concerns specific to the decline in meeting and event professional staffing, and an increase in work load for individual planners and suppliers. Thus was born, the MPI Global Knowledge Plan.

Overview of Curriculum

MPI's Global Knowledge Plan consists of eight points of entry including skill assessment, an introductory course, three global certificate training programs, two industry certification programs, and an executive leadership program. Each milestone offers various industry training experiences that are tied directly to a learning initiative consistent with the global community's desire to become more competitive for meeting planning business. These milestones reflect MPI's long-term training goal – to design and provide global industry training programs world-wide.

The Global Certificate in Meeting Operations (GCMO) is the first-level global certificate training program designed for individuals who possess little or no meeting planning industry experience. Each course in the GCMO program is 90-120 minutes long and includes topics such as Property Operations, Site Selection, Budgeting, Registration and Housing, Contracts, Food and Beverage, Risk Assessment, and Event Marketing. Course design consists of lecture, daily assessments, case-method analysis, and several group activities culminating into a capstone application project. Participants that successfully complete the program with an average score of 70% or higher are awarded an academic certificate and a professional industry endorsement.

Curriculum Development & Recruitment

Selecting curriculum developers and trainers for the GCMO was completed through an international call for proposals. Of the 112 MPI member faculty included in the call 11 were interviewed and four were chosen. The individuals selected encompass experience and talent in areas of curriculum design, research and pedagogy, progression in education, and industry expertise. The learning objectives were pre-constructed, giving developers full authority to make modifications as long as materials were culturally-sensitive and global. Course materials, presentation software ancillaries, and instructor manuals were designed with MPI templates and followed a standard format. The finished product would eventually become the standard, a break-through product used to form partnerships with training centers around the world.

Program Delivery

MPI's first global certificate training program (GCMO) launched in Doha, Qatar on November 9, 2008. Evaluation and modification resulted in two additional offerings (February, 2009 and June, 2009). Based on information provided by QMDI, the GCMO has successfully reached over 150 participants – most of which hold mid to high level planning and development positions in organizations such as: Qatar Foundation, Qatar Tourism & Exhibition Authority, Qatar Islamic Cultural Center, Qatar Civil Aviation Authority, Supreme Council of Information & Communication Technology, Supreme Council for Family Affairs, Al Shaqab, Reach Out to Asia, Qatar University, Carnegie Mellon University, and College of North Atlantic. The common denominator between participants is the connection QMDI, the primary driver and catalyst of Qatar's MICE (Meeting, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition) division. The motivation to become

proficient in event management and earn a meeting industry credential is prevalent and foremost the motivator for participation.

Course Modification

MPI was sensitive to participant needs and made several predictions about the initial delivery and outcomes of the GCMO, most of which were confirmed by the creators of the entire course experience. During delivery, the team efforts of international trainers and MPI administrators proactively monitored lectures to assess current needs and levels of understanding, offered instant feedback on best practices, classroom activities, and case-method facilitation, and submitted a comprehensive review at the completion of each program. Participants also completed an online survey which together with instructor feedback – built a case for course modifications now evidenced in the final version of MPI's global certificate training program.

Competitive Edge

MPI is similar to many organizations that search for ways to drive growth and build long-term stability through meetings and events. These organizations are an invaluable and irreplaceable form of economic stimulus and the quest to demonstrate value and find solutions requires business professionals to expand their body of knowledge and hone their strategic meeting management skills (Reuters, 2009).

The pursuit of globally transferable skills for the meeting and event industry is a world-wide trend (Manford, 2009) and the success of MPI's global curriculum gave them a competitive edge which is evidenced by the additional partnerships formed with San Diego State University and France's CERAM Business School. Together with QMDI in Qatar, they serve as the first three of an anticipated fourteen training centers globally recognized to have a strong meeting or event management course (Bachelors or Masters programs) and a strong business management focus.

Impact on Tourism

As evidenced in MPI's class list, industry professionals that participate in MPI's GCMO program serve organizations directly related to tourism. According to the World Tourism Organization (2008), participants that serve the meeting industry also render support service to business and local government by making valuable contributions to the efficiency of the products and services provided to tourists. However, despite the irony that the output of the meeting industry is mostly consumed by the conveners of conferences and conventions who provide services, little regard is given to the traditional definition of a traveler: someone who moves between different geographic locations for any purpose and any duration.

This disparity becomes more apparent in the 2008 Tourism Satellite Account: Recommended Methodological Framework, which states, the meeting industry's contribution toward tourism and its associated revenues and costs are considered

marginal as the output is mainly acquired by visitors. The report, which is intended to (a) analyze in detail all the aspects of demand for goods and services associated with the activity of visitors; (b) to observe the operational interface with the supply of such goods and services within the economy; and (c) to describe how this supply interacts with other economic activities, acknowledges the meeting industry as a tourism activity but considers its characteristic output to be the conveners of conferences and conventions who provide services to participants at conferences, conventions. (World Tourism Organization, 2008). The only recognition and delineation for such activity in the international classifications of products and activities, is ISIC 823, *Organization of conventions and trade show*, a separate category of visitors and their consumption induced by conferences, meetings, and conventions.

SUMMARY

Despite the categorical inclusion of the meeting industry on the Tourism Satellite Account and the potential studies meetings can have on tourism, questions continue to surface that address whether or not a global industry credential increases the quality of services provided to tourists.

The authors' purpose is not to answer all questions presented in this paper, however it is intended to use the development of MPI's global curriculum and training initiatives in the Middle East as a catalyst to consider the correlation between a global meeting industry curriculum and its contributions to an increase in tourism.

Further investigation would involve the long-term impact on sustainability for any given destination as a result of a professionally trained workforce. It may also include the World Tourism Organization's inclusion of the meeting industry's nature of the services provided to visitors during conferences and conventions.

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ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM, KHAO YAI NATIONAL PARK, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impacts of visitor activities on Thailand's Khao Yai National Park (KYNP). Based on a comprehensive review of past research on ecological impacts of visitor activities conducted in KYNP, a survey was designed to assess visitors' perception of those impacts, with the intention to analyze if real impacts (i.e., impacts reported by researchers in KYNP) and perceived impacts are congruent. Past research on soil impacts (changes in physical properties of soil, erosion, reduction in organic matter, area of bare ground), vegetation impacts (changes in plant composition, loss of ground cover, root penetration, introducing of exotic species, removal of shrub and tree stem, vegetation clearance), water quality, wildlife behavior (macaques and deer), noise pollution, and garbage accumulation were reviewed. A visitor survey was conducted between December 2008 and February 2009, to assess how KYNP visitors perceived those impacts; the visitors were grouped into three main user types: birdwatchers, hikers, and campers, and were also distinguished by their value orientation along the anthropocentric-ecocentric spectrum. Results show that visitors' perceived the environmental impacts less serious than actual impacts as reported by researchers. Significant differences were found between the three user types and between visitors with different value orientation. The key factors influencing impact perceptions include the type of recreation activity, value orientation, and level of education. Results clearly show the need for a strong environmental education program in KYNP.

KEYWORDS: Environmental impacts; Khao Yai National Park; Thailand; Value orientation; Visitor activities.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is of critical importance to a national park. People want to visit national parks to appreciate, enjoy, and experience the natural environment. Recent trends indicate that the growth of tourism in national parks is increasing. This growth presents a paradoxical situation. Many local communities have benefited from economic development in and around national parks, and tourism has contributed to conservation to a certain extent. On the other hand, tourism development has also caused significant problems for national parks due to adverse impacts of visitor activities, such as ecological degradation, loss of biodiversity, habitat fragmentation, and deterioration of visitors'

experience. These impacts have the potential to alter the natural ecosystems and visitors' ability to be satisfied with their recreational pursuits.

Balancing the growth in tourism demand and at the same time protecting the natural environment is an important issue that national park managers must address. Many studies have highlighted the importance of visitor impact research in national parks (Daniels & Marion, 2006; Newsome, Moore, & Dowling, 2002), as these studies can help in developing effective knowledge-based management strategies. Visitor impacts, in the context of bio-physical impacts, refer to undesirable changes in the natural environment as a result of recreation activities (Hammitt & Cole, 1998). The sources of impacts are not only limited to recreation activities but also include the consequences of visitor-related infrastructure construction and provision of recreation services. There are four major categories of environmental impacts of visitor activities. These include impacts on soil, vegetation, wildlife, and water (Hammitt & Cole, 1998; Leung & Marion, 2000; Liddle, 1997). In the context of ecological impacts of visitor activities, the key questions include: (i) what types of environmental impacts exist in particular area; (ii) what is the magnitude and significance of impacts; (iii) what are the major sources of impacts; (iv) what are the factors affecting the impacts; (v) what is the relationship between amount of use and intensity of impacts; (vi) what degree of visitor impact is acceptable and how can we define it; (vii) how managers respond to research results; (viii) what is an appropriate management strategy for particular area that can balance visitor use and resource protection; and (ix) how can research and impact assessment methods be improved (Leung & Marion, 2000).

Knowledge of visitors' perception of environmental impacts is an important element for the management and provision of quality recreation opportunities in national parks (Cressford, 2000). Information on visitor perceptions may play an important role in impact monitoring system, and is also valuable for visitor management that lead to positive changes in visitor's behavior. Perception of environmental impacts refers to how the visitors perceive impacts on the environment caused by their activities (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). The study of visitor perception is complex as it deals with many social and behavioral factors. Perceptions of environmental impacts at a particular site are often different from reality (Deng, Qiang, Walker, & Zhang, 2003). Individuals may see the same level of impact differently (Hillery, Nancarrow, Griffin, & Syme, 2001). Additionally, some studies have found that differences exist in perception of impacts of a recreation activity between resource managers and visitors (Farrell, Hall, & White, 2001; Priskin, 2003) and visitors engaged in different activities (Hillery et al., 2001). Moreover, visitors often underestimate their own impacts because they perceive that the other groups sharing the same resource cause more impact than they do (Priskin, 2003).

However, current research on visitor (or tourism) impacts indicates to a gap in our understanding of impacts. Studies have been conducted either on bio-physical impacts or on perception of impacts, and are thus treated separately. There is a lack of integration of these two aspects of impact research, which has made it difficult to find concrete solutions to these complex issues. This research aims to fill this gap, as it seeks to understand current bio-physical impacts of tourist activities in a national park, and examines how visitors perceive these impacts. This integrative approach hopes to provide

a comprehensive understanding of visitor impact issues in a national park. The Khao Yai National Park (KYNP), the most popular national park in Thailand, has been selected as the research location. The primary objectives of this study are to: 1) provide a synthesis of existing research in KYNP on bio-physical impacts of visitor activities, and 2) examine visitors' perception of those impacts. Visitors' perception is examined across three groups of activities, i.e., front country campers, backcountry hikers and bird watchers, and with three different types of value orientation (anthropocentric, ecocentric, and environmental apathy). The factors affecting tourists' perception are analyzed, and some tentative conclusions on visitor management provided.

STUDY AREA

Located between 14°05' – 14°15' N latitude and 101°05' – 101°50' E longitude, and approximately 2-3 hour driving from Bangkok, KYNP is the first national park established in Thailand in 1962. The KYNP is the third largest park in the country, covering an area of 2,166 square kilometers (Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation (DNP), 2006a). The park encompasses a wide variety of habitats and forest types. There are more than 2,500 plant species, 67 different kinds of mammals and over 300 species of birds. Because of its unique characteristics and outstanding values, KYNP was enlisted as an ASEAN Heritage Park in 1984, designated a World Heritage Site in 2005, and enlisted as an Important Bird Area (IBA) designated by Birdlife International (DNP, 2006a). There are more than 20 tourism sites in KYNP with a rich diversity of plant species, plentiful wildlife, beautiful scenery, and an interesting cultural history. These provide various types of recreational opportunities for visitors, such as wildlife observation, hiking, jungle rafting, nature education and camping (DNP, 2006b). Many visitor facilities such as camp sites, parking areas, food stations, souvenir shops, visitor center, and other types of infrastructure have been built to provide visitors a comfortable and enjoyable national park experience. Several hotels around the park boundaries provide additional accommodation. During the past ten years (1999-2008) KYNP was visited annually by more than 650,000 people (1999-2008) (DNP, 2009a). In 2008, it generated approximately Baht 65.75 million, or US\$ 1.9 million (DNP, 2009b). In recent decades, environmental impacts of tourism development and visitor activities have been reported as significant concerns for KYNP management. Visitor-induced environmental impacts include impacts on soil and vegetation (especially around campgrounds and trails), water and noise pollution, accumulation of garbage, changes in wildlife behavior and habitat destruction.

METHODOLOGY

This research has two parts. In the first part, a comprehensive review of visitor impact research in KYNP is presented. According to the available research documents from DNP, KYNP, the Office of the Higher Education Commission (Thailand Library Integrated System: ThaiLIS) and the National Research Council of Thailand (NRCT), 153 research studies were conducted in KYNP between the year 1963 and February 2008. These studies were classified into seven categories (Table 1); of these 40 studies were related to recreation and tourism. These studies were primarily focused on understanding visitor attitudes and opinion, satisfaction levels, trip motivation, and visitor behavior.

Only eight studies focused on visitor impacts; the synthesis of bio-physical impacts of visitor activities is based on these studies. The assessment of the level of impact is based on the authors' evaluation of the results presented in those studies.

Table 1. Number of Research Conducted in KYNP between 1963 and February 2008.

Time Period	Wildlife	Plant	Environment	Policy	Socio-economic	Tourism	Other	Total
1963-1970	6	1	1	0	0	0	0	8
1971-1980	7	1	3	2	1	0	1	15
1981-1990	3	1	8	1	4	6	0	21
1991-2000	15	3	1	2	3	12	4	40
2001-2008	27	13	1	2	0	22	2	67
Total	58	19	14	7	8	40	7	153

Sources: Compiled from various publications obtained from Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Khao Yai National Park, Thailand Library Integrated System, and National Research Council of Thailand

The second part of this study focuses on understanding visitors' perception of the environmental impacts as reported in the above mentioned studies. A questionnaire was developed to measure visitors' value orientation and impact perceptions. Originally developed in English, and based on previously published literature, the questionnaire was translated in Thai and pilot tested before the actual survey. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: section one gathered general information about visitors' recreation activities and past experience; section two measured visitors value orientation based on the ecocentrism-anthropocentrism scale developed by Thompson and Barton (1994); section three focused on measuring perception of visitor-induced environmental impacts in KYNP; section four collected socio-demographic information. The value orientation question asked visitors to respond to 33 items measuring their tendencies toward ecocentrism, anthropocentrism, or environmental apathy. A Likert-type five-point rating scale was used to indicate responses, from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Visitors' perception of environmental impacts in KYNP was measured using 18 impact items statements and soliciting responses at a six-point scale, from no observation (0), slightly impacted (1), somewhat impacted (2), moderately impacted (3), severely impacted (4), and very severely impacted (5). Surveys were conducted by trained interviewers to ensure a complete response and a high response rate. Visitors were approached randomly and interviewed on site as they were completing their activity for the day. A total of 628 domestic visitors pursuing three main activities (i.e., 304 campers, 237 hikers, and 87 birdwatchers) were interviewed. Both face-to-face and self-administered interviews were conducted, depending on visitors' preferences. The on-site interviews were conducted during January to February, 2009. Two campsites and four hiking trails were selected as data collection locations. These locations were selected based on initial observations that these were the preferred areas for the three specific visitor activities.

Data analysis consists of descriptive statistics and measures of differences. The results of the descriptive analysis show whether or not there is a difference in impact perception and reality, i.e., do the results of bio-physical impact research support visitors' perceptions of environmental impacts? Analysis of variance (F-test) was applied to test for differences between the three visitor groups. F-test and t-test were used to examine

the associations between key independent variables (recreation activity groups, recreation experience, environmental attitudes, and demographic factors) and dependent variable (perception of environmental impacts). SPSS (Version 16) was used for data coding, processing and analysis.

RESULTS

Existing Bio-physical Impacts of Tourism in Khao Yai National Park

Soil impacts: Soil impacts in KYNP are mostly associated with camping and hiking, two major visitor activities in the park. The impacts that were easily observed in KYNP included soil erosion, removal of humus layer, reduction in organic matter, and area of bare ground. There were also several user-created social trails. Nuampukdee (2002) examined hiking impacts on bulk density, total weight of soil, and water infiltration rate at two trails with different levels of use. This study indicated that values for these indicators differed significantly between disturbed and undisturbed sites. Level of use and slope significantly affected the magnitude of impacts. Nimsantichareun (2007) examined visitor impact on soil along five hiking trails. On each trail, the saturated soil hydraulic (K_s) was measured and compared across three plots with three different levels of use, i.e., low, moderate, and high. Results indicated that the values for K_s between the three plots on each trail were significantly different. Based on these studies, we concluded that the researchers assessed the impact on soil in KYNP to be severely impacted.

Vegetation impacts: Field observations confirmed that vegetation impacts in KYNP were wide spread, particularly around camping areas and hiking trails. Loss of ground cover, root penetration, introducing of exotic species such as palm tree around visitor center, removal of shrub and tree stem, and vegetation clearance were some of the common types of impacts. Others types of impacts included tying trees with ropes to hang clothes, clearing saplings in camping areas and on trails, and felling trees to use as tent poles or for firewood. Nuampukdee (2002) studied the impacts of tramping on plant communities on two hiking trails. The results show that the type and the average density of plants in undisturbed locations were significantly higher compared to disturbed locations. However, the results could not clearly determine if the differences could be attributed to varying degrees of slope, plant communities and level of use, as suggested in the literature. The DNP (2004) also measured visitor impacts on plant communities along five hiking trails. Species richness, expressed as the Important Value Index (IVI), of tree and sapling of keystone species such as *Cinnamomum subavenium*, *Eurya nitida*, and *Syzygium pachyphyllum* were analyzed. Results show that the IVI of dominant species at the edges of the trails (disturbed areas) were significantly lower than those away from the trails (undisturbed areas). Based on these studies, we conclude that vegetation impact in KYNP was considered to be at a moderate level.

Water impacts: There are many water-related attractions within the boundaries of KYNP, which naturally draw a large number of visitors and are also the primary locations for recreational developments. Field observations indicated that visitors were engaged in practices that were potentially harmful for the aquatic environment. These

practices include, but not limited to, disposing waste (i.e., kitchen) water, and using detergent, shampoo, or soap directly in or close to water resources. The national park's research division (DNP, 2004) studied freshwater ecosystem and water quality of seven tourist sites where the temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen (DO), biochemical oxygen demand (BOD), and total coliform bacteria were analyzed. Also, the plankton diversity index was used to measure the quality of water appropriate for the growth of aquatic life forms. Results indicated that surface water quality was good at all seven sites; visitor activities impacted water quality only at a low level. Results of the plankton diversity index showed that there was a moderate level of impact caused by the visitors. Nimsantichareun (2007) examined water quality at six sites potentially affected by visitor activities. The study measured water temperature, pH, DO, BOD, transparency, and total coliform bacteria; results indicated that visitor activities affected water quality at a low level. Based on these studies, we rate the KYNP's water quality to be somewhat impacted.

Wildlife impacts: In KYNP, wildlife feeding and behavior changes were the two major concerns, which had been mentioned frequently by KYNP officials and scholars as severe. Kanurai (2004) studied impacts of wildlife feeding on the population and behavior of macaques (*Macaca nemestrina*). The behavior of macaques and their presence along the road were observed. The study suggested that macaques were found along the road 83.3% of all observations. They were mostly found during 2:00 to 6:00 pm, and with a frequency of 6.01 macaques per hour. On average, the macaques received 2.2 pieces of food items per visitor. Sangjun, et al. (2006) examined the effects of night spotlights on sambar deer (*Cervus unicolor*) behavior. The study found that the frequency of spotlights from visitors' cars did not affect deer responses. However, there were significant differences in the amount of time that the deer stopped eating when they were spotlighted. Deer stopped eating longer closer to the road than those further away from the road. Also, the study indicated level of use, forest types, and seasons significantly influenced the intensity of habitat utilization by the deer. In studies of bird watching, less experienced birders were mentioned as a significant threat to hornbills in KYNP (Intarak, 2005; Poonswad & Tsuji, 1994). Additionally, declining tiger (*Panthera tigris*) population and elephant (*Elephas maximus*) harassment have been frequently mentioned by KYNP officials. On this basis, we consider wildlife impacts in KYNP as severely impacted.

Noise pollution: Noise pollution in KYNP was mentioned by visitors and park's officials. Noise pollution has a very large effect on wildlife and may lead to psychological effects on the visitors. Unfortunately, not much research has been conducted on KYNP's noise pollution issues. The DNP (2004) conducted one study which focused on the level of noise inside the park. This study measured the "equivalent continuous sound level" in a 24 hours time frame (L_{eq} 24 hr or a single value of sound level for any desired duration) at 11 sites. The UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY HAS SUGGESTED THAT AVERAGE decibels (dB) of wilderness area should be around 35 dB, and that L_{eq} 24 hr should not exceed 55 dB to avoid nuisance and impact on outdoor activities (Orlando, Perdelli, Cristina, & Piromalli, 1994). The KYNP study indicated noise level varied between 49.5 and 72.1 dB. The primary sources of noise were from tourists and vehicles. There were seven sites with noise levels exceeding 55 dB. The American Speech-

Language-Hearing Association (2009) has classified noise levels into five categories: faint (<30 dB); moderate (31-50 dB); very loud (51-80 dB); extremely loud (81-110 dB); and painful (>110 dB). In this study, two sites had noise levels at moderate level and nine sites at very loud level. Based on these studies, we conclude the level of noise pollution in KYNP as severe.

Garbage accumulation: Although KYNP has attempted to improve garbage management system, the amount of garbage in KYNP has not declined. Two studies were conducted on garbage management. In the first study, the amount of garbage was used as an indicator of impact; it showed that plastic was the most commonly found waste along the hiking trails, and that there was a significant correlation between the number of visitors and the amount of garbage (Utarasakul, 2001). The second study showed that KYNP visitors discarded three major types of solid waste including left-over food, glass, and plastic bags (Phaiboonsombat, 2003). The highest quantity of solid waste was collected from camping areas (1,415 kg./day and 1.19 kg./person/day). There was a significant correlation between number of visitors and amount of solid waste. Also, there was a significant difference between the quantity of solid waste between day-use and over-night use areas. Littering behavior had a significant correlation with type of group, group size, and type of stay. Based on these studies, we conclude that garbage accumulation in KYNP is at a very severe level.

Visitors' Perception on Impacts

Roughly 51% of the surveyed visitors are male and 48.73% female. The majority (47.8%) is 21-30 years old, 61.5% had completed undergraduate level education, and 86.7% are living in other provinces, especially in Bangkok while only 16.3% are local residents. The three major occupation groupings are student (30.9%), private company employee (27.6%), and government employee (13.5%). The majority (34.3%) have annual income lower than 120,000 Baht (1 US\$ = Thai Baht 35). Roughly 62% have visited KYNP before and 70% have prior experience in their major recreation activity (i.e., bird watching, hiking, and camping) before their current visit to KYNP. The main motivations for visiting KYNP are relaxation (46.7%), return to nature (34.2%), and enhancing family and friend affinity (27.2%).

Table 2 shows that the majority of campers (57.8%), hikers (51.1%), and birdwatchers (64.4%) are ecocentrists. Table 3 shows the value orientation amongst the three activity groupings. The results indicate that hikers tend to be more ecocentric and anthropocentric than either campers or birdwatchers. Campers tend to be more indifferent to environmental issues (i.e., environmental apathy) than hikers and birdwatchers. The ANOVA results show the three groups differ significantly in their anthropocentric value orientation ($F = 0.6.203, p = 0.002$) and environmental apathy ($F = 3.504, p = 0.031$), but no significant differences exist in regard to the ecocentric value orientation.

Table 2. Numbers of Visitors Classified by Value Orientation.

Value Orientation	Campers		Hikers		Birdwatchers	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Ecocentrist	175	57.8	121	51.1	56	64.4
Anthropocentrist	88	29.0	95	40.1	21	24.1
Environmental Apathy	9	3.0	2	0.8	1	1.1
Could not classified	31	10.2	19	8.0	9	10.3
Total	303	100.0	237	100.0	87	100.0

Table 3. Value Orientation of KYNP Visitors Comparing among Three Groups.

Value Orientation	Campers (n = 303)	Hikers (n = 237)	Birdwatchers (n = 87)	F	p
Ecocentrism	4.011	4.025	3.974	0.425	0.654
Anthropocentrism	3.850	3.956	3.755	6.203	0.002**
Environmental Apathy	2.403	2.390	2.199	3.504	0.031**

** The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Roughly 65% of the visitors indicate that visitor activities do indeed cause environmental impacts, while 33.4% do not agree with this statement. Camping (30.8%), cooking (30.3%), and picnicking (14.0%) are rated as top three activities causing the most impacts. Of the 18 impact items listed on the questionnaire, nine items are rated by the majority as “moderately impacted”. These are soil erosion (37.0%), bare ground (35.1%), exposed tree roots (29.2%), damaged trees/ saplings/seedlings (32.4%), presence of non-native plant (28.8%), turbidity in local stream/river 33.5%), seeing wildlife on the road or very close to the road (30.8%), deer habituation (27.8%), and visitor noise level (31.9%). The level of noise from vehicles is the only item that the majority (31.9%) rate “severely impacted”. Eight items the majority rate as “very severely impacted”. These include suspended solid matter on water surface (35.0%), solid waste in water (37.7%), monkeys waiting for food from visitors (29.1%), conversion of natural area into developed area (34.6%), air pollution from vehicles (30.8%), bad smell from toilets, bin, garbage, etc. (30.1%), accumulation of garbage (48.7%), and vehicles parked in natural areas (28.4%). The majority (41.0%) consider the overall level of impacts in KYNP as “moderately impacted” with a mean of 3.3 (n = 603, SD = 1.024).

To measure the differences between actual impacts (as reported in the first part) and visitors’ perception of those impacts, comparisons have been made based on arithmetic mean of each type of impacts. The visitors perceive soil erosion and bare ground as “moderately impacted” (mean = 3.0, n = 528, SD = 1.107). For vegetation impacts (exposed tree roots, damaged trees/saplings/seedlings, and presence of non-native plants), the average visitor perception is “somewhat impacted” (mean = 2.8, n = 576, SD = 1.074). Visitors perceive water quality (turbidity in local stream/river, suspended solid matter on water surface, and solid waste in water) as “moderately impacted” (mean = 3.5, n = 595, SD = 1.134). Wildlife (monkeys waiting for food from visitors, seeing wildlife on the road or very close to the road, and habituated deer) are also perceived as “moderately impacted” (mean = 3.2, n = 562, SD = 1.141). Similarly, visitors perceive noise pollution level (both from vehicles and visitors) as “moderately impacted” (mean = 3.4, n = 596, SD = 1.112). Most visitors perceive accumulation of garbage as “severely impacted” (mean = 4.0, n = 608, SD = 1.226). The results indicate

that, overall, with the exception of water impacts visitors perceive the different types of impacts as *less severe* than actual impacts.

The results of ANOVA comparing impact perceptions between the three activity groups are presented in Table 4. Overall, the results tend to support the study expectation that there are differences in perception of impacts between birdwatchers, hikers, and campers. The birdwatchers tend to perceive the KYNP environment as more “severely impacted” than campers and hikers. Significant differences exist for five impact items including soil erosion ($F = 3.058, p = 0.048$), wildlife on the road or very close to the road ($F = 4.676, p = 0.010$), habituated deer ($F = 5.155, p = 0.006$), conversion of natural areas into developed areas ($F = 3.880, p = 0.021$), and air pollution from vehicles ($F = 3.336, p = 0.036$).

Table 4. Environmental Impact Perception Testing Comparing among Three Groups.

Impacts	Mean of Impact Perception			F-value	P-value
	Campin g	Hiking	Bird Watching		
<i>Soil impacts</i>					
– Soil erosion	2.810	3.055	3.167	3.058	0.048* *
– Bare ground	3.101	3.140	3.329	0.977	0.377
<i>Vegetation impacts</i>					
– Exposed tree roots	2.730	2.756	2.841	0.189	0.828
– Damaged tree/sapling/seedling	3.105	3.030	3.184	0.444	0.642
– Presence of non-native plant	2.467	2.257	2.519	1.031	0.273
<i>Water impacts</i>					
– Suspended solid matter on water surface	3.633	3.624	3.630	0.003	0.997
– Solid waste in water	3.673	3.687	3.506	0.522	0.594
– Turbidity	3.184	3.028	3.181	0.886	0.413
<i>Wildlife impacts</i>					
– Monkeys wait for the food from visitors	3.506	3.365	3.688	1.652	0.193
– Wildlife on the road/ very close to the road	3.016	2.978	3.514	4.676	0.010* *
– Habituated deer	3.085	2.972	3.573	5.155	0.006* *
<i>Other impacts</i>					
– Conversion of natural area into developed area	3.667	3.448	3.901	3.880	0.021* *
– Air pollution from vehicles	3.600	3.445	3.855	3.336	0.036* *
– Bad smell (from toilets, garbage, etc.)	3.590	3.438	3.593	0.890	0.411
– Accumulation of garbage	4.021	3.857	4.149	2.020	0.134
– Conversion of natural area to developed area	3.547	3.563	3.786	1.307	0.271
– The amount of noise heard in the area which came from vehicles	3.387	3.367	3.679	2.126	0.120
– The amount of noise heard in the area which came from other visitors	3.424	3.290	3.554	1.609	0.201

Overall level of the environmental impact from visitors	3.304	3.234	3.542	2.790	0.062*
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** The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.10 level.

ANOVA tests are performed for each independent factor to examine its influence on visitors' perception of impacts (Table 5). The results show that group of activities, ecocentric and anthropocentric value orientation, and education level influence visitors' perception. Additionally, for the factors that significantly influence perception, differences between groups are analyzed based on the mean values of impact perception. The results determine that more bird watchers, who tend to be either strong ecocentrists or strong anthropocentrists, and well educated (completed undergraduate and graduate level) perceive the KYNP environment as "severely impacted" than either campers or hikers.

Table 5. ANOVA Tests to Investigate Factors Influencing Environmental Impact Perception of Visitors to KYNP.

Variables	Mean of impact perception	Test Statistic	df	P-value
Group of activities		F = 2.901	2	0.056*
Camping	3.305			
Hiking	3.276			
Bird watching	3.516			
Previous recreation experience		t = -1.540	1	0.124
Ecocentric value orientation		F = 5.140	2	0.006**
Low level of ecocentrism	2.069			
Medium level of ecocentrism	3.194			
High level of ecocentrism	3.361			
Anthropocentric value orientation		F = 3.630	2	0.027**
Low level of anthropocentrism	2.386			
Medium level of anthropocentrism	3.274			
High level of anthropocentrism	3.343			
Environmental apathy value orientation		F = 0.809	2	0.446
Gender		t = 0.400	1	0.689
Age		F = 1.373	5	0.233
Education		F = 3.110	5	0.005**
Elementary school	2.775			
Secondary school	3.137			
High school	3.048			
Vocational Education	3.256			
Undergraduate	3.360			
Graduate	3.362			
Income		F = 1.593	5	0.160
Residential location		t = -0.800	1	0.422

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aims to provide an overview of current conditions in visitor-induced impacts in KYNP, based on previously conducted research on ecological impacts, and fieldwork on visitors' perception of those impacts. The most common bio-physical impacts include soil compaction, removal of litter and humus layer, reduction in organic

matter, erosion, plant damage, vegetation cover loss, soil and root exposure, water quality deterioration, disturbance and feeding wildlife. Other environmental impacts include noise pollution and accumulation of garbage. These types of impacts are similar to impacts reported elsewhere in different countries.

Visitor perceptions of environmental impacts were compared to actual impacts as reported in KYNP research documents. The results indicate that overall visitors perceive the magnitude of impacts as *less severe* than actual impacts. This finding supports previous perception studies (Deng et al., 2003; Hillery et al., 2001; Priskin, 2003) which have concluded that visitors tend to perceive impacts from their activities to be less harmful than what exists in reality. This might be due to the limited knowledge of visitors about the negative consequences of their activities on the natural environments in the park.

Significant differences are found in perceptions between campers, hikers, and birdwatchers. This implies visitors engaged in different activities perceive impacts differently. This could explain that visitors are more sensitive to the impacts associated with their activities and natural resources that they consume (Hammit & Cole, 1998). For example, more hikers than campers perceived soil erosion and exposed tree roots that are commonly found along hiking trails as severe, while more campers than hikers perceive impacts on water resources as serious. The findings also show that value orientation of the visitors do influence their perception of impacts. Visitors who indicate they are strong ecocentrists or strong anthropocentrists perceive impacts more severe than visitors who were weak ecocentrists or weak anthropocentrists. This is relevant to Thompson & Barton (1994) who argued that both anthropocentrists and ecocentrists support conservation but in different ways. The anthropocentrists support environmental conservation motivated by self-interests, i.e., human quality of life is dependent on the preservation of natural resources and quality of the environment. The ecocentrists support environmental conservation because they affirm the equal value to all life-forms. Education significantly, and positively, relates to impact perception, i.e., more visitors with higher levels of education than others likely perceive environmental impacts as severe. This finding supports the assumption that visitor perception might be shaped by their education level (Priskin, 2003).

The implication of these results is that visitor impact management in KYNP need to be based on a continuous monitoring of visitor activities and the resultant impacts. The results clearly indicate that KYNP needs to strengthen its environmental education programs. Visitors need to be made aware of the negative consequences of their activities, and also reinforce positive behavior amongst those who are aware of these issues. When visitors' understanding about environmental impacts is improved, they might be more aware of the outcomes of their activity and behavior. This could help reduce high-impact behavior of visitors and encourage visitors to perform environmental friendly actions.

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A VALUES-BASED FRAMEWORK FOR TOURISM EDUCATION: BUILDING THE CAPACITY TO LEAD

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ABSTRACT

Students entering the uncertain world of the future, and in particular the vulnerable tourism sector, need different skills, aptitudes and knowledge to succeed and, it appears that educational systems need radical change to meet these challenges. In an attempt to address these issues, the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) was born by a few concerned tourism educators. The purpose of this paper is to describe a framework for tourism education developed by TEFI based on the input of about 60 experienced educators and industry leaders who met three times between 2007 and 2009 to discuss the need for change and to develop the proposed framework for a new tourism curriculum for 2010-2030.

KEYWORDS: Framework for tourism education; Tourism education; Values-based education.

INTRODUCTION

Students entering the uncertain world of the future and in particular, the vulnerable tourism sector, need different skills, aptitudes and knowledge to succeed. Educational systems need radical change to meet the challenge of the next few decades (Wallis and Steptoe, 2006). A fundamental re-tool and re-design is necessary; not incremental change but change in the nature of what is taught and how it is taught. Skills

and knowledge sets must be redefined, structures and assumptions need to be questioned, and old ways of doing things must be transcended. Tourism employment in the coming decades must have a very different profile than it does today. In 2020 students will be applying for jobs that do not even exist today, and much of what we teach our students is obsolete by the time they graduate. These pressures and the increasing need for responsible stewardship of tourism destinations call out for a new paradigm of values-based tourism education.

In an attempt to address these issues, the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) was born by a few concerned tourism educators (Sheldon et al, 2007). The purpose of this initiative is to develop a framework for a values-based tourism curriculum. Its content is based on the input of about 60 experienced educators and industry leaders who met three times between 2007 and 2009 to discuss the need for change and to develop a framework for a new tourism curriculum for 2010-2030. Specifically TEFI has the following mission:

TEFI seeks to provide vision, knowledge and a framework for tourism education programs to promote global citizenship and optimism for a better world.

Therefore, the vision of TEFI is to not only work to reshape tourism education worldwide, but to help the leaders of the tourism industry follow practices that are rooted in basic values.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Tourism is not a peripheral activity in the world. It is rather a hallmark activity of the postmodern world. As such is a significant factor in world-making and people-making. The same can be said for universities – they are major enterprises and can be sources of innovative thinking and change. The intersection of tourism and universities is therefore a powerful nexus of potential influence. But both universities and tourism are also products of the world – hence we have a paradox that they are both shaped by the world have the potential to shape it.

This paradox presents a challenge for tourism educators. Being part of the world, and not distant or removed from it, is of course important so that academics do not retreat to ineffectual ivory towers. That is to say, they should offer participation as well as critique. Similarly universities should not just become places of critique. They should contribute to a productive world developing a highly skilled workforce. But being shaped by the world also means that tourism education faces a number of challenges.

The first of these challenges is avoidance of unthinking reproduction (Apple, 1990). Here, the existing world model and machine, buttressed with solid structures and deeply impregnated by ideology (Althusser, 1984) has an innate tendency to reproduce itself in its current form. If caught in this simple, yet possibly blind cycle of reproduction, students learn to fit in passively to the world that exists rather than to create challenging vistas.

Related to this is a second tendency to concentrate on means rather than ends. That is to say, that our present configuration of the tourism world creates a number of immediate problems that need solving (for example in marketing, operations, service quality and logistics). Universities are called upon to produce human resources that can solve these problems. The urgency of the day to day inevitably competes for space with the equally urgent, but never quite so pressing issues of the future. Here, we can allow the vocational to supplant the philosophical (Tribe, 2002) giving insufficient attention to questions of desirable ends and the kind of tourism world we wish to create.

The late 1980s saw the crisis of communism marked by the symbolic fall of the Berlin Wall. The year 2008 saw the crystallization of a third significant challenge – the crisis of capitalism marked by the symbolic fall of major banks including Lehman Brothers. This has surfaced the challenge of appropriate corporate and broader societal values. Here, university business schools have been fiercely criticized for a failure to give adequate attention or leadership to this part of the curriculum for future business leaders.

The fourth challenge relates to sustainability and is neatly captured by Giddens' Paradox (Giddens, 2009). This is the paradox of climate change where Giddens notes that since we are not currently unduly affected by the outcomes of climate change we fail to act. But when we are finally pressed into action by its consequences it will be too late to do anything about them.

The fifth challenge is that tourism might be read as another product of some form of Washington Consensus (Williamson, 1997). That is that for example its terms of trade (between supplier and consumer), its rules of engagement, its allowed and disallowed moves, its tolerance of inequality, indeed its general configuration performs to generate a predictable structure of winners and losers legitimized by a script of neoliberalist values.

A sixth challenge is that of extent and pace of change. Patterns of consumption, technological change and supply innovation in tourism as elsewhere are in a constant state of transformation. This mean that graduates may find that their degrees only offer a few years of currency rather than a lifetime of expertise (Cooper et al., 2007). This raises the need to understand and promote lifelong learning to underpin professional expertise.

These challenges set the context for the Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI). A central task is to educate tourism graduates to satisfy the demands of the market place as productive employees for a fast changing world. The tourism industry expects its workforce to be well trained, and society might expect a contribution from universities in terms of enhanced economic performance. But any deep consideration of the term society generates other inescapable questions about what kind of tourism is to be developed. Here, we need to re-think and re-engineer our tourism courses. We need ourselves and our graduates to lead the debate about a set of values that should govern the development of the tourism world. If we achieve this we would be at the forefront of people-making and world-making through tourism.

THE TEFI PROCESS

As highlighted in the previous sections, the seeds of TEFI are based upon the general recognition that higher education and more particularly, tourism education must change in order to meet the various challenges. Additionally, it was recognized that many people (including academicians, teachers, industry professionals, and government leaders) throughout the world have voiced their concerns regarding the future. Led by these voices, a number of innovators concerned about the future of tourism education met in Vienna, Austria to discuss the status of tourism education and to assess the degree to which there was an agreement concerning the need to develop alternative models for tourism education. During this meeting, a process emerged that provides a framework for the growth and development of TEFI. That is, TEFI is largely organized around a process which is both *proactive* and *action oriented*, focusing on translating the core values articulated by the membership to implementation so that there can be a fundamental change in tourism education.

The TEFI process includes two important action settings: 1. An annual Summit, which brings together innovators from around the world to consider issues related to tourism education; and, 2. Working Groups, which throughout the year seek to develop tools that can be used to affect tourism education. The Annual Summit is generally comprised of 30 – 40 leading scholars and industry professionals and includes both lectures and breakout groups. The lectures are conducted to stimulate thinking and to challenge the status quo. For example, in the First Summit, Dr. Jim Dator, a leading futurist from the University of Hawaii, challenged the TEFI members to develop scenarios of future worlds, and then to propose possible solutions/responses to these scenarios. In the Second Summit, Dr. John Tribe articulated a vision of hope – an Academy of Hope – for the future of society and tourism education, in particular. But, he also challenged the group to take personal responsibility in shaping this future world. Dr. Gianna Moscardo presented a lecture focusing on the learning styles of the next generation, arguing that how we teach is just as important as what we teach. And, Scott Meis, former director of research for the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, demonstrated quite conclusively that the industry need for qualified employees will become even more critical over the next decade. The Third Summit focused on barriers to change within the university (as discussed by Dr. Thomas Bieger of the University of St. Gallen) and strategies for programmatic change (as exemplified by lectures by Drs. Irena Ateljevic, Simon Wong, Loredana Padurean and Betsy Barber). These presentations clearly demonstrated barriers and potential strategies for changing educational processes within the university; they also highlighted a number of conflicts within higher education in realizing the changes.

While the lectures provide the starting point of discussion, TEFI is organized around break out groups – actually, working groups – that provide the setting for ideation, creativity, dialogue and problem resolution. Throughout the three TEFI Summit meetings, the members of the break-out groups are tasked to develop position statements regarding the various issues related to the theme of the annual meeting. Then, the results of these efforts are presented to TEFI body for clarification and ultimate approval.

The second pillar of the TEFI process is the Working Group. For each of the Summits, Working Groups have been organized to provide essential energy and direction so as to result in concrete action-oriented tools that can be used by TEFI. For example, prior to the first TEFI summit, a Working Group identified a core set of readings that established a foundation – a common language and set of ideas and ideals - for discussion. In addition, the Working Group conducted a pre-meeting survey of participants regarding key knowledge and skill sets needed for the tourism graduate of the future. Three different Working Groups emerged from the first Summit, focusing on defining TEFI values, identifying case studies in the values-based education and assessing programmatic changes through outcome-based education. Each of the Working Groups developed working papers and presentations which were then presented and discussed at the TEFI 2009. And finally, as the result of the Third Summit, a series of Working Groups have been developed so as to create more concrete tools for supporting TEFI. These Working Groups include the following activities: 1. Developing a White Paper which outlines/documents the progress made by TEFI members; 2. Proposing a Faculty Code of Ethics; 3. Developing an outreach pilot program to universities worldwide; and, 4. Developing a ‘values inventory’ which may be used as part of program assessment.

TEFI VALUES

An important outcome of the TEFI process is a set of five values-based principles that tourism students should embody upon so that they will become responsible leaders and stewards for the destinations where they work or live (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. The TEFI Values

The five values are: 1 Ethics, 2. Stewardship, 3. Knowledge, 4. Professionalism and 5. Mutuality, and are portrayed as interlocking Value Principles because of the interconnectedness of the value sets and their permeability. It is envisioned by TEFI members that educators can use subsets of the five value principles to integrate into their courses as appropriate. The specifics of how to incorporate them are left to the educator.

THE WAY FORWARD

With the goal to fundamentally transform tourism education, TEFI is poised to move forward in a number of ways. As we move forward it is critical that we engage all stakeholders. In particular, we wish to work with leading industry thinkers to define a new model for the tourism industry and its various sub-branches of economic activity. In addition, we will bring students into the process to add their understanding to the redesign of education. Finally, we will also invite those in the upper levels of administration of university programs including deans, rectors, chancellors, provosts, etc. to gain their unique perspective and implementation possibilities.

TEFI has established linkages with other organizations with similar visions, distributing a White Paper broadly to educators, industry, students and associations of educators worldwide. It is beginning to develop pilot programs in the university context to test the values framework and is planning two future TEFI Summits to bring the initiative to its fruition.

INSTITUTIONS AND PEOPLE INVOLVED

The TEFI initiative has benefitted from the participation of educators and industry members from around the world. This effort reflects their insight, creativity and concern for the future of tourism education. Working Groups have been led by various individuals who have played a key role in bringing the initiative to this point. Three meetings have been held to date which have been financially sponsored by universities from around the world with strong tourism programs: Temple University, University of Hawaii, and Virginia Tech University, USA, University of Queensland, La Trobe University and University of Victoria, Australia, Bocconi University, Italy, Modul University, Austria and University of Lugano, Switzerland. They have also been sponsored by the *International Academy for the Study of Tourism* and the *BEST Education Network*. We are indebted to them for their support. The Steering Committee that has guided this initiative consists of Professors Daniel Fesenmaier, Pauline Sheldon, John Tribe, Leo Jago, Janne Liburd and Karl Wöber.

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EDUCATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR COMMUNITY EVENT MANAGERS

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ABSTRACT

Event management requires a diverse array of skills but is often an accidental profession with many event planners and managers entering their career without formal training in the area. Also, the required skills change continuously due to advances in technology and changes in consumer markets. These factors suggest high needs for professional development and continuing education in the events industry. An online survey was conducted to investigate the educational background, engagement in professional development and continuing education activities, specific educational needs, and the barriers to continuing education perceived by community event managers. The results indicate great interest in obtaining new knowledge but structural barriers to engagement in professional development or continuing education. Implications for providers of educational offerings in the area of event management are discussed.

KEYWORDS: event managers; educational needs; continuing education; professional development

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade Event Management has emerged as a dynamic sector expanding in terms of the number, diversity, and popularity of events (Arcodia & Axelsen, 2006). Many communities, small or large, are hosting events to increase the quality of life for residents and the attractiveness of the community for visitors. Effective management of events is not only crucial for the commercial success of the event but also for mitigating or avoiding potentially negative impacts on the community. Silvers (2008), says the “role of event management is to facilitate the putting on of the event as well as the fulfillment of the need and expectations of customers or guests attending the event and the goals and objectives of its host or client” (p. 11). All this suggests that event managers have diverse and continuous education needs. This research aims to assess the educational needs of event managers and the instructional methods they prefer for professional development and continuing education.

BACKGROUND

Event Management involves the planning, preparation and production of an event (Lamb, 2006). Thus, event management requires a diverse array of skills and a rather broad knowledge base. The field of event management is fairly recent and as such many of the current community event organizers did not receive formal education in the area of event management. This is not to say that event managers are not educated as “over 60% of event professional have earned a bachelor’s degree and nearly 10% have a post graduate degree” (Goldblatt, 2008, p. 369). Many community event managers are trained in fields other than event management and this lack of formalized training leads them to seek other educational opportunities, such as professional development and continuing education. According to Baker (2006), the events industry “historically has been an accidental profession – something folks fell into, enjoyed and decided to stay with,” but now, he states, an “overwhelming number of new event planners are “entering the field directly from college and university studies” (p. 73). Budding event professionals now have the opportunity to seek out specialized curricula in event management but their predecessors were often educated in other disciplines and received on-the job training and learned as they went. Even those who do have training in event management are faced with a continuously changing nature of their profession, suggesting that educational needs are generally high among this group of professionals. Some research exists with respect to educational needs of event managers in Texas (Flusche, 1999; Wicks & Watt, 1982; Hamilton, Sherman, Awang & Watt, 1989). However, it is limited in scope and very much outdated given the recent developments in educational technologies and approaches.

Professional Development Opportunities for Event Managers

The research presented in this paper seeks to identify the professional development opportunities that current event managers are seeking. According to Morgan (2007), professional development is a program designed to increase the knowledge and skills of individuals engaged in a specific occupation. A professional development program “boosts the individual's career, through travel, research, workshops and seminars” and allows them to “work with professionals who are experienced” (Morgan, 2007, p. 1). There are many professional development organizations designed for the purpose of assisting community event managers. For example, the International Festival and Events Association, or IFEA, positions itself as “The Premiere Association Supporting and Enabling Festival & Event Professionals Worldwide” (<http://www.ifea.com/>).

Clearly, these professional organizations have much to offer those who can afford to take advantage of their benefits. Many professional development organizations, such as IFEA, host annual conferences, seminars and workshops designed to further educate members. Often these organizations will offer special certifications that are designed to build their members’ resumes. Goldblatt (2008) states that a “professional certificate is often more valued by industry employers because it represents a specialized body of knowledge that is immediately useful to organizations that employ event organizers”, i.e.,

individuals possessing certifications are hired more often than individuals without certification (p. 371). IFEA's professional certification program is called the Certified Festival and Event Executive, or CFEE. Individuals who have obtained this certification often feature CFEE after their names when they appear in print. According to Flusche (1999) coordinators of larger festivals tended to be more aware of certification opportunities than those coordinating smaller festivals. Silvers (2008), states that it has "been argued that the event industry has not yet become a true profession because licensing, certification, or a recognized degree is not required as a condition of practice or employment" (p. 425). Silvers further argues that this lack of standardization is what makes certifications offered by professional development organizations crucial to the individual success of the event planner. Despite the importance of certification and professional development opportunities, not many event managers seem to take advantage of the existing professional development offerings. According to Flusche (1999), data of a survey of Texan event managers indicated that only approximately 39% of respondents were members of the Texas Festivals and Events Association, while 77.5% of the sample were aware of the existence of the International Festival and Event Association.

Continuing Education

Not to be confused with professional development, continuing education at its broadest definition is "any form of learning provided for adults" (<http://www.britannica.com/>). Merriam Webster's defines continuing education as "formal courses of study for adult part-time students" (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/continuing%20education>). Individuals interested in long-term careers involving event planning must stay abreast of the most current trends in the industry (Van Der Wagen & Carlos, 2005). In 2008, Goldblatt stated that "only a few years ago, education was considered to be a minor requirement for employment as an event leadership professional (p. 368). Now education is of paramount importance to individuals just entering into the field of event management. For the purposes of this research continuing education includes formal instruction degree-based or otherwise offered by a university or other organization for the purpose of expanding one's knowledge base in relation to event management or any of the subfields related to event management. It is not clear how many community event managers actually take advantage of continuing education offerings.

Study Goals

This research project seeks to determine the educational background of community event managers, their engagement in professional development and continuing education activities, their specific educational needs, and the barriers perceived in order to investigate whether current educational offerings provide community managers with what they need.

METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted using an online survey that administered to community event managers in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. The sample for this research used a non-probability sampling technique called purposive sampling, meaning that the researchers only seek respondents who are event managers in the aforementioned states to take the survey (Bernard, 2000, p. 176). These states were chosen because they comprise Region 3, the most compact of the IFEA regions.

A self-administered survey was designed for this project and implemented online. The survey was pre-tested using a panel of tourism experts and then pilot-tested with a sample of 30 event managers known through personal contacts. In order to develop a database for the survey pool, online searches for “events”, “fairs” and “festivals” in the states being studied were conducted. A total of 650 email addresses were captured this way. Emails were sent to each potential respondent, explaining the purpose of the research, the organization conducting the research, and instructions for accessing and taking the online survey. One week later a follow up email was sent to those who had not completed the survey, reminding the potential respondent to access and take the online survey. A total of 4 reminder emails were sent. For those events that could not be contacted via e-mail the phone numbers were captured. Those potential respondents were contacted via telephone. The survey was conducted over one month from the end of May to the end of June 2009 and the survey effort led to a total of 137 valid responses.

RESULTS

The following presents preliminary, descriptive results from the analysis of the data.

Sample Profile

A large majority of the respondents (72%) are female and 89% are Caucasian. Only 18% indicated that they derive all of their income from activities related to event planning. For many (52%), it accounts for less than 10% of their income.

The respondents seem to have a lot of experience planning events. Many (69%) planned their first event 40 to 50 years ago, while only 4% planned their first event less than 10 years ago. Many (43%) started their events career right away with a high-level position in terms of responsibility and decision-making power. About 60% are currently involved in planning and managing a festival, 9% manage a fair, 22% are responsible for a special event, and 9% work for some other type of community event. The majority (68%) currently holds a high-level event management position. Most (62%) have been involved with the event they currently manage for 5 years or more. Only 12% are involved in an event with 500 or less attendees, while 26% manage events that attract between 501 and 5,000 attendees, 15% work for mid-size events of between 5,001 and 10,000 attendees, and 31% manage events with between 10,001 and 50,000 attendees.

Only 17% manage events with more than 50,000 attendees. 68% work for an event with a budget of \$100,000 or less.

Internet skills are rather high in the sample. Most (93%) know how to locate the information they need on the Internet, 77% describe themselves as being very skilled at using the Internet, and 41% indicate that they know more about the Internet than most people. However, as far as technological innovativeness is concerned, most score low on the items. Only 38% indicate that they know about new technologies before other people in their circle do and 32% are among the first in their circle to buy new technologies; however, 48% indicate that they use technologies a lot compared to their friends.

Educational Background

When respondents started their career in the events industry, many (39%) had a bachelor's degree already or at least some college (33%). Of those who have an associate, bachelor or masters degree, most got the degree in business (18%), education (17%), or liberal arts (14%). Only 5% received their degree in recreation, park or tourism. Only 14% have changed their educational level since starting in the events industry.

Professional Development and Continuing Education

Only a small portion of the survey respondents is a member of a professional organization. Almost a third (31%) have not even heard of prominent organizations like the International Festivals and Events Association. About 28% have not even heard of professional development opportunities. Of those who have heard about them, most received the information through conferences, colleagues or trade magazines. Only 15% have actually obtained certificates or professional designations within the events industry. Slightly more (18%) of the respondents report that they have participated in college, university, or otherwise affiliated continuing education courses regarding event management.

Education Needs and Preferences

When asked what types of knowledge they were seeking most when planning their first event, the most frequent responses were knowledge about sponsorship, marketing, volunteer management, entertainment, public relations, vendors and activity planning. As far as current educational needs are concerned, these topics are still of great interest to the event planners surveyed. In addition, they are now also very much interested in management, technology & events, financial management, economic impact analysis, and website design, with more than half of the respondents rating these topics as very or extremely interesting to them.

As far as information about educational opportunities is concerned, most (71%) would like to receive information, preferably through email. In terms of the delivery mechanism for continuing education courses, the most preferred option are conferences followed by seminar. Online learning, classroom learning, a combination of online and

classroom learning and webinars were the least preferred options. However, in terms of convenience, online learning and webinars were rated the highest, suggesting that convenience was not a major driver for preference.

Barriers to Engagement in Continuing Education

Almost half (45%) of the respondents state that they cannot engage in continuous education because they cannot leave their job to travel to places where courses are offered and 43% agree that courses are too far away. Other prominent barriers are courses are too expensive (39%) and courses require too much time (37%). Some also state courses not being offered online, courses taking too long to complete, and courses not offered on the topics needed as reasons. Of those who listed additional barriers, most mention lack of time and tight budget.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The results show that many event planners start their career in high-level event management positions without having adequate training. The findings also indicate that although there is interest in gaining knowledge in various areas, only a small portion of event planners takes advantage of advancing their knowledge through formal training, professional development or continuing education. Prominent barriers are not being able to leave the job, lack of time and budget restrictions. While most think that online learning and webinars are convenient and many see courses not being offered online as a barrier, most event planners nevertheless prefer seminars and conferences as venues for continuing education. There clearly is a disconnect between preferences and what would be feasible for them, probably explaining why so many do not take advantage of continuing education offerings. Lack of interest or need is certainly not a factor, and many would like to hear about opportunities.

The results indicate that those offering formal training, professional development, and continuing education opportunities certainly face a challenge. While needs are high, knowledge of opportunities is low and ability to engage in educational activities also seems to be restricted. It appears that Webinars and online learning opportunities have to be better marketed to event planners/managers or maybe need to be restructured to become more attractive (e.g. more real-time lecturing through streaming video to better mimic real world teaching). Also, professional organizations do not seem to be very visible on the radar of many of the community event managers surveyed. Further, while many find out about opportunities now through conferences, colleagues or trade magazines, they would actually like to receive information via email, suggesting that there is a huge direct marketing potential for educational offerings.

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MODELING THE PERSUASIVE EFFECT OF SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the impact of search engines on travelers' online information search behavior can generate important insights into online promotional and advertising for tourism organizations and destinations. This study examines the persuasive effect of textual search results presented to online travelers by asking respondents to rank order these search results using an interactive ranking tool built into Google. The preliminary analysis clearly shows that textual contents, indeed, have significant impact on the perceived relevance of the search results and certain words have higher persuasive "power" than others. This study offers implications for designing effective online communication strategies for tourism organizations and destinations.

KEYWORDS: Destination marketing; Online promotion; Persuasion; Search engines; Search engine results; Tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Today, search engines have become one of the most important information technologies in travelers' use of the Internet for trip planning (TIA, 2005, 2008). They play a crucial role in generating upstream traffic to many tourism and hospitality businesses and, thus, provide opportunities for online marketing and advertising (eMarketer, 2008; Hopkins, 2008; Prescott, 2006). Consequently, search engine marketing (SEM) is being adopted by destination marketing organizations as a strategic tool to attract, engage, and persuade potential visitors (Google, 2006). However, SEM is extremely competitive because: 1) the amount of information available on the Internet is incredibly huge; and, 2) users pay very limited attention to the information they are exposed to on the Internet (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Gladwell, 2005). In the context of travelers' use of search engines for travel planning, marketers oftentimes only have a few seconds to attract travelers' attention in order to create a positive "first impression" (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2008b). As such, it is crucial to understand strategies and techniques that can influence travelers in a positive way in a very short time span during the process of online travel information search.

A search result in a typical search engine is usually presented as a cluster of components including page title, snippet, URL, size, and date of the page. The page title and snippet, derived from the textual content of the target Web page (e.g., page title, meta tags, and textual body of the page), have the potential to substantially influence search engine users (Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2006). As such, the goal of this study is to empirically assess the persuasive effect of search results on a search engine result pages (SERP) when a traveler uses a search engine to look for destination related information. By finding out the relative importance of certain linguistic entities in influencing travelers' perceived relevance of search results, this study will generate insights into the strategies for online tourism promotion through search engines.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Search engines serve as an important tool that bridges the traveler and various suppliers online (Xiang, Wöber, & Fesenmaier, 2008). Like any other marketing practices, the success of search engine marketing requires the marketer to have in-depth knowledge about search engine user behavior in order to provide the information desired by consumers. Therefore, it is argued that it is crucial for tourism marketers to understand how search engines work as well as how travelers use and respond to the information presented by these tools. This section reviews relevant literature as the foundations for understanding the persuasive effect of search results as well as identifies the weaknesses in existing literature to provide the rationale for the current study.

Travelers' Use of Search Engines for Trip Planning

Xiang et al (2008) conceptualized travelers' use of search engines as an interaction between an information user and the online tourism domain mediated by the search technology and its interface. The domain, consisting of numerous business entities and content providers, serves as the symbolic representation of the supply of tourism with various communication goals. Seeing it as a process, Kim and Fesenmaier (2008b) proposed a four-stage model which describes travelers' use of a search engine as a sequence of mental and behavioral states and actions including: 1) the traveler begins the search process by querying the search engine; 2) he/she selects the most relevant search result and visits the target website; 3) an impression toward the travel Website is elicited through a quick inspection of the Web page; and, 4) a decision is made regarding whether or not to navigate to other Web pages offered by the search engine. This model indicates travelers can be influenced in the search process in a number of ways and provide a foundation for developing effective communication strategies.

Persuasive Communication through Search Results

Search engine marketing (SEM) seeks to promote a website on search engine result pages (SERPs) by improving its visibility and, consequently, the likelihood for users to "click through" to the Website (Moran & Hunt, 2005). Search engines use unique algorithms to determine the ranking of a Web page based upon a number of factors (e.g., Brin & Page, 1998). On the user side, the ranking of a search result is presumably the most important aspect that influences search engine users' choice of search results (Pan *et al.*, 2007). A marketer's task is, then, to create conditions that help improve the ranking and click-through rate using techniques such as search engine optimization (SEO), paid directory listing, as well as keywords advertising (e.g., Google Adwords). In addition to the ranking of search results, however, it has been argued that search engines offer the opportunity to influence travelers by skillfully crafted language presented in search results (Xiang & Fesenmaier, 2006). For example, Kim and Fesenmaier (2008a) showed

that language cues, i.e., page titles and snippets, can be very effective in creating positive attitude toward the Website and even the destination. As such, it is argued that while the “natural” ranking of search results is a critical indicator of its relevance to the search query, the language cues in search results can also lead to a “perceived” relevance by travelers who use the search engine.

Research Rationale

It is clearly important to understand travelers’ reactions to search results in the process of using search engines. However, research on this topic is extremely limited with the exception of Kim and Fesenmaier’s study (2008a), in which linguistic entities (words and phrases) from search result titles and snippets were extracted and evaluated. Their study confirmed the persuasive effect of the use of certain linguistic entities. For instance, words such as “official” and “information” have strong positive impact on travelers’ perception of the relevance of a specific search result. However, their study suffers from artificiality in research design because respondents were asked to provide their evaluation of search results in an isolated fashion (i.e., not in relation to other search results). In reality, a specific search result is always presented along with a number of other potentially relevant search results on a SERP and, thus, the evaluation of search results is, cognitively, similar to a rank-ordering process (e.g., Pan *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, a more realistic approach needs to be used to better approximate the process.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The goal of this study was to understand the relative importance of certain linguistic entities in search results (i.e., title and snippet) in generating persuasive effect within the context of traveler’s use of a search engine for travel planning. It was assumed that travelers would respond to search results with their own rank order which is not necessarily the same as the one provided by a search engine due to the persuasive effect of various linguistic entities.

Research Design

The research design aimed to create a scenario wherein travelers can, in a realistic way, provide their rankings of search results. This goal was achieved by the following steps: First, to simulate a traveler’s use of search engine to look for destination information, five destinations in the United States were chosen on the basis that respondents did not have extensive knowledge about them to avoid potential biases in their judgment. Then, these destinations were used to form queries like “travel to Burlington, VM”, respectively. The rationale to use a “uniform” format for these queries was based upon the need to control the search engine response because, potentially, every individual could come up with his/her unique query, which could lead to high level of variation in the search results (e.g., some queries could be too specific while others very general). Third, travelers were asked to use these query terms, one after another, to generate search results in Google and rank order them based upon their perceived relevance using the ranking tool provided in iGoogle (a personalized interface by which a user can click built-in buttons to move up/down search results). Using Google as the focal technology was, obviously, because of its is currently the *de facto* search engine on the Internet (Bertolucci, 2007).

Sampling and Data Collection

Eighteen undergraduate students from a public university in the US participated in a pilot study on a voluntary basis in April 2009. Based upon analyses of the response a number of changes were made to the survey format to improve responses by the subjects. Subjects were asked to use iGoogle to query the search engine (using the queries formulated based upon the five destinations, one by one) and evaluate (rank-order) the search results. The textual content of search results, both before and after the evaluation, were copied from the Web browser and saved in a WORD document by each subject.

Data Analysis

Data analysis were conducted in the following steps: 1) data were “cleaned” by deleting stop words and then “tokenized” by translating the remaining words and terms with the same meaning into broader “categories” (linguistic entities); 2) descriptive analysis were conducted to provide an understanding of the basic aspects of the data, e.g., how many linguistic entities were in the search results, to what extent the search results were re-rank ordered by the subjects, etc; and, 3) ordinal regression analysis was conducted to assess the relative importance of linguistic entities in driving the rank order provided by respondents, which reflects the perceived relevance. Each search result was treated as one case with respondent provided rank order being the dependent variable and the linguistic entities as independent variables (coded as dummies). Each search result’s original rank order was incorporated into the regression model because studies have show it is the primary indicator of the perceived relevance for a search result (e.g., Pan et al., 2007). Additional analyses were conducted to test whether other variables such as the destination and type of search result component (i.e., title or snippet) which a linguistic entity belongs to, have any effect on the perceived relevance of the search results.

FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

In total, the data consist of 2,505 cases of search results (from both pre- and post-evaluation SERPs), along with other variables such as ranking and destination, out of which 2,329 cases are valid after the removal of some cases due to respondent errors (e.g., some respondents only saved the post-evaluation ranked search results). While data analyses are not complete, a preliminary examination of the data revealed that there are considerable differences in the pre- and post-evaluation rank orders of search results, indicating respondents were, indeed, influenced by the language cues in search results. As such, the findings of the study should be consistent with Kim and Fesenmaier’s study (2008a) in that certain linguistic entities have significant impact on travelers’ reaction to search results. However, it is expected that the original rank order of search results should have a strong effect on the perceived relevance.

While the main tools in search engine marketing (e.g., SEO, paid listing, and search engine advertising) are becoming increasingly popular for online tourism marketing, this study, by showing the persuasive effect of the language aspects in search results, will provide insights into alternative and complementary strategies for tourism marketers to attract and engage travelers through search engines. In addition, the results of the study will also demonstrate the effect of “language of tourism” (Dann, 1997) in an online setting and, thus, offer directions for promotion and advertising in other online environments as well wherein a traveler’s attention may be a scarce resource.

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