

2008 ISTTE Conference Proceedings

**The Future Success
of Tourism:
New Directions,
Challenges and
Opportunities**

Clontarf Castle Hotel,
Dublin, Ireland
September 30 ~
October 2, 2008



ISTTE

International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators

Conference Chair: Dominic Dillane
Proceedings Editor: Clark Hu



*The Future Success of Tourism:
New Directions, Challenges and Opportunities*



*Annual Conference Proceedings of Workshop, Research and Academic
Papers – Volume XX*

*Clontarf Castle Hotel, Dublin, Ireland
September 30 – October 2, 2008*

Clark Hu, Ph.D., Editor

*The Future Success of Tourism:
New Directions, Challenges and Opportunities*



The Twenty-Seventh Annual Conference

*Annual Conference Proceedings of Workshop, Research and
Academic Papers – Volume XX*

*Clontarf Castle Hotel, Dublin, Ireland
September 30 – October 2, 2008*

*Clark Hu, Ph.D.
Editor*

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Preface

The 2008 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) conference theme is: “*The Future Success of Tourism: New Directions, Challenges and Opportunities.*” This theme supports our Society’s overall goal to provide 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. This year’s conference is the first in ISTTE’s history to be held in Europe and on the Emerald Isle in beautiful Dublin, Ireland. Likewise, this year’s Proceedings ventures a new expansion to include some selective and interesting workshop papers presented in the conference. At the same time, it continues providing an excellent opportunity to challenge a variety of travel and tourism research issues related to bridging the gap between industry and education needs, cross-cultural studies, emerging issues in education and training, innovations and designs for travel and tourism, innovative and creative teaching techniques, human resources management, impacts on the travel and tourism industry, information communication technology research, international issues and trends, sustainable tourism planning and development, technological applications in travel and tourism education, travel and tourism education and curriculum, etc.

The 2008 Proceedings consists of workshop, full, poster and working papers. This year, a record number of 64 submissions were received across the various categories in the research and academic paper section competing for presentation opportunities. After a double-blind review process, 28 were accepted in the full paper competition of 51 entries. This represents approximately 55% acceptance rate for research and academic full papers. For all accepted submissions, authors were invited to submit a final paper. In addition to three workshop papers, a total 36 final papers were received and included in this Proceedings at the time of its production, including 24 refereed full papers, eight refereed poster papers and four refereed working papers that will be presented at the conference.

I would like to thank all the researchers who participated in the Paper Call Process regardless of the outcome. My sincere thanks are also extended to so many reviewers who generously contributed their time and constructive comments to the authors. Their strong support and timely assistance represent a significant contribution to ISTTE as well as to the profession and the disciplines of Tourism and Hospitality. I have included their names and affiliations in this Proceedings to recognize their kind efforts and important contributions. I am very grateful that Professor Michael Sabitoni, President of ISTTE, Dr. Dominic Dillane, Vice President of ISTTE and Conference Chair, Ms. Joann Bruss, ISTTE Executive Director, and members of the ISTTE Board of Directors have continued their great support during the entire process. I 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 announced in this Proceedings. Finally, I would like to thank ISTTE for giving me the opportunity to serve as the Research and Academic Papers Committee Chair during 2006-2008!! It is my time to leave this position... I hope whoever succeeds my post will always do a better job each year.



Clark Hu, Ph.D.
Editor, 2008 Annual ISTTE Conference Proceedings
Research and Academic Papers Committee Chair

General Information

The 2008 Annual International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) Conference devotes several sessions to the presentations of academic and research papers. It is the intent of these sessions to focus on a broad range of topics that are related to education, research, and management in the field of travel, tourism, and hospitality services. ISTTE is an international organization; therefore, submissions from international scholars are highly encouraged. This year's conference title is *"The Future Success of Tourism: New Directions, Challenges and Opportunities,"* which supports our overall goal to provide 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 International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators (ISTTE) provides authors with a choice of four types of research papers and one type of workshop papers:

- Refereed full papers
 - Full papers based on refereed extended abstract
 - Poster papers based on refereed extended abstract
 - Working papers based on refereed abstract
 - Workshop papers based on quality of proposed materials
- } Double-blind reviews

TYPES OF PROCEEDINGS PAPERS

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

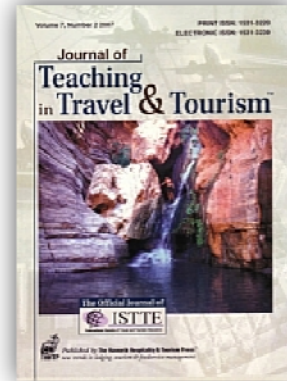
- SECTION I: FULL RESEARCH PAPERS
- SECTION II: POSTER PAPERS
- SECTION III: WORKING PAPERS
- SECTION IV: WORKSHOP PAPERS

Special Issue Call for Papers

Contribution from the Travel and Tourism Educators

Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism (JTTT ISSN: 1531-3220; EISSN: 1531-3239):
The Official Journal of the International Society of Travel & Tourism
Educators (ISTTE)

Contributions are invited to the forthcoming special issue of the *Journal of Teaching in Travel and Tourism*, "Contribution from International Travel and Tourism Educators". Research related to teaching and learning conducted by travel and tourism educators is the focus on this special issue to encourage interests in hospitality and tourism education as a research stream. Individuals whose papers were accepted for presentations in the Annual ISTTE Conference are especially welcome to submit revised manuscripts based on their conference papers and peer suggestions/comments. Areas of interest to this special issue include, but are not limited to:



- Teaching and learning methods and/or technology
- Teaching and learning assessment and/or Quality assurance
- Innovative and creative teaching techniques
- Emerging content for inclusion in travel and tourism courses
- Emerging issues in travel and tourism education and training
- Careers for travel and tourism students
- Travel and tourism education and curriculum design
- Student recruitment
- Perspectives on articulation and/or accreditation
- Industry relations and faculty/student career development

The manuscript should be double-spaced, following the APA style, and approximately 25-30 pages in length including all references, tables, and figures. Please see "INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS" on the journal Web site for details.

Electronic submissions are required. When submit manuscripts via e-mail attachments, only Microsoft Word for Windows format is accepted. All information should be included in one file (i.e., cover page, text, references, and tables/figures). The information on the cover page should be stated in the e-mail message.

- **Full paper submission deadline: December 30, 2008**
- **Review feedback given: March 31, 2009**
- **Acceptance notified: No later than April 30, 2009**
- **Target Publication Date: June 30, 2009**

Please send your submission to the Guest Editor:

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Recognition of Reviewers

As the 2008 ISTTE (International Society of Travel and Tourism Educators) Conference Review Chair for Research & Academic Papers, I want to express my sincere gratitude for the following reviewers' kind contribution to review this year's submissions. They were selected as a Review Committee member because of their expertise and scholarship in tourism and hospitality disciplines. Reviewing others' scholarly work is time-consuming and often a non-paid task (especially in this case). I found their timely comments/suggestions insightful and helpful for the authors. Their reviews are useful for the authors to improve their final papers and presentations at the conference or resubmit to other possible venues such as journals. Our reviewers' strong support certainly made a significant impact on the quality of academic/research papers in the proceedings and presentations at our Annual Conference in Dublin, Ireland. A big THANK-YOU!

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SECTION I
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INNOVATION, ICT AND SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper develops the proposition that information and communication technology can be an innovative approach to sustainable tourism development. It discusses the suitability of the Abernathy and Clark (1985) model to this new research domain of information and communication technology and sustainable tourism development by presenting a modified version of this model.

KEYWORDS: Abernathy and Clark; eTourism; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Innovation; Sustainable Tourism Development.

INTRODUCTION

Engaging in innovative behaviours is critical to any industry seeking to achieve its potential with tourism being no exception to this. Hall & Williams (2008) commented that tourism can be a commanding force for driving and transmitting innovation. However, tourism is noted for paying insufficient attention to innovation (Liburd, 2005; Hjalager, 2002) with the research being limited, sparse and fragmented (Hjalager, 2005; 1997). Tourism innovation research is still in its infancy stage but with a growing body of knowledge (see Hall & Williams, 2008; Hjalager, 2005; 2002; 1997; Volo, 2005; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003; Fache, 2000). However a gap still exists in demonstrating the significance of how this tourism innovation can be carried out in practice (Hjalager, 2002).

Innovating in tourism has mainly resulted from the use of information and communication technology (ICT), with technology already being regarded as critical for tourism (Buhalis, 2003; Werthner & Klein, 1999; Sheldon, 1997; Poon, 1993), since it not only drives economic growth but it can also ensure the long-term prosperity of tourism (Liburd, 2005). Moreover, there is indeed a link between ICT and innovation with ICT being identified as an important facilitator of innovation (European Commission, 2006). Seventy-eight percent (78%) of European tourism companies in 2006 identified that innovations were critically linked to ICT (European Commission, 2006). Increasing pressures are being placed on tourism organisations to “compute and compete” and to make their operational, tactical and strategic processes more efficient, with ICT being an attractive way of doing this. Using ICT to innovate will not only be beneficial but in fact essential to the long-run prosperity of the tourism industry. The exploitation

of ICT in tourism has focused mainly on consumer and demand dimensions, technological innovations and industry functions (Buhalis & Law, 2008). There are still other areas in tourism that ICT can be used with sustainable tourism development (STD) being such an avenue. The application of ICT to STD will not only expand the eTourism research domain beyond web based marketing and distribution (Frew, 2000), but it will also stimulate innovation in the tourism industry.

Miller & Twining-Ward (2005) identified innovation as being important and appealing to organisations engaged in sustainable activities with Stamboulis (2003) agreeing that the impacts caused by tourism can be a major driving force for innovation in the tourism industry. Tourism researchers have however displayed little emphasis on the application of ICT as an innovative approach to STD for destinations. The continued growth of tourism will no doubt pose greater environmental threats for destinations. To deal with these issues, the tourism industry has applied the concept of sustainable development to tourism policy and planning i.e. STD (Choi & Sirakaya, 2006). Striking a balance between economic growth and protection of the natural and socio-cultural environments has proven to be difficult, and to date there is no agreed approach as to how destinations should develop their tourism industry in a sustainable manner (Ali & Frew, 2008). The most radical solution that can be proposed is to reduce the future growth of tourism by decreasing the amount of travel (air, rail, bus, coach) that occurs. However, this solution is neither feasible nor beneficial to anyone.

Alternative forms of tourism (green tourism, soft tourism, responsible tourism, niche tourism, and eco-tourism) have not yet proven successful in this respect (Liu, 2003) and many of the efforts to materialise STD have been identified as having a “lack of quality, technical content, reliability, maturity, equity and effectiveness” (Buckley, 2001 cited in van der Duim & van Marwijk, 2006:449). Climate change is also intensifying as an issue of serious concern for the tourism industry. The preparedness of destinations for these environmental threats will be a critical factor for the continued prosperity of the industry. Therefore the industry has to come up with more innovative and beneficial solutions to limit the levels of environmental degradation to destinations and to reap the positive rewards of tourism.

Researchers in different fields of tourism must occasionally question the current ways of thinking and doing things and seek out more radical concepts, methods and practical solutions to revitalise the industry. Innovations in STD would require changes being made to the existing tools and mechanisms that destination managers use for STD. It is a process of change, or a path, rather than a fixed end point or a rigid goal (Farrell & Twining-Ward, 2004). STD innovations call for re-defining the situation, practices and materials (van der Duim & van Marwijk, 2006). Dearing (2000) argued that sustainable development must be treated as a framework for innovation, and management principles must be used and extended for this framework to be operational and effective. He also discussed that the use of better technologies will make sustainable development a reality. The same can be said for STD which must be viewed in light of its relationship with sustainable development (Sheldon, Knox & Lowry, 2005). STD can be seen as a framework for innovating in tourism and using ICT as a new and innovative approach will extend the theories of innovation in order to make STD a more workable reality for destinations.

PURPOSE

In researching ICT as an innovative approach for STD, these researchers found no such existing approach to innovation or any sort of classification. Ali & Frew (2008) proposed an emergent framework in looking at the applicability of ICT to STD by identifying four steps: tourism as a complex, adaptive system, the current approaches to managing STD, the existing opportunities for using ICT-based tools/applications and ICT as an innovative approach to STD. This paper will be focusing on the last step of this emergent framework by exploring it in greater detail. Hjalager (2002) observed that classical innovation theories have much to offer tourism and to date there has been little research on their applications. This research therefore considers the use of the Abernathy and Clark (1985) model and its usefulness in the application of ICT as being innovative in managing STD. Innovation is the first step in the diffusion process (Agarwal, 1983) and the discussion will focus on this, and not on ICT usage and adoption and diffusion by tourism organisations for STD and their behaviour. The paper therefore examines some promising perspectives driven by both an ambitious and creative research agenda to combine STD and ICT.

DEFINING INNOVATION

The concept of innovation is broad in scope since it can be classified in numerous ways (Hall & Williams, 2008). Much of the research on innovation stemmed from Schumpeter's (1939; 1942) research which is grounded in economic theory and emphasised that innovations were at the heart of competition (Hall & Williams, 2008). Following in Schumpeter's "creative destruction" footsteps, innovation is frequently placed on a continuum between invention and adoption with the existing literature categorising innovations based on a firm's capabilities (Volo, 2005; Singh et al., 2002). Inventions are however different from innovations. The first happening of an idea is an invention whereas an innovation is the foremost effort to carry out this invention in practice i.e. invention is the new breakthrough whilst innovation is the new value. The core understanding behind an innovation is that the idea has to be developed and merged into a product, process or service for particular industry uses. Therefore innovation is not an one off happening but rather a long and cumulative process (Singh et al., 2002). Moreover, one of the problem areas in defining innovation is the understanding of the term "newness" (Hjalager, 2002). Sundbo (1998) observed that an innovation does not have to be new, but rather only new to the market segment or industry. This thinking will be adopted for this research since the application of ICT is not new to tourism but it will be new for its uses for STD.

According to Kanter (1983) innovations changes a problem-solving idea into an application. Innovation can exist in a variety of forms but share three main elements – creativity, a problem solving approach and a new way of thinking (Moscardo, 2008). Edward De Bono (1998) the leading scholar on creative thinking observed that all thinking techniques are connected by challenging the existing assumptions and looking at the situation from a different perspective. Based on this, Moscardo (2008) argued that being innovative involves varying degrees of creativity. It must be noted that being creative is a necessary but not sufficient factor for facilitating innovation (Carayannis & Gonzalez, 2003) but rather it is the ability to develop novel ideas that are useful for solving problems and satisfying needs (Sternberg et al., 2003, cited in Hall & Williams, 2008:83). It is therefore "a goal-oriented process that generates innovations"

(Hall & Williams, 2008:83). This is at the core of this paper which looks at the solutions to tourism’s negative impacts by approaching STD from an alternative viewpoint. In looking at ICT applicability to STD, this approach will be seen as a new and innovative one for the tourism industry i.e. a problem solving idea that transforms STD into a practical concept.

Perdomo-Ortiz, Gonzalez-Benito & Galende (2006:1172) provides an analysis of innovation and defined innovation as a “dynamic capability” which is a pattern of collective activity whereby an organisation changes how it operates in order to improve its effectiveness. This definition will be used for this research since it demonstrates that all forms of innovation are based on new ways of thinking associated with creative thinking techniques (Moscardo, 2008). This definition is also relevant since the application of ICT for STD will come from the organisations responsible for the management and development of tourism at the destination – the Destination Management Organisation (DMO). Being innovative in STD requires management which supports strategy formulation, dissemination of new techniques and implementation. The DMOs can also bring together the creativity and problem solving expertise to generate the innovations and monitor changes at the destination (Krozer & Redzepovic, 2006). Therefore DMOs will change their current operations in how STD is managed and display their dynamic capability by bringing forth a process of change which is innovative for the STD of the destination through the use of ICT.

CLASSIFICATION AND INNOVATION THEORIES

Innovation is a process to classify with the output of this process resulting in a classification, which serves as a framework for ordering and representing (Coccia, 2006). There are two main approaches to constructing such a classification: empirical and theoretical (Coccia, 2006). The former approach involves using collected data that is analysed to produce the classification i.e. data is used to support the classification. The latter approach involves using existing theory to develop a classification where the topic under investigation is placed in this classification i.e. theory is used to support the classification. This paper will adopt a theoretical approach but will discuss empirical work to be undertaken to support this theoretical approach.

Various classifications of innovation exist in the literature from different disciplines. In Schumpeter’s (1939) term, innovation is aligned to a new goods, new quality products, new methods of production, new markets or marketing and new organisation or management. Most of the classification of innovation are modelled after Schumpeter’s research and Table 1 provides a listing of some of the more common classifications in the literature.

Table 1. Innovation Classification

<i>Categoryisations</i>	<i>Existing Models</i>
Octa	Reformulated, new parts, re-merchandising, new improvements, new products, new users, new market, new customers (Johnson & Jones, 1957)
Penta	Systematic, major, minor, incremental, unrecorded (Freeman, 1994)
Tetra	Incremental, modular, architectural, radical (Henderson & Clark, 1990)

	Niche creation, architectural, regular, revolutionary (Abernathy & Clark, 1985)
	Incremental, evolutionary market, evolutionary technical, radical (Moriarty & Kosnik, 1990)
	Incremental, market breakthrough, technological breakthrough, radical (Chandy & Tellis, 2000)
	Incremental, architectural, fusion, breakthrough (Tidd, 1995; Tidd et al., 2001)
Triadic	Low, moderate, high innovativeness (Kleinschmidt & Cooper, 1991)
	Incremental, new generation, radically new (Wheelwright & Clark, 1992)
Dichotomous	Discontinuous, continuous (Anderson & Tushman, 1990; Robertson, 1967)
	Instrumental, ultimate (Grossman, 1970)
	Variations, reorientation (Norman, 1971)
	True, adoption (Maidique & Zirger, 1984)
	Original, reformulated (Yoon & Lilien, 1985)
	Innovations, reinnovations (Rothwell & Gardiner, 1988)
	Radical, routine (Meyers & Tucker, 1989)
	Evolutionary, revolutionary (Utterback, 1996)
	Sustaining, disruptive (Christensen, 1997)
	Really new, incremental (Schmidt & Calantone, 1998; Song & Montoya-Weisse, 1998)
	Breakthrough, incremental (Rice et al., 1998);
	Radical, incremental (Balachandra & Friar, 1997; Freeman, 1994).

Source: Coccia, 2006:13

The classification of innovations identified emerged from the theories of innovation which are depicted in Table 2.

Table 2. Theories of Innovations¹

<i>Model</i>	<i>Key Features</i>
Abernathy & Utterback (1978)	Introduced dynamism into the innovation process and the concept of a dominant design. This model examined the processes that occur with firms in an industry during the evolution of technology (Singh et al., 2002) and described three phases in an innovation's life cycle from a firm's perspective – the fluid, transitional and specific phases.
Appropriability and Complementary	Discussed more than technological capabilities were required to make use of an innovation. This model argued that the appropriate innovation and the complementary assets were needed by the firm,

¹ Space constraints preclude detailed discussion of the theories of innovations. Please contact authors for further information.

Assets	both of which were important. It therefore demonstrated that inventors are not always the ones to profit from an innovation.
Chandy & Tellis (1998)	Discussed the extent to which technology involved in a product is new or different from previous technologies and the extent to which the new product satisfies important customer needs better than the existing product.
Disruptive Innovation Theory	Discussed why new entrants to the market have a better chance of succeeding in the market. The reasoning behind this is that established firms in the marketplace have a greater likelihood of winning over the new entrants when the innovation is incremental or radical, whilst the newcomers tend to be more successful if the innovations are disruptive. Disruptive innovations are those which are simple, convenient and low-cost.
Foster "S" Curve (1986)	Foster argued that the rate of technology advancement is a function of the amount of effort put into the technology and this follows the shape of a "S" curve. This model contributes to predicting the end of an existing technology and the introduction of a new one.
Henderson & Clark (1990)	This model defined innovation based on its impact on the components and its impacts on the linkages between components. It argued that categorising innovation as either incremental or radical was incomplete and confusing since the large effects that minor improvements in technological products can have on an industry were not considered. Based on this, innovation was examined from a product development perspective especially the development of a new product by building product demand which resulted in two types of knowledge: architectural and component knowledge. The combination of component and architectural knowledge leads to four kinds of innovation: incremental, radical, architectural and modular. This model provides insights into why established firms have trouble adapting to architectural innovations and why they fail at such types of innovations.
Local Environment Model	Stated that the ability of a firm to innovate is based on the environment in which it operates.
Moore's Chasm Concept (1991)	Based on the Technology Adoption Life Cycle, Moore explained why firms encounter difficulties in "crossing the chasm" from being early adopters to early majority with their products.
Resources, Processes, and Values Theory	Based on the above theory, this model explained why existing companies have difficulties grappling with disruptive innovations whilst newcomers fail at incremental or radical innovations.
Strategic Choice Model	Demonstrated that the strategic choices of a firm are what determined whether the firm exploited an innovation.
Strategic Incentive to Invest	Examined the type of firm that will invest or be the first to take advantage of an innovation based on whether this innovation is incremental or radical.

Strategic Leadership Model	Examined the role of top management in innovation and resolved that a firm's failure or success at adopting innovation is based on its management.
Teece Model (1986)	This model of innovation looked at why innovating firms tend to derive less returns compared to later market entries and innovators. It provided a framework which identified the factors that determined the firms which won from innovation. These were the firms which were first to market, follower firms, or firms that have related capabilities that the innovator needed.
Tushman & Rosenkopf (1992)	Discuss the extent a firm can influence the evolution of an innovation and the dominant design (Mustonen-Ollila & Lyytinen, 2003). This model considered that for a firm, the greater the complexity of an innovation, the greater the chances of it being affected by non-technical factors. Technological progress depends on factors other than those internal to the firm and the more it is under-determined by factors internal to it. It considered innovation from the perspective of the impact on market knowledge and technology. These researchers described market knowledge as being either new or existing technology and was classified as either incremental or radical. Using these two dimensions, innovation was classified into four categories: architectural, incremental, major product or service and major process.
Value-Added Chain Model	Investigated innovation according to the value added chain of suppliers and other innovators in the value chain. The significance of this model is that it explained why some firms tend to fail with incremental innovations but succeed with radical ones.

With regards to STD, Hjalager (1997) developed an analytical typology for innovation by dividing them into the following: product innovation, classical process innovation, process innovations in information handling, management innovation and institutional innovation. These can be further expanded for its applicability to using ICT for STD as discussed below.

Firstly, product innovation consists of changing, combining or introducing a new tourism product or service, where the novelty of this is more attractive to the tourists. Examples of product innovation in tourism are nature tourism, organic farming and volunteering tourism. With regards to ICT for STD, a product innovation would be the development of different types of ICT for use by various individuals and groups. One such example is Location Based Services (LBS) which is a wireless service for mobile users that employs geographic information to provide the user with targeted information based on his/her specific location (Eriksson, 2002; Zipf & Malaka, 2001). LBS can lead to STD by promoting greater tourist satisfaction. This offers the DMO an opportunity to become more customer focused and flexible in their information and service delivery, which is essential in tourism becoming more responsive to the tourists' needs (Buhalis & O'Connor, 2006). LBS can be used to provide real-time and correct information to the tourists whilst they are on their trip, facilitate in reducing potential risks by providing easy and quick access to information on services such as hospitals and policing and alert the tourist of any activity whilst on their vacation, and be used for transactions and tele-

banking (Flouri & Buhalis, 2004). The environmental quality of a destination can also be improved by using LBS since this leads to more sustainable production with less paper and energy being used to produce maps and brochures. Liburd (2005) discussed these devices can also lead to sustainable consumption by allowing the tourist to make better decisions on what products to purchase and which companies to support whilst they are at the destination.

Secondly, process innovation refers to raising the performance level through the redesign of the production and delivery systems with the aim of achieving savings in production inputs such as labour (Hjalager, 1997). Examples of these in tourism include: computerised management and monitoring systems and self check-in/check-out machines. With regards to the application of ICT to STD, an example of a process innovation would be a DMO use of a Destination Management System (DMS). This is a system that consolidates and distributes a comprehensive range of tourism products through a variety of channels and platforms and generally caters to a specific region and supports the activities of a DMO in the region. The concept of a DMS can be extended to a Destination Integrated Computer Information Reservation Management Systems (DICIRMS) which acts as an advanced and more sophisticated DMS (Buhalis, 2003; 1999; 1997). This DMS can contribute to the STD by fostering new tools for managing the valued resources (natural, economic and social-cultural) of a destination (Buhalis, 1999).

By serving as an “information diffusion mechanism” (Buhalis, 1997: 84), this enhanced DMS can lead to economic benefits by efficiently managing the resource inventory of a destination, providing managerial aid for small business and supporting the tourist experience before, during and after the visit. The socio-cultural benefits can be improved by disseminating information to the tourists on culture, customs, history and other needed elements that fosters an understanding between the tourist and the host community. This DMS can also highlight the fragile eco-systems and resources of a destination. Process innovation is therefore achieved through improvements of the DMS which leads to savings in the production inputs required to monitor, market and promote the destination.

Thirdly, process innovation for information handling refers to using ICT for managing information. ICT will play an invaluable role in STD through the efficient management and monitoring of environmental information and issues for better performance and a higher quality destination. An example of such an application is an Environmental Management Information System (EMIS). This is a computer-based technology that manages information by collecting and merging disparate information about environmental issues. An EMIS can co-ordinate such activities as tracking waste, monitoring emissions, scheduling tasks, coordinating permits and documentation, conducting cost/benefit analysis, and choosing among alternative materials (Moore & Bordeleau, 2001). This allows the decision maker to analyse the information in a more appropriate fashion since the EMIS is focused on the effective and efficient collection of performance data to sustain performance measurement and process improvement as well as providing cross-organisation integration of environmental data (El-Gayar & Fritz, 2006). DMOs can use an EMIS to obtain the answers to many questions which would have been difficult before due to the incompatibility, diversity and volume of information available. An example of an EMIS in action for tourism is Xanterra Parks and Resorts Ecometrix System. This computerised system monitors consumption of electricity, natural gas, gasoline, diesel, propane,

fuel, oil water, generation of solid waste recycled materials, hazardous materials, recycled hazardous materials, sustainable cuisine and green house gas emissions.

Fourthly, management innovation refers to new management procedures which change the existing authority systems, creating new jobs and collaborative structures and staff empowerment (Liburd, 2005). By using ICT for STD, new roles in DMOs will need to be defined since these tools/mechanisms will assist them in better management of the destination, using information more appropriately, and having greater stakeholder involvement.

Lastly, institutional innovation lies beyond the individual enterprises as collaborative processes or regulatory structures that transect the public and private sectors. This type of innovation is more wide-ranging than those discussed prior since institutions not only exist in a physical state, but are also habits and customs and provide some type of framework within which people can interact (Hjalager, 1997). The tourism system will have to be managed by an institution that is located beyond the scope of individual businesses and organizations (Hjalager, 1997). The use of ICT for STD can stimulate this type of innovation by fostering better partnerships with stakeholders by use of the Internet and engaging in dialogue with the community by using community informatics (CI). By using e-mail, bulletin boards and community networks based on the Internet, community participation and development will be strengthened (Milne et al., 2005).

ICT, SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND THE ABERNATHY AND CLARK (1985) MODEL

The Abernathy & Clark (1985) model analysed innovation and the various roles this plays in competition. According to this model, innovation was classified according to two dimensions, market knowledge and technological capabilities of the firm, by distinguishing between the preservation and destruction of this knowledge after an innovation has occurred and the capability of the firm needed for producing the product or service as a result of this innovation. Based on this model, the technological capabilities of a firm can become archaic, but the firm can still maintain its market capabilities and use this to its advantage to deal with competing, newer firms in the market. Combining market knowledge and technological capabilities leads to four kinds of innovation: regular, niche, revolutionary and architectural as seen in Figure 1.

Market Knowledge	Technical Capabilities	
	Preserved	Destroyed
Preserved	Regular	Revolutionary
Destroyed	Niche	Architectural

Figure 1. Abernathy and Clark Model (1985)

From the model, architectural innovation defines the architecture of the industry. It is broad based and involves changes not only to the industry but also the community in which it would be used (Hjalager, 2002). It is both a radical technological and market innovation (Singh

et al., 2002). Regular innovations are those that appear almost invisible but whose cumulative impact over time can be substantial i.e. conserves the manufacturer's existing technological and market capabilities (Abernathy & Clark, 1985; Hjalager, 2002; Singh et al., 2002). This type of innovation strengthens the existing competence. Niche innovations are those which are focused on strengthening the established structures but not the existing competences i.e. it enhances technological capabilities but obsoletes market capabilities (Abernathy & Clark, 1985; Hjalager, 2002; Singh et al., 2002). Lastly, revolutionary innovations are those which can have a disruptive effect on competences and causes radical consequences with structures remaining unchanged (Abernathy & Clark, 1985; Hjalager, 2002). This model was analysed by Hjalager (2002) with regards to its applicability for tourism by providing examples of the types of innovation identified for tourism.

The benefit of this model is that it demonstrates the importance of the market capabilities of a firm since businesses having well established markets and/or technological capabilities will tend to take advantage of regular, revolutionary and niche innovations. New market entrants will tend to exploit architectural innovations and niche innovations to a lesser extent. It also shows that innovation is not a unified phenomenon but rather they disrupt, destroy and make obsolete an existing firm's competences while others refine and improve. The model also identified that different kinds of innovation require different kinds of organisational environments and managerial skills.

Selection of this Model

This model was chosen in comparison to the other models of innovation for this research for several reasons. Firstly, Coccia (2006) stated that in the management of technology, this model provided the most useful classification since it presents a clearer understanding of the nature of particular and well-defined innovations. Moreover, there are numerous ICT-based tools/applications that can be used for STD and this model serves in providing a useful classification for the tourism industry in differing aspects both on a micro and macro level.

Secondly, many of the innovation theories looked at the behaviour of firms, the types of firms that innovate, the firms that generate innovation and the stages they go through in adopting these innovations. This research is focused on the types of innovation rather than the behaviour of firms in the innovating process. The intent is therefore to develop concepts that may prove useful in incorporating ICT in the struggle to make STD more achievable. The reason for this is that there is little knowledge on the use of ICT for STD, the types of ICT based tools/applications that are being used, how they are being used and how they are selected by DMOs for their destinations.

Thirdly, Hjalager (2002) in her analysis of the Abernathy & Clark (1985) model used core competence as the unit of analysis. This measurement of core competencies is more suitable since innovation in tourism is often based on core competencies (Weiermair, 2003). Since all destinations are striving to be competent in managing their sustainability, this model is most appropriate.

Lastly, the use of ICT for STD can be classified under this taxonomy because the dimensions identified by Abernathy & Clark (1985) are appropriate. Regular innovations will

exist with ICT-based tools/applications in that their impacts will seem insignificant but over a considerable period of time this impact builds up and play a huge role in sustaining the tourism industry. Regular innovation include new investments in existing technology for STD such as investments in DMS as discussed earlier. Another example include adding a technology aspect to the current methods for managing STD. This can be achieved by using an EMIS² to assist with monitoring, if this is a method currently being used for managing STD.

Niche type innovations will be created with the use of ICT for STD by strengthening the existing structures. New opportunities will be realised by using what the destination managers already possess. The same ICT that DMOs are using for other purposes can be used for STD with this ICT being refined, improved or changed in some way to support the new use. One such example is extending the uses of the Internet. DMOs can improve the environmental quality of their destination by placing promotion materials and maps on their websites. This leads to sustainable production with less paper being used to produce promotional materials, and sustainable consumption by the tourists using these websites. Additionally, the Internet can be used as a tool for interpretation by encouraging interaction amongst tourists whereby they can share their experiences on a DMO's website. This is critical to a destination image since it might be these very comments that influences the tourists' destination choice (Staab and Werthner, 2002). DMOs can also use the Internet creatively by providing the tourists with information on ground transport, directions, safety and security, events, eating places, and background information on the destination so that they are aware of the local culture, dress, behaviour, history and geography and how best to experience and learn about the destination prior to their visit. The Internet for STD can also be used for enabling partnership by fostering stakeholder consultation and information transfer. It can be a strategic tool for building and strengthening relationships, networks and communities which can transform the tourism planning process and enhance economic development at the destination level. An example of this is DestiNet (<http://destinet.ewindows.eu.org>), an initiative of the European Environment Agency. The information resource and communications platform contains quality information on the ways in which tourism is being made more sustainable. It acts as a single European-level gateway to environmental sustainability for the tourism sector, allowing users to understand and report on sector impacts on the environment, learn how to improve tourism sector sustainability, and coordinate information exchange between tourism stakeholders (World Bank, 2006).

Revolutionary innovations will occur when the types of ICT-based tools/applications used for STD have a disruptive effect on the competence of how STD is managed. This is accomplished by transforming the current methods to managing STD, making some of these approaches obsolete and in the long term changing how tourism is overall managed at the destination. An example of a disruptive ICT-based tool/application could be the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). This is "an information system that can capture, store, manage, manipulate, analyse, integrate and display large amounts of geographical data" (Ali & Frew, 2008). GIS development is a full spectrum approach to retrieving information, developing new and existing products, ensuring quality and managing the environment (Raghuvanshi, Belwal, & Solomon, 2007) and if supported, GIS can be a fundamental tool for STD. According to Lee & Graefe (2004), being GIS illiterate in the next decade would be like someone who does not know how to use e-mail and the Internet today. Table 3 identifies the uses of a GIS for STD.

² Please refer to the earlier discussion of an EMIS.

Architectural innovation will occur through the use of ICT for STD since it will change the existing ways in which STD is managed. This will open up new market linkages and users and is characteristic of the creation of new industries as well as the reformation of old ones. The use of certain types of ICT-based tools/applications can change the framework of how STD is managed and in effect make the destination more competitive.

Table 3. Uses of Geographical Information System for Sustainable Tourism Development

<i>GIS Uses</i>	<i>Applications for Sustainable Tourism Development</i>
Data Integration	Produces more informed arguments, compromise and resolution for decision-making by managing, integrating and co-ordinating data from a variety of sources. The Lake District National Park Authority used a GIS to integrate accommodation data from the Cumbria Tourist Board, Population Census and Ordnance Survey to examine how the types of accommodation vary within the quieter and busier central valleys areas of the Lake District (Bahaire & Elliott-White, 1999).
Indicator Identification	Updating of old data as new data becomes available and taking account of changing demand over time (Avdimiotis et al., 2006).
Resource Inventory	Used to map and report about an area selected for development (Lee and Graefe, 2004). It assists in determining problematic areas and provides stakeholders with the types of information required to assert their point of view (Bahaire & Elliott-White, 1999). A landscape and resource inventory was developed in the Badenoch and Strathspey District in Scotland (Bahaire & Elliott-White, 1999).
Suitability Analysis	Provides guidance in identifying suitable locations for tourism development, location of surrounding communities, right to the land in the area, accessibility to the proposed site, areas that require protection, identify utilities and highlight how the land is changing over time.
Visual Impact Analysis	Three-dimensional visualisations of areas can be produced before and after proposed developments which aids in the evaluation of proposals, alternatives and the degree of virtual intrusiveness (Bahaire & Elliott-White, 1999).
Community Participation	Serves as a structured framework to assist the socio-cultural aspects of STD by enhancing public consultation and community participation process by use of different types of data such as video, sound, three dimensional images and large scale maps to give the community more information and hence foster better decision making. (Avdimiotis et al., 2006; Hasse & Milne, 2005; Bahaire & Elliott-White, 1999).

No discussion of this approach would be complete without addressing some of the existing criticisms of the Abernathy & Clark (1985) model. The model has been criticised for being too static (Hjalager, 2002). For this approach, this static is overcome by applying it to a dynamic system such as tourism and changing the dimensions from its previous applications to

see how it works in a tourism setting. Another criticism is that the model underestimated the extent to which innovation builds on existing technologies. This adapted model will consider this aspect since as mentioned earlier this approach is not looking at developing new technologies but rather seeing what already exists and how these ICT-based tools/applications can be used for STD. No model is flawless and despite the criticisms, this model aids in providing insight in forming a useful framework for addressing ICT as being an innovative approach to STD.

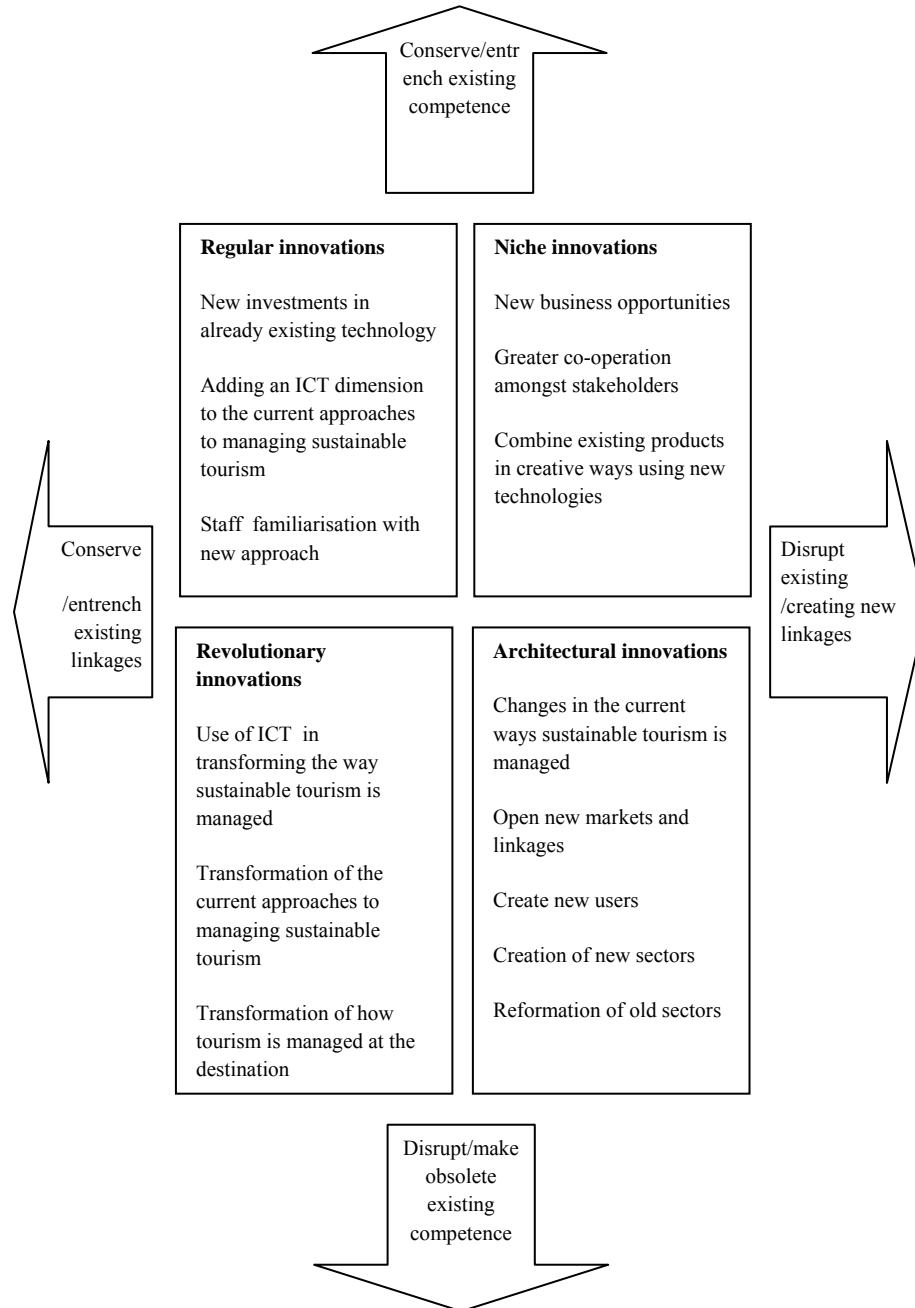


Figure 2. Innovation, ICT and Sustainable Tourism Development – A Modified Abernathy and Clark (1985) Model. Adapted from: Hjalager, 2002

CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE WORK

Organisations are being warned that if they do not innovate they would cease to exist. This paper has demonstrated that the Abernathy & Clark (1985) model is a useful starting point to research the application of ICT as an innovative approach for STD. For this approach to be innovative, DMOs not only need to know the ICT-based tools/applications which can be used for STD, but also need to know what ICT-based tools/applications are available and how best to make use of them for their particular needs (Fache, 2000). Future work leading from this research will involve the administering of eSurveys to destination managers, eTourism experts and destination system providers, with the aim of obtaining their perspectives on the use of ICT-based tools/applications for STD, determining the uses and application to STD of existing ICT-based tools/applications and identifying other potential tools. The results of these eSurveys and the literature review findings will lead to refinement of the model presented in Figure 2 and will describe, categorise, and show how this wide-ranging list can be used for different perspectives of the industry and how it will be an innovative approach.

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CREATIVE DESTRUCTION IN THE CENTRAL FLORIDA THEME PARK INDUSTRY: WALT DISNEY WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Creative destruction is described as the cyclical process of growth and decline in capitalism resulting from innovation. This study examines the role of creative destruction and the theme park industry, specifically a case study of Walt Disney World. Qualitative research methods were utilized to collect the data. Stages of creative destruction were revealed by analysis of investment, consumption, resident attitude, crime, immigration and workforce data. This is followed by a discussion of the current stage of Creative Destruction, the direction for future stages, and the complexities that can hinder future innovation and progression. Recognition and analysis of the creative destruction process can be identified and applied throughout the theme park industry.

KEYWORDS: Creative destruction, theme parks, Disney, qualitative, Central Florida

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of Central Florida as the world's theme park capital has been a process of reinvention. Competition for tourist revenue has spurred intense rivalry among surrounding theme parks (Braun, Soskin, & Cernicky, 2003), each reinvesting millions of dollars a year to increase consumption (Braun & Soskin, 1999). Schumpeter (1942) states that as consumption increases, the product offering must also increase, hereby creating a cycle of growth and destruction; birthing a new economic structure while simultaneously destroying the old one (Huang, Wall, & Mitchell, 2007).

The purpose of this study is to examine Walt Disney World, a theme park located in Central Florida, in relation to Schumpeter's (1942) five stage theory of creative destruction. At the present time, no studies have been conducted integrating the economic theory of

Schumpeter's creative destruction with the life cycle of theme parks neither dispelling nor drawing the notion of industries destroying themselves due to consumer demands. Schumpeter (1942) proposed this economic theory of creative destruction as a byproduct of innovation. As new products and services emerge, a new economic process develops from within (Schumpeter, 1942). Theme parks continually offer higher quality tourism experiences, (Milman, 2001), drawing consumers into the new arena in effort to garner a competitive advantage. Aghion & Howitt (1992) assert that creative destruction involves the process of individual innovation, and individual effort is important enough to affect the overall economy. The major theme parks in Central Florida are chief drivers of the Central Florida economy (Milman, 2004), and the stage of creative destruction theme parks currently experience can affect the residents of the city. By identifying the stage of creative destruction of a tourism product, the introduction of quality tourism offerings can alleviate the cycle of destruction, ultimately creating a more innovative industry.

To assess the stage of destruction of Walt Disney World, a qualitative design is employed. Measures of product consumption will be collected from published databases, investments in the tourism product were self reported by the company, and resident attitude will be analyzed through past published survey data and articles. This study expands the existing body of literature relating to theme park research, increasing the understanding of the life cycle and creative destruction of the industry. The framework presented could possibly be applied to other tourism-related industries for analysis of creative destruction. Limitations of the current study and opportunities for future research are also discussed.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Creative destruction

The process of creative destruction has been described as the cyclical process of growth and decline in a capitalist society (Huang et al., 2007). The creation of new processes, technologies, and products destroy the established entities, creating new standards for operation (Mitchell, Atkinson, & Clark, 2001). Innovation is a fundamental element of such creation, which in essence, advances the current state into providing the opportunity for a temporary industry monopoly; ultimately affecting the entire economy of an industry (Aghion & Howitt, 1992). Innovation is not static, requiring entrepreneurial initiative and constant evolution (Carayannis & Ziemnowicz, 2007).

Entrepreneurs are largely responsible for the initiation of innovation, either through individual effort or collectively, as an organization (Carayannis & Ziemnowicz, 2007). Schumpeter (1964) connoted three main qualities of innovation: 1) it is dynamic in nature, 2) economic equilibrium is a catalyst, and upon diffusion, 3) economic equilibrium will be restored. This diffusion occurs when the innovation is absorbed into the industry, making the innovation the new standard, initiating imitation. Diffusion of the innovation reduces the profit level dramatically, if not completely, necessitating further invention. As profit is a measure of entrepreneurial function, diminished earnings is a stimulus for innovation (Carayannis & Ziemnowicz, 2007). This cycle of invention, innovation, and imitation is the underlying

framework for the theory of creative destruction (Carayannis & Ziemnowicz, 2007; Huang et al., 2007).

Measures of Creative Destruction

Varying methods of measurement for creative destruction have been proposed by many researchers, with examples existing of models quantifying the concept through productivity (McMillan, 2004), economic growth (Aghion & Howitt, 1992), and sustainability (Hart, 2005). Mitchell (1998) proposed a model of creative destruction examining the convergence of investment, consumption, and attitude, which has been applied to multiple tourism destinations (Huang et al., 2007; Mitchell et al., 2001). This study will utilize the Mitchell et al., (2001) model, applying the constructs of investment, consumption, and attitude to the theme park industry.

By examining investment, consumption, and attitude, distinct stages of creative destruction are revealed (Mitchell, 1998). The five stages of creative destruction are: Early Commodification, Advanced Commodification, Early Destruction, Advanced Destruction, and Post-Destruction (Huang et al., 2007; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell et al., 2001). In the first stage, Early Commodification, initial investments are made and consumption is low. Resident attitude toward the growth is enthusiastic and optimistic (Huang et al., 2007; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell et al., 2001). As investment levels surge, the industry enters into the second stage, Advanced Commodification. Throughout the Advanced Commodification stage, there is a marked increase in both investment and consumption. Within this stage, primary resident discontent emerges, particularly for those not directly involved with the industry (Huang et al., 2007). One ramification in the Advanced Destruction stage is likely to occur to smaller businesses; especially those which cater solely to residents, their own destruction. In order to serve the increasing consumption, these businesses may give way to larger firms; therefore, fostering emotions of bitterness (Mitchell, 1998). The third stage, Early Destruction, appears as the landscape continues to evolve with the purpose of serving tourism consumers and reinvestments of profits into tourism-related products signify this transition (Mitchell, 1998). In this stage, residents begin to express their concerns for the erosion of the community, and the perception of a new economy being created (Huang et al., 2007; Mitchell, 1998). Advanced Destruction, the fourth stage, is marked by an outward migration of residents who have determined the community is no longer conducive to their standard of living, with tourism-related industries becoming the predominant economic driver (Mitchell, 1998). Investment levels continually rise to increase consumption, which has grown exponentially through the stages, and residents perceive the costs of tourism to outweigh the benefits (Huang et al., 2007). In the fifth and final stage of creative destruction, Post-Destruction, resident attitude may improve, as those who have experienced discontent have vacated the community, leaving behind a population content with a commodified existence (Huang et al., 2007). In this phase, however, consumption has risen to such an extreme level, the consumers become dissatisfied with the industry, ultimately reducing consumption levels (Mitchell, 1998).

Figure 1 is a model composed of concepts outlined in the literature review, specifically Mitchell (1998) and Mitchell et al., (2001). It is an overview of the constructs of investment, consumption, and attitude to the theme park industry.

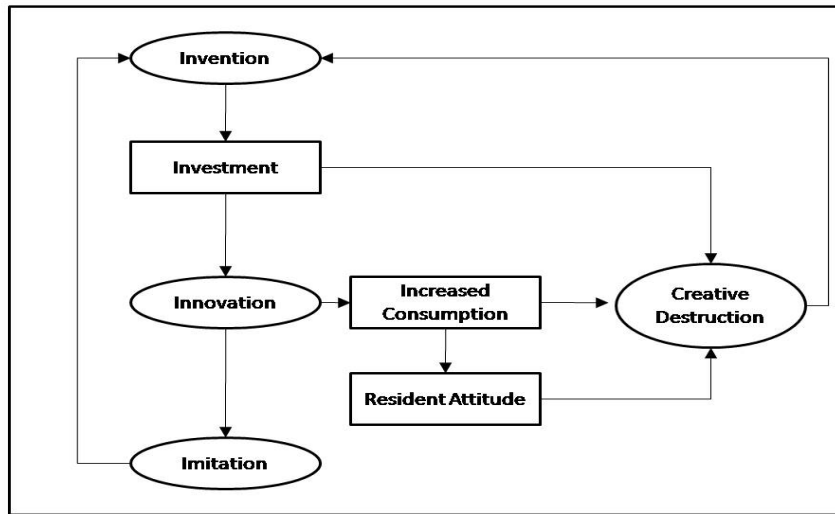


Figure 1: Model of Creative Destruction

The model was originated by Mitchell (1998), regarding the creative destruction of rural areas, and tested with the creative destruction of a heritage shopping village (Mitchell et al., 2001). As it is the only creative destruction model applied to tourism related industries thus far, it was deemed appropriate for application to the theme park industry. The model will be tested with the following hypotheses:

- H1. Investment, consumption, and attitudes are measures of creative destruction of the theme park industry.
- H2. Walt Disney World is in an advanced stage of creative destruction.

Walt Disney World

The Walt Disney Company opened a brand new theme park in Orlando, Florida in 1971 after a search for a location began more than a decade earlier (Foglesong, 2001). An earlier deal to host the park in St. Louis collapsed after the mayor at the time, Augustus Busch, insulted Walt Disney publicly, regarding Walt Disney's decision not to serve alcoholic beverages in the new park (Foglesong, 1999). Many other choices were considered after St. Louis including: Niagara Falls, northern Virginia, and New Jersey. Disney chose Central Florida for many reasons, the weather was conducive to a year round operation, eliminating seasonality of workers, and also Central Florida was not coastal, so the park would not have the perceived bad reputation of waterfront amusement parks (Foglesong, 1999). Most importantly, Central Florida had a better roadway system; it had two major highways, Interstate 4 which connected with Interstate 95, which connects Maine to Key West, and the Florida turnpike which connected with Interstate 75 with Interstate 10, which spans the country from Georgia to California (Foglesong, 1999). The last reason Disney chose Central Florida was for its compliant state government and local area that was predisposed for growth.

Disney followed its growth progression with the opening of subsequent theme parks after Magic Kingdom, beginning with Epcot in 1982, followed by Disney-MGM Studios in 1989, and Animal Kingdom in 1998 (Lazo, 1998). As a result of the expansion, Central Florida became the leader in number of hotel rooms and visitors in the 1980's (Braun & Soskind, 1999). However, Milman (1991) evaluated local residents' attendance at theme parks in Central Florida as a leisure activity; approximately 71% visited the surrounding theme parks, less than once a month, or averaged 5.4 visits per year with a standard deviation of 10 visits. Jackson (2004) reported that Disney is responsible for close to \$5.1 billion, or 9% of the metro Orlando area's gross regional product.

METHODOLOGY

A single case study design was chosen, as Walt Disney World is a critical case to test the theory of creative destruction, determined a success in terms of profits, continuous growth, and reputation. The case can be viewed longitudinally, with thirty-five years of data available, allowing patterns of creative destruction to emerge.

Standardization of the data is required to account for differing amounts of resources among theme parks. While Walt Disney World has ample size and resources, reflected in high levels of investments and consumption, competing theme parks throughout the region may not achieve such scope. To compare this case study with future research, investment and attendance must be standardized. Investment will be standardized by comparing the price earnings ratio, while consumption will use reported attendance figures divided by the number of available attractions.

Investment figures were collected from historical stock market data. A designated period of time was determined and the average price earnings ratio for that period was calculated and categorized as high >17.1, medium 10-17, and low <9.99. The P/E ratio is highly relevant to investors because it reveals which of the earnings per share are reflected in its price (Gill, 2003). It is calculated by dividing the market price per share by the earnings per share. Interpretations of P/E ratios can be misleading, further research into a company must be done to gain the whole picture noting that high P/E ratios may indicate confidence in the future of the company or it could indicate an inflated share price and misled investor confidence (Gill, 2003). Low P/E ratios may indicate low investor confidence, or undiscovered territory (Gill, 2003), or the firm is bigger and older (Dinopoulos & Waldo, 2005).

Attendance in the theme parks was collected from multiple sources, including published books (Adams, 1991; Fjellman, 1992; Price, 2004), online resources (Themed Entertainment Association, 2006, 2007), and independent reports compiled by trade industry journals (Top 50 Amusement Parks, 1992 - 2005). For standardization of data, attendance was measured as a proportion of available attractions. Similar to the lodging industry's use of occupancy rate, comparing rooms sold to total rooms available, this study examines attendance using the following equation:

$$\frac{\text{Total Theme Park Attendance}}{\text{Available Attractions}} = \text{Theme Park Occupancy Rate}$$

This theme park occupancy rate will be used as a measure of consumption. Available attractions for each year of operation were compiled from guide books (Birnbaum, 1991; Drummond & Drummond, 2003; Shelinger, 1997; 2001; Sehlinger & Finley, 1987; Sehlinger & Testa, 2007), non-fiction publications (McDaniel, 2005), and organizational promotional materials (Walt Disney World, 1982; 1986; 1991; 1994; 2001). All attractions were coded as operational/non-operational for every year of operation, with total available attractions tabulated. Total available attractions are defined as the number of potential shows and rides guests may utilize during their visit.

The attitude of residents in the communities surrounding Walt Disney World has been quantitatively measured through published studies (Milman, 2004) and surveys of community residents (Heaney, 1985; Roy, 1991), and reported in qualitative media interviews (Ahmad, 1990; Craig, 1996; Foglesong, 2001; Kunerth, 1999; 2002; Maxwell, 1999; 2002; Millican, 1994; Rivera, 1998; Selditch, 1985; Shenot, 1995; Shrieves, 1993; Strother, 1995; Tin, 1991). Qualitative interviews with long-time Central Florida residents were also conducted to gather primary data regarding current resident attitudes. The data collected from these sources were categorized as Lovers, Haters, and Realists, based on prior work by Madrigal (1995). Lovers are classified as residents who believe in the benefits of the theme park industry, Haters are classified as residents that believe the negative aspects of the theme park industry outweigh the positive, and Realists describe residents that recognize both the positive and negative ways theme parks affect the local community (Madrigal, 1995).

The primary analytic technique utilized is pattern matching. Pattern matching is the process of relating qualitative data collected to theoretical propositions (Cao, 2007), and through this process, analytical generalizations are formed. The theoretical pattern provides a sequence of benchmarks in which to compare stages of creative destruction. The data collected in this study will be classified according to a 3x3 matrix (Table 1), identifying levels of high, medium, and low investment, consumption, and attitude.

Table 1- Level Quantification

	High	Medium	Low
Investment	>17.1	10-17	<9.99
Consumption	>50%	30-49.9%	<29.9%
Resident Attitude	Lovers	Realists	Haters

These levels were then compared with the established theoretical patterns of creative destruction. Based on existing models of creative destruction (Mitchell, 1998), classification for theme park stages of creative destruction are:

Table 2- Parameters of Creative Destruction

	Investment Level	Consumption Level	Resident Attitude
Early Commodification	Medium	Low	High
Advanced Commodification	High	Medium	High
Early Destruction	High	High	Medium
Advanced Destruction	High	High	Low
Post-Destruction	Low	Medium	High

RESULTS

The Early Years: 1970-1979

The primary stage of creative destruction is noted for the investments made to create the theme park landscape, promoting goods and services related to the theme park. During this stage, local and non-local investors will recognize the potential for the community surrounding the theme park for generating profit and participate in the commodification process (Mitchell, 1998). During this period, theme park visitors generate financial rewards for the participating investors. The local residents relay positive feedback and are content with the presence of the theme park in their community (Mitchell et al., 2001).

In the case of Walt Disney World, the stage of Early Commodification stage started before the opening of the first park Magic Kingdom, and spanned over a period of fifteen years. The notable investments that occurred during this time were the investments utilized to build the initial theme park Magic Kingdom, opening in 1971, and then the secondary theme park in Walt Disney World, Epcot Center, which opened in 1982 (Figure 2).

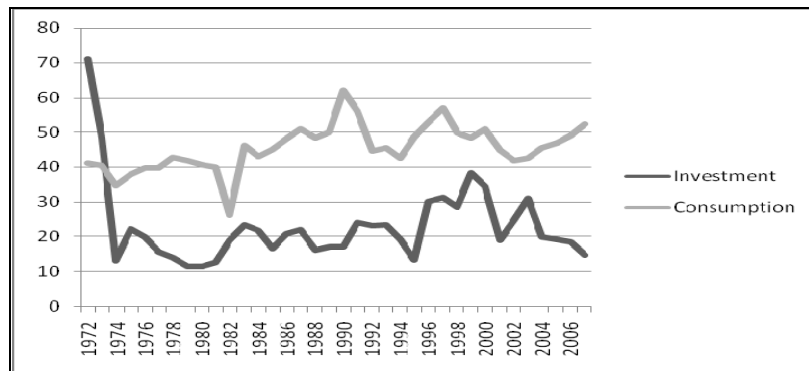


Figure 2. Walt Disney World Investment and Consumption

Prior to the opening of Walt Disney World, Central Florida had 3.5 million tourists in 1969. Shortly after the opening of Magic Kingdom in 1971, visitation to central Florida proliferated to 10 million visitors. The amount of consumption in the central Florida market is reflected in the annual visits which doubled itself within throughout a decade; beginning with close to 11 million visitors in the first year of operation to approximately 23 million in 1983. To represent the growth of the new tourism and building economy in central Florida, the Hartford Insurance Group and CNA Financial Corp. constructed large towers in the downtown Orlando area, and simultaneously the growth triggered new suburban housing developments, and a state university, Florida Technological (Foglesong, 2001). The landscape of Orlando was experiencing a transformation from the orange groves that once dominated the scenery to a metamorphosis beginning with the genesis of new businesses to support both the local residents and tourists. In the interim, the development of Orlando was plagued with the difficulties of fragmented land ownership, while Disney had the luxury of centralized ownership and the ability to control their renowned aesthetics (Foglesong, 2001) while preparing Phase II, a plan than included 13 new attractions, more guest accommodations, shops, and restaurants (Foglesong, 1999). However, despite the new investment and new consumption occurring during this stage of development, the residents are classified as Lovers because they looked upon Disney favorably, grateful for the boost in the economy, and could accept the traffic congestion in and around Disney. Throughout this period of Early Commodification, Disney was able to be self-reliant and remain unconcerned with the development and predicted future problems of areas existing outside of Disney property (Foglesong, 2001).

A Period of Growth: 1980-1989

Advanced Commodification is the secondary stage of creative destruction, recognized by increased levels of investment, higher levels on consumption, and a decline in resident attitude, particularly by those residents that are not directly involved with the theme park industry (Mitchell, 1998). Walt Disney World entered this stage shortly after the opening of its second park, Epcot, in 1982. The early eighties revealed significant developments for central Florida with the addition of the Orange County Convention Center and a substantial increase in the construction of new hotel rooms. There were 33,800 hotel rooms in 1982 in central Florida, by 1984 the number increased to 44,500 and by March 1985, the number was just under 50,000 (Foglesong, 2001; Vaughn, 1985). Resident attitude was beginning to split from the Lovers that had once existed to outright Haters, with most residents considering the growth that had previously occurred over the span of a decade was accomplished in two years, with consumption rates almost doubling from 13 million in 1981 to 23 million in 1983.

By 1986, the third stage of creative destruction, Early Destruction, was emerging, with surplus value reinvested into businesses that cater to the tourist population. During this phase, consumption levels continue to rise and resident attitude falters as there are increases in crime, traffic, and crowding (Mitchell, 1998). The period of Early Destruction began in 1986 with low airfare and gasoline prices and a \$17 million dollar advertising campaign originated by Disney (Vaughn, 1986). This stage saw a substantial investment for Walt Disney World in the opening of another theme park, Disney-MGM Studios in 1989 (Walt Disney World, 1992). In the surrounding community, an attempt to capture the adult audience was made with the opening of Church St. Station in downtown Orlando (Stewart, 1988). Consumption remained in the mid 20

millions; rising to 30 million attendees after the opening of Disney-MGM studios. Resident feelings during this period were dictated by involvement in the theme park industry. Noticeable disdain by local residents were felt by tourists, inciting one tourist to write the local paper, the Orlando Sentinel, to complain about locals' attitudes towards the tourism industry:

Don't the people of the Orlando area realize that Disney is their livelihood? Even if they are not in direct contact with the company, the businesses are affected by the tourism. There are complaints about the traffic and the tourists, but have they stopped to think what would happen if Disney World weren't there? Those who think "the real Florida" is/was before Disney obviously don't appreciate progress and change (Warrick, 1986, p. A22).

However, though traffic congestion stories became newsworthy, the business owners were pleased with the returns generated by tourists, Gary Powell, director of the Resort Area of Kissimmee-St. Cloud Inc., reflected in an Orlando Sentinel article that, "Business is better than usual." He continued further to predict that hotels would finish December with an occupancy level 5 percent above that of December 1985 (Carey, 1986, p. A1).

The Golden Age: 1990-1999

Coming off of an explosive growth period, the decade began in the Advanced Destruction stage. Consumption was at an all time high, with new theme parks drawing in visitors in record amounts. The highest annual theme park occupancy ratio in the history of Walt Disney World occurred in 1990, with the attendance per available attraction rate of 62.1%, which has not been exceeded to date (Price, 2004). Investment remained high through 1994 (Walt Disney World, 1994), reflecting reinvestment to sustain the rapid growth. Through this growth, employment increased dramatically, rising from 36,000 in 1990 to 45,000 in 1999, drawing in new workers from outside the Central Florida region (Rivera, 1998; Shenot, 1995). Resident's attitudes toward the overcrowding continued to decline, with higher levels of haters emerging as the population grew. Many residents adopted a "wait and see" attitude toward tourism, holding off on shifting to a lover or hater (Tin, 1991). Roads were congested and new construction aimed to improve flow actually added to the gridlock (Roy, 1991). Still, Ahmad (1990) declared this decade to be the "Golden Age" for Central Florida.

High investment continued into the mid-1990's (Walt Disney World, 1993; 1994; 1995; 1996); however, due to fuel prices and overseas political turmoil, consumption began to diminish slightly beginning in 1992 (Top 50 Amusement Parks [chart], 1993). This diminishing consumption lasted through 1996 (Price, 2004), bringing the company back to the Advanced Commodification stage of destruction. It is important to note the stage change was not due to innovation, but external forces acting upon the tourism market.

With newer resources created for the rising number of tourists in the previous years, such as improved roads and entertainment, resident's attitudes were improving concurrently with the decline in consumption. The capacity had increased, yet consumption decreased, allowing residents to enjoy the new resources (Millican, 1994). Marketers for the Central Florida theme parks had to counter a "been there, done that attitude" of residents who were taking the theme

parks for granted” (Strother, 1995, p. B13. Crime was widespread in the mid 1990’s, reflected in the Central Florida area statistics. During this period, data indicates the crime index for the primary county Walt Disney World occupies (Orange County) increased sharply, but was downplayed in the media, indicated by a paucity of archival records.

Investment through the end of the decade remained high, with Disney’s Animal Kingdom opening in 1998 (McDaniel, 2005; Walt Disney World, 2001). Even post-opening of the new theme park, investment continued to increase (Walt Disney World, 1999). Consumption also increased by 1996 and remained relatively high through the end of the decade, only decreasing the occupancy proportion with the introduction of additional attractions. Attendance, however, continued to rise, making history by exceeding 40 million annual visitors in 1998 (Top 50 Amusement Parks [chart], 1999).

Resident attitudes began to drop dramatically, claiming the influx of workers, especially immigrants, affected crime levels, increased congestion, and furthered a loss of community, losing the “close-knit, intimate atmosphere” (Kunerth, 1999; Shenot, 1995, p. B14). As one reporter stated “When you think of Orlando, you think of Walt Disney World,” and that “may bug the bejabbers out of Orlando residents” (Shrieves, 1993, p. E1). As one Orlando Sentinel article stated, “Before our very eyes, Central Florida is being transformed into a true international city” with everyone here for “the same American dream” (Rivera, 1998, p. J5). The article further discussed native languages of immigrants being spoken in places of business and products specifically catering to the new market segments foster feelings of animosity toward non-native residents. The perception of the increase in immigrants is supported by US Census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001). This combination of investment, consumption, and attitude was furthering the cycle of creative destruction. With theme parks filled to capacity to celebrate the new millennium, Walt Disney World appeared to be trending toward higher levels of creative destruction in the next decade.

The New Millennium: 2000-present

The year 2000 was an exciting time for Walt Disney World. Capitalizing on the hype surrounding the turn of a new century, the theme parks initiated a 16-month celebration of the millennium (Walt Disney World, 2001). Consumption was again climbing, reporting 43.2 million visitors in the year 2000 (Top 50 Amusement Parks [chart], 2001), and investment was extremely high, with a P/E ratio of 34.2 (Walt Disney World, 2001). Resident attitude had not improved according to media representations, and the theme parks appeared to be trending toward Advanced and Post-Destruction.

In 2001, the trend was terminated with the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. Consumption at the theme parks declined dramatically, with 2002 reporting attendance 37.6 million (Top 50 Amusement Parks [chart], 2003), the lowest since the mid-1990’s. Obviously, innovation was not the catalyst for the change, but external forces the theme parks could not control reduced Walt Disney World to the Advanced Commodification stage. The theme parks continued with increased investment through 2003, but have continually declined in recent years (Walt Disney World, 2007). The level of investment for 2007, with a P/E ratio of 14.7, has fallen into the medium classification for the first time in twelve years, down from a high of 38.2

in 1999. Consumption is beginning to rebound, with 2007 levels returning to the high classification (Themed Entertainment Association, 2008). Resident concerns center on leakage of resources garnered by the theme parks, as the corporate headquarters are outside the state (Maxwell, 2002).

Interviews conducted in 2008 with long-time Central Florida residents yielded many views of Realists. One interviewee noted the town is often too crowded, but he “strategically avoids” tourist areas, while another noted she avoids grocery shopping on weekends when families arrive and shop for their visit. Another interviewee, when referring to the Central Florida infrastructure, stated tourism has been both “contributed to its development as well as its deterioration.”

One resident discussed the volunteer activity she performs for a tourist-based house of worship. She told the story of how the tourists’ need to have a place of worship while on vacation was evident even in the early years of Walt Disney World. To fill the need, a church congregation was formed and would hold services at local hotels. As tourism consumption grew, the need for larger facilities to hold service escalated. Through contributions of tourists, a permanent shrine was built and continues to grow, which she considered “a true testament to the power of tourism.” She now serves tourists by being a volunteer at the shrine and feels “it is a wonderful opportunity to meet people from around the world and to extend hospitality as a representative of the community.”

Through interviews, negative attitudes toward tourism were expressed by shorter-term residents. These are residents residing in Central Florida for less than fifteen years. Even though these residents moved to Central Florida well after tourism was established, some noted the area is over-crowded and over-utilized. One resident stated they originally came to the region because of all of the attractions, but is considering leaving due to the large number of tourists. She continued “I can’t even go to the places I came here for. There are so many people there it is miserable. The parks keep adding more to do, but then more people come to see it.” She stated she anticipates moving out of the region within the next year, reflecting the transient nature of many Central Florida residents. As one reporter reflected, “We are a stepping stone city, a place where people go on their way to somewhere better” (Kunerth, 2002, p.A1).

CONCLUSIONS

By measuring investment, consumption, and resident attitude, cycles of creative destruction have been identified; however it is not clear whether innovation alone is the contributing factor. Innovation and external forces are not stationary, isolated events, and varying levels of consumption and investment impact both the organization and the surrounding community. Walt Disney World has experienced multiple stages of creative destruction, introducing periodic innovations and improvements, ultimately increasing consumption. As the theme park industry has been greatly affected by this decade’s political turmoil, fuel cost increase, and terrorism attacks, it is difficult to predict the future stages of creative destruction for Walt Disney World. The theme parks are trending toward advanced stages of destruction, with innovations and external factors continually altering the phase.

LIMITATIONS

A major limitation to the study was the availability of necessary data. Although Walt Disney World is a publicly traded company, data was not transparent, and was inconsistently provided. Attendance is not reported by the theme parks; hence, sources used in this study estimated total attendance annually. Data regarding attitude was not empirically based, drawing assumptions from immigration and crime statistics; and was sporadic in the frequency of qualitative reports. As resident attitude in the early years cannot be measured in present time, assumptions were made concerning attitudes and were more subjective in nature.

Data was standardized for comparison to other theme parks in future research. Initially, park size was to be a factor of standardization; however, theme parks do not report the percentage of the park accessible to guests, and with the introduction of Disney's Animal Kingdom, which has many acres devoted to animal care inaccessible to the guests, the occupancy rate of the theme park declined significantly. Consequently, the number of attractions determined the theme park occupancy percentage. Due to lack of monthly data, it is unknown if attractions closed for a partial year.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The model of creative destruction in the theme park industry presented in this study should be applied to other theme parks within the Central Florida region, domestically, and internationally. Future research concerning creative destruction in the theme park industry should include updated empirical resident attitude figures. Studies replicating that of Milman (2004) could create a more objective examination of resident attitude.

Continued longitudinal study of Walt Disney World could establish the effect of recent political events to determine if the revealed trends in investment, consumption, and resident attitude will continue. The terrorist attacks of 2001 terminated a trend of growth; however, a rebound in consumption has begun, continuing the cycle of creative destruction.

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EDUCATION AND TALENT MANAGEMENT: A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE SUPPLY OF FUTURE TALENT FOR THE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores one of the biggest issues and challenges now faced by tourism and hospitality education and the tourism and hospitality industry: that of how to attract and retain a critical group of talented people. This paper will first set the scene by reviewing the current state of employment issues in the tourism industry. Thereafter a discussion regarding contemporary attitudes toward the generation undertaking tourism education and making career decisions will take place. This paper will also consider the current generation's specific attitudes toward education and careers and the potential consequences this will have for the tourism and hospitality industry in the future. From there, a comprehensive review of the academic literature will highlight the key studies that have investigated the nature of tourism employment amongst new recruits in the tourism and hospitality industry and report on thoughts of soon to graduate tourism students. The paper argues that educators require to be more fully aware of the consequences of reducing the practical and vocational nature of programmes and that adjustments to the management and administration of programmes are essential to allow students to complete programmes. This paper will create the basis for a discussion on how best to handle these issues so that organizations within the tourism and hospitality industry can successfully recruit, select, train, retain and motivate future talent.

KEYWORDS: Education; Talent Management; Thematic Analysis; Tourism and Hospitality Industry

INTRODUCTION TO TALENT MANAGEMENT

According to Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talent_management retrieved 17.1.08), the term Talent Management was first coined by McKinsey and Company in the mid 1990's and is a professional term that has recently gained popularity. It refers to the process of developing and fostering new workers through interviewing, hiring, orienting and successfully integrating new hires into an organization's culture, and thereafter, developing and keeping current workers and attracting highly skilled workers to work for an organisation. Consequently, it is considered that organisations involved in talent management are strategic and deliberate in how they source, attract, select, train, develop, promote, and move employees through the organisation. The term talent management means different things to different people. For example, The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (2007) considers that talent management is focused on the individual member of staff who can either make an immediate positive difference to organisational performance, or who possess the potential to make such a difference at some point

in the future. Berger and Berger (2003) are more inclusive and consider it is about how talent is managed generally and assumes that all people have some talent which can be identified and liberated. They do however, suggest that an organisation that effectively promotes talent management categorises staff members and concentrates development investment in key, high performance and high potential individuals.

Superior talent is increasingly recognised as the prime source of sustainable competitive advantage in high performance organisations. Underlying this trend is the rapidly changing business environment and the growing need for globally aware managers and professionals with multi-functional fluency, technological literacy, entrepreneurial skills, and the ability to operate in different cultures, structures and markets (Chambers, Foulton, Handfield-Jones, Hankin, & Michaels, 1998). At the same time, the signs are that attracting and retaining talented employees is becoming harder. In fact, a number of recent surveys suggest that many large organisations are already suffering a chronic shortage of talented people. In the US, for instance, three-quarters of the 400 corporate officers recently surveyed said their companies had 'insufficient talent sometimes' or were 'chronically talent-short across the board' (Chambers, et al. 1998). Similarly, Sparrow and Hilltrop (1994) alluded to the growing problem of talent shortages in most European countries. In France, for example, INSEE statistics show that the proportion of manufacturing organisations experiencing difficulties in recruiting all categories of staff rose from 25 per cent in 1976 to nearly 50 per cent by 1989. According to Bournois (1993) the greatest problems are in the managerial and technical labour markets, where the channelling of investment into new computers and machinery, increases in production capacity and new organisation methods have all been associated with a growing requirement for talented people.

This paper aims to explore the biggest challenge now faced by tourism and hospitality education and the tourism and hospitality industry: that of how to attract and retain a critical group of talented people. This paper will first set the scene by reviewing the current state of employment issues in the tourism and hospitality industry and enter into a discussion regarding contemporary attitudes toward the generation undertaking tourism and hospitality education and making career decisions. Thereafter the supply of talent for the tourism and hospitality industry will be presented thematically as a means of highlighting challenges for education and industry alike. The paper argues that educators require to be more fully aware of the consequences of reducing the practical and vocational nature of programmes and that adjustments to the management and administration of programmes are essential to allow students to complete programmes. This paper will create the basis for a discussion on how best to handle these issues so that organizations within the tourism and hospitality industry can successfully recruit, select, train, retain and motivate future talent.

EMPLOYMENT IN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY

The tourism and hospitality industry has always found it hard to attract suitably motivated, trained and qualified employees that are able to deliver the service promises that organisations make to their current and potential customers. The tourism and hospitality industry has a poor reputation as a source of permanent employment, offering low pay, anti-social working hours, menial work, and limited opportunities for career progression (Kusluvan & Kusluvan, 2000; Baum, 2002; Wood 1995; Choy, 1995). Regardless, tourism, is the world's largest and fastest

growing industry and accounts for 10 percent of global employment (Baum, 2002), and consequently demand for tourism and tourism and hospitality employees of all levels is increasing exponentially (WTO, 2003). Not surprisingly, the activities of interviewing, hiring, orienting and successfully integrating new employees and developing and keeping current workers and attracting highly skilled workers to work for an organisation is key to the success of the tourism and hospitality industry. Consequently, higher education organisations involved in the training and development of future tourism and hospitality managers have a pivotal role to play in the future of the industry. Consequently, given shifting demographic patterns and changing generational attitudes, the tourism and hospitality industry would benefit from a timely review of these issues, their impact on and importance to the industry, as well as initiating a healthy debate on how best the industry can deal with these issues.

A number of studies have, in recent years, addressed the nature of the relationship between tourism and hospitality educators, the tourism and hospitality industry and the student. These studies appear to follow one main theme – that of providing the industry with graduates who possess the necessary skills and attitudes essential for careers in the industry. The debate regarding what graduates the industry requires and what educators provide has been the focus of a range of studies. Gilbert and Guerrier (1997) found significant differences between the perceptions of industry and academics on the skills, knowledge and attitudes required by graduates for successful careers in the industry. Indeed industry criticised educators for over emphasising theoretical concepts and identified deficiencies in certain practical skills. For their part, academics felt that the industry did not make the best use of students, both during their practical training and on graduation. Lefever and Withiam, (1998) concluded that tourism and hospitality practitioners consider it essential that tourism and hospitality management educators provide students with a more realistic view of the industry in addition to the technical skills and knowledge essential for careers in the industry. Similarly Stutts (1995) highlighted concerns amongst tourism and hospitality employers in the US, considering it the responsibility of tourism and hospitality educators to more fully equip graduates with realistic expectations of careers in the industry.

Researchers have also been interested in what happens to tourism and hospitality management graduates and their subsequent careers upon leaving college or university. A number of studies have identified significant attrition of tourism graduates and it has been suggested that 50% of tourism and hospitality graduates choose careers out with the industry (Johns and McKechnie, 1995). The decision not to enter the tourism and hospitality industry on graduation appears to be taken during the period of tourism and hospitality management education. Indeed, in their study of tourism management students' image of the tourism industry, Barron and Maxwell (1993) examined the perceptions of new and continuing students at Scottish higher education institutions and found that while students recognised the career opportunities associated with the tourism industry, the majority were unable to foresee a long term career in the industry.

THE SUPPLY OF FUTURE TALENT: GENERATION Y

While Generation Y is receiving more attention in mainstream business literature, few studies have concentrated on the tourism and hospitality industry and consequently there is scant

published material about Generation Y as employees in the tourism industry. Some brief articles in tourism trade journals have begun to pay attention to the idea that Generation Y employees think and behave differently to previous generations but only point out the characteristics and do nothing to explain them or suggest how to deal with them (see for example, Millwood, 2007; Saba, 2006).

While there is some debate over the actual age ranges, it is generally agreed that Generation Y refers to those born between the years 1979 and 1994 (Yan, 2003; Loughlin & Barling, 2001). The literature is relatively consistent in its description of Gen Y's attitudes and behaviours and matching the motivational, training and development needs of Generation Y students and employees with appropriate and effective education and employment strategies would appear to be the challenge for the future. A few papers concerning Generation Y concentrate on their perceptions and expectations of work upon graduation. Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden (2007) surveyed Generation Y students' expectations of retail employment upon graduation. It appeared that students' significant expectations were to experience enjoyment of their careers, combined with concerns for fairness, tolerance and equity in the workplace. Szamosi (2006) found similar results when researching Generation Y students' expectations of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in that they wanted to work for caring and sensitive SMEs that were environmentally aware. These students also expected tangible and intangible rewards, empowerment, respect, workplace involvement, concern for employee welfare and supportive management.

Other studies have investigated Generation Y's work-related attitudes and behaviours in terms of perceptions and attitudes based on actual work experiences rather than future expectations. Eisner (2005) investigated how Generation Y students perceived work experiences and found that these students' perceptions of management competence was very low, which significantly reduced students' job satisfaction. Whilst it has been found that Generation Y employees tend to experience lower levels of job satisfaction than previous generations (Westerman and Yamamura, 2006) Eisner (2005) concludes that an improvement in management competence is pivotal to an increase in the level of Generation Y employee's job satisfaction.

GENERATION Y IN TOURISM EDUCATION AND THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The problems faced by the tourism and hospitality industry in attracting, recruiting and retaining adequately trained and motivated staff are well documented. However no discussion regarding tourism employment is complete without mention of the acceptance as inevitable of the concept of turnover. The turnover culture identified in the UK and Australian tourism industry by Deery (2002) found some turnover rates as high 300% per annum. In a series of studies, high turnover in the industry has been attributed to work-family conflicts, as a result of the poor working conditions and constant emotional labour from customer contact (Karatepe & Kilie, 2007; Karatepe & Baddar, 2006). A study conducted in hotels in Hong Kong found that most turnover occurs in the first few months of employees (Lam, Lo & Chan, 2002). This would suggest that an employer must understand the importance of recognising and achieving the expectations of new employees as a means of avoiding dissatisfaction leading to turnover. Attracting and retaining sufficient levels of talent is a significant challenge for tourism operators made difficult by tourism and hospitality employment not being viewed as a career (Macaulay &

Woods, 1989; Choy, 1995), the unskilled nature of many positions and limited career advancement opportunities (Cheng & Brown, 1998).

Several studies have been undertaken that examine Generation Y students' attitude toward the tourism and hospitality industry. Firstly, Rodriguez & Gregory (2005) undertook a study of non tourism students working in the tourism industry. It was found that their experiences were wholly negative, citing the menial nature of the work and poor supervision and rewards. When asked, it was, not surprisingly, determined that none of the students' experiences of the industry had in any way endeared them to enquire about possible future careers in the industry. Other studies have provided a more positive picture and highlighted the softer side of careers in the tourism industry. Secondary school students' attitudes towards tourism and tourism careers were examined and found that tourism careers opportunities were perceived well by those students who were actively interested in self-development and working with friendly people (Lewis & Airey, 2000). Concentrating on students enrolled on tourism and hospitality programmes, Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge and Ogden (2007) examined students' experiences of working in the tourism industry and their expectations of careers upon graduation. It was found that whilst students had enjoyed the excitement of working in the industry and recognised the social benefits, students also highlighted the poor rewards and limited managerial expertise they had experienced. Many students were looking forward to careers in the industry albeit with a recognition of commitment to other aspects of life such as family and leisure time.

Given that issues of attracting qualified staff to the industry, giving them adequate training and motivation to stay and deliver on high levels of customer service has always been an issue for the tourism industry, it is important to shed some more light on the defining characteristics of Gen Y, in order to best understand how their entrance to the workforce will need to shape employment strategies into the future.

THE SUPPLY OF FUTURE TALENT FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY – A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The difficulty for the tourism and hospitality industry and tourism and hospitality educators to attract and retain students has been compounded by recent trends in demographics that have seen a reduction in entrants to the overall labour supply in developed nations. Tourism and hospitality educator's issues regarding attracting and retaining the appropriate students is exacerbated not only by the shrinking pool of young workers, but also the approach to education and work of the latest entrants: Generation Y (Magd, 2003; Furunes & Mykletun, 2005). The baby boomers, the largest generation in the current workforce and the generation that forged the contemporary higher education structure (Downing, 2006; Sutton Bell & Narz, 2007), are starting to retire and the education demands of the Generation Y student is radically different from their predecessors. It is already being widely noted that Generation Y's possess a particular set of attitudes and characteristics that tourism and hospitality educators and the tourism and hospitality industry are struggling to cope with (Glass, 2007; Sutton Bell & Narz, 2007; Kehrl & Sopp, 2006; Martin, 2005; Morton, 2002; Wallace, 2001). The main findings regarding Generation Y's approach to education and careers and their impact on the tourism industry are discussed thematically below.

1) Learning Styles

A number of studies have examined the preferred learning styles of tourism and hospitality students. These students have been found to adopt an Activist leaning style preference (Lashley and Barron, 2006; Barron, 2002). This approach accords well with the current generation of students and new employees who have been described as being more demanding than ever, possessing a low tolerance for boredom and unafraid of expressing their opinions (Earle, 2003). The current student thrives on new challenges and expects to be shown respect in the classroom and the workplace (Glass, 2007; Sutton Bell & Narz, 2007; Kehrli & Sopp, 2006; Martin, 2005) and it has been found that Generation Y students are very selective in the way they receive information – the more interactive it is, the more it will ‘pull’ them towards it (Goman, 2006; Kehrli & Sopp, 2006).

Many tourism and hospitality programmes have traditionally provided students with a vocationally oriented education that encouraged an active approach to the area and consequently, it might be argued that current generation Y students will appreciate and thrive in such an environment. However, several commentators (Tribe, 2005; Lashley, 1999) have been highlighting the development of a more reflective graduate – one who becomes a more cerebral manager and takes time to fully appraise a situation prior to making decisions. The call for such a change in the attitude of graduates has coincided with a reduced emphasis regarding the active development of practical skills (e.g. food production and service) to a concentration of more reflective or theoretical subjects. Indeed such is the move away from the development of practical skills that it is now normal for students studying a Masters degree in tourism management not to undertake any practical training, and there are examples of undergraduate programmes that have eradicated food service and food production classes and require students to undertake limited, if any, industrial placement. It might be suggested that the traditional tourism and hospitality student will not find such programmes attractive. This will have one of two consequences. Firstly dissatisfied students on a theoretical programme might decide to leave, preferring instead the more practical and active tourism programmes offered by the further education sector, or indeed bypass the tourism programme altogether and enter direct to the tourism industry. Secondly, the student might continue with their university qualification, but experience increasing dissatisfaction with their programme which may, in turn, result in the student deciding not to pursue a career in the industry on graduation.

2) Achievement of Outcomes

Generation Y students are more likely to live at home (Szamosi, 2006, Eisner, 2005; Hill, 2002), and it would appear that family time is more important to Generation Y students than previous generations (Families & Work Institute, 2002). In a conceptual paper where Hill (2002) reflects on personal experiences with Generation Y students at university, he describes the differences (and similarities) between Gen Y and previous generations that will have a major impact on the effectiveness of academic staff and ultimately managers of Generation Y employees. Hill posits that a major point of difference is the nurturing and non-competitive family environments that Generation Y students have grown up in and the subsequent effect this has had on Generation Y’s perception of their performance. While members of previous generations have often been benchmarked against each other, Generation Y students have been

told by their parents that the outcome is less important: participation is the key. In an outcome-oriented institution where students are required to achieve specific learning outcomes, this attitude could present major problems for a Generation Y student in terms of measuring their own ability and performance, as they struggle with the difference between “I can’t do it” and “It’s hard to do” (Hill, 2002:65).

Given that talent management is usually associated with competency-based human resource management practices, the attitude described above sits uncomfortably with the concept of talent management in the tourism and hospitality industry where the competency set may include the development and attainment of knowledge, skills and experience. It might therefore be suggested that tourism educators have a responsibility to highlight to students the importance of achieving set outcomes. Perhaps an initial approach to addressing this issue might be concerning re-assessment on tourism programmes. The author’s recent experience (albeit overseas) was of an institution that viewed any re-sitting of assessment as an exception and it might be argued that the current situation in many UK institutions that allows a series of attempts to pass a subject reduces the emphasis on achieving outcomes.

3) Exposure to the Industry

In another conceptual review, Loughlin & Barling (2001) analyse the events that have had a major influence on Generation Y’s work-related attitudes and behaviours. Focusing on the early work experiences of this generational cohort as a guide to assessing their future attitudes and behaviours, they argued that early work experiences have a formative effect on future attitudes towards work, and that ‘poor quality’ employment early on leads to less opportunities for developing skills and learning which in turn engenders low levels of motivation, cynicism and lower work values. The authors caution that conditions should not be promised to young workers that are not obtainable, as findings in the food-service industry illustrate that it is not so much the low pay of actual work that alienates young workers, rather the poor behaviour of management towards them. Loughlin & Barling (2001) also point out that there are significant changes occurring in the workplace that will affect all workers, not just Generation Y, yet it will be Generation Ys’ reaction to the new workplace that will be most significant in the future.

As early as 1993, Barron and Maxwell found that the period of industrial placement had a significant effect on the overall educational experience of students and resulted in a level of disillusionment with the tourism and industry. Examining post supervised work experience students from all higher education institutions in Scotland, it was found that student’s wholly positive view of careers in the tourism industry prior to the period of organised work experience changed as a consequence of exposure to the industry and resulted in a significant re-evaluation of the future career aspirations and directions of students with 70% of study participants not willing or able to foresee a long term career in the industry (Barron and Maxwell, 1993). More recent studies would indicate that students’ attitudes to career in the industry have not changed and upon conducting research that examined the impact of educational experiences on career aspirations, Jenkins (2001:20) concludes that “many tourism students, through exposure to the subject and industry, become considerably less interested in selecting (tourism) as their career of first choice”

A key factor, however, of the above studies was the influence of the period of university required work experience. More recently, several studies have examined alternative means of gaining experience and developing relationships between current students and the tourism and tourism industry. Barron and Anastasiadou (2007) studied the extent and impact of part-time work amongst tourism and tourism students and found the majority involved in some form of part-time employment in the tourism and/or tourism industry. Whilst the main reason for most students to become involved in part-time employment whilst studying is to earn money (Lashley, 2005; Curtis and Lucas, 2001), it has been found that tourism and tourism students also use their part-time experience to develop skills and knowledge of working life in the industry (Lucas and Lammont, 1998). Such experience of the industry will provide students with more realistic expectations of careers in the industry and hopefully minimise the impact of the university controlled period of industrial experience that appeared to leave such a negative impression on students studied by Barron and Maxwell (1993) and Jenkins (2001).

4) Technologically Literate

This newest generation is extremely technologically literate, independent and looking for instant rewards, where long-term means twelve months (Martin, 2005). Generation Y students have grown up in relative affluence but in an uncertain world, where they are constantly connected to the events of the world through advances in information technology (Eisner, 2005). Multi-tasking is a habit, where 30 hours of content can be crammed into a 7 hour period (Millwood, 2007). Educators have started to understand the importance of technology to Generation Y students and are beginning to provide a range of flexible methods of programmes delivery and assessment. Whilst the tourism and hospitality industry has adopted appropriate technology as a means of making their organisations more efficient and profitable, for example in the area of marketing, the majority of the industry is judged by the level of 'old fashioned' contact between the service provider and the guest. The skill for tomorrow's managers is going to be finely balancing the advantages of new technology while maintaining traditional tourism and hospitality values. This balance must be addressed by tourism educators who will be responsible for exploiting the technological expertise of their students whilst emphasising the importance of the intangible elements of the tourism experience.

5) Limited Commitment

Previous studies would suggest that Generation Y students are looking to make a contribution to something worthwhile and to have their input recognised from the start. The short term outlook of these students is evident when one realises that they are not willing to put in years of service in order to gain any significant reward from their employer (Martin, 2005). Raised in non-competitive environments, where participation is the key, Generation Y are used to being praised for their efforts, rather than their results (Hill, 2002). In the workplace, they seek constant feedback, even on a daily basis (Glass, 2007; Martin, 2005). On the whole, they dislike menial and repetitive work and seek new challenges regularly (Saba, 2006; Martin, 2005). This is a potentially worrying attitude for the tourism industry and perhaps epitomises the potential dangers that lie ahead for both educators and industry. The poor conversion rate from tourism and hospitality student to tourism and hospitality manager has already been highlighted and, coupled with the high levels of turnover and attrition common in the industry, the limited

commitment, the requirement of constant praise and feedback, and the desire for new challenges will result in even fewer students deciding upon tourism as a career.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This paper has attempted to present an overview of the generation who are currently completing, or have just completed higher education qualifications in tourism and hospitality. The continued success and growth of the tourism and hospitality industry is reliant on these new managers for the foreseeable future and this article has indicated that this generation has significantly different demands and preferences for education and careers compared to their predecessors. It is evident that both educators and industry will have to consider the characteristics of Generation Y as a means of ensuring success. The previous discussion would suggest that educators and industry need to work together and address the following areas as a means of ensuring the supply of talented people.

The image of careers in the industry remains poor and both education and industry must exert effort in addressing this issue. If the industry image is one of menial jobs, poor career opportunities and limited rewards, Generation Y will be even less likely to choose tourism as a viable, long term prospect. Higher educators are already experiencing a softening of demand for tourism and hospitality programmes and there is evidence of higher education institutions halting the provision of tourism and hospitality programmes, or branching into the currently fashionable area of Event Management – a potentially short-sighted strategy. Similarly the previous discussion has suggested that tourism and hospitality student career aspirations are negatively affected by exposure to the industry. Narrowing the gap between students' expectations of careers in the industry and the reality of working life remains a key responsibility of educators. Educators are responsible for addressing students' expectations of the realities of working life in the industry, but of course, the industry must examine the entire student placement process and aim to provide opportunities that not only develop skills and knowledge but also highlight long term career opportunities and actively encourage students to join the industry on graduation.

What then, are the implications for the higher education sector? Given the traditionally Activist nature of many tourism students, the reduction in practical focus of many tourism programmes has the potential to dissuade many students from studying tourism at university. Such students will find their practical needs fulfilled by those further educators still providing certificates, diplomas and other skills based programmes. Or, alternatively, there may be evidence of a return to the situation where young people interested in careers in tourism and hospitality find a job in the industry and work their way upwards, thus bypassing formal education altogether. Educators need to recognise the practical desires of many students and reintroduce an element of skills development into their programmes and consequently need to re-examine the content of their programmes in order to redress the balance between theory and practice

Educators must recognise the practical and financial pressures that many full-time students face and understand that part-time (and in some cases, full-time) work is a normal aspect of many students' lives. Part-time work has been shown to have benefits to both industry and students and it is essential that industry recognises that the casual, part-time employee of today

might be tomorrow's manager. Educators must, therefore, play their part and more fully recognise and understand the role of part-time employment which for a majority of their students is an essential element of contemporary student life. The practical implications of this recognition will have an effect on the scheduling of classes in order to allow optimum working time, a more flexible attitude regarding administrative matters (for example the submission of assignments), and credit for students' part-time experiences. All the preceding will require a major shift in the organisation and administration of higher education programmes. Educators also require to more fully understand the learning characteristics of Generation Y students. An increase in the use of technology, the provision of more flexible methods of learning, efforts at encouraging commitment and an attempt to develop more reflective approaches to learning might be initial means of engaging and developing Generation Y students.

Finally, it might be suggested that the tourism and hospitality industry as a whole is required to consider how newly graduated managers are treated. The characteristics of Generation Y would suggest that tourism employers have even less opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of long term careers in the industry. The provision of little or no personal development, boring work and limited recognition will ensure that the levels of staff turnover that the industry still views as inevitable will continue.

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ADVENTURE TOURISM AND ICT: A PRELIMINARY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the foundation work which is part of a wider research project aiming to examine the role of ICT in the representation and distribution of adventure tourism products. It discusses challenges and development work in the process of literature investigation in the domain of adventure tourism and subsequently adventure tourism and ICT. The findings of the literature assessment in terms of volume, category and chronology of the references are discussed along with an analysis of authorship and theming of the reviewed work.

KEYWORDS: Adventure tourism; ICT; Meta-analysis; Adventure tourism and ICT; eTourism.

INTRODUCTION

The extraordinary growth in information and communications technologies (ICT) and their impact upon the travel and tourism sector has been well documented over the past 15 years (e.g. Poon, 1993; Sheldon, 1997; Werthner and Klein, 1999; and Frew 2000). This field, now often referred to as eTourism has seen a transformation of business models at all levels and dramatically re-engineered business processes as an outcome and the ICT-driven changes in the demand side can be evidenced in the emergence of e.g. user-generated content (often referred to as Web 2.0 or Travel 2.0). A large part of this growth is in web presence and in electronic distribution.

The authors wished to explore this eTourism phenomenon in the context of one of the most rapidly growing areas within tourism itself, that of adventure tourism now recognised as a distinct sector of tourism. It was considered timely to seek to explore the extent to which the eTourism story played out in adventure tourism and the longer term goal of the authors is to examine the role of eTourism in developing competitive advantage in Scotland's adventure tourism market. An immediate research task therefore is to establish the scale and scope of the work done within adventure tourism through a detailed analysis of the literature and, once done, to assess the relative importance of ICT within this and its current and potential for contribution

to competitive advantage. The first step, and the purpose of this paper is this assessment of the corps of knowledge.

In 1998 Burak, cited in Williams & Soutar (2005), suggested predicted growth in adventure tourism demand at 15% *per annum* and Swarbrooke, et al. (2003) confirmed adventure tourism to be the fastest growing sector in the tourism industry. The Adventure Travel Society, cited in Hudson (2003) estimated that, globally, adventure tourism was growing annually at around 10-15% with most of this growth occurring in existing markets. Scotland reflects this trend very clearly and this has been recognised at national tourist board level where adventure tourism has been identified for priority support for product development and marketing (Page, Bentley & Walker, 2005b). Whilst statistics on adventure tourism *per se* are scarce, the volume and value of Scottish activity holidays in 2003 was calculated by the United Kingdom Tourism Survey (UKTS) to be 2.2 million trips and £631 million in expenditure. As stated by Buckley (2006a), “adventure tourism is big business.”

It is not unusual for research work to lag behind commercial developments in any expanding field, however, after a decade or more of growth projections for this sector, which seem to be borne out in practice, it is somewhat surprising that this growth of adventure tourism has not been reflected in the research literature and indeed there is in the main merely superficial research coverage of adventure tourism.. A review of the existing literature on adventure tourism carried out by Weber in 2001 revealed that the focus of research was on the individual’s perception of adventure, whilst a more recent review of the literature by Buckley (2006b) concluded that most of the research currently applied in commercial adventure tourism is derived from the outdoor recreation literature.

As has been said, if the ultimate goal of the work is to investigate electronic distribution and the contribution of eTourism to competitive advantage in the adventure tourism sector, then this initially requires a robust understanding of the scale and scope of the adventure tourism literature and in turn prompts a need to understand boundaries around the area and definition of terms within it.

The first stage of the work therefore aims to establish a framework and a robust set of criteria and measures through which to assess the use of ICT in representing and distributing adventure tourism products. Ultimately it is envisaged that this will provide a sound basis for examining the role of ICT in Scotland’s relative competitive position in adventure tourism.

The aim of this paper, however, is thus to outline and discuss the foundation work carried out to lay the basis for the longer term goals and lays an emphasis on the methodology. This preliminary work comprised three phases; an initial comprehensive search of the published literature to establish a superset of candidate outputs, an iterative refining process through which a more relevant sub-set of this was developed, and, using the criteria established updating this reference database.

The principle objectives of this work are therefore to:

- outline the initial search process
- outline the process of refining the reference superset
- outline the subsequent search process
- identify weaknesses or limitations in the above processes
- describe how these challenges were addressed
- present the findings
- provide an evaluative commentary

RESEARCH APPROACH

Initial Literature Search

All potentially useful databases were identified and the final list can be seen in Appendix 1. Two sets of key words were constructed – one set for searching for articles on adventure tourism and another set for searching for articles on ICT aspects of adventure tourism. These were iteratively refined throughout the process and the final sets of keywords can be seen in Appendix 2. This initial search produced a ‘raw’ database containing 2,204 records. Cleansing of the database to remove duplicate records or spurious entries was undertaken. An interesting aspect of this exercise was that, whilst a journal article, for example, would inevitably appear in the database under Reference Type “Journal”, a ‘duplicate’ entry of that record invariably appeared under Reference Type “Generic.” The record containing more extensive information (for example, abstract details) was retained and the other, duplicate, record (or records) deleted. If both records contained abstract details, then the record containing a URL for the source of the article was retained. The final output was a database containing 1,972 records.

Refining the Database

As some of the entries classified as Reference Type “generic” were in fact journal articles it became evident that it was necessary to further “refine” the database. In addition, the database contained many records that, whilst matching one or more key terms, were in fact of little value. A decision was made, therefore, to a) re-categorise “Generic” entries with their correct reference type, and b) delete non-useful entries. The purpose of this exercise was to reduce the 1,972 records to a body of knowledge that represents *reviewed* literature that has adventure tourism as its focus.

The main changes that were made were as follows:

- articles from trade press were re-categorised as “Magazine Articles”
- series of lectures, for example, were re-categorised as “Reports”
- articles from newspapers were re-categorised as “Newspaper”, and
- journal articles were re-categorised as “Journals”

The database was “refined” by looking through each and every record (i.e. author, journal, abstract, etc.) and deleting records where the reference to adventure tourism was deemed to be marginal and would offer no additional knowledge of the nature and/or development of adventure tourism or adventure tourism and ICT. As the nature of “adventure tourism” is ill-defined, decisions about deleting records were not made without some considerable thought. It should be noted that, in making the decision to delete a record, consideration was given to the author and the source of the article. Articles from non-tourism journals were deemed less likely to be relevant for this study, for example:

- medical journals, such as the Journal of Travel Medicine
- environmental journals, such as Environmental Conservation
- outdoor recreation journals, such as Parks and Recreation
- planning journals, such as Progress in Planning

In every instance the abstract was examined carefully before the decision to delete a record was made. Where it was not clear from the details of the record whether it would prove informative (and there was no link to the full text article), the record was kept in the database until the article could be retrieved for further examination. The result of this process was a much refined database containing 289 records representing a much more useful indicator of the published literature on Adventure Tourism. The process of iterative refining of the boundaries and terms took some considerable time and it was deemed appropriate to now apply the refined procedure to update the reference database.

Update Literature Search

The second literature search, carried out in the Spring of 2008, updated the database with all relevant literature on adventure tourism published since the initial search process. The first step in this second search was to review the databases used in the initial search and check whether any new databases that might contain relevant information had become available. The revised set of databases searched in this second sweep of the literature can be seen in Appendix 1.

Taking into consideration the lessons learned from the initial literature search, and using the knowledge of the records in the database (gained through the painstaking “refining” process), the authors were able to refine the key words with some confidence. The set of key words for this second search were, therefore, refined and simplified (see Appendix 3).

The output from the “refining” stage and the second literature search is a database of 325 records (as at 30th April, 2008).

FINDINGS

Original Database

The original reference database described above contained 1,972 records and this database was manipulated to categorise the entries by type of record (“Reference Type”), as can be seen in the following Figure.

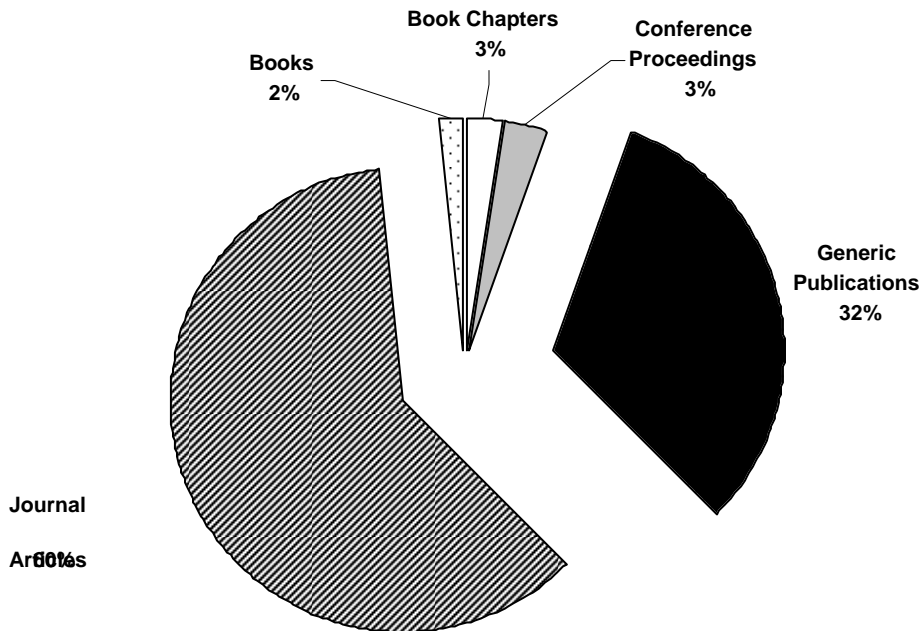


Figure 1: Percentage of Records by Category

References Database Update

Following the second and third phases of the work (as described in the research approach), the investigators produced a refined and updated database that contained 143 journal articles. These journal articles were published up to, and including, 2007. There may, however, potentially be 2007 publications that were not yet available in online databases during the second sweep of literature carried out in the Spring of 2008.

This relatively small body of knowledge is deemed to provide a current and accurate picture of the published work on adventure tourism and Figure 2 shows the trend in journal publication.

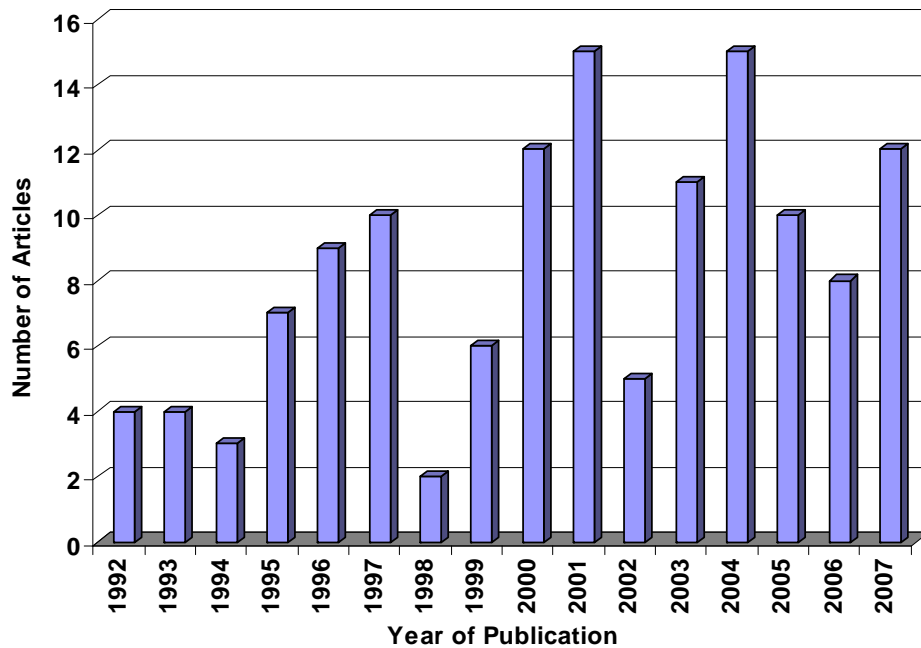


Figure 2: Journal Articles by Year of Publication

The growth in publications since the mid 1990’s is obvious and, whilst there are peaks and troughs, the overall trend is one of growth. Given the growth of the adventure tourism industry in recent years it would be interesting to chart the growth of the industry alongside the growth in academic research in the area. However, as already indicated, volume and value statistics on adventure tourism have proved difficult to source. This may well be because of the ill-defined nature of adventure tourism and its emergence as a distinct sector of tourism only in recent years.

The most common occurrence of statistics on adventure tourism in the published literature relates to injuries sustained during adventure tourism activities. This reflects the interest in the safety, accident prevention and risk management of adventure tourism – one of the identified themes in the literature (see Analysis).

The only longitudinal data sourced by the investigators relates to the number of international visitors to New Zealand who participated in nature-based tourism activities (i.e. tourism ranging from high impact adventure activities such as jet boating, skydiving and mountain climbing to more relaxing activities such as bush walking, wildlife and scenic tours and boat cruises) between 2002 and 2006. As much of the literature on adventure tourism has been written on adventure tourism in New Zealand, it is unsurprising that this data has been sourced from the New Zealand government.

Authors and Journals

An analysis of the journal articles has revealed that the only authors who have published more than 2 articles on adventure tourism are Bentley, T., (Bentley, Page & Laird 2000; Bentley & Page 2001; Bentley, Page & Laird 2001; Bentley et al, 2001a; Bentley et al, 2001b; Bentley Page & Walker 2004); Buckley, R., (Buckley 2000; Buckley 2003; Buckley 2005; Buckley 2006b; Buckley 2007); Ewert, A., (Ewert, 1997; Ewert & Shultis 1997; Ewert 2007); Morgan, D., (Morgan 2000; Morgan 2001; Morgan & Fluker 2003; Morgan, Moore & Mansell, 2005); Page, S., (Page, Bentley & Walker 2005a; Page, Bentley & Walker 2005c; Page, Steele & Connell 2006); and Sung, H.Y., (Sung, Morrison & O’Leary 1997; Sung, Morrison & O’Leary 2000; Sung 2004).

These 6 authors have written almost exclusively on adventure tourism in New Zealand and/or Australia (Bentley, Buckley and Morgan), New Zealand and Scotland (Page) and North America (Sung).

The journal articles of all authors in the database are published in a very wide spectrum of journals. Selected tourism journals include; Annals of Tourism Research, Tourism Management, Travel and Tourism Analyst, Journal of Sport Tourism, Tourism Recreation Research and the Journal of Ecotourism.

However, there are articles in journals as diverse as Medical Economics, Safety Science, Journal of Travel Medicine, Anthropology Today, Parks and Recreation, and Environment and Planning D-Society and Space.

Analysis

The investigators attempted to identify “themes” in the published journal articles – by analysing the abstracts of each article. However, and perhaps unsurprisingly, the articles are as diverse in subject matter as the journals in which they are published. The only clear “themes” that have emerged are as follows:

- safety/accident prevention/risk & crises management, and
- sustainability/nature conservation/ecotourism

Three of the more prolific writers (Bentley, Morgan and Page) have written almost exclusively on the “safety” theme. Buckley, Ewert and Sung, however, offer more insight into the nature and characteristics of adventure tourism and adventure tourism products, as well as the classification and motivation of adventure tourists. The “select” group of authors writing in this subject area as well as the small volume of work helps to explain the peaks and troughs in the growth of the published literature. It is likely that the published literature reflects personal interest as well as availability of funding for this emergent area of research. Many different authors have published just one or two journal articles on the second theme (above). These have largely focused on the sustainability of adventure tourism as well as the overlap between nature-based tourism, ecotourism and adventure tourism, for example, (Higham & Dickey 2007) and Williams & Soutar (2005). Examples of other adventure tourism topics addressed include the

role of the tour guide; the relationship between mountaineers and adventure tourists and the “commodification” of adventure in tourism.

Buckley’s review of research on adventure tourism in 2006 concludes that “the business and geography of adventure tourism products, packages and providers have been ignored”, and this view is certainly borne out by the investigator’s review of the abstracts in the database.

Adventure Tourism and ICT

Given the aim of the wider research project (i.e. to investigate the use of ICT in the representation and distribution of adventure tourism products), the number and nature of academic journal articles written on adventure tourism and ICT is of very great interest to the investigators. Only 4 journal articles in the refined database address ICT aspects of adventure tourism; i.e. articles by Schott (Schott, 2007), Korzay & Chon, (Korzay & Chon 2002), Kuby, et al, (Kuby, M.J. et al 2001), and Mader, R. (Mader, R. 1999). Given the phenomenal growth in the published literature on eTourism in recent years this paucity of academic publications on adventure tourism and ICT is somewhat surprising. Interestingly, both the trade press and conference proceedings contain a significant number of articles on ICT aspects of adventure tourism. Adventure tourism and ICT is, therefore, of topical interest and, if the trade press is a barometer for the level of research in an area, this interest is likely to lead to academic research in the near future.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Adventure tourism is clearly growing, and still has enormous growth potential although the body of academic research on adventure tourism has shown only a modest growth trend since the mid-1990’s and thus has not reflected the pace or scale of the growth in this sector of tourism. The number of researchers focussing on this area is very small indeed and the range of topics examined is equally limited. Specific academic research on adventure tourism and ICT is almost non-existent and given the phenomenal growth in academic research on eTourism, the lack of research on adventure tourism and ICT is very surprising indeed.

Given the economic significance of adventure tourism (particularly to countries such as Scotland and New Zealand), there is an immediate need for academic research into the nature and scale of adventure tourism products and markets.

Recommendations arising out of the preliminary work of the project are to continue to further update the database with published reviewed research on the subject area as it becomes available. It is also intended that this database be published online to enable other researchers to use the database and to share references on the subject area.. This foundation phase work will provide a springboard for the next stage of the project as we move towards developing a more precise working terminology and set of measurement criteria for adventure tourism, ultimately leading to a framework within which the use of ICT in representing and distributing adventure tourism products can be assessed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Databases searched

1. ArticleFirst*
2. ASSIA
3. Business Source Premier
4. Emerald
5. Hospitality & Tourism Complete
6. Ingenta Connect
7. Leisure Tourism Database
8. Science Citation Index
9. Science Direct**
10. Scopus
11. Zetoc

* by the time of the 2nd literature search, Article First was no longer available to the investigator

** Science Direct was not available at the time of the initial literature search, but was used in the 2nd literature search.

Appendix 2 : Key words for searching

Adventure Tourism

1. Adventure tourism
2. Activity and tourism
3. Activity tourism
4. Physical activity and tourism
5. Outdoor activity and tourism
6. Outdoor recreation and tourism
7. Sport and tourism
8. Sport tourism
9. Physical sport and tourism
10. Outdoor sport and tourism
11. Activity sport and tourism
12. Adventure sport and tourism
13. Recreational sport and tourism
14. Recreation and tourism
15. Adventure recreation and tourism
16. Recreational leisure and tourism
17. Leisure and tourism
18. Ecotourism and adventure
19. Ecotourism and recreation
20. Ecotourism and activity
21. Ecotourism and sport
22. Risk and tourism
23. Risk and adventure tourism
24. Wilderness and tourism
25. Wilderness and adventure tourism

Adventure Tourism and ICT

Adventure **or** Tourism and.....

1. ICT
2. Information and Communication Technologies
3. Information Technology
4. Technology
5. Computer
6. Computing
7. eTourism, e-tourism
8. eBusiness, e-business
9. e-marketing
10. Distribution channel
11. eDistribution, electronic distribution, distribution
12. Web distribution
13. Online distribution, on-line distribution
14. Web representation
15. Website, web-site, web
16. Web page, web-page
17. Destination representation
18. Destination website, web-site

Appendix 3 Key words for second literature search

Adventure Tourism

Adventure tourism, OR adventure holiday*, OR adventure travel*

Adventure tourism and ICT

Adventure tourism, OR adventure holiday*, OR adventure travel* AND (ICT OR information technology OR comput* OR web* OR online)

THE VALUE OF DESTINATION LOYALTY: MYTH OR REALITY? THE CASE OF VISITORS TO KISSIMMEE/ST CLOUD, FLORIDA

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ABSTRACT

Given the growing appeal of the concept of destination loyalty in tourism marketing, it is highly important to investigate the travel expenditures of loyal vs. non- or less loyal visitors. Adopting the behavioral approach to loyalty, this study examines the spending patterns of visitors to Kissimmee-St Cloud, while comparing between the different loyalty segments: no previous visit, one previous visit, and multiple visits. The analysis is based on an intercept survey conducted by the Kissimmee-St Cloud Convention and Visitors Bureau, which yielded a sample of 4,301 visitors. In contrast to the prevalent concept, the results show that first timers spend more than the more loyal segments, both in per-trip and per-night total expenditures. However, the loyalty segments are distinguished in their spending patterns at the destination, when first timers spend more on lodging, food and restaurants, and car rental, and the those with one or more previous visits spend more on gasoline, activities and entertainment, and shopping. The paper ends with an assessment of the contributions of the findings both to the literature on loyalty and to tourism destination marketers.

KEYWORDS: Destination Loyalty; Case Study; Kissimmee/St Cloud, Florida; Tourism Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

This study empirically examines the value of destination loyalty in terms of travel expenditure. Customer loyalty is one of the most prominent 'buzz' words both in contemporary marketing literature and in practice, replacing mere 'satisfaction' as the ultimate goal of service and goods organizations (Dick & Basu, 1994; Oliver, 1999; Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999). The growing

appeal of the concept of loyalty derives from the widespread perception that loyal customers are more profitable to an organization than new customers (Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). In addition to reduced marketing and operating costs and increased positive word-of-mouth communication, Reichheld (1996) claimed that loyal customers were also likely to pay more for a brand, a view that was widely adopted by the mainstream marketing literature (e.g. Ravald & Grönroos, 1996). As might be understandable regarding an industry that relies heavily on marketing concepts, the belief in the value of loyal customers has also trickled into the tourism industry (Bowen & Shoemaker, 2003; Mattila, 2006). However, both in general marketing and in the tourism literature, the assumption that loyal customers are also bigger spenders than new customers, is 'common wisdom', for the most part not based on any empirical findings.

The belief in the value of loyal customers has also led firms in the tourism industry to invest enormous resources in marketing efforts, in order to retain existing customers and to encourage repeated patronage (Jang and Mattila; 2005). Nevertheless, in the past few years scholars and researchers have begun to seriously challenge the assumption that loyal customers are more profitable than new customers. The limited research on this subject both in the field of general marketing (e.g. Reinartz & Kumar, 2000; Ranaweera, 2007; Loveman, 1998) and in the tourism literature (e.g. Oppermann, 1996; Petrick, 2004b, Wang, 2004) has revealed mixed and sometimes contradicting results. Consequently, according to Niininen, Szivas and Riley (2004), the understanding of the value of loyalty in the tourism industry is still limited and deserves further research.

The current study investigates the relationship between destination loyalty and spending among visitors to Kissimmee/St Cloud, Florida. The area is one of the most important tourist destinations in Central Florida, hosting over 6 million visitors in 2004, with expenditures exceeding US\$1.3 billion dollars (Croes & Severt, 2007). A destination was chosen for the analysis of loyalty among visitors (in contrast, for example, to hotels or cruises), since destination loyalty is a relatively new concept, which calls for further research (Pike, 2007). Specifically, studies on the usefulness of the concept of destination loyalty and its applications to tourism products or services have been particularly limited, which may have a negative impact on the understanding of loyalty as one of the major driving forces in a competitive market (Yoon & Uysal, 2005).

For the purpose of the study, the behavioral approach to destination loyalty was adopted. This approach is not without limitations, since it does not consider the psychological attachment of the visitor to the destination, but focuses solely on the visitor's actual behavior (Petrick, 2005; Oppermann; 1997). However, as noted by Oppermann (2000), "from a practitioner point of view, the more immediate returns in term of actual visitors or customers seem more important" (p. 81). Therefore, in the current study, loyalty will be determined according to the number of recurring overnight visits to Kissimmee.

Although spending is only one indicator for determining the profitability of visitors (in addition to marketing, operation and service costs), there are three main reasons why the study focuses on the visitors' spending behavior during their vacation in Kissimmee/St Cloud. First of all, customer spending is naturally a central component in determining profitability, giving an initial estimate as to the value of the customer (Pfeifer, Haskins & Conroy, 2005). Secondly, as

noted by various researchers (So & Morrison, 2004; Jang, Bai, Hong, & O’Leary, 2004), studies on travel expenditures are still limited, although spending patterns among tourists are vital for planners, marketers and business managers. Finally, exploring the differences in spending behavior between non-repeat and repeat visitors, if there are such differences, may provide a good basis for market segmentation, leading to increased revenues (Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004; So & Morrison, 2004).

For the reasons described above, the paper attempts to contribute to the literature on destination loyalty and on travel expenditure, two relatively understudied fields in tourism management. As more destinations aim to increase their revenue by focusing on high-spending visitors, uncovering the link between loyalty and spending might have important implications for tourism marketers, especially in their segmentation efforts. Determining the value of loyal visitors, compared to the segment of first-time-visitors, is also expected to clarify whether indeed, the importance attributed to repeated visitation and the significant investments in this sector, are indeed justified.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Loyalty: Approaches and Measures

The study of customer/brand loyalty has been attracting the attention of marketing researchers since the 1920’s, resulting in the accumulation of a substantive body of knowledge on the topic. However, there still lacks a proper definition of loyalty that will capture the wide divergence of opinions regarding the nature of customer loyalty. An early study of Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) found 53 different operational definitions of loyalty, and there is good reason to believe that today, loyalty is an even more controversial concept. Research on loyalty in the tourism industry began at the end of the 1980’s, and reflected the general fuzziness with regards to the nature of the phenomenon (Oppermann, 2000). Nevertheless, three main approaches towards defining and measuring customer loyalty can be identified from the literature, as will be elaborated below.

The earliest studies on customer loyalty were based on consumer behavior (*the behavioral approach*). In its behavioral interpretation, loyalty can be defined as the act of a consumer repeatedly buying the same brand. The logic behind using repeat purchase as a determinant of loyalty is derived from the Recency-Frequency-Monetary (RFM) value paradigm, which is part of the database marketing literature (Hughes, 1995). This paradigm maintains that “clients are most likely to purchase other products offered by the company if they have recently purchased a product, if they frequently purchase products and if they purchase expensive products” (Paas, 1998: 354). Consequently, followers of the behavioral approach determine the level of consumer loyalty by measuring the sequence of purchase (how many times in a row the brand was purchased), the proportion of purchase (the rate of purchase of the brand, compared to all purchases), and/or the intensity of purchase (how often the brand was purchased, within a certain purchase sequence) (Oppermann, 1997, 2000). Other behavioral-related indicators of loyalty that are highly popular in both the general marketing and the tourism literature, are measuring the intentions to repurchase/revisit and the willingness to recommend the product/destination to others (e.g. Chen & Gursoy, 2001; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2007).

Nevertheless, relying solely on behavioral measures of loyalty has been under heavy criticism, the main argument being that they do not attempt to understand the causes leading to repeat/non-repeat purchase. High repeat purchase may derive from factors such as a lack of alternatives, high switching costs or temporary convenience in using the brand, while low repeat purchase may derive from variety seeking or different usage situations (Dick & Basu, 1994; Petrick, 2005). Therefore, alternative measures for loyalty were developed, which consider the psychological attachment of the customers to the brand by itself (*the attitudinal approach*), or in combination with the behavioral dimension (*the composite approach*). The followers of the latter advocate the perception that a truly loyal customer must both purchase the brand as well as have a positive attitude towards it (Shoemaker & Lewis, 1999, Oliver, 1999; Petrick, 2004a). This integrative approach allows us to identify spurious loyalty (high repeat patronage but with a relatively negative attitude) and latent loyalty (low repeat patronage but with a relatively positive attitude), and thus offers more practical implications for marketers (Dick & Basu, 1994).

Although the composite approach offers clear advantages as it reflects a more holistic picture of loyalty, Oppermann (1999, 2000) argued that loyalty research in tourism should nevertheless adopt, at least for the near future, the behavioral approach. The main reasons for this were (1) a composite measurement of loyalty has practical problems, especially since it calls for very long questionnaires; (2) attitudes tend to change over time, therefore measuring them at one point in time does not necessarily reflect the overall picture; (3) surveys which measure attitudes are usually conducted during or after the trip, when in fact they should be conducted before the trip; (4) actual behavior is more important for practitioners than attitudes that might or might not be translated into visits; and (5) in contrast to most products and services, vacation travel is a relatively rare purchase, and is therefore likely to reflect a conscious decision. Consequently, it is likely that actual behavior will also reflect positive attitudes towards the destination. In addition, as was noted by Pritchard, Howard and Havitz (1992), psychometrically sound instruments for measuring attitudinal loyalty are still missing in the tourism literature. Thus, in light of the present limitations of the attitudinal and the composite approaches, the current study will employ the behavioral approach to loyalty, when loyalty is determined base on the actual behavior of the visitors, i.e. prior visitations to the destination.

The Value of Loyalty: The Debate

The perception that retaining existing customers is more economically worthwhile than acquiring new customers is well accepted by researchers and practitioners from many industries, as well as the tourism industry. It has been argued that loyal customers are more profitable than new customers because (1) they are less price-sensitive, thus are ready to pay more for a brand; (2) since they are familiar with the service, it is less costly to serve them; (3) they represent a more stable source of revenue, reducing future marketing costs; (4) since the organization usually retains their personal details, they are more accessible for direct marketing; (5) loyalty secures the relationship between buyer and seller, making it more likely that the customer will choose the brand over competitors in the future; (6) they are expected to be more forgiving in relation to errors committed in the provision of a service, and attribute them to ‘unstable factors’; and (7) they generate more positive word-of-mouth communication, which consequently brings in additional business (Bowen & Shoemaker, 2003; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990; Oliver, 1999).

The perceived high value of loyal customers has led many organizations to create often expensive loyalty programs, which grant benefits and incentives to repeat customers, for the purpose of encouraging repeat patronage and establishing long-term relationships with customers (Dowling & Uncles, 1997). This trend is widely adopted in the hospitality and tourism industry, including airlines, hotel chains, restaurants, casinos, cruises, and theme and amusement parks. Interestingly, the concept of loyalty programs has begun to attract the attention of destination marketers as well. For example, Fyall, Callod and Edwards (2003) described the attempts to establish loyal visitor programs for Stockholm and Barbados, aimed at rewarding and encouraging repeat visitation. In any case, even without formal programs, the appeal of loyal customers (i.e. visitors) has clearly trickled into destination marketing, as more destinations adopt strategies focused on attracting visitors to return to the destination (Lehto, O’Leary & Morrison, 2004).

The assumption that profitability is linked to loyalty only started to be seriously challenged by marketing scholars and researchers in the past few years. A few researchers analyzed the aforementioned link, leading to conclusion that the profitability of loyal customers was a controversial matter that should not be taken for granted. Reinartz and Kumar, prominent opponents to the mass adoption of the customer loyalty concept, investigated a large retail firm (2000) and four other service providers (2002), and revealed surprising results in both studies. It was found that repeat customers are not necessarily more profitable than first-timers, since the cost of serving them is not lower and they do not pay higher prices. In the second study it was also found that the link between loyalty and positive word-of-mouth is not as strong as might be expected.

More recent studies strengthen the conclusion that the profitability of loyal customers is a contentious issue that should be further examined. To name a few examples, in Helgesen's (2006) study on fish products' exporters and their customers, a positive correlation was found between customer loyalty and customer profitability, but that this link was digressive, i.e. increased customer loyalty had a positive effect on profitability, but at a decreasing rate. Ranaweera (2007), in her study of the British telecommunication sector, indicated that long-term customers are not always more profitable than new customers, leading her to conclude that “the greater profitability of the so-called ‘loyal’ customers appears to be overstated” (p. 119). It should be noted, however, that some studies did find a positive link between loyalty and profitability (see, for example, the study of Loveman, 1998, on the banking sector). Even assuming that loyal customers are indeed more profitable which, as can be seen, is still in dispute, Henry (2000) warned about the reliance of firms on their loyal customers, claiming that “today’s customers, no matter how loyal, will someday cease to be customers” (p. 15). Therefore, neglecting the competition over new customers might lead to severe consequences in the long term. In addition, he called for caution when competitors’ customers are presumed loyal, and firms concede potentially valuable markets without a fight.

Although most of the loyalty research in tourism has focused on examining the antecedents and the factors leading to loyalty, the underlying assumption being that it is desirable for tourism businesses (e.g. Yoon & Uysal, 2005), the limited scope of this research has revealed mixed and divisive results. The most comprehensive investigation for determining the profitability of loyal visitors was carried out by Petrick (2004b), who found that loyal cruise

customers were more likely to visit in the future and spread positive word of mouth, but first time visitors - and less loyal visitors in general - spent more money and were less cost-sensitive. These findings led Petrick (2004b) to the conclusion that “first-time visitors are a very viable market” (p. 468), and should not be neglected by cruise marketers. On the other hand, Miller and Grazer (2003) calculated and found that the loss of a very loyal cruise customer, termed “apostle” - one that sails exclusively with that cruise line, cruising at least twice a year and taking long cruises - costs the cruise line upward of \$1,755,000. Therefore, they recommend cruise lines to identify the “apostles” and handle them with special attention. However, most of the research on the value of customer loyalty in the tourism industry was conducted at the destination level, and investigates the subject mainly from the perspective of travel expenditure.

One of the first attempts to address the issue was conducted by Oppermann (1996), who found similar expenditure patterns between first-time and repeat visitors to Rotorua, New Zealand. However, since the latter stay significantly longer than the former, their per-day spending was actually lower. In a later study, conducted among international visitors to New Zealand, Oppermann (1997) found similar results in general, although they varied across nationalities. In the case of visitors from the UK, Hong Kong, Germany and Canada, the repeaters were the ones who spent more, although not substantially. Consistent with Oppermann’s findings, in a study among Japanese travelers to the U.S., Jang, Bai, Hong and O’Leary (2004) found that first timers spend more than repeaters in the overall sample. However, they found that high-income earners are significantly heavier spenders regardless of the number of previous visits to the destination. Different results were found by So and Morrison (2004) among visitors to Taiwan, where no significant spending differences were found between first-time and repeat visitors, except for the U.S. segment. Lastly, in striking contrast to most of the findings described above, Wang (2004) was one of the few researchers whose findings from a study of visitors from Mainland China to Hong Kong, confirm the traditional view of loyal visitors as bigger spenders than first-time visitors. Wang (2004), therefore, in contrast to Petrick (2004b) and others, concluded that that the extra attention to be paid to repeat visitors is justified.

At the very least, the mixed results on the subject, and the variations among different sectors, levels of income and nationalities, imply that the relationships between loyalty and profitability, in general, and loyalty and expenditure, in particular, are controversial and deserve further research. It is especially required in light of the increasing evidence which imply that the heavy reliance on repeat visitors on behalf of many destinations might be based on partially false assumptions, i.e. that loyal visitors tend to spend more than less or not-loyal visitors. This lack of clarity regarding the value of visitor loyalty has clear negative implications on destination marketers and their efforts to increase revenue through effective market segmentation. Therefore, this study will empirically examined the differences between different loyalty segments in regard to their spending patterns, taking Kissimmee-St Cloud as a case study, while assessing their value to the destination marketers.

METHODOLOGY

Sampling

Data for this study was collected by the Kissimmee-St Cloud Convention and Visitors Bureau (KSCVB) during 2006, using a regular intercept survey among visitors to the county. Intercept surveys aim to target and interview face-to-face customers or potential customers in their natural environments, e.g. malls, restaurants and attractions - in contrast to mail or telephone interviews - and have shown to be an effective data collection method, that can provide better access to more harder-to-reach segments (Bush & Hair, 1985). In 2006, the KSCCVB administered approximately 880 intercept surveys each month from guests in lodging establishments, yielding more than 10,600 respondents over a twelve- month period. The participants were recruited from a wide variety of hotels, motels and timeshare properties, in order to ensure maximum heterogeneity and to minimize the limitations of the intercept survey approach. Excluded from the targeted properties were campgrounds, convention hotels and on-site theme park resorts. Visitors were approached by trained interviewers and were asked to participate in the survey immediately after check-out from their respective lodgings, at different times of the day, both on weekdays and on weekends. For the purpose of the study, a visitor was defined as a person who stayed overnight in a paid accommodation in Kissimmee-St Cloud, regardless of the distance traveled. Therefore, day visitors and visitors staying with friends and relatives (VFR) were also excluded from the survey.

Out of the total number of participants in the KSCVB study, only 4,305 of them reported their expenditures and number of previous visits, and therefore will be included in the current analysis. Four respondents reported on lodging, Shopping, gasoline, or car rental expenditures that were deemed extreme and not proportional (might due to data input error), and therefore excluded from the analysis, leaving sample of 4,301 participants. Out of those 71.7% were domestic US visitors, while the rest, 28.3%, were inbound tourists (including Canadian tourists, who formed the largest group, with 263 visitors). Sixteen percent were under the age of 29, 61.5% were between the ages of 30 and 49, and the remainder of the sample were aged 50 and above. Regarding the participants' annual income, 44.3% earn less than \$60,000 and 43.6% earn \$60,000 or more, while the remainder refused to answer that question.

Instrument/measures

The questionnaire was composed of thirty-seven questions divided into 14 sections, including three which were relevant to the current study. First of all, questions pertaining to socio-economic aspects related to the participants' age, annual income and country of origin. Since the vast majority of the sample comprised domestic visitors, with the remaining participants coming from a large number of countries, the visitors were divided into U.S. and non U.S visitors. Secondly, the participants were asked to state their expenditures in the area of Kissimmee-St Cloud, in relation to lodging, food, car rental, gasoline, activities and entertainment, and shopping. It should be noted that although the participants were also asked about their expenditures on their entire trip - which may have included other destinations - the current study investigates spending in Kissimmee-St Cloud only. The total expenditure for a travel party was comprised of lodging expenditure at a minimum, followed by the other spending categories (food

and beverages, car rental, gasoline, activities and entertainment, and shopping) as they occurred in KFC only. In other words, all the participants acknowledged lodging expenditures, but not necessarily all the other expenditure categories.

Finally, the participants were asked to provide current trip-related information: the number of nights spent in Kissimmee-St Cloud (length of stay), the total number of people included in the travel party, and the type of accommodation (hotel/motel/suite or timeshare). In addition, the survey included a question regarding the number of previous overnight visits to Kissimmee-St Cloud. Since the current study adopts the behavioral approach to loyalty, and in order to compare between loyalty segments, this variable was transformed into a categorical variable. Previous related studies usually divide visitors into two categories: first-time versus repeat visitors - two or more visitations (e.g. Anwar & Sohail, 2004; Oppermann, 1996). Nevertheless, this approach has been criticized by Oppermann (1999), who argued that such studies have “taken the very superficial route of only identifying repeat and first-time visitors rather than discriminating among the various repeat visitors” (p. 56). Indeed, some contemporary studies have begun to consider different levels of behavioral loyalty (e.g. Wang, 2004; Oppermann, 2000; Petrick, 2004b). Thus, the current study adopts Oppermann’s (1999) proposal to differentiate between three loyalty segments: no previous visit, one previous visit, and multiple visits (two visits or more). The observations for each segment were 1,885, 776, and 1,644, respectively. Sets of One-Way ANOVA and Chi Square Test of Association analyses will be utilized in order to examine the differences between the segments with regards to socio-demographic characteristics, trip-related variables, and expenditure patterns during the visitors' last stay in Kissimmee-St Cloud. In the cases where significant results have been obtained in an ANOVA, a Scheffe post hoc test was used to determine where differences lie between the three segments.

FINDINGS

Socio-Demographic characteristics

The first comparison was conducted in order to investigate whether or not the three loyalty segments differed in their socio-demographic characteristics (see Table 1). Regarding the origin of the participants, the percentage of US visitors exceeded that of the inbound tourists in all loyalty segments. However, the segments were significantly different ($\chi^2_2=500.399$, $P<0.001$) in their proportions of US vs. inbound tourists: first-timers were characterized by a higher proportion of inbound tourists (45.4%), in comparison to those with one previous visit (20.9%) and those with multiple visits (12.3%).

Another significant difference ($F_{2,4301}=187.147$, $p<0.001$) was found between the segments, based on the average age. The lowest average age was found among first timers (37.78), followed by those with one previous visit (41.66) and those with multiple visits (45.23). A Chi Square test of association confirmed ($\chi^2_{10}=355.625$, $P<0.001$) that the difference in the distribution of age groups between the segments was significant ($\chi^2_{10}=355.625$, $P<0.001$). Among the first timers, 62.3% were between the ages of 18 and 39; 67.1% of those with one

previous visit were between the ages of 30-49; while 61.9% of those with multiple visits were aged 40 or above.

Finally, a chi square test of association was conducted to evaluate whether the proportions of different income levels varied between the loyalty segments. It was found that the annual income was indeed statistically significant in relation to the loyalty segment each respondent belonged to ($\chi^2_{20}=426.645$, $P<0.001$). The proportion of low income respondents (<\$60,000) was higher among first time visitors than among the two repeater categories, while the proportion of the higher income respondents (>\$60,000) was higher among those who had one or more previous visits.

Trip-Related Variables

The trip-related variables examined in the study were length of stay, party size and type of accommodation. As can be seen from Table 2, the results of the ANOVA test found a significant difference between the loyalty segments based on their average length-of-stay ($F_{2,4302}=5.528$, $p<0.01$). However, the Scheffe post hoc test indicated no significant difference in the average length of stay between first-time visitors and those with multiple visits. The only significant difference that was found was between first timers and those with one previous visit, where the former showed a higher average length of stay. The finding that those with one previous visit were not significantly distinguished from those with multiple visits in their average length of stay point to a loose and limited link between loyalty and length of stay.

The next trip-related variable examined was the party size. Although the ANOVA test found a significant difference between the loyalty segments based on the party size ($F_{2,4301}=3.297$, $p<0.05$), the Scheffe post hoc test revealed a significant difference only between those with one previous visit ($M=2.90$) and those with multiple visits ($M=3.07$). No significant difference in party size was found between the first timers ($M=3.00$) and the other two loyalty segments. Therefore, first time and repeat visitors were not statistically distinguished from each other in term of their party size. Finally, the chi square test of association found no significant link between the type of accommodation and any of the loyalty segment ($\chi^2_2=4.786$, $P>0.05$).

Table 1: Socio-demographic variables, per loyalty segment

Variable	Total Sample (N=4,305)	No Previous Visits (N=1,885)	One Previous Visit (N=776)	Multiple Visits (N=1,644)	F or χ^2 Value	Sig.
Country of origin					$\chi^2=500.399$	0.000***
USA	71.7%	54.6%	79.1%	87.7%		
Other than USA	28.3%	45.4%	20.9%	12.3%		
Age (mean)	41.32	37.78 ^a	41.66 ^b	45.23 ^c	F=187.147	0.000***
18-29	16.0%	22.0%	12.8%	10.6%	$\chi^2=355.625$	0.000***
30-39	34.3%	40.3%	34.1%	27.4%		
40-49	27.2%	24.6%	33.0%	27.4%		
50-59	13.3%	9.6%	13.1%	17.5%		
60-69	7.9%	3.0%	5.8%	14.5%		
70 or above	1.4%	0.5%	1.2%	2.5%		
Annual income					$\chi^2=426.645$	0.000***
< \$20,000	2.4%	4.2%	0.9%	1.1%		
\$20,001-\$29,999	5.7%	8.8%	3.6%	3.3%		
\$30,000-\$39,999	13.0%	18.3%	10.8%	7.8%		
\$40,000-\$49,999	13.1%	16.8%	12.6%	9.1%		
\$50,000-\$59,999	10.1%	11.8%	7.9%	9.2%		
\$60,000-\$69,999	9.6%	9.3%	8.5%	10.4%		
\$70,000-\$79,999	8.2%	6.2%	8.2%	10.4%		
\$80,000-\$89,999	7.2%	5.6%	9.1%	8.2%		
\$90,000-\$99,999	6.4%	3.8%	9.0%	8.1%		
\$100,000 or above	12.2%	6.0%	16.4%	17.3%		
Refused	12.1%	9.2%	12.9%	15.1%		

Note: F and significant level are presented for the initial One-Way ANOVA analysis. Significant differences in the means between pairs of the three loyalty segments (no previous visits, one previous visit, multiple visits) based on the Scheffe test are indicated by the letters a, b or c. Pairs of means that do not have the same letter are significantly different whereas those pairs of means that have the same superscript are not significantly different. χ^2 and significant level are presented for the chi square test of association.

- * Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.
- ** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.
- *** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

Table 2: Trip-related variables, per loyalty segment

	Total Sample (N=4,305)	No Previous Visits (N=1,885)	One Previous Visit (N=776)	Multiple Visits (N=1,644)	F or χ^2 Value	Sig.
Length of stay	5.02	5.17 ^a	4.74 ^b	4.97 ^{ab}	F=5.528	0.004 ^{***}
Party size	3.01	3.00 ^{ab}	2.90 ^a	3.07 ^b	F=3.297	0.037 [*]
Lodging					$\chi^2=4.786$	0.091
Hotel/Motel	78.2%	79.6%	78.1%	76.6%		
Timeshare ¹	21.8%	20.4%	21.9%	23.4%		

1. Including short-term rental

Note: F and significant level are presented for the initial One-Way ANOVA analysis. Significant differences in the means between pairs of the three loyalty segments (no previous visits, one previous visit, multiple visits) based on the Scheffe test are indicated by letters a, b or c. Pairs of means that do not have the same letter are significantly different whereas those pairs of means that have the same superscript are not significantly different. χ^2 and significant level are presented for the chi square test of association.

- * Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.
- ** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.
- *** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

Tourist Spending

The comparisons between the loyalty segments based on their average travel expenditures are presented in Table 3 (the shaded lines represent expenditures per night). A significant difference between the loyalty segments was found in each of the expenditure categories. In terms of total expenditure per-trip, first timers spent an average of \$979.41 per trip, which was significantly higher than the other loyalty segments. However, no statistically significant difference was found between those with one previous visit ($M=\$781.77$) and those with multiple visits ($M=\$856.84$). A similar pattern was found in the categories of food and restaurant meals, lodging, and car rental, where first timers spent significantly more than the two repeater segments. Nevertheless, in the other expenditure categories – gasoline, activities and entertainment, and shopping – those with multiple visits spent more than both first timers and those with one previous visit. In the case of gasoline expenditures only, those with one previous visit spent more than first timers.

Although, as was shown in the previous section, the difference in length of stay between the loyalty segments was only marginal, a comparison was also conducted on the basis of expenditure per-night in order to neutralize the impact of the length of stay on the total expenditures. Expenditures per-night for each category are presented in Table 3 in the shaded lines. As can be seen, a very similar picture to the total expenditures emerged when considering expenditures per-night, the most important detail being that first timers spent more per night, in total, than both repeater segments.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The aim of the study is to contribute to the literature on the relationship between destination loyalty and travel expenditures, using the tourism destination of Kissimmee/ST Cloud as a case study. The question of whether or not loyal customers/visitors do indeed spend more than non- or less-loyal customers/visitors is the subject of an ongoing debate in contemporary marketing literature (e.g. Reinartz & Kumar, 2000, 2002; Miller & Grazer, 2003; Petrick 2004b). Therefore, the current study can be seen as another step in clarifying the value of loyal visitors, as it is realized in terms of tourist spending. As recommended by Oppermann (2000) and Pritchard et al. (1992), the study used the behavioral approach to loyalty, whereby it is determined by the number of prior visits to a destination. In line with this approach, the tourists were divided into three categories: no previous visits, one previous visit and multiple visits. The comparison between the segments was based on total per-trip and per-night expenditures, as well as expenditures across different spending categories.

The results of the study clearly indicate that first-timers (those with no previous visits) are a viable and prominent segment for Kissimmee-St Cloud. It was found that they spend significantly more both regarding per-trip and per-night total expenditures, than the two repeater segments. It should be noted that the differences between the segments regarding length of stay and party size are limited, thus the findings point to fundamentally different spending trends between the segments.

Table 3: Expenditures, per loyalty segment

Expenditure Variable (\$Avg.)	Total Sample (N=4,305)	No Previous Visits (N=1,885)	One Previous Visit (N=776)	Multiple Visits (N=1,644)	F Value	Sig.
Total expenditures	896.98 (100%)	979.41 ^a (100%)	781.77 ^b (100%)	856.84 ^b (100%)	18.282	0.000***
Total expenditures per-night	177.71 (100%)	186.88 ^a (100%)	164.67 ^b (100%)	173.35 ^b (100%)	14.115	0.000***
Food and restaurant meals	257.85 (28.7%)	278.11 ^a (28.4%)	240.33 ^b (24.5%)	242.87 ^b (28.3%)	11.534	0.000***
Food and restaurant meals per night	53.44 (30.1%)	55.63 ^a (29.8%)	52.03 ^{ab} (31.6%)	51.59 ^b (29.8%)	4.716	0.009**
Lodging	496.99 (55.4%)	581.37 ^a (59.4%)	422.00 ^b (43.1%)	435.63 ^b (50.8%)	32.045	0.000***
Lodging per night	98.10 (55.2%)	111.05 ^a (59.4%)	90.76 ^b (55.1%)	86.72 ^b (50.0%)	53.383	0.000***
Car rental	10.41 (1.2%)	17.13 ^a (1.7%)	8.53 ^b (0.9%)	3.59 ^b (0.4%)	19.760	0.000***
Car rental per night	2.22 (1.2%)	3.62 ^a (1.9%)	2.16 ^{ab} (1.3%)	0.65 ^b (0.4%)	15.744	0.000***
Gasoline	20.25 (2.3%)	13.82 ^a (1.4%)	19.75 ^b (2.0%)	27.85 ^c (3.3%)	69.998	0.000***
Gasoline per night	3.97 (2.2%)	2.31 ^a (1.2%)	3.80 ^b (2.3%)	5.94 ^c (3.4%)	103.993	0.000***
Activities and entertainment	31.50 (3.5%)	21.50 ^a (2.2%)	24.49 ^a (2.5%)	46.27 ^b (5.4%)	40.568	0.000***

Table 3: Expenditures, per loyalty segment (Cont'd)

Expenditure Variable (\$Avg.)	Total Sample (N=4,305)	No Previous Visits (N=1,885)	One Previous Visit (N=776)	Multiple Visits (N=1,644)	F Value	Sig.
Activities and entertainment per night	5.25 (3.0%)	2.92 ^a (1.6%)	3.85 ^a (2.3%)	8.57 ^b (4.9%)	70.296	0.000 ^{***}
Shopping	79.99 (8.9%)	67.48 ^a (6.9%)	66.66 ^a (6.8%)	100.63 ^b (11.7%)	21.825	0.000 ^{***}
Shopping per night	14.73 (8.3%)	11.34 ^a (6.1%)	12.06 ^a (7.3%)	19.88 ^b (11.5%)	37.964	0.000 ^{***}

Note: All spending variables refer to money spent in Kissimmee-St Cloud only. F and significant level are presented for the initial One-Way ANOVA analysis. Significant differences in the expenditures between pairs of the three loyalty segments (no previous visits, one previous visit, multiple visits) based on the Scheffe test are indicated by letters a, b or c. Pairs of means that do not have the same letter are significantly different whereas those pairs of means that have the same superscript are not significantly different. Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding.

* Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.

** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

*** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

The study's results are consistent with some earlier studies (Petrick, 2004b; Oppermann, 1996, 1997; Jang et al., 2004) which indicated that less-loyal visitors (in this context – first timers) spend more at the destination. It also strengthened the call of scholars such as Reinartz and Kumar (2000, 2002) and Henry (2004) for caution in automatically assuming that loyal customers are willing to pay more for a brand and/or that they are less price-sensitive. Nevertheless, the findings are contradictory with those of Wang (2004), who found that repeat visitors are bigger spenders and So and Morrison (2004) who found no spending differences based on the tourists' number of previous visits. At the very least, this study provides evidence to the fact that the clear preference on the part of many tourism destinations to allocate marketing resources to loyal visitors (Fyall et al., 2003; Lehto et al., 2004), often at the expense of attracting first timers, should be reconsidered and reevaluated.

Nonetheless, the study went one step further in taking into account not only the total expenditures, but the different spending categories, as well. Taking this into consideration, a more complicated picture emerged regarding the visitors' spending patterns. While first timers spend more on food and restaurant meals, lodging, and car rental, the more loyal visitors spend more on gasoline, activities and entertainment, and shopping. Since the study examined expenditures at Kissimmee/St Cloud only, these findings portrayed different tourist behaviors at the destination for first timers and repeaters. First timers spend more on lodging and restaurants, seemingly due to a lack of knowledge regarding the destination, which may often place them in an inferior bargaining position. The more loyal visitors, on the other hand, seem to be able to get better deals on lodging and find cheaper places to dine, once their familiarity with and orientation at the destination have improved. First timers also spend more on car rentals at the destination, which may stem from their concern about driving by themselves to the still unfamiliar destination; more loyal visitors, on the other hand, seem more confident about reaching the destination by themselves.

On the other hand, the more loyal segments have higher expenditures at the destination in gasoline, activities and entertainment, and shopping, all of which indicate that they prefer to focus more on activities at Kissimmee/St Cloud, compared to the first timers who tend to focus more on activities outside Kissimmee/St Cloud. Bearing in mind the context of Central Florida, it is reasonable to assume, in light of these finding, that while first timers spend more on activities in iconic attractions, such as Disneyworld or Universal Studios (which are located outside Kissimmee/St Cloud), repeat visitors, after experiencing the traditional attractions, prefer to spend more time dining, shopping and on local attractions in Kissimmee/St Cloud. These findings are consistent with some earlier studies (Anwar & Sohail, 2004; Kemperman, Joh & Timmermans, 2004; Oppermann, 1996, 1997; Wang, 2004), which indicated that first timers are more likely to be active, visiting mega-attractions and touring the area, while repeat visitors tend to revolve within a more limited geographical area, and to engage in more relaxing experiences, such as shopping and dining.

The study provides important marketing implications for the tourism destination of Kissimmee/St Cloud, the most important one being that the less loyal visitors' segment should not be neglected. In order to better identify first timer segments, based on the examination of the socio-demographics characteristics of the segments, it should be noted that they are younger, with a lower annual income and have a higher proportion of inbound tourists, compared to the

repeater segments. Nevertheless, in light of the segment differences in the distribution of expenditures across the spending categories, different hospitality sectors should consider different marketing strategies regarding loyal visitors. More specifically, in the case of Kissimmee/St Cloud, local attractions and shopping facilities should focus specifically on the loyal visitor segment, since they are more likely to spend more on these activities.

The current study is not without limitations. First of all, as was noted before, spending is only one factor in determining profitability, thus it is plausible that although they are characterized by higher spending, first timers are more costly in terms of marketing and/or service efforts. Thus, future research should include other profitability indicators as well. Secondly, Kissimmee/St Cloud is a distinguished destination, characterized by icon attractions located outside its boundaries. Therefore, the results should be generalized with caution, as external validity seems to set some limitations to the study - other destinations should be examined in future studies. Thirdly, the study relies on the respondents' report on their expenditures, which might not fully reflect their actual spending in Kissimmee-St Cloud. However, the data collection occurred at the destination at the end of the respondents' vacation, thus significantly minimized recall bias and enhances the internal validity of the findings. It should be noted also that survey was conducted over period of 12 months, thus increases the reliability of the reported expenditures. Finally, in order to generate more meaningful and specific implications, more information is needed on the characteristics of the various spending segments, especially concerning the information sources used prior to the trip and the prominent decision makers in the travel party. Nevertheless, the study can assist local decision makers in marketing planning, and contributes to the understanding of travel expenditures across spending segments, while providing further confirmation with regards to the overestimation of loyalty in tourism marketing.

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MACCANNELL'S SITE SACRALIZATION THEORY AS AN ANALYTICAL TOOL:
HISTORIC PROPHETSTOWN AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Intrinsically connected to a pivotal event in Native American and U.S. military history, Historic Prophetstown in Battle Ground, Indiana, may have the potential to become a world-class tourism destination. But how does a destination reach this status? While Historic Prophetstown appears to have all the elements necessary to become a successful tourism attraction, it consistently teeters on the verge of insolvency. This study adopted sociologist Dean MacCannell's (1976) five-stage site sacralization theory as an analytical tool to see if it could help explain the site's history and, in this case, aid in pinpointing reasons for the site's underperformance. The findings suggest that due to the varying interpretations and framings held among key stakeholders and interested parties, Historic Prophetstown has never successfully completed or moved beyond MacCannell's first stage: naming.

KEYWORDS: Historic Prophetstown, Native American history, site sacralization, Tecumseh, Tenskwatawa, tourist icons

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant efforts to stop westward expansion of Anglo-European settlers in the first decade of the 1800s was led by two Shawnee brothers: Tenskwatawa and Tecumseh. Tenskwatawa, or the Shawnee Prophet (Edmunds, 1983), is remembered for articulating the religious and philosophical underpinnings of a religious revival whose purpose was to “reform Indian life, which in his view had been corrupted and debauched by contact with whites” (Cave, 2006), and, in the process, impart the power to thwart westward expansion. Tecumseh is remembered as a Shawnee warrior, an orator and a leader who united a pan-Indian confederacy in an effort to save Indian land from the advance of white settlers and soldiers. The Shawnee Prophet arrived in Indiana with his followers in 1808 to build a community called

Prophet's Town near the confluence of the Wabash and Tippecanoe Rivers just north of Lafayette. His brother Tecumseh followed, and together they built a pan-Indian resistance to westward expansion.

William Henry Harrison, then a major-general in the U.S Army and a future president of the United States, led the American forces in the Battle of Tippecanoe (November 7, 1811), which took place in modern-day Battle Ground, Indiana. This was a culminating military conflict between the followers of the Shawnee brothers and the United States. There was no clear victor of the military engagement, but Harrison was successful in destroying Prophet's Town and all but destroyed the Prophet's spiritual movement. Within a generation, the U.S. government would implement federal Indian policies that led to the forced removal of many Native American people west of the Mississippi River into Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma) and the trans-Mississippi West. This mass diaspora permanently altered the cultural landscape of Indiana and the region once known as the Old Northwest. Because of its pivotal role in U.S. history just prior to the War of 1812, Prophets Town, now interpreted at Historic Prophetstown, has the potential to be a world-class tourist destination on par with Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument in Montana. The latter site commemorates the battle between several Native American tribes, who also resisted westward expansion of white settlers, and U.S. forces led by George Armstrong Custer in a battle popularly known as Custer's Last Stand.

However, the development of Prophetstown for tourism of any kind was long in coming and has suffered financially since its beginning. The site languished in obscurity for almost 2 centuries with only one small historical marker announcing the historic site on a bluff overlooking the Wabash. Then, in the 1990s, the founding board of the Museums at Prophetstown hoped to garner the funds to build two structures they proposed for the property. A 65,000-square-foot Woodland Native American Center was to serve as a museum with both permanent and rotating exhibits, a theater and classrooms to showcase and help preserve the cultural heritage of the Woodland Indians who had resided in the deciduous forest of the northeastern United States, especially the Great Lakes region. The sister Eagle Wing Visitor and Education Center was to welcome local visitors and tourists from Chicago and beyond. Although its exhibits would also have highlighted Great Lakes' traditions, they would have been accompanied by exhibits dedicated to Indiana's agriculture and environmental heritage. However, none of the plans to promote the site based on this broader historical potential materialized. Instead, the current configuration of Historic Prophetstown comprises three main areas: a 1920s living history farm, a partially restored prairie, and a modest Woodland Indian village.

This research applies a theoretical framework developed more than 3 decades ago by American sociologist Dean MacCannell. Ironically, despite its origins, this theory has primarily been used to analyze tourism destinations in Europe, Asia, and Australia. The only application of the theory in the United States reported in the scholarly literature was an analysis of tour guide performances at a heritage site in Texas, rather than of the development or status of the actual attraction. Thus, the goal of this research was to test the theory in a new setting (i.e., Historic Prophetstown) to see if it could help explain the site's history and, in this case, aid in pinpointing reasons for the site's underperformance. A by-product of this process may be to further validate the efficacy of the model for assessing the status of tourism sites, wherever they may be.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tourism professionals have many tools to assess a destination's current status or guide its development, among them, economic impact analyses, Leiper's theory of tourist attractions (Leiper, 1990), and Butler's life-cycle development model (Butler, 1980). Another useful but under-utilized framework for understanding the steps necessary if a site is to become a successful tourist destination is sociologist Dean MacCannell's site sacralization theory (MacCannell, 1976:43–45).

Trained as a sociologist, MacCannell's took his first step into the world of tourism through his study of the sociology of leisure through the lens of Erving Goffman's front-back dichotomy (Goffman, 1959; MacCannell, 1973). MacCannell concluded that tourists are often led to believe they are entering the back regions of a place where an authentic and intimate experience can occur, but that is frequently not the case. Instead, they are taken into special places that lie somewhere on the continuum between the "front," which is often a staged presentation, and the "back." In *The Tourist* (1976), MacCannell argued that a tourism site is transformed into a tourism attraction by passing through five stages: naming, framing and elevating, enshrinement, mechanical reproduction, and social reproduction.

According to MacCannell (1976:45), tourist attractions are not just a "collection of random material representations" but should incorporate "natural, social, historical and cultural domains in a single representation made possible by the tour." The steps in site sacralization help define tourist attractions and render them authentic. The first stage, called *naming*, occurs when the site is "marked off from similar objects as worthy of preservation (MacCannell, 1976:44)." MacCannell also discussed the importance of the signs or signage to help demarcate and define resources.

MacCannell's second stage is *framing and elevating*. Framing is the "placement of an official boundary around the object" and elevation is "putting an object on display" or opening it up for visitation (Jacobsen, 1997; MacCannell, 1976:44). The third stage, *enshrinement*, occurs when the framing material itself enters the first stage of site sacralization, or naming. The fourth stage is *mechanical reproduction*, which MacCannell used to address the re-creation of artifacts and souvenirs associated with the site. The final stage of site sacralization is *social reproduction*, which occurs when towns, schools or even people start to name themselves after famous attractions (MacCannell, 1976:45).

In the past 2 decades, the field of tourism has adapted MacCannell's original model and relabeled the stages to use in a marketing and sustainability framework (Henke, 2005; Pearce, Morrison & Moscardo, 2003; see Table 1, right column).¹ Other researchers have tipped their hat to its insightful power (Bruner & Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1994) but have not employed it specifically to deconstruct the history of a site's development. Additionally, in MacCannell's

¹ In the introduction to the 1989 revised edition of *The Tourist*, MacCannell thanked many scholars for finding various sociological applications for his theory. Among them, he thanked the founding editor of the *Annals of Tourism Research* for publishing many articles that involved "interesting empirical tests of hypotheses derived from *The Tourist*."

original model, the framing of the five stages was primarily physical, but other researchers have successfully applied his theory to audio performance of tour guides by looking for spoken correlates to the five stages (Fine & Speer, 1985).

Table 1. MacCannell’s Original and Modified Stages.

MacCannell’s Original Stages	Relabeled Phase
1. Naming	1. Resource identification
2. Framing and elevating	2. Marketing emphasis
3. Enshrinement	3. Interpretation
4. Mechanical reproduction	4. Sales and merchandizing
5. Social reproduction	5. Broader community use

However, most researchers have applied MacCannell’s five stages as he envisioned them to a specific site (see Table 1, left column), such as Gallipoli, a site in Turkey where Australia and New Zealand lost thousands of soldiers during World War I (Slade, 2003), an aboriginal site in Australia (Clark, 2002), and a Norwegian cape (Jacobsen, 1997). Looking at the course of tourism development of a huge promontory on a Norwegian island in the Arctic Ocean, Jacobsen (1997) systematically worked through MacCannell’s five stages, which the researcher called MacCannell’s attraction theory, to reveal that they can sometimes occur out of order. For example, though “discovered” in 1553 by a British expedition, the Nordkapp (North Cape) was engraved in 1594 by a Dutch coppersmith. This engraving prompted Jacobsen to conclude that mechanical reproduction occurred early in the site’s development and thus was its second stage, instead of its fourth. However, despite some leapfrogging over other stages the site had successfully progressed through all of MacCannell’s stages during the past 450 years to become a “sacred site” and a “sacred sight” as a staging area to watch the midnight sun from the middle of May to the end of July each summer. Thus, Jacobsen believed the theory was a good tool to describe and explain the development of the site.

An Australian researcher adopted MacCannell’s theory to look at the history of visitation to a waterfall that was once a sacred aboriginal site (Clark, 2002) and to indigenous rock art sites (Clark, in press) in Victoria. A weakness of the first study was the exclusion of MacCannell’s fifth stage (i.e., social reproduction) without an explanation for its omission. However, the theory did help organize the history of the site to reveal its overall decline. The second study (Clark, in press) did not employ MacCannell’s full theory and looked only at the role naming, or in this case misnaming, played in the vandalism of indigenous rock art in southwest Australia. As these sites were “discovered,” they had been given either descriptive names related to art or names related to the site’s location. The research revealed that “inappropriate names” often contributed to visitor dissatisfaction, which, in turn, resulted in graffiti being left behind at some sites.

The use of MacCannell’s site sacralization model is not a quantitative exercise but rather a subjective and qualitative one. Thus, there is no specific or agreed-upon operationalization of the model. Indeed, the beauty and strength of the model lie in its flexible application to a wide range of sites and situations. However, as revealed in the literature, those who analyzed each site usually consulted scholarly writings, historical documents, and government reports, as well as garnered knowledge from site visitation, to work through MacCannell’s original five stages, one-

by-one through time, from the site's historical origins or "discovery" until its modern-day configuration. However, one researcher adopted a truncated version (Clark 2002; Clark, in press). In the end, whether the full or partial theory was employed, the results of the investigations were used to argue whether a site had attained a sacred status (Jacobsen, 1997; Slade, 2003), which is equated with being a successful tourism attraction; had lost its sacred status (Clark, 2002); or had gotten stuck in one stage (Clark, in press), which helped explain the site's dysfunction.

METHODOLOGY

The authors adopted MacCannell's site sacralization theory to assess the interpretation of Tenskwatawa's and Tecumseh's encampment through time in order to identify its progression or lack of progression through the five stages. To gain insights into why visitation numbers remain low and Historic Prophetstown struggles financially, the authors undertook several avenues of inquiry. An initial round of research involved visitation to all parts of the Historic Prophetstown complex, visitor observations, and compilation of a photographic inventory of the site's current configuration.² These efforts were accompanied by a review of pertinent print and electronic material in the public domain, such as local newspaper articles, databases, and Historic Prophetstown's Web site, supplemented by a review of membership newsletters and annual business reports.

A second round of research was the inspection of historical materials provided to the authors by a founding board member, including an original fundraising video showcasing the vision for the Museums of Prophetstown (as well as original print documents from that project). Because the site is intrinsically connected to iconic figures, especially Tecumseh, an extra analysis looked at the role iconic figures play in success of tourism sites.

However, an additional step was added to this analysis, which served to quicken and broaden the learning process in relation to the site. Due to the proximity and accessibility of Historic Prophetstown, the lead author had the opportunity to interview its key stakeholders. Employees of the living history farm and Prophetstown State Park were initially asked to describe a typical day at the property; this question was designed to get at the daily activities associated with the business of the property and the various interpretations the employees attached to these activities and the land the site sits on (i.e., in essence, how they mentally framed the destination.) A founding board member and Native American scholar were asked to put the site into a historical context. After lead questions to start the conversation, all the interviews were unstructured.

² These images can be viewed at <http://picasaweb.google.com/momlinda/Prophetstown?authkey=PQyMn2zaJVA>

DATA

Onsite Visitation and Materials Review

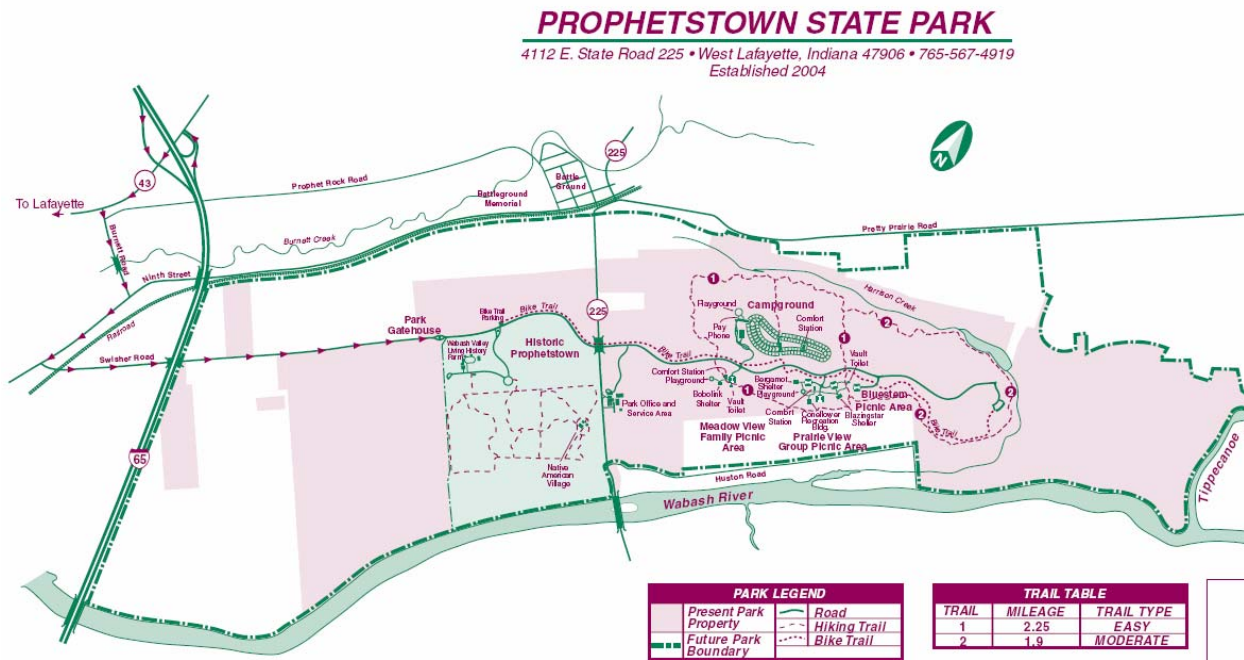


Figure 1. Prophetstown State Park map with Historic Prophetstown highlighted in green.

Often lands in the public domain are organized into state or national parks. Historic Prophetstown, the nonprofit entity analyzed in this research, currently sits on 247-acre piece of land that is nested within and leased from Prophetstown State Park, which will eventually encompass 3,000 acres. Indiana’s newest state park (it opened in August 2004), Prophetstown State Park is adjacent to other historically significant sites, such as the Tippecanoe Battlefield, the site of a nationally-recognized monument to Harrison and his troops, and Tippecanoe Battlefield Museum, both of which are located in Battle Ground, Indiana.

Historic Prophetstown is composed of three main areas: a 1920s living history farm, a partially restored prairie, and a modest, four-building Woodland Indian village that includes replicas of a council house, medicine lodge, chief’s cabin, and granary. The village is physically separated from the farm by a hearty 15- to 20-minute walk through the prairie, which acts as a buffer. However, this site is not the historical site of the Prophet’s encampment, but rather its interpretative site.³

³ This setup could be at least partially likened to the situation surrounding the well-known cave paintings at Lascaux in France. When public visitations were starting to damage the originals, the French government created Lascaux II, a replica of the Great Hall of the Bulls and the Painted Gallery, 200 meters from the original.

Signage on the property, either near the entrance of the property or at the edge of the parking lot adjacent to the farm, does not adequately showcase its rich Native American history. Nor does the signage provide adequate visitor orientation about the Indian village's location. During the onsite observations, several tourists were seen aborting their walk to the village; they related that it was too far or they couldn't find it. On weekends when agrarian events, such as Plow Days in April or Corn Husking in October, are taking place, a horse-drawn trolley acts as transportation to the Indian village and interpretation is offered in the council house. But most of the time visitors must walk to the village, which is almost three-quarters of a mile from the official parking lot and not easily visible from the farm, and must go through the unattended structures alone.

Local newspaper articles from the 1990s record early attempts at site development. Until the early 2000s, much was written about funding the aforementioned cultural and visitor centers. Although there is no mention of the pitch for financial support to the Lilly Foundation, the public record does discuss the some other fund-raising efforts and donations, from both the state of Indiana and private individuals. Evidenced by events, invited speakers, and programs announced in the official membership newsletter, initial enthusiastic tribal involvement and endorsements for the site have slowly disappeared (*Prophetstown Dispatch*, 1996–2008). In 2005, total income was \$420,000, including donations, and expenses were \$395,000 (*Historic Prophetstown Annual Report*, 2005). Skipping a year due to the lack of comparable figures, in 2007, total income from multiple sources was \$450,000, with expenses of \$392,000, for a net profit of \$57,000. But without a generous \$100,000 donation from a long-time board member and his wife (Larson, 2007) the site would have been in the red (*Historic Prophetstown Annual Report*, 2007). These figures reveal that in recent years the site has been barely solvent.

Additionally, a review of the official Web site, announcements of upcoming events in the local paper, and the design of the membership card (which sports a picture of a draft horse and a little girl) demonstrate that the preponderance of events held and promoted for Historic Prophetstown are tied to an agrarian calendar—not a Native American one.

Interviews with Two Farm Employees at Prophetstown

The living history farm at Historic Prophetstown is home to Barred Rock chickens, Berkshire hogs, milking shorthorn cattle, and Romney sheep. Belgian horses are brought in to work the fields of corn, oats, and hay. The main house, a replica from a Roebuck estate (of Sears & Roebuck fame), was built specifically for the site in the 1990s, and a smaller Sears and Roebuck kit house, which houses the gift shop, was moved to the site from downtown Lafayette, Indiana (Shaw, 2004). A corncrib, tool shed, red barn, stables, and a garage dot the grounds. The employees were busy with farm duties so the greater part of the interview was done following them around the property from chore to chore. The conversation explored the ins and outs of daily operations related to running the farm. During the interview there was brief mention of an account by Harrison when he first viewed the Indian settlement.

When Harrison came to burn the village down...he wrote [in his diary] that the river bottom for two miles on both sides of the river [the Wabash] stretched with

row crops, cultivated row crops. They planted corn, beans, and squash. They called them the Three Sisters.

One of the farm employees mentioned the constant battle against Mother Nature to sustain the prairie. Drilled and seeded in the 1990s on Woodland soil rather than prairie soil, “oaks and maples are all over it.” Hence, although this can be viewed as appropriate due to Indiana’s rich agricultural resources and history, the agricultural history showcased on the site is not the Three Sisters agriculture of Tecumseh’s time but rather that of the 1920s. Additionally, the prairie is not original and is a struggle to maintain.

Thus, interviews with two employees of the 1920s living history farm at Historic Prophetstown reveal that their interpretation and mental framing of the site’s physical and social space is that it best utilized to tell the story of early twentieth-century agriculture—even though the site was not a farm in the 1920s.

Interview with Museums of Prophetstown Founding Board Member

A board member of the Museums at Prophetstown framed and interpreted the space quite differently. With historical documents to aid the discussion, the interview was essentially a guided tour of “what went wrong” at Prophetstown. The board member recounted how he had spent a substantial amount of his own monies to write, design, and print many informational and fund-raising materials to gain financial support for telling the Native American story. Due to his substantial social capital in the community, he was able to garner financial and political support for the project from several entities. Early on, the board approached the Lilly Foundation (the philanthropic arm of the Eli Lilly pharmaceutical company headquartered in Indianapolis) for a \$30 million grant to help build the cultural center on the property. Although Lilly “had shown a great deal of interest and we thought we were there,” those monies never materialized. Without the big funds needed to complete the original, much larger project, efforts shifted to developing three anchoring points on the property: a replica Sears house, the prairie, and the Woodland Indian council house. The board member cited the lack of vision of a subsequent board and a coinciding downturn in the economy as the two key reasons for the very limited implementation of the original plan.

That gave us some dimension on three places [Sears house, prairie, and council house], so it looked like we were going. And you got to talk it up, and then ... what I call the dream busters arrived. “You can’t do this because it’s going to take time” ...Just do it! We’ll worry about the consequences later on. But let’s get this thing up and get ourselves a first-class director and get going. But they didn’t. And the money was getting tight...Money, in my judgment, is never a problem unless you lose your dream. Once you lose your dream, you lose the money.

Hence, the earliest vision for Historic Prophetstown, under the name Museums at Prophetstown, was to tell the Woodland Indian story, especially the story of Tecumseh, through storytelling, artifacts, and educational activities that would have taken place in cultural and visitor centers.

Interview with Prophetstown State Park Employee

The office for Prophetstown State Park lies just north of the Woodland village, but there is no direct access to or from Historic Prophetstown. Only one small sign outside the small, neat building announces its purpose. The lobby displays a large poster outlining the history of Prophetstown and the life of Tecumseh. Ironically, no such signage can be found at Historic Prophetstown proper—either at the farm or in the Indian village.

The park employee explained that the park is situated at the western edge of the Eastern deciduous forest as it slowly gives way to the tallgrass prairies of the American West. Forests line the bluffs of the Wabash River, but prairie and oak savannas would have been part of the original vegetation as one moved away from the river. The park's current plan is to restore the tallgrass prairie and oak savanna on the property. This means that the property would revert to the historical natural landscape circa 1800. Although Tecumseh was mentioned frequently during the interview, the intention of the property manager is to leave interpretation related to Native American history to Historic Prophetstown. However, in a unique partnership, the state maintains control over what can be built, and by default, what happens there.

The vision of the state park is to re-create everything back to the way the European settlers found it when they arrived here. We want to restore it back to the way Tecumseh saw it when he and the Prophet were here. We want to erase the trace—that [means] using resource management procedures and removing fencerows, removing cornfields, bean fields—and plant prairie grass where prairie grass is to be planted... restore the oak savannas.

At present, the overall interpretation and framing of the physical place that directly adjoins Historic Prophetstown, and encircles it, is one of natural resource management. It was not clear what the long-term relationship of the state park with Historic Prophetstown is or whether the “unique partnership” could change over time.

Interview with Native American Scholar

The scholar's office was decorated with Native American artifacts and lined with scholarly texts about numerous tribes and their histories. Early in the interview, the scholar, who also serves as an academic consultant for Historic Prophetstown, mentioned that the site promoted as the “historical” site of the Indian village, the place where Tenskwatawa, Tecumseh, and other Indians in the alliance lived, is not what scholars believe to be the historically “authentic” site. The next few minutes were spent looking at historical maps of Indiana and Google maps to see if it was possible to pinpoint the spot.

Current theories place the village roughly three miles north of the current Historic Prophetstown campus, close to the confluence of the Wabash and the Tippecanoe Rivers—but still within the boundaries of Prophetstown State Park. However, the exact location of the site is not public information and will not likely be publicized in the future for fear it could be vandalized by collectors looking for Indian artifacts. However, the scholar believes that if history is presented in an accurate fashion, Historic Prophetstown still has the potential to be an

international tourism destination due to the world-changing events that took place in its immediate vicinity. The scholar also addressed the issue of the different perceptions of the two brothers.

The pair [Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa] have been used, they've been almost played up as the secular and the sacred side of Native America in an exaggerated sense, which isn't necessarily true ... that Tenskwatawa represented the sacred and the religious revitalization movement, and Tecumseh represented the militant and political and diplomat resistance movement. Together, they almost were a great power—or were for a little while.

In the past 2 centuries, Tenskwatawa was popularly and academically vilified for failing to guide his followers to a victory (which may have contributed to his obscurity), while Tecumseh is praised for his bravery. However, Tenskwatawa's pivotal role and place in history is still championed (Edmunds, 1983), and it is the Prophet who lent his name to the settlement.

Hence, the scholarly interpretation or framing of Historic Prophetstown pays homage to historical events that took place *near* the present-day site and the lives of the key historical figures, Tecumseh and Tenskwatawa, but perhaps not in that order.

APPLYING THE THEORY

Naming

At its root, a name for a place is an important sign or signpost and societal marker. In relation to MacCannell's first stage, or naming, a core necessity is accurately identifying the site referred to as "Prophet's town" in the early 1800s. As stated earlier, the Indian village settled by the Prophet and his followers was probably not the Woodland village currently located within the boundaries of the 247-acre Historic Prophetstown. Second, no one can be sure what the Native Americans called the site themselves. Perhaps "Prophet's Town" was merely anglicized from the Shawnee language or another tribal language. However, an early account of Harrison's life may be the first appearance of the name "Prophet's town," which was later reduced to Prophetstown.

The genius of Harrison —“The Man Who Never Lost a Battle” who has never yielded to country's foes, was equal to this crisis; and by a master stroke of policy, he conquered every disadvantage, and moved down with an army of eight hundred men, upon the Prophet's town, where all the hostile Indians were assembled, and before Tecumseh had returned from his visit to the Southern Tribes (The life of Major-General William Henry Harrison, 1840).

The site was first organized for visitation under the name the Museums at Prophetstown in 1995. In 2002, the site's name was changed to the singular Museum of Prophetstown to reinforce the "unity of the three components" (Bodenmiller, 2005:1), but it was changed again in 2005 to Historic Prophetstown. The official reason for the name change was to "reflect both the specific area ...and something about their mission" (Bodenmiller, 2005:1), but an interviewee

revealed that there may have been deeper reasons: (a) visitors were arriving with the expectations of finding a museum, which had not materialized, and (b) people were attempting to make donations of Native American artifacts, but there was nowhere to put them. This observation illustrates how the naming of a place keenly influences people's reactions to it.

The power of naming can be multiplied by capitalizing on the name of an iconic figure (Pearce et al, 2003). In relation to this historic site, the most-recognized iconic figure among the interviewees was Tecumseh, not Tenskwatawa. In order for a historical figure to make a successful contribution to a destination's tourism efforts, there must be a reciprocal relationship between the person and the destination (Pearce, et al, 2003). Two questions posed to Historic Prophetstown can illuminate this relationship. When asked, "What specific place would you associate with Tenskwatawa?" and "What specific person would you associate with Prophetstown?" the answers "Prophetstown" and "Tenskwatawa" should be given with equal probability. However, although the name "Prophetstown" is derived from Tecumseh's brother, throughout the interviews, the historical and iconic figure most often mentioned was Tecumseh himself.

The first stage of MacCannell's site sacralization theory states that the resources of the site must be clearly defined. At least on the surface, there seems to be some confusion over which brother is the key attractor for bringing tourists to Prophetstown and whose story should be told. This may seem a trivial designation, but in the mind of the visitor this question could cause confusion and a blurring of the site's identity and its projected image.

Framing and elevation

Framing, according to MacCannell (1976:44), is the "placement of an official boundary around the object." Maps clearly demarcate the boundaries of Historic Prophetstown within the larger Prophetstown State Park. However, maps are drawn from an aerial perspective, and this boundary is not obvious to the visitor on the ground. In fact, the visitor does not pay an admission fee to Historic Prophetstown directly but rather to Prophetstown State Park and the fee is later split up between the two entities. It is only after entering the state park that the visitor sees official signage for Historic Prophetstown. There is no signage announcing the site along Interstate 65 less than one mile away.

Additionally, the framing and elevation of the individual elements within the property—the farm, the prairie and the Indian village—are not done consistently. There is signage for the farm, the prairie, and the Indian village (although it is quite minimal), but the effects of the lack of adequate signage were evident during our initial observations, when several visitors were seen aborting their efforts to walk to the Indian village in the hot sun. Also, the various stakeholders have "framed" the site with different representations.

MacCannell also argued that elevation is "putting an object on display (MacCannell, 1976:44)." In the case of battlegrounds, quite often graves, monuments, and statues have been erected and serve to frame and elevate the site (Slade, 2003). However, the Battle of Tippecanoe did not take place in the Prophet's encampment, nor is the exact location of the former site known to the public. Also, because neither Tecumseh nor the Prophet died in the battle, there are

no gravestones for them anywhere in the area; nor is there any commemoration of the forty plus Native Americans who died. Thus, there is no place to honor or memorialize the events of the past. The fact that the site has not been archaeologically investigated contributes to the lack of visible elevation.

In lieu of physical elevation, the Native American aspect of Historic Prophetstown could be electronically elevated or enhanced through its Web site (<http://www.prophetstown.org>). In essence, this would create a virtual elevation of place rather than a physical one. But, the site's Web presence is almost entirely focused on agricultural history, and the majority of events are linked to an agrarian calendar. In fact, a textual analysis of the Web site revealed that the word *horse* has the most frequency on the site. Additionally, the description of Historic Prophetstown on the official Indiana tourism site is totally agricultural and no images are posted. All in all, there is no consistent or agreed-upon framing and elevation of the site, either physically, sociology or electronically. Thus, MacCannell's second stage of framing and elevation has not taken place at Historic Prophetstown.

Enshrinement

According to MacCannell (1976), enshrinement occurs when the framing material itself enters the first stage of sacralization, i.e., naming. The example MacCannell cites is a holy object displayed inside a church, such as a chalice or cross. The boundary around the object (as a container) becomes a named entity and, eventually, a tourist attraction in its own right. In the tourism literature, researchers have translated this stage to mean that the buildings on a site become venerated themselves (Jacobsen, 1997; Leiper, 1990). It seems unlikely the Sears' houses or barn on the living history farm at Historic Prophetstown could become venerated objects, but the potential for such a development might have existed for the Eagle Wing Visitor and Education Center and the Woodland Native American Center proposed in the original plan for the Museums of Prophetstown.

However, because Prophetstown State Park surrounds Historic Prophetstown, the authors suggest one could view Prophetstown State Park as the "framing material" for Historic Prophetstown. In that light, if the state park becomes a viable, successful tourism destination in its own right (as are its plans), with a marketable and recognizable name, this would facilitate Historic Prophetstown's movement into MacCannell's third stage of enshrinement. At this point, the state park is still in Phase 1 of a three-stage development process. Thus, the enshrinement phase has not taken place at Historic Prophetstown.

Mechanical Reproduction

The fourth stage in MacCannell's sacralization theory is mechanical reproduction. This includes the creation of prints, photographs, models, or effigies of the "sacred object," which themselves become valued, perhaps as collectibles, or are displayed. While there is ample material on which to base reproduction, especially a beautiful painting of Tenskwatawa at the end of his life painted by renowned artist George Catlin (1830), this has not happened at Prophetstown. Slade (2003) includes journalist efforts and film in this category. In the case of Gallipoli, the "amount of newspaper writing, books published, radio and television programs

made and historical articles written about Gallipoli defy summarizing” (Slade, 2003). There have also been major motion pictures and plays about Gallipoli. Although this has not happened in relation to Historic Prophetstown, there are many books about Tecumseh in both the popular and academic press but remarkably fewer for Tenskwatawa.

Also, in the late 1980s, two professors at Purdue University co-wrote a play called *The Battle of Tippecanoe: An outdoor drama* (Smiley & Miller, 1989) that was performed at a nearby amphitheater. Opening night was June 20, 1989 (personal communication with Dale Miller, June 28, 2008), but due to politics outside the scope of this paper, the play’s run was only two summers, 1989 and 1990. In the past few years, there has been a growing interest in telling the story of Prophetstown and the Battle of Tippecanoe from the Native American perspective. Those efforts include a documentary about Tecumseh for the History Channel (Foreman, 1998) and a profile of the two Shawnee brothers in upcoming episode of PBS’ American Experience series called *We Shall Remain* (Burns & Eyre, 2009). However, MacCannell’s fourth stage of mechanical reproduction has not occurred directly in relation to Historic Prophetstown.

Social Reproduction

In the past 200 years, there has not been extensive social reproduction (i.e., towns, schools, or people named after someone or something famous) in relation to Tenskwatawa, but there has been a fair amount in relation to Tecumseh, such as the name of towns in Michigan, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. The Union general who marched on Atlanta during the Civil War was named William Tecumseh Sherman. Numerous schools are named for Tecumseh, such as Tecumseh Junior High School in Lafayette, Indiana, and others in Michigan and Oklahoma, as are businesses and neighborhood streets throughout America.

As another measure of social reproduction, an electronic search of the WorldCat database using the word *Prophetstown* returned 63 records. However, a majority of them pertained to sites outside Indiana, such as Greenville, Ohio, and Prophetstown, Illinois, which is named for the prophet White Cloud. There were 12 records for *Prophet’s Town*, but only one for *Historic Prophetstown*, and a search on the word *Tenskwatawa*, returned only 126 items. By comparison, a WorldCat search for *Tecumseh* returned 4,408 items. Similar ratios were achieved when searching the United States Geological Survey’s Geographic Names Information System (GNIS), which is the official repository of federally-recognized place names.

However, these events of social reproduction took place out of order (i.e., without successful completion of Stages 1, 2, 3, and 4), and they are not directly related to Historic Prophetstown but instead, overwhelmingly, to one of its iconic figures. Hence, they do not have the same impact on the site’s development or reinforce an accurate perception of the destination. Thus, MacCannell’s fifth stage of mechanical reproduction has not occurred in relation to Historic Prophetstown.

CONCLUSION

The varying interpretations of Historic Prophetstown have hindered its movement through MacCannell's five stages of site sacralization. Thus, it has remained in the first stage: naming. A lack of focus that proper naming would provide has hindered framing and elevation (Stage 2), enshrinement (Stage 3) and mechanical reproduction (Stage 4). Although there has been ample social reproduction (Stage 5) related to Tecumseh, it is absent in relation to Historic Prophetstown itself and to the Prophet who gave it its name. If MacCannell's model is used as a measure, because Historic Prophetstown has not successfully moved through all five stages, it lacks authenticity as a tourist destination. The lack of authenticity stemming from the improper naming of the site may substantially contribute to its low visitation and financial stagnation.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

As revealed through the analysis in this paper, it could be beneficial for Historic Prophetstown to clearly identify its resources—especially which name and historical framing of the site would best maximize the potential for successful future development and promotion. Since the site has been referred to as either Prophet's Town (Harrison, 1840) or Prophetstown since the early 1800s—not Tecumsehville—it may be prudent to realign the visitors' perceptions and expectations to match the name and significance of the site. This effort might even include another name change to capitalize on the name of Tecumseh, an iconic figure whose name has been extensively socially reproduced during the past 200 years and who is historically tied to the destination. Alternatively, Historic Prophetstown and the surrounding Prophetstown State Park could undertake concerted efforts to increase the awareness of the historical contributions and significance of Tenskwatawa, the Prophet. It should also be remembered that within the indigenous community, the naming of something is an important and sometimes sacred process.

To increase awareness of and reinforce the site's intrinsic Native American connection, which is related to MacCannell's elevation, historical images, such as George Catlin's (1830) and Henry Inman's (1830) paintings of Tenskwatawa, could be incorporated into the design of attractive educational materials for area schools and educational literature to be distributed on site, as well as its projected image on the Web. Also, consideration should be given to whether the promotion of agricultural events under the umbrella of Historic Prophetstown leads to misidentification of the site among potential visitors.

In order for Historic Prophetstown to accurately interpret and represent the historical and cultural events of 1808–1811, there needs to be proper signage on the property, education of the staff and more accurate interpretation. If done correctly, Historic Prophetstown could become the interpretive center for Native American history related to the Prophet and Woodland Indians in the Wabash Valley. According to MacCannell (1976:45), tourist attractions should incorporate “natural, social, historical and cultural domains in a single representation made possible by the tour.” Consolidation of the core message, that the events at Prophetstown changed the course of U.S. history as well as the American landscape, should be considered in the creation of a unified tour. The shared vision for such a tour would need to be collectively agreed upon, negotiated meaning between the various stakeholders.

Because Prophetstown State Park could be considered the physical “framing material” for Historic Prophetstown, any improvements and successes in the park at large could contribute to the Historic Prophetstown’s enshrinement as a tourism destination. This possibility should be encouraged through cultivating and maintaining a good symbiotic and working relationship with the park and state of Indiana. Alternatively, a higher level framing could be accomplished if Prophetstown State Park was elevated to the status of a national park based on the historical significance of the elements within its boundaries.

One critical addition to the next stage of research will be the identification of appropriate Native American representatives, especially among the Shawnee, the tribe to which the brothers belonged, and the Potawatomi, the tribe that invited the Prophet to relocate in Indiana. Representatives could include tribal cultural preservationists and historians, who may offer insights into more appropriate interpretation and framing. Additional board members, both past and present, should be interviewed to gain a broader perspective.

No research is terminal, and this site is definitely worthy of revisitation. At that time, it would be fitting to conduct more formal research among the tourists visiting both Historic Prophetstown and the larger Prophetstown State Park in order to assess their expectations prior to visitation and their overall visitor experience.

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A TREND VISUALIZATION ANALYSIS OF BILATERAL INTERNATIONAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the evolutionary patterns of bilateral international tourism development between the U.S. and its eight major European markets for a nine-year period from 1998 to 2006. Two units of analysis – Average Receipts per Inbound Arrival (ARPIA) and Average Payments per Outbound Resident (APPOR) – were introduced and utilized to better explore the dynamic nature of international tourism development in the longitudinal terms. Using these two measures, comparative analyses and visualization of each paired origin-destination were conducted. The trend visualization approach revealed insightful tourism intelligence to help national tourism administrators better understand the constantly changing tourism market and identify international market trends.

KEYWORDS: European markets; International tourism; Tourism market intelligence; Tourism receipts and payments; Trend visualization.

INTRODUCTION

A country's international tourism information, especially about the inbound and outbound arrival volume, flow directions, and tourism receipts/payments, is important market intelligence for tourism forecasting, planning, policy-making, and future marketing of the country. It has been a major concern of national tourism office (NTO) administrators to understanding the patterns of tourism development in terms of bilateral movement of tourist arrivals and tourism receipts/payments among a pre-defined set of major partners in a regional market. This study investigated the evolutionary development of the U.S. international tourism related to its eight major European markets. Based on the secondary data collected from the U.S. inbound and outbound tourism statistics for a nine-year period from 1998 to 2006, the comparative analysis and visualization of each paired origin-destination (the U.S. vs. eight European markets) were conducted. The authors introduced new "unit of analysis" to better explore the dynamic nature of international tourism development between the U.S. and eight mentioned markets over time. As a result, new trend patterns of market development were identified and discussed with effective visualization. The research efforts demonstrated in this paper represent a significant and meaningful

contribution to help market analysts enhance their capacity to manage tourism intelligence and plan for tourism strategies and policies.

BACKGROUND

International tourism is one of the fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, and is becoming an increasingly competitive market. Europe and the Americas have been the top destinations worldwide in terms of tourist arrivals and receipts. However, regarding the average growth rates of international tourism arrivals for the past five years, the European and North American regions (2.2% and 0.8% respectively) have been outpaced by their Asia-Pacific counterparts (7.1%) (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2006). In terms of the U.S. international tourism development, the tourism trade between the U.S. and European countries has been facing challenges. The tourist arrivals of the major European markets to the U.S. generally decreased in 2006. For example, the U.K. visitation dropped 4%, and arrivals from France declined by 10%, whereas German, Italian, and Swedish arrivals were down 2%, and there was no growth from Netherlands. Preliminary data indicates that the growth in European international travel is shifting from North America to intra-EU, Asian, Middle East and Oceania markets (United Nations World Tourism Organization, 2006). It only becomes more important and interesting to know how this declining trend has affected the U.S. international tourism market in the European region and what role the United States played with each of these European countries in their bilateral tourism market. Some countries have started to establish tourism networks or partnership arrangements for sustainable economic tourism. While there is a growing interest in the concept of “tourism network,” such topic at the firm level has been addressed only sporadically in extant tourism research (Morrison et al., 1995; Morrison, 1998; Morrison, Lynch and Johns, 2004). At the country level in the international context, countries in a strategic tourism network are assumed to collaborate and enhance tourism performance and competitiveness among member countries. For this assumption to sustain, it is apparent that members of the tourism network should share resources and exchange various forms of intelligence/knowledge. Therefore, a very important task for an NTO is to better analyze the characteristics and trends of the country’s international tourism statistics related to its key partners over time.

For the United States, its NTO must pay strategic attention to identifying important market trends of the international tourism trade with major European countries across the time spectrum. However, the traditional tools for such market analyses have been quite elementary using simple line or bar charts to indicate tourist arrivals or growth rates. While these tools are simple to understand, they are ineffective to deal with more complex multi-nation multi-year cases in visualization (i.e., scaling and longitudinal nature). To help tourism market analysts overcome this challenge, research for unique and new approaches is not only important but also necessary to understand and visualize the evolutionary patterns of tourism market development (Hu, Meng & Racherla, 2007). Such improvement of productivity and effectiveness in market analyses allows NTOs to better visualize the tourism trade relationships and their evolution over time among strategic partners in the region.

METHODOLOGY & CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

For the purpose of this study, the authors collected the information of the U.S. international tourism (including both the inbound and outbound tourism statistics) through secondary data sources from the U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI, 2007) for a nine-year period from 1998 to 2006. The authors first identified the key European markets based on their importance to the most recent available U.S. international inbound tourism industry in 2006. Specifically, eight countries/regions (i.e., United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Ireland, and Sweden) listed in the top 20

tourist-generating markets to the U.S. in 2006 were identified for the analysis. However, due to the unavailability of some Ireland tourism data and the importance of Switzerland in the U.S. tourism industry, Ireland was replaced by Switzerland in the analysis (see Table 1).

Table 1. Top U.S. inbound tourism generating markets from the European region (2006).

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Inbound tourism flow into USA</i>
3	United Kingdom	4,176,211
5	Germany	1,385,520
6	France	789,815
9	Italy	532,829
12	Netherlands	446,785
13	Spain	424,224
14	Ireland	414,423
19	Sweden	285,994
N/A	Switzerland	271,000

Source: U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism Industries (OTTI) 2006 Data.

Since the top 20 markets accounted for almost 90 percent of all international arrivals to the U.S. during 2006, the identified markets were considered the most important European tourism partners to the United States. For example, the United Kingdom's tourist volume to the U.S. accounted for 43% of all arrivals from Western Europe. The 2006 statistics also showed that the tourist arrivals from most of these European countries to the U.S. decreased, especially in leisure travel market. Only Spain grew in the number of tourist arrivals in 2006. Therefore, it is of importance and interest to examine recent overall patterns of the international tourism development between the U.S. and these major European partners.

In order to plot the intended trend patterns of the international tourism development over the period from 1998 to 2006, four annual time series were collected:

- Inbound tourism statistics to USA: Trends in International Travel Receipts (in millions), and Trends in Inbound Arrivals (in thousands)
- Outbound tourism statistics from USA: Trends in International Travel Payments (in millions), and Trends in Outbound Residents (in thousands)

These time-series data are considered the most important tourism statistics available at the national level. However, following the traditional approach to plot any of these single time series does not produce the best market intelligence for bilateral travel patterns. Instead, the authors created two time series from the above four to best reflect bi-directional tourism flows (inbound tourists vs. outbound residents) and travel trade (receipts vs. payments) simultaneously between concerned origin country and destination country. Thus, for each pair of origin (*i*) and destination (*j*) countries in the year (*t*):

- Average Receipts per Inbound Arrival for the origin country (ARPIA)_{it} is theoretically equivalent to Average Payments per Outbound Resident for the destination country (APPOR)_{jt}

$$\text{i.e., } \left(\frac{\text{International Travel Receipts}}{\text{Number of Inbound Arrivals}} \right)_{it} = \left(\frac{\text{International Travel Payments}}{\text{Number of Outbound Residents}} \right)_{jt}$$

- Average Payments per Outbound Resident for the origin country $(APPOR)_{it}$ is theoretically equivalent to Average Receipts per Inbound Arrival for the destination country $(ARPIA)_{jt}$
i.e.,
$$\left(\frac{\text{International Travel Payments}}{\text{Number of Outbound Residents}} \right)_{it} = \left(\frac{\text{International Travel Receipts}}{\text{Number of Inbound Arrivals}} \right)_{jt}$$

Consistently using these two derived measures for the origin country, $(ARPIA)_{it}$ and $(APPOR)_{it}$, a systematic process of plotting the annual series on a two-dimensional space was then established to help explain the evolutionary nature of the bilateral tourism development between the origin and destination countries over time. Thus, the spatial movement of data points and its overall direction provide special insights to the evolutionary development of the concerned tourism markets (destination countries) for the origin country.

ILLUSTRATIONS

To further illustrate the meaningfulness and simplicity of this elegant system, Figure 1 summarizes four general patterns of movement and their respective meanings in terms of different market development trends. This unique visualization allows for more effective understanding and better representation of bilateral tourism relationships over time in an origin-destination setting. First, the derived tourism data were plotted on a two-dimensional grid, with the Average Receipts per Inbound Arrival (ARPIA) on the horizontal axis and Average Payments per Outbound Resident (APPOR) on the vertical axis (see Figure 1). To comprehend this graph, one should interpret from the origin country's viewpoint because the origin series are selected to plot both dimensions. Each node represents the market position for a specific year and the links between the nodes indicate the market movement between two consecutive years. The reference (dot) line in the graph shows the "balanced" situation of the two countries' tourism trade, which means that the average tourism receipts and payments between the origin and destination countries are the same or very close to each other. When the spatial movement of nodes moves upward along the reference line, both ARPIA and APPOR increase together for the origin and destination countries. This indicates a healthy tourism market growth and a mutually beneficial situation between the two countries (illustrated as the #4 movement in Figure 1). On the contrary, the #1 movement represents the opposite situation (i.e., the market shrinkage) where both ARPIA and APPOR are reduced between origin and destination countries. When the node movements follow the overall direction towards the right side of the reference line (illustrated as the #2 movement in Figure 1), it indicates that ARPIA increases faster than APPOR for the origin country. In other words, the average of tourism receipts generated by inbound tourists grows more than the average expenditure spent by the origin country's own residents in the destination country. Therefore, the origin country receives more tourism surplus. Otherwise, it receives tourism deficit as illustrated as the #3 movement in Figure 1.

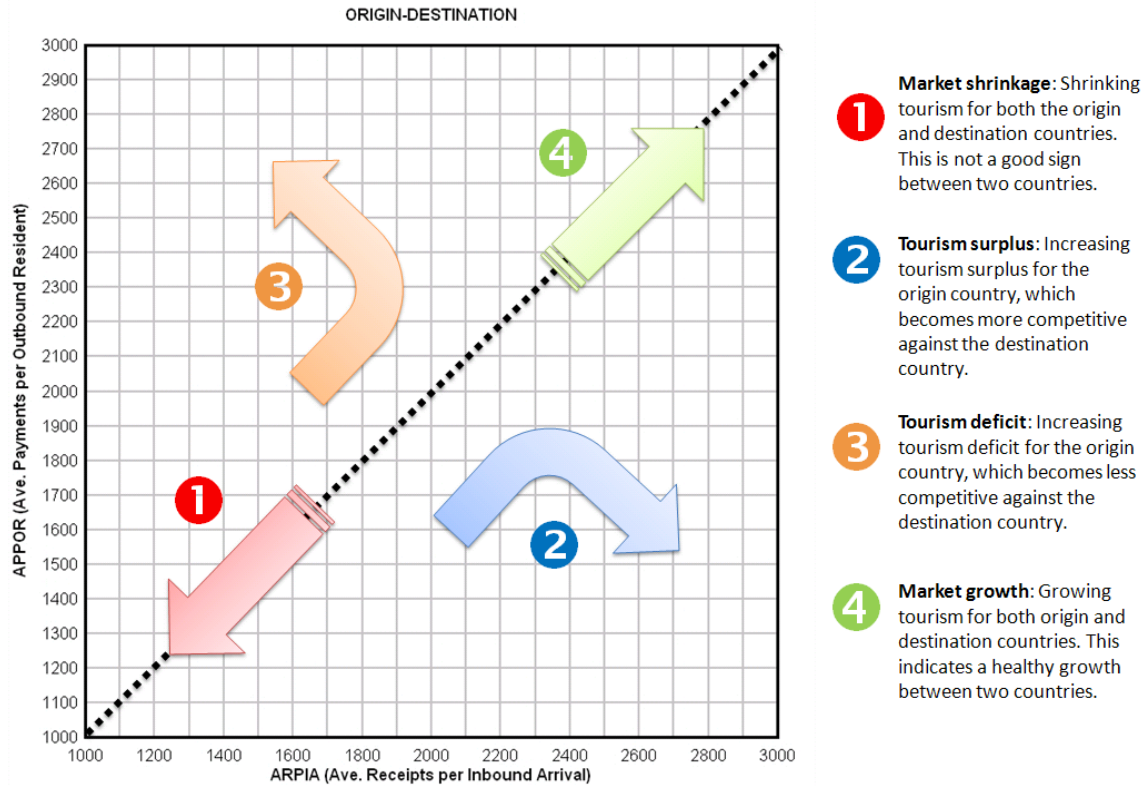


Figure 1. Conceptualization of evolutionary international tourism development. (Both ARPIA and APPOR are from the origin series).

FINDINGS

The specific evolutionary trends for each bilateral tourism development between the U.S. and eight individual European markets over the nine-year period represent distinct patterns (see Figures 2a~h for graphic illustrations). The results revealed that the U.S. generally enjoyed “per-tourist” tourism surplus in these major European markets. Figure 2a displayed the bilateral international tourism trend between the U.S. and United Kingdom from 1998 to 2006. All the nodes and lines were at the right side of the reference line, indicating that ARPIA increased faster than APPOR. In other words, the average tourism receipts generated by the U.K. tourists who traveled to the U.S. increased more than the average expenditure spent by the U.S. residents in the United Kingdom. Therefore, the U.S. received the per-tourist tourism surplus over United Kingdom. Overall, the average expenditure of the U.S. residents in U.K. increased over time as a general trend, with small ups and downs in some years. However, the average tourism spending of the U.K. residents in the U.S. (inbound tourism receipts to the U.S.) generally increased over the nine-year period. To the U.S., the United Kingdom displayed a generally healthy market growth in the studied period.

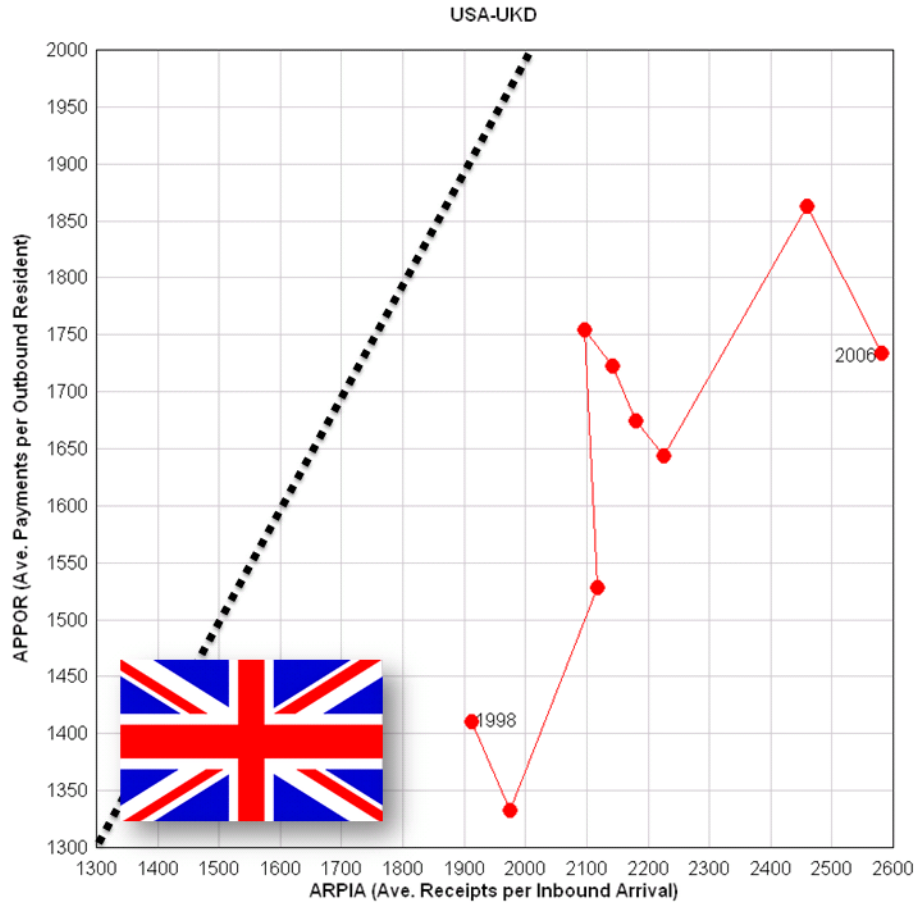


Figure 2a. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the USA vs. U.K. (1998-2006).

Regarding the bilateral tourism trade between the U.S. and Germany, the nodes and lines were also at the right side of the reference line. The average tourism receipts generated by the German tourists in the U.S. increased more than the average expenditure spent by the U.S. residents in Germany, indicating the U.S. received per-tourist tourism surplus over Germany. In general, the average expenditure of the U.S. residents who travelled in Germany showed a trend of continuous increase over the years (more than \$400). The average tourism spending of the German visitors in the U.S. (inbound tourism receipts to the U.S.) increased over time, with a big decrease in 2006. Furthermore, the average expenditure of German visitors spent in the U.S. was at least \$1,000 more than the amount of an average U.S. resident spent when traveling to Germany (see Figure 2b). Similar to the U.K. case above, to the U.S., Germany also displayed a generally healthy market growth in the studied period.

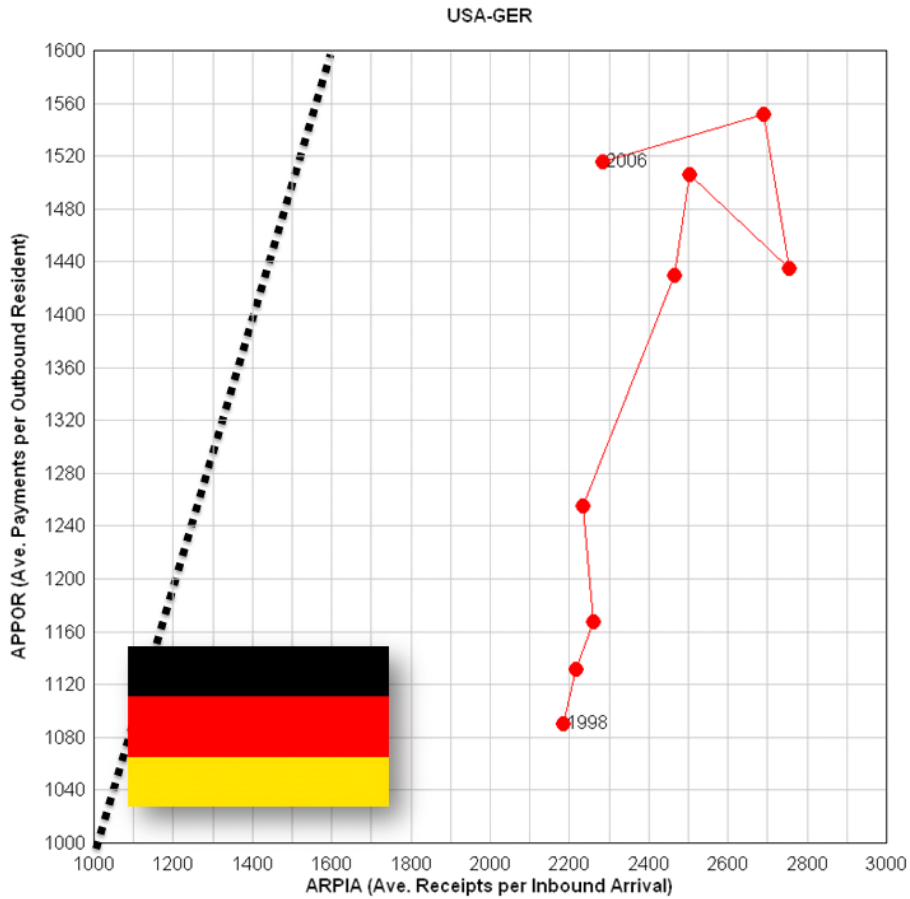


Figure 2b. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. Germany (1998-2006).

The overall trend between the U.S. and France is similar to those found in the US-UK and US-Germany situations in terms of the average expenditure of the U.S. travelers, since the number increased in these markets over years. The definite number of the U.S. travelers' expenditure in France showed a limited increase of \$150 from 1998 to 2006. However, the average receipts generated by French tourists in the U.S. increased about \$600 over the nine years, and the actual "per-tourist" spending was twice as much as the amount of the U.S. travelers spent in France (see Figure 2c).

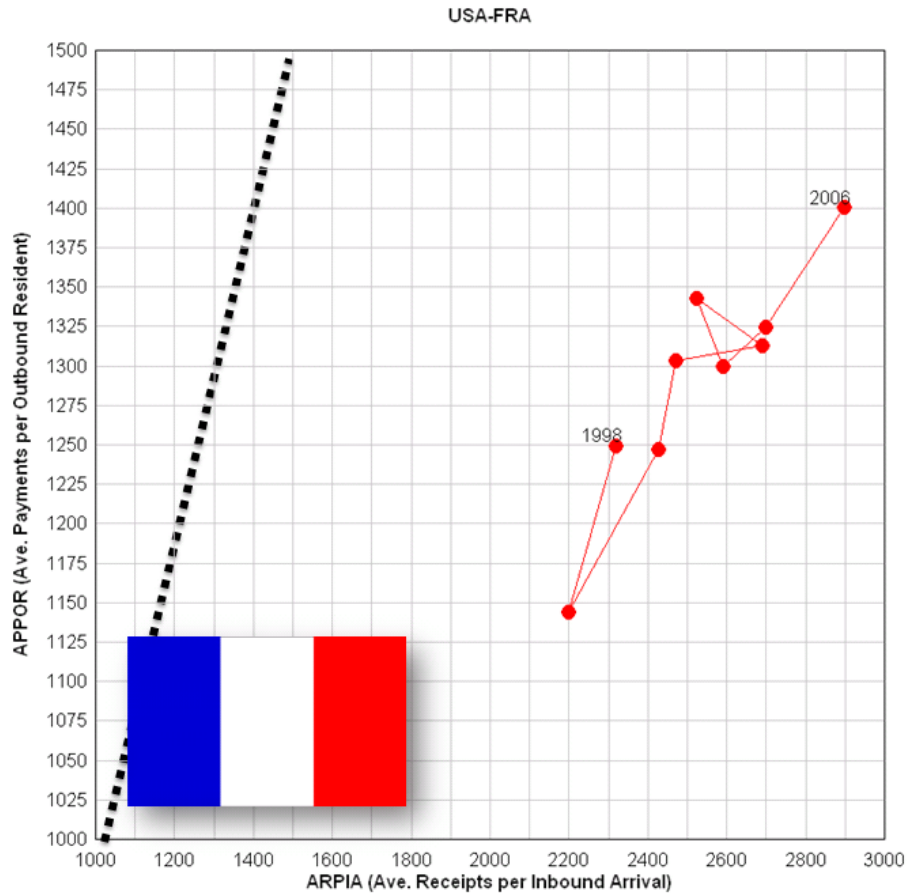


Figure 2c. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. France (1998-2006).

The evolutionary pattern of US-Italy tourism trade showed that the U.S. received per-tourist tourism surplus over Italy. The average tourism receipts generated by the Italian tourists in the U.S. generally decreased from 1998 to 2006, whereas the average expenditure spent by the U.S. residents in Italy had a limited increase overall, with ups and downs each year. Overall, the difference between 1998 and 2006 in terms of either ARPIA or APPOR was not distinctive. However, similar to the US-France situation, the actual spending of the Italian travelers in the U.S. was twice as much as the amount of the U.S. travelers spent in Italy (see Figure 2d).

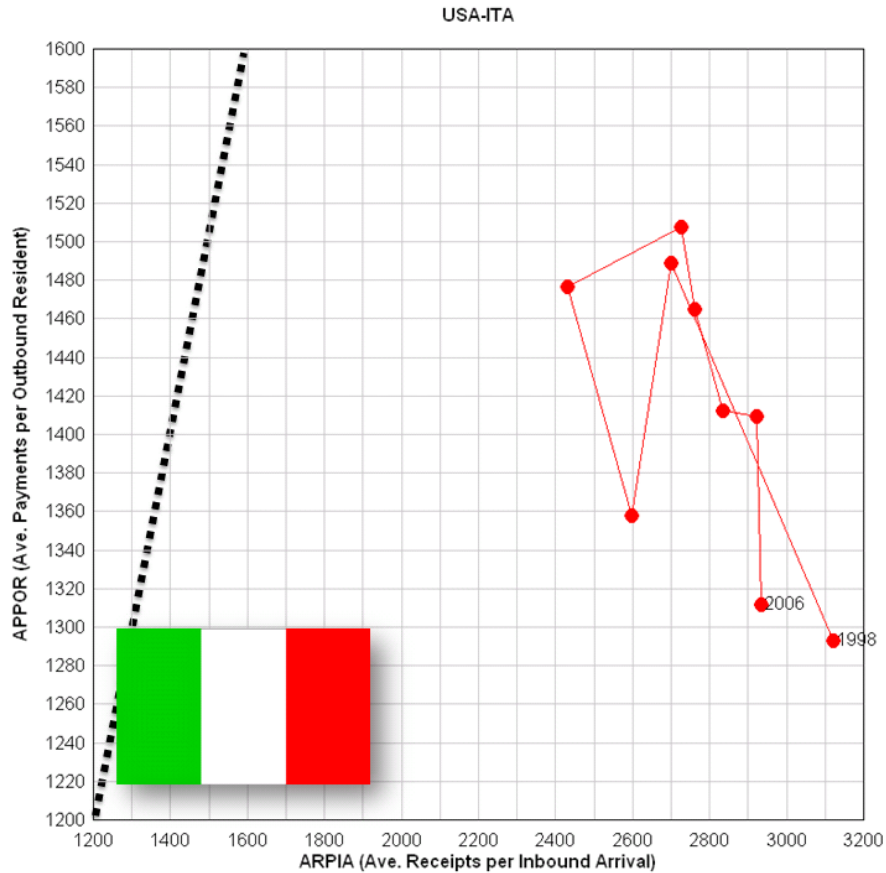


Figure 2d. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. Italy (1998-2006).

In the US-Netherlands tourism trade, the U.S. had tourism surplus over Netherlands in terms of average tourism receipts. Overall, both ARPIA and APPOR increased over the nine years from 1998 to 2006. The increase of average receipts generated by Dutch travelers in the U.S., however, slowed down since 2003, with a distinctive decline in 2006. Comparatively, the average expenditure of the U.S. travelers spent in Netherlands generally increased over years, with a big increase in 2006. Nevertheless, the average expenditure of the Dutch travelers in the U.S. was twice or almost three times as much as the amount of the U.S. tourists spent in Netherlands (see Figure 2e).

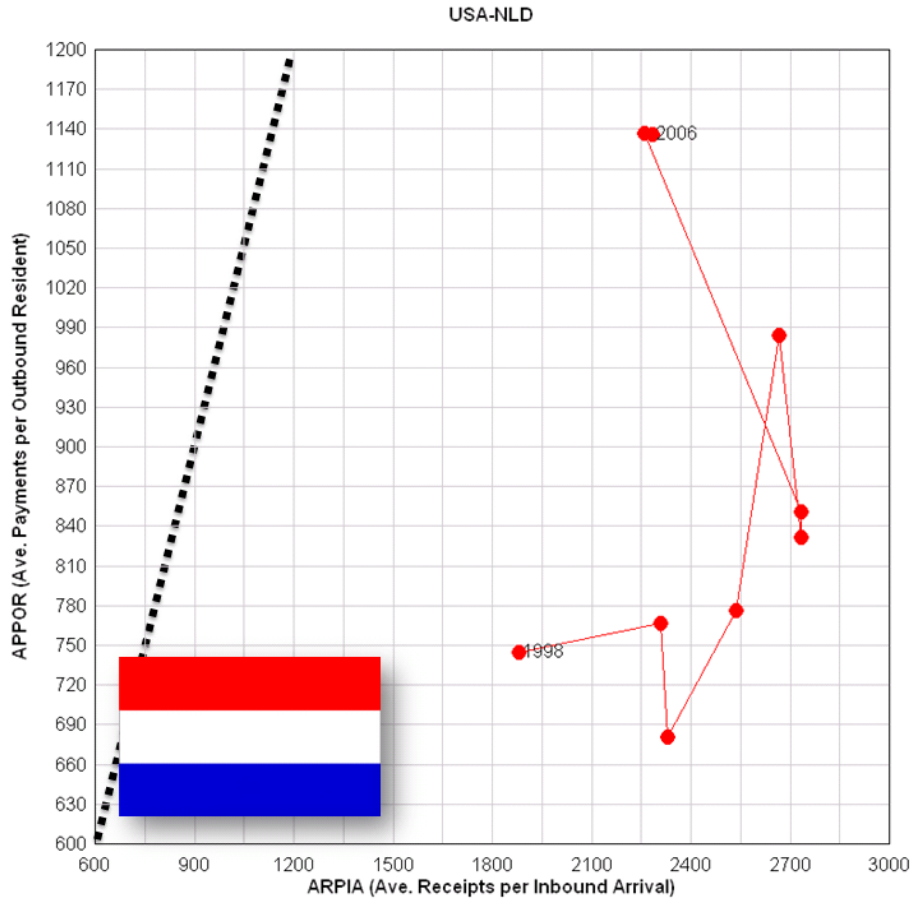


Figure 2e. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. Netherlands (1998-2006).

The U.S. had tourism surplus over Spain in average tourism receipts per tourist as well. The average receipts generated by Spanish travelers in the U.S. had constant increase over the nine years (more than \$400 difference between 1998 and 2006). However, the average expenditure of the U.S. visitors in Spain had distinctive increase and decline in individual years. As a result, there was only minimum increase on the APPOR U.S. between 1998 and 2006 (about \$50). The average expenditure of the Spanish travelers in the U.S. was twice or three times more than the amount of the U.S. tourists spent in Spain (see Figure 2f).

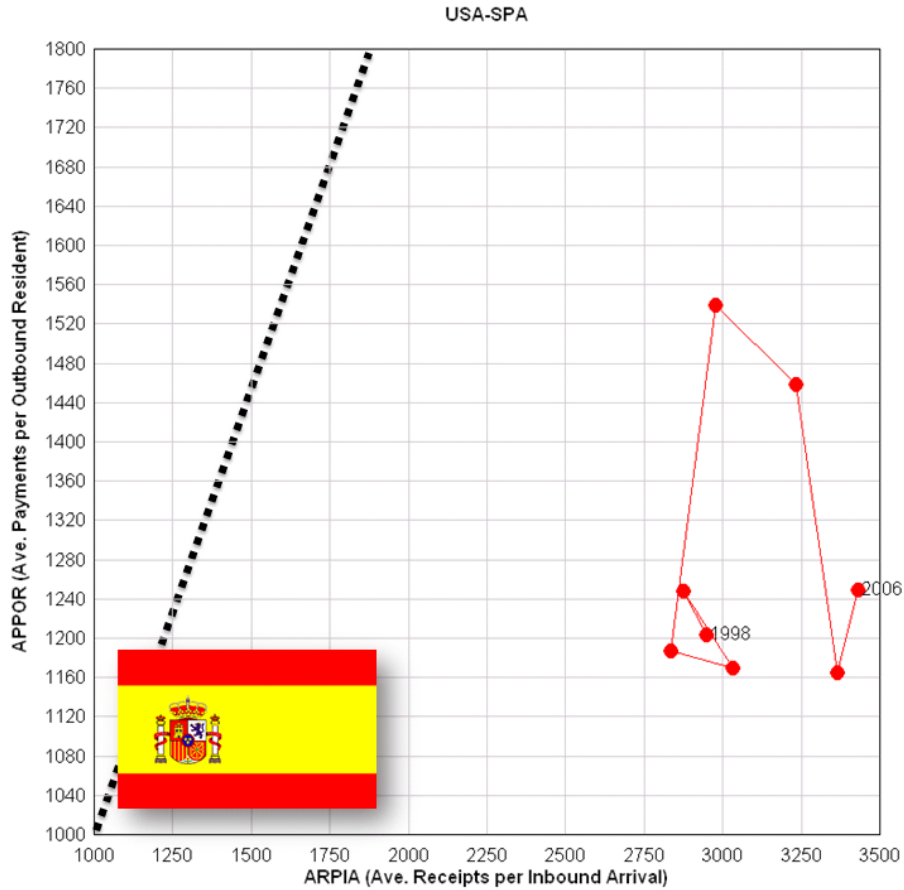


Figure 2f. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. Spain (1998-2006).

The international tourism trade between the U.S. and Sweden, again, showed a pattern of U.S. tourism surplus over time. The average spending per Swedish visitor in the U.S. increased about \$250 over the nine years. Comparatively, the average tourism expenditure of the U.S. residents spent in Sweden did not change from 1998 to 2003, but after a big drop in 2004, the number tremendously increased from \$600 in 2004 to \$1,450 in 2006, almost tripled in three years. This seems to indicate that Sweden was gaining some advantage over the U.S. in the last two years in the studied period. When comparing the definite value of ARPIA and APPOR, the U.S. visitors' expenditure in Sweden was only one-third or half of the amount Swedish travelers spent in the United States (see Figure 2g).

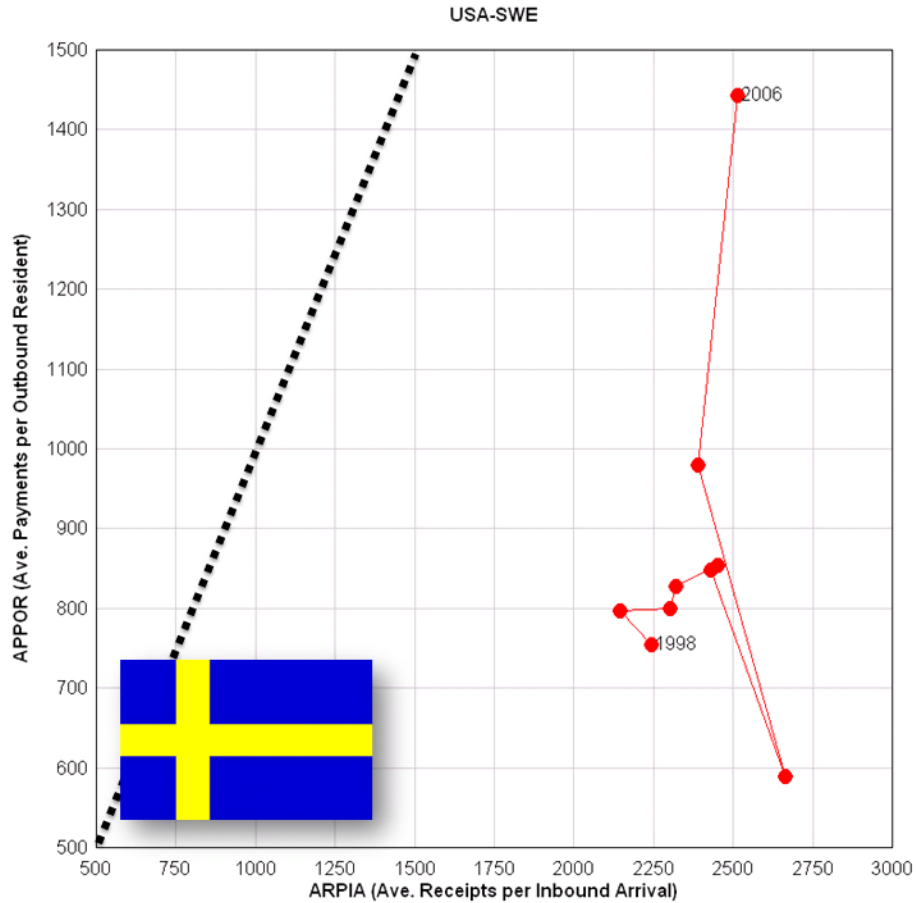


Figure 2g. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. Sweden (1998-2006).

The bilateral tourism receipt/payment pattern between the U.S. and Switzerland was similar to other studied European countries in that the U.S. enjoyed tourism surplus over time. Furthermore, the average expenditure of the U.S. residents in Switzerland was only one-third of the average receipts generated by Swiss travelers in the United States. The amounts of the ARPIA and APPOR had noticeable changes in some individual years, but the difference between 1998 and 2006 was not distinctive. The general trend of the ARPIA (average receipts generated by inbound Swiss travelers) was increasing but the growth rate was relatively limited, whereas APPOR (average payments of U.S. travelers in Switzerland) had bigger ups and downs but the general trend was in favor of the United States (see Figure 2h).

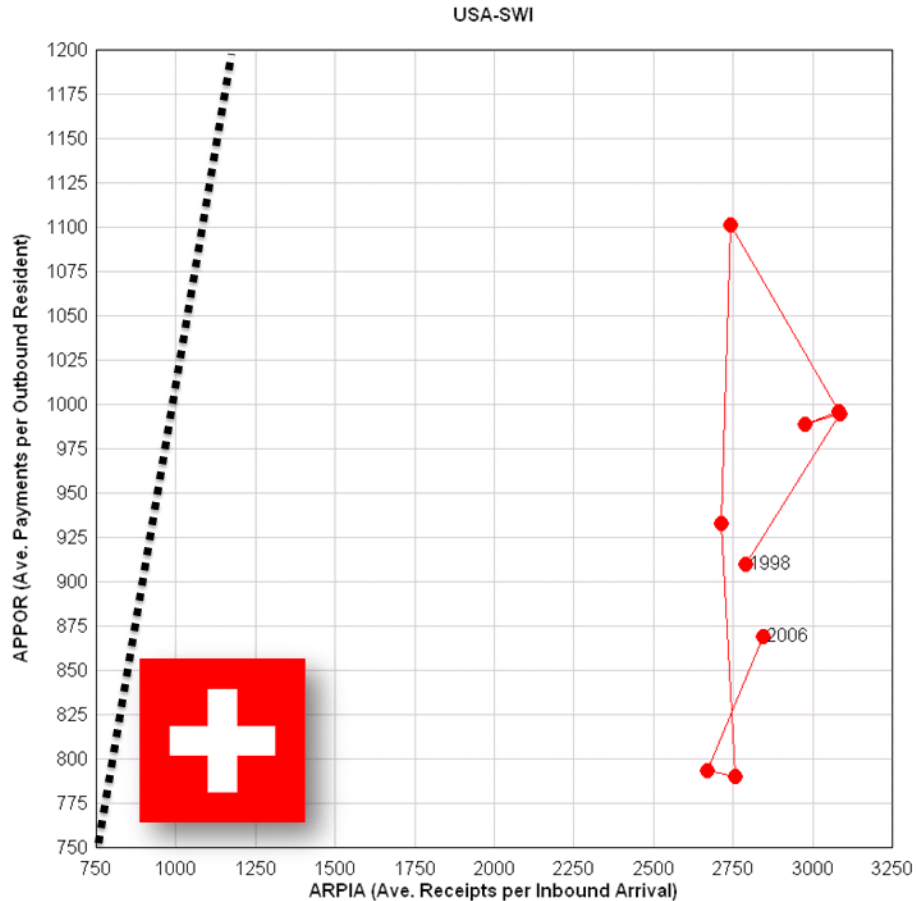


Figure 2h. Market Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. vs. Switzerland (1998-2006).

A comprehensive overview of all eight European markets altogether presents an excellent opportunity to evaluate each country's development related to others' from the U.S. perspective (see Figure 3). Overall, the U.S. enjoyed per-tourism tourism surplus over all the eight European partners. The average receipts generated by these European travelers ranged from \$2,000 to \$3,400, whereas the average payments of the U.S. visitors to these European countries ranged from \$600 to \$1,850. Figure 3 indicated that the U.S. travelers spent the most in the United Kingdom, but spent the least in Sweden in general. In both ARPIA and APPOR, the definite amount of the average U.S. expenditures of outbound travel was much less than the average receipts generated by tourists from the European regions. Specifically, the APPOR of the U.S. to European destinations was about half or one-third of the ARPIA generated from the European region. This is partly due to the smaller size of the European countries and easier cross-border travel. The U.S. travelers tend to stay shorter in each destination but visit different countries at one time when traveling to Europe. Therefore, they are very likely to spend less in each individual country during the whole trip. On the contrary, European travelers usually stay longer when traveling to the U.S. This travel behavior results in more tourism spending in the United States. The overall pattern of the ARPIA and APPOR also showed that, during the nine years from 1998 to 2006, the average receipts generated by the European regions to the U.S. as well as the average payments of U.S. outbound travelers in these European countries had increased.

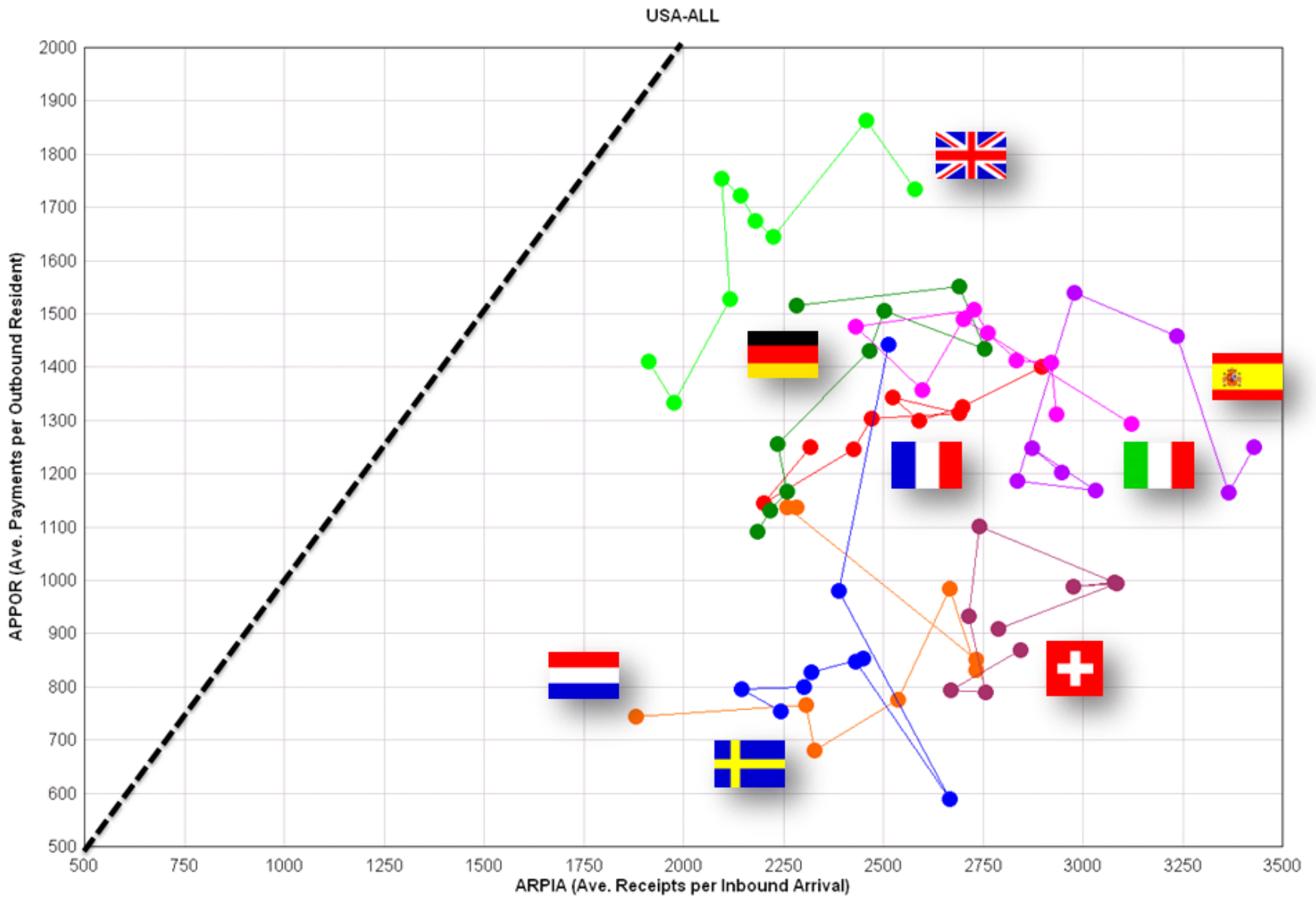


Figure 3. Evolutionary Development in International Tourism Trade: the U.S. and European Partners (1998-2006).

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the evolutionary patterns of bilateral international tourism development between the U.S. and its eight major European markets for a nine-year period. The new approach of such trend visualization generated a clear picture of the international tourism trade between the U.S. and each major European markets, and revealed insightful tourism intelligence in the longitudinal terms. The findings indicated the purchase power of different European markets in the international tourism trade with the United States, as well as the general development patterns over time. The market intelligence can be speculated when the U.S. recent international tourism or trade policies are examined along with some observed trends in this research, especially at the current situation of decreased tourist arrivals from most European countries to the United States.

This research made unique contributions to help national tourism administrators understand the constantly changing tourism markets, identify market trends, and realize the short- and long-term development patterns of the U.S. international tourism. This new “system” should not be limited by its reliance of the available secondary tourism statistics at the national level. Its expansion into higher-frequency data sources (monthly and quarterly data) with various important factors will prove to be even more accurate in monitoring and sharing international tourism intelligence in a timely fashion. As a tourism network of strategic partners, member countries will be able to establish this type of intelligence collaboration for sustaining a healthy growth patterns in the European region.

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THE DESTINATION CHOICE MODEL OF TRANSITIONAL TRAVEL:
COLLEGE STUDENTS IN CHINA

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ABSTRACT

The current study examined the phenomenon of transitional travel by college students in China. The transitional travel takes place during the specific period of time when students are graduating and about to embark on a new phase of their lives. This study adopted a grounded theory approach to develop a conceptual model of destination choice for such travel. The data used in the study included 14 in-depth personal interviews, as well as extant literature. The proposed model elaborates the destination choice process for the transitional travel of college students in China. The model consists of the five components. They are 1) barriers of transitional travel, 2) motivations of transitional travel, 3) internal inputs, 4) external inputs, and 5) destination selection. The findings of this study suggest that while existing destination choice models apply in part to the college students in China, they exhibit some unique and critical characteristics for their transitional travel. They include situational constraints, travel motivations, timing, and travel budget.

KEYWORDS: Transitional travel; Destination choice; College students; China

INTRODUCTION

Today's college students travel more than the generations before them did (Shoham, Schrage, & van Eeden, 2004). They have become a major market for the travel industry due to their spending power (Borgerding, 2001). They have been recognized as a growing segment with the potential to expand into a billion-dollar business in the United States (Field, 1999; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003). The US Census Bureau reported that there were more than 17 million

students enrolled in US colleges in 2006 (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2008). This number is expected to reach more than 18 million by 2010, which represents a huge and growing market with tremendous potential.

Similar with western peers, college students in China, totaling 17 million and still growing (Education Statistical Abstract of China, 2007), represent an even greater market appeal, not only because of the huge volume, but also due to the great propensity to travel (Chen, 2005; D. Li, 2005; Meng, 2001). Over 95 percent of college students are inclined to travel, and about 90 percent of them have traveled for leisure prior to graduation (Song, 2005). There are reports that college students in China have more leisure time than average travelers, and their unique psychological features, such as being curious, exploratory, romantic, and eager to learn new things, strongly motivate them to travel (Chen, 2005; Jin & Lang, 2004; Meng, Zhao, & Liu, 2004; Yu, 2004).

The large potential of college student travel market leads to a growing body of western literature in this area that examined their travel motivations (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002), travel behavior (Field, 1999; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Jin & Lang, 2004), activity preferences (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003), perceptions (Sakakida, Cole, & Card, 2004), online travel planning (Bai, Hu, Elsworth, & Countryman, 2004), and destination choice (E. Sirakaya, Sonmez, & Choi, 2001). Existing Chinese studies on college student travel mostly focused on travel behavior (L. Li & Bao, 2000; Meng, Zhao, & Liu, 2004; Yang & Liu, 2005) and market development strategies (Chen, 2005; Guo, 2005; D. Li, 2005; Yu, 2004). Among previous studies, there was an implicit assumption that undergraduate students were a homogenous group, and they exhibited different travel behavior from graduate students (Field, 1999; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003). Yet, attentions on heterogeneity within the undergraduate student group remain scarce. For instance, when college students are graduating and about to embark on a new phase of lives, they may feel anxious, excited, scared, and nostalgic. Such states of mind are expected to result in unique travel motivations which in turn affect decision making process and travel behaviors.

The current study focused on the phenomenon of transitional travel by the college students in China. The transitional travel takes place during the specific period of time when students are graduating and about to embark on a new phase of their lives. The purpose of this study was to investigate destination choice process of such travel. The study chose college students in China as the subject, not only because of the sheer size of the market, but also because of its unique characteristics as the first generation of China's one-child family structure.

LITERATURE REVIEW

College Student Travel

Studies on college student travel emerged in the late 1990s when there is a growing recognition of this niche market. The extant studies can be categorized into four research streams. The first stream was exploratory, focusing on such topics as travel motives (Heung & Leong, 2006; Kim, Oh, & Jogaratnam, 2007) and travel characteristics (Heung & Leong, 2006). Kim et al. (2007) determined seven motives from the demand side of college student market. These

motives are knowledge, sports, adventure, relax, lifestyle, travel bragging, and family. Heung and Leong (2006) described travel features and motives of college students in Hong Kong. They identified four attributes important to Hong Kong college student travel including social relationships, obtain new experience, relax and enjoy, and cost of travel. The second stream of work focused on the comparison of college students from different countries in their travel behavior (Field, 1999; Shoham, Schrage, & van Eeden, 2004), activity preferences (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003), travel motivation (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2002), and knowledge of beach safety (Ballantyne, Carr, & Hughes, 2005). Shoham et al. (2004) examined different travel preferences of college students from three countries and it was found that most differences resulted from the location and gender. Field (1999) compared the travel patterns and activity preferences of domestic and international college students. Kim and Jogaratnam (2002, 2003) examined differences of travel motivations and activity preferences of Asian international and domestic American college students.

The third stream of research on college student travel examined the effects of socio-demographic factors on motivation, perception, emotion, satisfaction, value, and loyalty (Barnett, 2006; Mattila, Apostolopoulos, Sonmez, Yu, & Sasidharan, 2001; Sakakida, Cole, & Card, 2004). The fourth stream of work was largely due to the easy access to college student sample, in that researchers tended to use this convenient sample to test their proposed models and generalize them on average tourists (Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Pizam & Fleischer, 2005; E. Sirakaya, Sonmez, & Choi, 2001). Yet the unique features of college student travel market were not reflected at all. Sirakaya et al. (2001) took Turkey as an example to examine the role of image in destination choice of college students. It was indicated that various image components have different importance in destination choice decisions. The study conducted by Pizam and Fleischer (2005) among 1429 college students discovered that Hofstede's cultural dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity and individualism/collectivism had effects on tourists' choice of active vs. passive activities.

Destination Choice Process

Um and Crompton (1990) developed a destination choice framework for pleasure travel. They identified and integrated five sets of processes as follows: a) the formation of subjective beliefs about destination attributes in the awareness set, through passive information catching or incidental learning; b) a decision to undertake a pleasure trip (initiation of a destination choice process) which includes consideration of situational constraints; c) evolution of an evoked set from the awareness set of destinations; d) the formation of subjective beliefs about the destination attributes of each alternative in the evoked set of destinations, through active solicitation of information; and e) selection of a specific travel destination (or destinations). Seddighi and Theocharous (2002) proposed and empirically tested a model of tourists' behavior and destination choice using a micro-econometric approach. Their model extended consumer-oriented transportation decision making paradigm and adapted it to the product characteristic approach within the context of tourist behavior.

Destination choice is one of many travel related decisions (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994). It could be viewed as a cognitive process involving perceptions of stimuli, a reasoned action determined by attitudes and influences of social groups, an economic activity which

maximizes utility, and leisure participation (Um & Crompton, 1990). It is a sequential activity with several successive steps, which may be influenced by beneficial image (Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000), interactions of constraints and image (Um & Crompton, 1990), interactions of visit intention and situational variables (Woodside & Lysonski, 1989), and travel party members (Kang & Hsu, 2005; Woodside & MacDonald, 1994).

Some existing studies on destination choice employed the qualitative approach in conceptualization (Crompton, 1992; Decrop & Snelders, 2005; Ercan Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005; Um & Crompton, 1990). Such approach aims to “understand the socially constructed nature of reality and situational constraints that shape inquiry”, and therefore it is appropriate to explore processes that underlie human behavior in the specific phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). Existing literature on college student travel mostly adopted the quantitative approach to characterizing market features and investigating relationship between and among known variables and constructs. Further scrutiny of decision making process in college student travel remains unexplored.

This study was therefore conducted to close this gap and improve the understandings of college student travel with two specific objectives: 1) to identify components involved in the destination choice process of transitional travel by college students in China; and 2) to develop a conceptual model of destination choice for the transitional travel.

METHODOLOGY

The current study adopted grounded theory as the primary approach. Differentiated from quantitative methods in which the data reliability centers on sample size, the grounded theory method emphasizes depth and quality rather than sample size. The method does not aim to generalize findings but to develop or discover concepts and theories on a phenomenon, and to study how people act and react to this phenomenon. Typically data used in grounded theory approach comes from interviews and multiple visits to the field (Creswell, 1998).

A total of 14 personal interviews in this study were conducted by phone in July 2007. College students who graduated in the summer of 2007 were qualified to participate in the interview. All the interviews were undertaken in Chinese and digitally recorded with the permission from interviewees. Most of the interview sessions took around half an hour. Potential respondents were contacted by phone calls. They were first told the objective of the study and had the opportunity to participate or decline. Fourteen respondents participated. Among them, five were from three universities in Beijing, eight came from two universities in Guangzhou, and one was from a university in Hunan Province. Eight college students traveled during the transitional period.

All questions used in the interview were open-ended to encourage free thoughts and feelings from interviewees. Questions were organized in the three sections of 1) travel characteristics including travel time, travel party size, duration, travel patterns, expenditure and so on, 2) travel motivation, and 3) how and why choose the destination. Some basic demographic information was also gathered. Digital recordings were transcribed in Chinese, while data

analysis was made on the translated English version of the transcripts. Data analysis in this study followed the systematic process used in a typical grounded theory research (Creswell, 1998). They included open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding proceeded through examining each line of data and forms the initial categories of information about the phenomenon being studied. Based on the information segments from open coding, researchers came up with a logic diagram in the step of axial coding, to identify the central phenomenon, explore causal conditions influencing the phenomenon, specify actions or interactions that result from the central phenomenon, and delineate the consequence for the phenomenon. Through this step, researchers sought for relevant information categories in the data.

FINDINGS

Eight of the 14 interviewees traveled during the transitional period. Seven of them traveled with their classmates, and one with his family. The party size of the transitional travel varied, ranging from three to more than twenty. The trip could be officially initiated by the class or organized by a small group of close friends or roommates privately. Students planned activities by themselves, and limited their time budget of one week or shorter and financial budget of no more than 1500RMB (about \$220) per person. All of them traveled before moving out of campus.

Five themes emerged from the data analysis. They were: 1) barriers of transitional travel, 2) motivation of transitional travel, 3) internal inputs, 4) external inputs, and 5) destination selection. These five themes constituted key components of the destination choice model of transitional travel by college students in China, as illustrated in Figure 1. Some expressions from college students were directly quoted to provide evidence and to support statements.

Barriers of Transitional Travel

Six out of the 14 respondents reported that they didn't travel during the transitional period because of their pending future. This was represented by responses from several students who conducted the transitional travel:

Students who traveled have already decided their next step after graduation, such as work or further education. Those who are at the pending status don't have time and mood to travel at all. (Interviewer No. 2, Beijing, will go to US for graduate school, traveled with about 20 classmates.)

We three have accepted job offers, otherwise we wouldn't travel. (Interviewer No. 5, Beijing, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with two friends.)

The job market doesn't look good. My classmates are anxious to hunt for jobs and nobody even think about travel. (Interviewer No. 6, Hunan Province, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with family.)

Motivation of Transitional Travel

Almost all the students mentioned bonding with classmates before graduation as one of their motivations for transitional travel. In addition, to those who will go to work after graduation, time availability for travel in the future becomes a concern and transitional travel is regarded as a way to relax and prepare for the upcoming exciting career.

... First, we may not have time to get together after graduation; second, work may not allow us to travel in the near future; third, we really want to relax ourselves via a trip. (Interviewer No. 4, Guangzhou, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with two friends.)

It is very possible that I don't have time and mood to travel after work. Typically the frame of mind must be changed after entering the society relative to being as a college student. Therefore it is a great opportunity for me to travel prior to graduation. (Interviewer No. 5, Beijing, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with two friends.)

Internal Inputs

Internal inputs refer to personal and psychological characteristics that affect the destination choice process and influence the choice decision. Psychological characteristics such as their perceptions of transitional travel and alternative destinations in particular, helped college students define or narrow down the alternatives.

Transitional travel should not be simple as a one-day trip to the suburban. This trip is expected to include a lot of fun and be a rare and wonderful memory of undergraduate life. (Interviewer No. 3, Guangzhou, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with about 20 classmates.)

Final decision of the destination was influenced by their personal conditions including financial and time budgets. Most of the respondents limited their travel time of one week or shorter and financial budget of no more than 1500RMB (\$220). These limitations determined that they tended to go to near-by destinations with convenient transportation.

We went to Shi Du for two days, a rural destination away from Beijing in 3-hour driving. We chose this place because it met our financial budget of 200RMB per person, moreover, that was the only time all of us agreed with. (Interviewer No. 1, Beijing, will go to graduate school in China, traveled with about 20 classmates.)

In some cases, the respondents were keenly aware of their psychological needs in considering destinations, but nevertheless made a choice that was within their means.

We chose Sanya as the destination because of its tropical climate and great environment. We are interested in Sanya also because none of us have ever been there. Moreover, Sanya is affordable for us and has convenient transportations

with Guangzhou. (Interviewer No. 4, Guangzhou, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with two friends.)

We went to Dalian for three days. We think it is boring of traveling close to Beijing. But we don't have enough time and money to afford a long trip. As a famous destination with perfect distance away from Beijing, Dalian worked out. (Interviewer No. 7, Beijing, will go to graduate school in China, traveled with eleven friends.)

We did consider some far destinations. However, limited timing and financial budget don't allow us to take a long trip. Finally we chose Bashang, the grassland away from Beijing 4 hours by railway. (Interviewer No. 2, Beijing, will go to US for graduate school, traveled with about 20 classmates.)

External Inputs

External inputs could be viewed as social interactions and marketing communications through which students could collect related information and make decisions. Three students mentioned the importance of recommendations from one member of their group who had been to the destination before (Interviewers No. 1, No. 7, and No. 8). In addition to recommending the alternative destination, this experienced visitor was able to provide detailed information related to the trip. Therefore it was easier for the whole travel party to agree without spending too much time on information search. Previous experience could effectively address the concerns that it's hard to control budgets to an unfamiliar destination.

...One reason to choose Qinhuangdao as the destination is that a member of our travel party has been there before. He is familiar with the destination, especially in terms of attractions, activities, transportations, financial budget, and so on. (Interviewer No. 8, Beijing, will work in Beijing, traveled with seven friends.)

This risk-avoiding approach was also reflected in response from a student who traveled to hometowns of classmates.

We traveled from Beijing to our hometowns one by one after graduation. We don't need to pay for food and hotels, which saved a lot of money for sightseeing and transportation. Moreover, it's easy to make travel plan because we are familiar with destinations. (Interviewer No. 5, Beijing, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with two other friends.)

In some cases, student leaders of the class played a role of recommending alternatives, then collected feedbacks and made the final decision. Internet is the primary information source helping them to know more about unfamiliar destinations.

Several committee members of the class recommended this destination, and most of us agreed. It's impossible to satisfy everybody. (Interviewer No. 3, Guangzhou, will work in Shenzhen, traveled with about 20 classmates.)

Destination Selection

The component of destination selection in this study includes two sequential constructs of alternative destinations and final destination selection. Following the decision to take a transitional travel, alternative destinations emerged. Internal and external inputs were important for the students to evaluate these alternatives. The final decision making was more collective than individual, as reflected in the response as follows.

...One member of our travel party has been to Dalian before. He recommended this destination to us for his previous great experience over there. Then we met together and discussed our perceptions, expectations, timing and financial budgets, with the consideration of information he provided. Ultimately all of us agreed with Dalian. (Interviewer No. 7, Beijing, will go to graduate school in China, traveled with eleven friends.)

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study focused on the phenomenon of transitional travel by college students in China in light of the huge potential of this market. Through the literature review on destination choice and the qualitative approach of grounded theory, a conceptual destination choice model of transitional travel by this market was proposed. The study identified five model components. They are 1) barriers of transitional travel, 2) motivation of transitional travel, 3) internal inputs, 4) external inputs, and 5) destination selection.

The destination choice model proposed in this study is partially in line with findings from extant literature. Destination choice is a multi-step process involving a series of cognitive sets as well as external and internal factors (Seddighi & Theocharous, 2002; Um & Crompton, 1990). Um and Crompton (1990) suggested three phases to complete a destination choice decision. They are awareness set, evoked set/late consideration set, and final decision. Awareness set includes all possible destinations in mind when people decide to travel. Evoked set/late consideration set refers to alternative destinations after people consider their situational constraints and preferences. The destination choice process proceeds with the integration of internal and external factors (Um & Crompton, 1990). Seddighi and Theocharous (2002) indicated that destination choice process should start from tourist decision of “Yes/No vacation”, followed by alternative destinations and final destination selection. The model proposed in this study for transitional travel in China mirrors the structures and flows of aforementioned two models. In addition, the formulation of the model presented in Figure 1 provides evidence to support findings in previous studies on college student travel in China. For instance, they tended to travel in groups with friends and classmates (Guo, 2005; Meng, Zhao, & Liu, 2004), conduct travel plan by themselves (Meng, Zhao, & Liu, 2004), spend less and be price-sensitive (L. Li & Bao, 2000).

As the first attempt to address the phenomenon of transitional travel by college students in China, this study demonstrated heterogeneity within the college student travel market. The

study results revealed some unique characteristics and situational constraints when students were making decisions of their transitional travel, such as barriers of transitional travel, motivation of transitional travel, timing, and travel budget. Students' future after graduation determined their participation of transitional travel. Motivations of transitional travel mostly centered to bonding with classmates, relaxing to prepare for exciting career, and concern of time availability in the future. College students preferred transitional travel before moving out of campus and limited their time budget in one week or shorter and financial budget in no more than 1500RMB (about \$220) per person. The most noteworthy finding was that the final decision making of transitional travel by college students in China was more collective than individual. The research subject of this study is the first generation of China's one-child family structure. This generation is known for the characteristic of individualism relative to generations before them. However, this self-centered general culture seems to be absent in destination choice process of transitional travel. Demands and preferences of the whole group, such as timing, financial budget, and destination type, affect the decision making process all along. Priority to group benefits in this case is over that of the individual. Some students are even willing to revisit the destination where they have been recently, as long as their classmates are happy with it. Motivations of transitional travel reveal the underlying reasons of this paradox. According to interview results, bonding with classmates before graduation is the uppermost purpose of transitional travel. This is not only a pleasure trip, but to some extent, it is also a special get-together. Therefore students actually care more about who to travel with than where to go.

Findings of this study present practical implications. The characteristics of transitional travel by college students in China should be informative to the tourism businesses, particularly destinations, to better understand and cater to this market. As transitional travel is becoming more of a necessity than an option for many among college students in China, the industry is challenged to provide products and services to satisfy their unique and growing demands.

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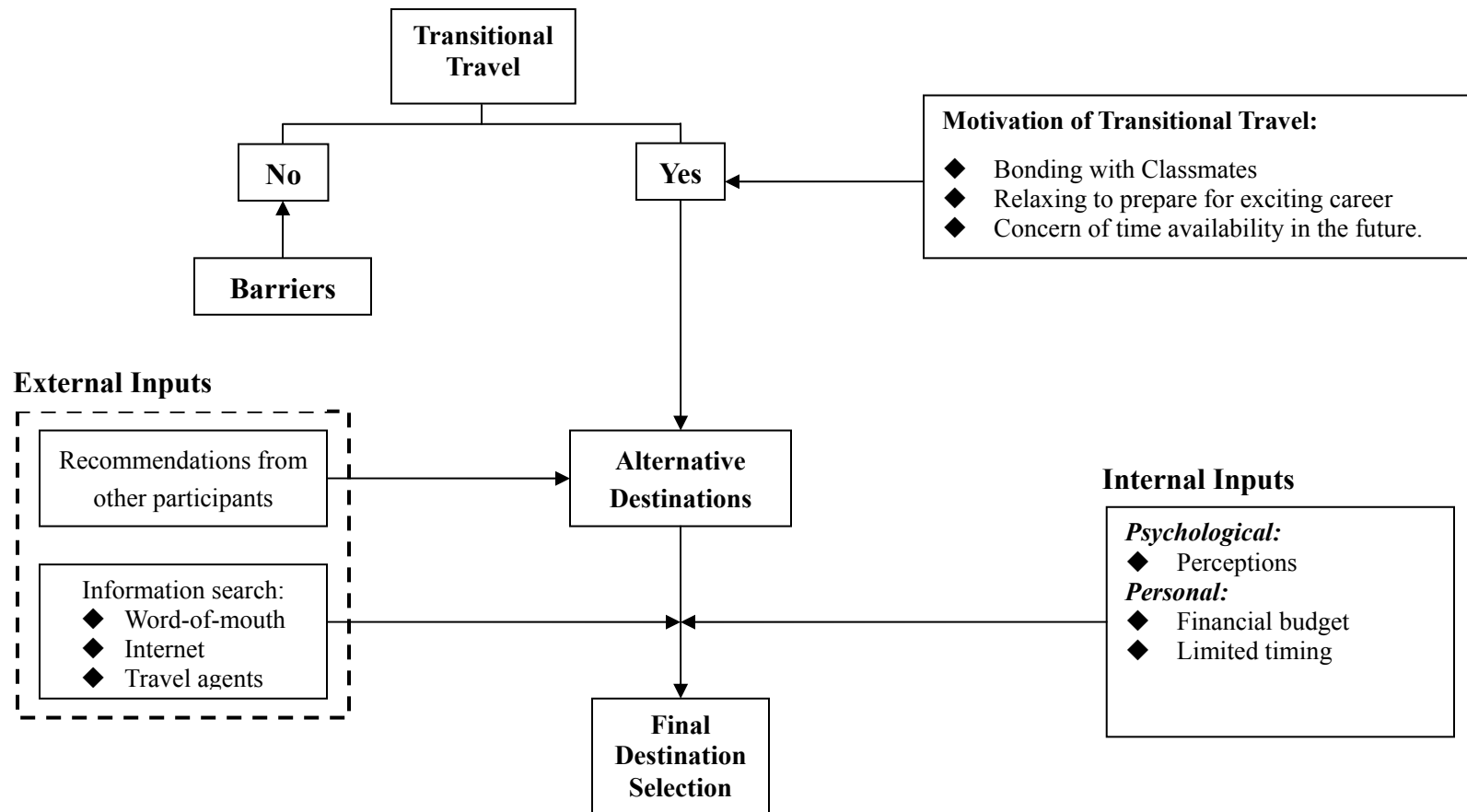


Figure 1. The Destination Choice Model of Transitional Travel by College Students in China

HEALTH TOURISM AND AYURVEDA – THE CASE OF KERALA

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ABSTRACT

An important trend in global tourism has been the popularity of health care holidays. The tourism industry in India, especially the South Indian state of Kerala has been responsive and is making considerable efforts to cater to this ever-growing market based on Ayurvedic therapy. Health tourism based on Ayurvedic therapy is in the sphere of segmented and selective tourism and has become a popular choice among a particular section of tourists. Its potential in the tourism sector has become quite obvious and both the trade and tourism promotion authorities in liaison with those in charge of the indigenous system of medicine are evolving some norms for dispensing this therapy so that, it leads to diversification and enrichment of the tourism product. The significance of Ayurveda in the promotion of tourism in Kerala has immense potential in view of health seekers and particularly the tourism market for the baby boomers. This study is an attempt to bring about the basic issues involved the development of Ayurvedic tourism with special reference to Kerala state. The methodologies adopted for data-collection are questionnaires, in-person interviews, corporate interviews and secondary sources.

KEYWORDS: *Ayurveda, Health Tourism, Kerala, Panchakarma, Shamana therapy, Shodhana therapy.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world's fastest growing industries and in recent years, has come to play an increasingly dominant role in the economies of developing countries. Tourism related businesses are also the leading producers of new jobs worldwide. Various governments are keen to garner a percentage of this huge 694 million-tourist traffic (WTO, 2004). In India the improvement of tourist infrastructure, enhancement of transport connectivity, and focused work on marketing and promotion campaigns by the tourism departments and the industry has led to the country experiencing a boom in tourist arrivals. In 2004, foreign tourist arrivals rose by 23.8% (3.4 m) while domestic tourists recorded a 19% increase (367.6 m). The earnings generated were US \$4.8 billion. The industry contributed 4.9% to the country's GDP and has

emerged as a major source of employment. Tourism supports 48.26 million jobs (directly and indirectly) accounting for 8.78% of the total jobs within the country.

The success of tourism depends upon the success of a number of sectors. The tourism industry doesn't manage the majority of products and experiences it sells. Tourism managers are transporting people to view natural features, cultural attractions, economic activities and lifestyles of people worldwide. Unlike other enterprises, tourism takes consumers to the product, not the products to the consumers.

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH AND INDIGENOUS MEDICINE

According to the constitution of World Health Organization (WHO), "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Man has evolved several methods for ensuring health and curing illness ever since time immemorial. Different civilizations and societies have thus given shape to their own medicinal systems, which reflect their social beliefs, practices and way of life. Virtually every civilization has a system of indigenous medicine. The World Health Organisation (WHO) sponsored meeting at Brozaville in 1976 has defined traditional medicine as "the sum total of all knowledge and practices, whether explicable or not, used in diagnosis, prevention and elimination of physical, mental or social imbalance and relying exclusively on practical experience and observations handed down from generation to generation, verbally or in writing". The need for curing diseases has resulted in the development of medicinal systems like Ayurveda and Siddha in India, Acupuncture and other systems in China, Greek medicine in Greece and Unani in Middle East.

There are other medical systems, which developed out of Ayurveda or were influenced by it. One such system is the Tibetan system of medicine, which is the mainstay of a majority of the Tibetan people. Ayurvedic *Samhitas* (literature) were translated into Tibetan, from Tibetan to Mongolian and further into other languages of Central Asia and to Greek. Indian medical works of *Charaka* and *Sushruta* were translated into Arabic language under the patronage of Caliph Al Mansur. Western medicine, till the 7th century A.D was based upon the Latin version of this Arabian translation. The medical treatises in Sinhala language of Sri Lanka were prepared based on the ancient Sanskrit Ayurvedic Samhitas. Thus Ayurveda, the Indian indigenous medicinal system made a remarkable development in India as well as having influenced contemporary medical systems of other societies.

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH TOURISM

The concept of health resorts and public baths can be traced to the Romans. The ancient baths introduced in the second century B.C, helped people enhance health and social interaction. Baths were located by mineral springs or Spas that were believed to have restorative powers. The medicinal properties of mineral springs gave origin to the spa. The need for additional facilities in the spa further caused the development of these spas into resorts with added facilities for pleasure and entertainment. The Health holiday market is a fairly

developed one in various parts of the world. In France the Accor group is devoting a full 20 percent of its total investments in the hospitality sector to the development of health resorts. It is the leader in France in thalassotherapy or seawater therapy. The business potential of health holidays is indicated by an Accor survey which shows that at least 20 percent of Europeans are looking for more active, health oriented holidays and would like to find some kind of health and fitness facilities integrated in their holiday resorts or even take their holidays in a dedicated health resort. The European client is a significant source of revenue for the Health tourism industry in Kerala.

Promotion of physical well-being and massage has always been a part of the Asian way of life. Indian villages were known for their traditional treatment methods. The spiritual texts carried the message of healthy living, which involves righteousness in thoughts, emotions and actions. *Ayurveda* enlightens us with an understanding of the body constitution of a person, highlighting the necessity of personal participation and adaptation to seasonal changes, dietary intake, preventive measures and therapeutics.

ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE OF AYURVEDA

Ayurveda is the ancient Indian health science developed through research work conducted over centuries by the sages, who were eminent scholars. *Ayurveda* is a compound of two words: *Ayu* which means 'life' and '*Veda*' which means knowledge. As the term '*Ayurveda*' denotes 'the knowledge of life', it is not only a system to cure disease but the system teaches us how to achieve perfect health. The philosophy of *Ayurveda* takes a holistic view of health, emphasizing a balanced diet; physical fitness, healthy life style, hygiene and body care for a disease-free, long and healthy life.

Ayurveda deems health as the perfect condition of man having a happy combination of thought, action and speech. Revitalizing this healthy condition and making one vigorous and immune to diseases is one of the cardinal principles of *Ayurveda*. This is achieved through a perfect harmony with nature. *Ayurveda* advocates the prevention of disease rather than cure. The guiding motto of *ayurveda* pharmacology is '*Jagathyeva Manaushadam*' meaning there is nothing without any medicinal value in the world. So *Ayurveda* uses every thing from trees and food grains to metals like gold and silver. Certain animal products are also used. The period of the origin of *Ayurveda* is considered to be around 6000 B.C.

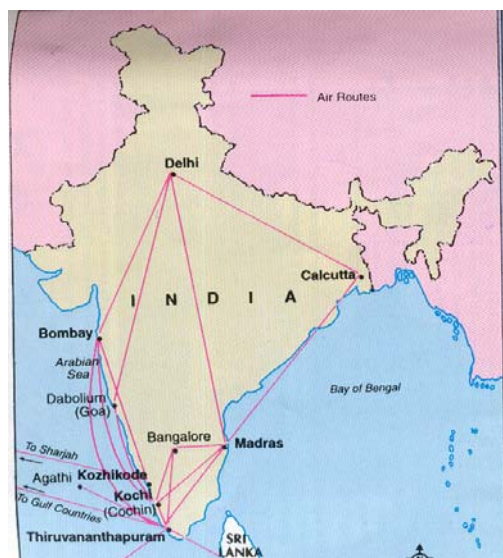
According to *Ayurveda*, disease is the result of disequilibrium among the seven dhatus or body constituents. The imbalance of three doshas (fundamental components of the body) will also result in disease. Balance of these fundamental components can be regained by removing waste accumulated in the body through the method of *Panchakarma* (five actions). In this way, the root of the disease is eradicated. Consumption of environmental matter in the form of drug or a diet will also correct the disequilibria among the body constituents. The five-fold purification treatment consists of *Vamana* (emesis), *Virechana* (Purgation), *Vasti* (enema), *Nasya* (head evacuation) and *Rakta Mokshana* (Blood letting).

Ayurveda uses two distinct modalities in the treatment of diseases called *Shamana* therapy (consumption of medicine) and *Shodhana* therapy (purification). In *Shamana* therapy, medicines are given to alleviate diseases and their symptoms. *Shodhana* therapy removes toxins accumulated in the body, which ultimately results in the eradication of the cause of the disease. *Panchakarma* is the most important *shodhana* therapy (purification therapy). Ayurvedic centers offer *Panchakarma* treatment and its pre-operative and post-operative treatments. The science of *ayurveda* is much beyond *Panchakarma*, which includes the elaborate eight branches of the Vedic science. *Ayurveda* focuses on therapeutic and rejuvenate aspects.

KERALA-SALIENT FEATURES

Kerala is a lush green state situated on the southern tip of India and occupies only 1.18 percent of the total area of the country. The major cities are Kochi and Tiruvananthapuram. It accounts for 3.34 percent of the total population of the county. The state economy has been growing at a pace averaging 7.8 percent since 2000-01. The growth of population is the lowest among all states of India. 58.8 percent of the state's income comes from the service sector and this can be mainly attributed to its success in the tourism sector. The service sector engages almost 38 percent of the population with an annual increase of 10.2 percent. The per capita income stood at Rs. 29,601 (roughly \$750.00) in the year 2005-06. The literacy rates of 94.2 percent for males and 87.4 percent for females are the highest in India. Kerala has the highest sex ratio in the country, which has increased from 1036 females per 1000 males in 1991 to 1058 females per 1000 males in 2001. The state has the lowest infant mortality at 12 deaths per 1000 births. Another notable fact is that 97.7 percent of births are with trained assistance. Thus Kerala ranks at the top of all India states in human development indicators. The geographical position of Kerala and its connection with major cities of India are shown below.

Figure 1. Geographical position of Kerala and air routes between important cities of India and Kerala (Source: Tourist Brochure, The Kerala Map, Kerala Tourism)



TOURISM IN KERALA – THE PRESENT SCENARIO

Kerala enjoys unique geographic features that have made it one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the world. Having emerged as the most acclaimed tourist destination of the country in the recent past, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has selected Kerala as a partner state. National Geographic Traveler chose Kerala, as one of the fifty must-see destinations of a lifetime. They called Kerala as ‘One of the ten paradises of the world’. Kerala has also been awarded the ‘Best performing state’ award for the year 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2004 by the Government of India. Kerala Tourism has also won a number of other awards from national and international organizations.

With tourism notified as an industry by the state government in 1986, the state has focused on connectivity with the world and has three international airports. Kerala has a large sea port at Kochi and 20 intermediate and small ports. Some of the wide range of its specialities are a long shoreline, serene beaches, tranquil stretches of backwaters, lush hill stations and exotic wildlife in dense tropical forests, local festivals, historical and cultural monuments, Ayurvedic spas, spectacular boat races and waterfalls.

Tourism in Kerala has recorded remarkable growth in the last several years. The number of foreign and domestic tourists visiting the state has crossed 515,000 and 6.2 million respectively. The share of Kerala in foreign tourist arrivals to India is more than 10% .The number of foreign tourists has gone up from a mere 50,841 in 1986 to 515,508 in 2007. The table below shows a summary of the foreign tourist arrivals to India and Kerala from 1997 to 2007. Arrivals of domestic tourists to Kerala also show an upward trend. While the number of domestic tourists who came to Kerala in 1986 was a mere 424,000 it rose to 6.6 million in 2007.

Table 1. Foreign & Domestic tourist arrivals, Kerala (1997-2007)		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Number of tourists</i>	
	<i>Domestic (mil)</i>	<i>Foreign</i>
1997	4.95	182,427
1998	4.48	189,941
1999	4.88	202,173
2000	5.01	209,933
2001	5.24	208,830
2002	5.57	232,564
2003	5.87	294,621
2004	5.97	345,546
2005	5.95	346,499
2006	6.27	428,534
2007	6.64	515,508

Source: Tourist statistics 1997-2007, Dept. of Tourism, Kerala.

A comparative study of the foreign tourists' country of origin revealed that U.K., France, U.S.A, Maldives, Germany, Italy, Australia, Switzerland, Netherlands and Japan constituted a majority of the arrivals. The study revealed that tourist arrivals from the first ten countries constituted 64% and 66.47% of the total foreign tourist arrivals for 2003 and 2004 respectively. United Kingdom remained on the top of all tourist-generating countries for Kerala followed by France, U.S.A, .Maldives and Germany.

The arrival of foreign tourists to Kerala follows a typical pattern. Despite a slight increase in the arrival of foreign tourists in the beginning of the year, the figure gradually decreases till June, and then a general upward trend is seen except during certain months from July. The months of December and January mark the highest international tourist inflow to Kerala. In 1997, foreign exchange earnings were a meager \$ 0.04 billion while it reached 0.66 billion in 2007.

Table 2 Earnings from Tourism- Kerala

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Income (Dollars in bn)</i>	<i>Foreign Exchange Earnings (Dollars in bn)</i>
<i>2001</i>	<i>1.12</i>	<i>0.13</i>
<i>2002</i>	<i>1.23</i>	<i>0.17</i>
<i>2003</i>	<i>1.48</i>	<i>0.24</i>
<i>2004</i>	<i>1.71</i>	<i>0.31</i>
<i>2005</i>	<i>1.93</i>	<i>0.39</i>
<i>2006</i>	<i>2.28</i>	<i>0.40</i>
<i>2007</i>	<i>2.86</i>	<i>0.66</i>

Source: Tourist statistics 2001 to 2007, Department of Tourism, Kerala

Medical and treatment facilities in Kerala are equivalent to that of developed western countries and are comparatively superior to other states of India. *Ayurveda's* contribution is very significant in Kerala, particularly when compared to other indigenous medicinal systems.

AYURVEDA AND HEALTH TOURISM IN KERALA

Kerala has a fairly ancient Ayurvedic medical system that is not distinctly visible on other parts of India. A patient's energy level is required to be stable and he is advised to avoid undue mental and physical stress including travel, strenuous exercise and sexual activity. According to various Ayurvedic texts, treatment should only be carried out 'when the atmosphere is not very cold or hot. These texts prescribe the monsoon period as the most suitable time for treatment. Ayurvedic treatment is popular in Kerala, since the state has an equable tropical climate. Temperature varies from 18⁰C to 35⁰C which is most suitable for Ayurvedic treatments. Climatic conditions directly influence curing of diseases. *Sodhana* therapy and treatments for rejuvenation can be ideally performed during three months – mid

October to mid November, mid February to mid March and mid July to mid August. With the introduction of Ayurveda as a tourism product, tourism activity has become a year round activity. Due to the significant impact of Ayurvedic therapy on Kerala's tourism earnings, it is receiving a significant thrust and being marketed as Kerala's USP. Public and private sector operators offer Ayurvedic therapy to fitness enthusiasts in the form of packages. Kerala has indeed sensed the potential for fitness holiday packages and is trying to tap this market.

TREATMENT FACILITIES

Ayurvedic treatments are offered in Kerala by three categories of organizations.

1. *Ayurveda* colleges and hospitals
2. Ayurvedic Resorts
3. Ayurvedic Spas associated with hotels.

Ayurvedic colleges and hospitals are in the field of Ayurvedic healthcare. *Aryavaidyasala*, the most prominent among them was started in 1902. These colleges and hospitals made *Ayurveda* popular. These institutions are sincerely engaged in ensuring quality Ayurvedic treatment to people in general. The state government runs many of these colleges while some others are run by the renowned '*Ashtavaidyas*', or stalwarts in Ayurvedic treatment. A number of Ayurvedic resorts have come up in the last decade with the mantra of promoting tourist arrivals to Kerala. 44 of them got the Olive leaf and Green Leaf certification from the department of Tourism, Kerala and are offering quality treatment to tourists. Qualified doctors and technicians offer Ayurvedic treatments where the duration of treatment ranges from one day to 51 days. These resorts have made the concept of Ayurvedic tourism popular in Kerala. All prominent hotels are now offering Ayurvedic treatment facilities as part of diversification plans and thus adding revenue. Ayurvedic spas have become an essential part of the hotels. However, along with these genuine Ayurvedic institutions, a number of fake institutions operate in the field, deceiving tourists. The classification procedure introduced by the Kerala Tourism Department has ensured quality of treatment and other physical facilities in the approved centers which functions as the cornerstone of Kerala's Ayurvedic tourism development. A survey conducted by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in the year 2000 at prominent tourist destinations of Kerala revealed that the average duration of stay of a foreign tourist is 14.1 days. One of the major reasons behind this long duration of stay is Ayurvedic treatment.

METHODOLOGY

Much of the tourism activity in Kerala is a relatively new development, and has been considered worthy of academic pursuit only since recent times. But the tourism industry is of sufficient economic importance and its impacts on economies, environments and societies are serious topics requiring detailed study. Tourism consists of diverse industrial sectors and academic subjects, reinforcing the need for an inter-disciplinary approach. Also, tourism suffers from less availability of data sources in terms of both comparability and quality. The issues involved in the study of health tourism in Kerala include social, economic, cultural and

marketing matters. The methodology used in this study is mainly analytical and empirical. The historical method has been used for studying travel history. The primary data collection is based on

- Opinion survey using questionnaire
- Interview and observation methods
- Official records and reports

A survey was conducted at various Ayurvedic centres located across Kerala including Ayurvedic hospitals, resorts and hotels where Ayurvedic treatments are offered to tourists. Interviews were conducted with 200 personnel that included entrepreneurs, doctors and visitors. Secondary sources were also researched. The study was conducted in 2002-03. Principal Component Analysis (CATPCA) and Method of Least Square (MLS) were used for analyses.

HEALTH TOURISM AND AYURVEDA – PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

This research was intended to analyze various issues involved in the field of *Ayurvedic* tourism development in Kerala. Our study reveals that inadequate quality of services and facilities are major obstacles in the *Ayurvedic* tourism development of Kerala. It also highlights the tremendous scope of *Ayurvedic* tourism in Kerala's socio-economic development.

Our study shows that some *Ayurvedic* centers offer medicines and treatments of sub-standard quality to tourists. The quality of medicines and its right usage in appropriate proportions is required for getting maximum benefit out of the treatments. By purely following the traditional treatment methods given in the classical texts, quality of treatments can be ensured. The quality of medicines and the percentage of contents should be checked and a mechanism related to checking should evolve. All *Ayurvedic* centers in Kerala do not have adequate treatment space and utensils. The government through its classification measures has ensured this in government centres.

Our study also shows that a majority of *Ayurvedic* centers do not have well qualified doctors. Complicated treatments like *Panchakarma* can be offered only under the guidance of experienced doctors. Lack of well-trained masseurs and technicians do more harm than good. In some *Ayurvedic* centers, the customers select treatments, which is against the basic rules of *Ayurveda*. Also treatments, which should not be offered independently, are offered in certain centers.

Most of the *Ayurvedic* centers do not strictly follow the rules related to duration of treatments. This could prove harmful. *Ayurvedic* treatment gives excellent results in the monsoon season when the atmosphere is cool and the body is receptive to oils and therapy. Treatments like *Pizhichil* can be offered only between 8 A.M to 10.A.M and from 4.P.M to 6.P.M. By projecting Ayurveda as a tourism product, the aim was to ensure Ayurvedic tourist arrivals during the monsoon, which is not a tourist season. However, a majority of the tourists arrive during the tourist season between October and March to receive treatments and this period does not fall in

the monsoon season. Also widely differing and high rates are charged by most of the treatment centers.

Commercialization and demand for *Ayurvedic* products in large volumes has resulted in reduction of the quality of medicines. Most of the drug manufactures are not able to follow traditional manufacturing practices during the manufacture of medicines due to heavy demand. Heavy demand has resulted in the manufacture of medicines in large volumes. For example, 'arishstam', an *Ayurvedic* drug should be kept beneath the earth for a period of one month. Besides a few drug manufacturers, none are typically following this procedure.

There are a huge number of drug formulations which require scientific confirmations. *Ayurvedic* drug formulations are graded according to their smell, taste and color which are specific to each and every medicine. It means that only an experienced physician or a pharmacist can test these medicines for quality. It is very difficult to test the medicines made with the substitutes, and it is dangerous to test specific medicines that could be harmful to a person conducting the test, that does not have adequate training. The subjective experiences of the person testing the medicine are also an important factor. Due to all these reasons, this cannot be taken as an error free method. The development of digital sensors which can smell and taste different materials along with assessing its quality is a gigantic step in the standardization of medicines. This digital sensor technology help in testing the physical properties of medicines and will provide graphical outputs too. Standardization of *Ayurvedic* medicines will enable it to have a global reach. Even though the manufactures are asked to register with the drugs controller and acquire Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification, which is a mark of standardized procedures to ensure cleanliness and appropriate ingredients, many of them have managed to evade such restrictions. The concept of *Ayurvedic* tourism will further help the growth of *Ayurvedic* research and development.

A majority of *Ayurveda* doctors consider involvement of tourism in *Ayurveda* as beneficial to its growth. Most of the tourists in *Ayurvedic* centers come exclusively for treatment and are prepared to stay for an adequate period. Following strict diet regimen and avoiding physical exertion are some of the preconditions for cure from diseases. However, some tourists are not ready to follow the strict *Ayurvedic* rules, which impede and effective treatment.

Many *Ayurvedic* centers located in Kovalam beach in the southern tip of Kerala have flouted the basic rules of *Ayurveda*. Some fake parlours even employ regular female masseurs with no *Ayurvedic* training, to lure clientele. Some *Ayurvedic* centers offer treatments in open air, especially beaches, practices that are against the basic tenets of *Ayurveda*. Another negative impact of the growth of *Ayurveda* is the tendency to simplify it. Some of these centers offer *Ayurveda* as a simple skilled method of healing in the form of massages accompanied by Indian music.

There is experimental proof that thirty percent of tourists to Kerala arrive for health holidays. This will help the hospitality, transport and food & beverage industries. *Ayurvedic* tourism development has helped skilled, semi-skilled and non-skilled people in gaining employment in other allied industries too. *Ayurvedic* tourism has enriched the wide range of attractions of Kerala helping it regain its position as a land of varied offerings. Diversification of

tourism products has resulted in repeated visits. About 90% of the customers in approved *Ayurveda* centers are from foreign countries. Generally in the tourism industry, a significant part of the earnings is spent on importing goods meant for tourists. As a result, the benefits leak away. Since *Ayurveda* uses traditional resources, practices and facilities, the earnings will remain in the society and will help the local population.

84.2 percent of international tourists are attracted to *Ayurvedic* treatments through websites. This shows the significance of adoption of modern communication means for effective marketing. As marketing tools, websites are followed by information through word of mouth and brochures. Since *Ayurvedic* health holidays are in a stage of growth, more effective focused marketing techniques targeting the potential customers are required to attract more tourists. Majority of tourists visit *Ayurvedic* centers for rejuvenation of their mind and body. The increased health consciousness and the lack of side effects is the major reason. The repeated visits to government approved *Ayurvedic* centers shows the quality and efficacy of treatments offered there. When compared to *Ayurvedic* spas in hotels the *Ayurvedic* resorts gained less tourists but the duration of treatments are long as these resorts offer complete *Ayurvedic* treatments. The efficacy of complicated treatments like Panchakarma was proved on the basis of biochemical parameters. A study by Schneider et al (1990) proved that the *Panchakarma* subjects have significantly less distress, anxiety, depression and fatigue and increased vigor. Subjects undergoing this programme have shown significantly higher speed of visual processing ability, reduced coronary artery disease risk factors and cardiovascular risk factors. *Ayurvedic* spas associated with hotels offer treatment of shorter duration and attract more customers than *Ayurvedic* resorts. Although *Ayurvedic* hospitals, *Ayurvedic* resorts and hotels are offering *Ayurvedic* treatments, more treatment centers with good facilities are required as the number of tourists is increasing.

Ayurvedic tourism development has helped protection of Kerala's architecture too. Many of the old houses and mansions constructed in ancient times i.e, the "*Nalukettu*" and "*Ettukettu*" were refinished to start *Ayurvedic* centers. Many of these damaged houses were dismantled and carefully reconstructed at tourist destinations.

The tourists who are attracted by *Ayurvedic* centers are explorers whose main interest is to experience and understand ancient Indian systems of medicine and practices. They understand the richness and uniqueness of the Indian way of life and adapt fully with the circumstances. Health tourism has benefited Kerala society in the form of increased communication with other people, improved self image of the Kerala society in other countries, growing range of employment opportunities, motivation for learning, modernization of infrastructure and increased urbanization. New employment opportunities to doctors, technicians, masseurs, receptionists etc. are some of the important advantages of *Ayurvedic* tourism development. The study revealed that employees are receiving increased salaries due to increased *Ayurvedic* tourist arrivals. Cleanliness and superior facilities according to western standards is another specialty. Modernization and increased interest in *Ayurveda* has helped in the preparation of traditional *Ayurvedic* medicines under brand names. Many of those medicines are exported after scientific clinical analysis, earning valuable foreign exchange. The growth of *Ayurveda* as a form of medicine has highlighted the importance of opening up overseas centers. Some of the *Ayurvedic*

centers of Kerala have opened such centers resulting in the creation of overseas employment opportunities.

Our study also reveals that *Ayurvedic* centers are only offering *Panchakarma* treatment and its pre-operative and post-operative treatments. The science of *Ayurveda* is much beyond *Panchakarma* and includes the elaborate eight branches of the Vedic science. The emergence of this new area of activity has helped the small state of Kerala in gaining much in monetary terms. Although it had a tremendous scope for development, the inadequate quality of services and facilities are major hindrances for its sustainability.

MAJOR SUGGESTIONS

Based on our study, we suggest that the following points be taken into account while formulating policies and plans for the growth and development of *Ayurvedic* tourism in Kerala.

1. Develop the *Ayurvedic* tourism market further, through marketing campaigns among first and second generation Indian communities, especially Non-Resident Keralites settled in the west that are familiar with *Ayurveda*, to increase tourist arrivals during monsoon season.
2. Change the nomenclature of hotels that offer short-term massages and peripheral applications give themselves, from 'Ayurvedic centers' to 'well-being' centers.
3. Direct flights to Kerala from the major tourist generating countries of Western Europe, United States of America and Australia that can help further growth of tourist arrivals.
4. The heavy taxes charged by the state government of Kerala on hotel rooms, and food and liquor meant for tourists be reduced to reasonable levels.
5. Medicinal Plants Board be strengthened to promote cultivation of various medicinal plants keeping in mind external and internal demands. Central and state government assistance for the owners of medicinal gardens be routed through this board.
6. The state government constitutes a 'Tourism Promotion Council' with non-resident Keralites. Migrant Indian workforce of Kerala origin that currently resides in other countries be given a role in tourism promotion of Kerala.
7. *Ayurvedic* centers be categorized according to offerings, and price of *Ayurvedic* treatments be fixed based on the facilities there.
8. Clinical laboratories be opened along with *Ayurvedic* centers to test blood, urine etc.
9. Working time be fixed for all institutions offering *Ayurvedic* treatment facilities to tourists.
10. The government frame rules to ban *Ayurvedic* centers running without doctors and without adequate treatment facilities that make use of the ignorance of the western tourist about *Ayurveda*. The approval and classification scheme be made compulsory to all centers offering treatment facilities to tourists.

11. The government entrust local bodies to function as watchdogs for ensuring high quality of service at *Ayurvedic* centers.
12. A mechanism to monitor the quality of herbal products and medicines be evolved. Measures for periodic banning of substandard batches of *Ayurvedic* medicines be taken.
13. Legal measures be adopted to curtail the practice of depicting dietary supplements as medicines.
14. Drug manufacturing companies be asked to mention the names of ingredients on drug bottles and packets.
15. *Ayurvedic* educational institutions and courses be upgraded to incorporate breakthrough in research and technology.
16. Measures be taken to invest in R&D. Clinical analysis of popular medicines and scientific confirmations can create global attention on *Ayurvedic* products.
17. *Ayurveda* be integrated with other mainstream systems of medicine to bring up the idea of integrated medicine and to meet the health requirements of people. This is due to the failure of any single system of medicine to fully satisfy the humans' growing health requirements. Holistic villages offering all such facilities be formed.
18. Ayurveda can be linked up with other attractions like folk arts of North Kerala or its heritage spots. The art forms like *theyyam* and *thira* will enrich the total tourism experience.
19. Collection, cataloguing and digitalization of ancient *Ayurvedic* manuscripts be initiated.
20. Marketing of tourism products abroad take into consideration the number of popular Indian restaurants in those countries. Marketing strategies focused on these restaurants situated at prominent cities of the world would give more results, than marketing focused on a wider society.
21. Facilities for blind, infirm and handicapped visitors be arranged at various centers. This should be given high priority during resort and accommodation planning.
22. The Kerala example of *Ayurvedic* health holidays can be followed by states like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh etc. which are famous for their *Ayurvedic* tradition and presence of precious herbs.

CONCLUSION

Kerala, the southern state of India, has been referred to as a “paradise for tourists” by media worldwide. A gradual growth in both foreign and domestic tourist arrivals has happened in the last decade. This is mainly due to the diversification and enrichment of existing tourism products, by adding additional offerings like *Ayurvedic* health holidays, back-water holidays, eco tourism etc. A number of measures are to be taken to sustain the growth of *Ayurvedic* holidays.

The tourism planners, entrepreneurs and policy makers should carefully address the problems faced by this fast-growing industry which is a unique opportunity for Kerala. Opening up of *Ayurveda* cautiously, scientifically and systematically to the world will result in the all round economic development of Kerala.

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THE EFFECTIVE USE OF GUEST SPEAKERS IN THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM CURRICULUM

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ABSTRACT

It is important for hospitality and tourism programs to maintain good relationships with industry. This happens when industry executives and managers participate in the educational process by speaking to groups of students on campus. This paper addresses some of the benefits of having industry speakers on campus, suggests ways to enhance the value of the speaking engagement, and presents a model to ensure a match between the presentation and classroom objectives.

KEYWORDS: Curriculum; Education; Executive Interaction; Industry; Guest Speaker; Teaching

INTRODUCTION

Virtually all hospitality and tourism programs utilize managers and executives from industry to contribute to the educational process. This industry/education collaboration may require a large personal commitment by an industry professional as well as a commitment on the part of a firm, for example when an executive agrees to serve on the program's advisory board. Also of importance, although requiring lesser effort, is when an industry professional agrees to make an appearance as a guest speaker for a hospitality and tourism program. This paper addresses the second situation where an industry representative agrees to either speak to a specific class or address a session open to all students in the program.

A literature review of this topic has found only a few references on utilizing guest speakers effectively in the classroom. While a follow up web search of "Guest Speakers" turned up multiple lists of top guest speakers, motivational speakers, extraordinary speakers etc. However, only two references were directed at ways to successfully use guest speakers. One site (www.developfaculty.com/tips/tip46.htm) gave a cryptic list of thirteen points titled "Using Guest Speakers Effectively". The second site referenced an article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* by James M. Lang (2008), in which he chronicled a personal poor use of a guest speaker and a good use of a guest speaker by a colleague.

Similar to Mr. Lang who has not had a great respect for using guest speakers, many people feel educators who use industry speakers are just getting out of preparing for class. However, effective teachers have a strategy to make sure students get the most from a speaker and that the interaction is a positive experience for both the students and the industry representative. This strategy is by no means effortless, and requires pre and post speaker planning by the classroom instructor.

There are several great advantages to having speakers from industry. One major benefit is that students are exposed to industry professionals who have been successful in their jobs and can relate the problems and pleasures of the industry from firsthand experience as well as discuss their career paths (Okumus and Wong, 2004). They can also discuss the current competitive environment and relate specific competitive methods that have been successful for them. If professors have been doing a good job of presenting relevant information, industry speakers can add credibility to the course and the faculty member.

Another advantage is the opportunity for industry professionals to get a perspective of what it is like to be a faculty member. While most faculty members have industry experience, it is less likely that practitioners have an understanding of what it is like to prepare an effective presentation that stimulates students day after day after day. Being a guest speaker provides a small taste of academia and might encourage some industry practitioners to pursue further education with the thought of becoming a much needed faculty member.

Guest speakers also provide a conduit for student contact with hospitality firms. Classroom interactions allow company representatives to assess the quality of students and their level of preparedness to enter the industry, which is helpful to companies when deciding whether or not to recruit at an institution. Information provided by the guest speaker can help students prepare for job interviews, give students confidence in their career choice and provide networking opportunities (Metrejean, Pittman and Zarzeski, 2002). In addition to aiding the recruitment process, classroom involvement can also provide two-way positive support when firms share information and students can work on solutions to industry problems.

Often, inviting an industry professional to address a class is a first step in setting up a long term relationship with a corporation. The more a company can learn about a high quality program, the more likely a company will support the program, either through direct financial contributions, hiring students, providing internship opportunities or simply representing the program to the industry in general.

The authors of this paper have each taught over 30 years in a variety of major universities in the U.S. and have had the opportunity to see guest speakers misused by well intentioned faculty and administrators on multiple occasions. There are times when a guest speaker is used to fill a void in a syllabus, to replace an absent faculty member, at the discretion of the administration, or by the express desire of the speaker or the company he/she works for. There are times when industry professionals ask to come in to speak to classes for the sole purpose of recruiting the students.

We have seen the same industry professional assigned to speak to several classes over a one or two day period. The same students hear the same presentation more than once. This is not good for the industry professional or the academic community, and specifically it is a lost opportunity. The sad part is something that could have been such a win-win situation ends up being a disaster or a mediocre learning experience at best. Often times what is just “common sense”, needs to be pointed out as much as “rocket science”.

The current presentation will be used to develop a model/ flow chart of steps that can be followed to develop a positive classroom speaker situation.

THE INDUSTRY SPEAKER’S PERSPECTIVE

A successful industry manager or executive would not dream of wasting human resources by having purposeless meetings. Effective meetings will have an announced purpose and an agenda. The person conducting the meeting will be prepared and have necessary materials distributed ahead of time. This pattern should also be followed when addressing a class of students. The speaker should ask some questions of him/herself and the course instructor. For example, a speaker might ask, why am I here? What is the goal of this class session? Once these questions have been clarified, the speaker can prepare the presentation to communicate a specific message and accomplish specific goals.

It seems that sometimes industry speakers forget what it was like sitting in the classroom instead of being the presenter. (It seems faculty members often forget this too.) Students are quick to become excited and energized by good industry speakers. On the other hand, they pull no punches in letting other students and the instructor know when a speaker was boring, unprepared and uninformative.

Speakers need to realize the tremendous impact they can have on students. One particular company that was unsuccessful with students signing up for job interviews requested that their recruiter be allowed to speak to some classes. The recruiter gave a good presentation that not only told about the company but was tailored to the particular class being addressed. In a human resources class she talked about recruitment, employee evaluation and dealing with ethnic diversity. In a marketing class she gave illustrations of how the company selected sites and made product decisions. The result was that students became excited about the company and a full schedule of interviews was set up by the end of the day. We have literally seen an impressive recruiter literally turn around the number of students accepting offers at a company.

While it is relatively easy to have a positive impact on students, it is also easy to have a negative impact. After a presentation by a poorly prepared speaker, students have been quite forthcoming in saying that their impression of the company is such that they are not interested in working for it. One of the most negative impressions comes from an aura of arrogance. Industry speakers sometimes feel the need to impress students with how great they are and how incompetent the students are and how small their chance for success. There are better ways to let students know the realities of the industry without putting them down. Indeed, it is usually the

best students with the most industry experience who react the most negatively to the arrogant speaker.

What contributes to an effective guest speaker engagement?

Interaction between the faculty member and speaker ahead of time

It is the faculty member's responsibility to share the course teaching objectives, possible assignments concerning the topic the speaker is presenting and course syllabus. It is an absolute must that the faculty member and speaker communicate ahead of the scheduled engagement. If the speaker has initiated the contact then they must share some of the responsibility with regards to understanding the course content. Unfortunately, not all faculty members will make the effort to ensure the speaker's success so a speaker who cares about his/her image will want to make sure they know what they are getting into. If the speaker does not get the information they need, it may be better to cancel or ask to speak to another class rather than make a poor impression. While on the one hand we have seen an impressive recruiter turn around the image of their company, we have also seen the reverse take place. The role of the faculty member will be developed more fully later in the article.

Necessary preparation

Although speaking to a college class is usually a little more relaxed than giving a formal speech at a meeting or convention, many of the same criteria for effective speaking apply to the classroom setting as to other speaking situations. It is somewhat surprising that some industry speakers feel that it takes no preparation to address a college class. Some speakers who would never consider addressing a corporate or association meeting without considerable preparation will come into a classroom with no plan of what they will discuss, or if they have a plan, they bring no materials to support their presentation.

Occasionally a speaker comes along who does so much public speaking that he/she appears to talk totally off-the-cuff. Unless a speaker falls into this category, they should not plan to "wing it." A good presentation takes time to prepare. Unprepared speakers will find themselves in an uncomfortable situation, and unless the course instructor is prepared for this eventuality with leading questions, the course period will have been wasted and the speaker's company portrayed unfavorably.

Guest speakers need to understand that today's students are used to being entertained. They have grown up in a big-screen, iPod, instant information environment with constant stimulation and interactive learning. Expectations that faculty and lecturers will provide stimulating presentations are high. PowerPoint presentations and the incorporation of other media such as film clips and computer interaction are becoming commonplace. Whether this is as it should be is not the question. It is a fact of life in today's academic settings. With this understanding, speakers should consider what their company can provide in the way of film clips, PowerPoint presentations and handouts.

If all this sounds like it is a lot of work for a speaker, it is not as difficult as it may seem. It does not mean that the speaker has to turn the classroom into a circus. As was mentioned

earlier, most college classrooms are still somewhat informal venues. What it does mean is that being effective in the classroom requires more than a ten minute presentation on what the speaker's company does and then asking for questions. Questions will come from a stimulating presentation but the students need to be engaged by the speaker.

Balancing "war stories" with content

Most people enjoy talking about themselves and their own career paths. In truth, students often prefer to be entertained with stories and interesting situations ("war stories") than to discuss textbook content. However, there needs to be a balance between telling "war stories" and actually teaching something. The best situation is when a guest speaker can use industry experiences to illustrate how to apply (or not to apply) a theory, concept, or idea that incorporates the learning objectives of the course. Some use of entertaining stories is fine because it gets the students' attention. But each class period should also have a plan to make sure it is also an educational experience or we might as well tell the students to go home and watch *American Idol*.

A particularly popular industry speaker illustrates this point very well. This person had many years of industry experience and was quite a dynamic speaker. He was often called upon to present educational seminars to industry and was also a popular speaker at university hospitality and tourism programs. The audience always listened closely and laughed often at his many funny comments and the amusing situations he had encountered. The authors also agreed that the presentation was enjoyable and well orchestrated. However, after hearing the speaker several times, we began to ask exactly what the audience had learned or were supposed to learn. In no instance could a participant relate anything of substance that they took away from the presentation. It is imperative that a guest speaker do more than entertain, the entertainment should be a means of imparting information appropriate for the course content.

Tying the presentation content to course objectives

It is important that a guest speaker's presentation fit with the length and format of the class being addressed. Classes at most universities tend to be somewhere in the neighborhood of either fifty minutes or an hour and twenty minutes. While it is certainly appropriate for a speaker to give an overview of his/her company, it is difficult to fill a whole class period with general company information. This is another reason why it is necessary to have a speaker tie the presentation to the course objectives and also why it is good to match the expertise of the speaker with the course content. Ideally, a speaker for a marketing course would be someone from the sales or marketing department. If the speaker is the firm's recruiter, then it might be more appropriate for that person to speak to an introductory class or a human resources class. At the very least, if a recruiter is going to speak to classes such as finance or management, he/she should discuss the presentation with someone in the company knowledgeable about the specific topic before visiting campus.

THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY MEMBER

Setting expectations for the speaker

Everyone needs to know what is expected of them if they are to do a good job and guest speakers are no exception. In most instances, it not appropriate for a class to be used exclusively as a recruiting session for the company. Speakers need to be made aware of what the course is about as well as the topic and objectives for the specific session. Providing a course syllabus, course objectives, and a description of the course is important. The course instructor needs to describe the students in terms of career interests, amount of industry experience and previous coursework (Hess, 2004). A faculty member who invites a speaker whose presentation appears to be unfocused and not relevant to the course probably shares much of the blame because they did not adequately communicate with the speaker.

An effective learning experience requires that the topic of the speaker's presentation be tied into the learning objectives for the course. Ideally, the presentation will be tied to the specific material that is scheduled for the class period when the speaker will appear. Realistically, this is not always possible so the instructor needs to have some flexibility to accommodate the speaker's schedule. For example, if the sales manager of a hotel is available on a certain date but sales management is not the topic for that date, adjustments need to be made. One solution is to shift chapters and topics around a bit. While this sounds simple, in courses that present material in a manner that builds one topic on another, it can cause some problems in comprehending class material. However, this tradeoff is probably worth it to get industry speakers into the classroom. It won't hurt students to read a chapter in the textbook earlier than it would usually be read and then read it again later in the proper sequence.

It is often appropriate to provide the speaker with reading materials that accompany the class session with which he/she will be involved. Most speakers appreciate knowing what preparation the students have had and what they are studying so they can better relate their presentation to them. Specific goals for the class period should be made known as well so the speaker can incorporate them whenever possible. In most instances speakers are happy to do this if class topics are within their area or expertise. For example, if a general manager (GM) is addressing a finance class and the topic of the day is cash flow, it should be easy for the GM to discuss how his hotel handles cash flow. This makes the class more relevant for the students and should generate interest.

Preparing the class

The effectiveness of a guest speaker also depends on how well the class has been prepared for the visit (Mooney, 1998). Students should be given information on the company that the speaker represents, or better yet, be required to conduct research on their own as an assignment. Examining the company's web site can provide some good information. Students should also be encouraged to ask questions that relate to the topic of the class period as well as general questions about the speaker's company.

Questions can be stimulated in several ways. If the instructor wants to make sure that certain issues are covered, students might be provided with a list of questions they need to have answered by the speaker. In large classes, where students tend to be more hesitant to ask

questions, questions might be submitted in written form to the speaker. Some instructors of large classes have found that providing extra credit for those asking intelligent questions stimulates oral interaction. Whatever the mechanism used, stimulating questions provides a more interesting, interactive format and makes it easier for the guest speaker.

Questions by the instructor

It is usually better to let the students ask the questions, but sometimes circumstances require the instructor to ask questions. If there are specific learning objectives that are not being met by student questions, the instructor may need to intervene to draw out the valuable perspective of the guest on certain issues. Also, if students are slow to get started in questioning or if there is an awkward lull in questions, the instructor needs to be ready to stimulate discussion. In some instances an unprepared guest speaker can still provide a stimulating learning experience through appropriate questions.

Discussing with the guest speaker what is and is not acceptable in the classroom

As with the rest of society, universities have become more sensitive to issues relating to gender, ethnicity and respect for the individual. While hospitality corporations also work hard to indoctrinate employees as to the proper behavior in the workplace, sometimes speakers need to be reminded that while college campuses are less restrictive in many ways than corporations, the same need for sensitivity exists. It may seem insulting to suggest that a speaker would say or do something inappropriate on a college campus, but it does happen. Recruiters have been known to make inappropriate advances to students and there are cases where speakers inadvertently say things that are offensive to individuals. A particularly bad instance is noted later in this paper. So as not to alienate a potential speaker, the hospitality program can include a general letter reminding speakers that they need to be cognizant of the makeup of their audience. The letter could include an introductory paragraph apologizing for any implications that the speaker would do anything wrong but state that it is simply a matter of policy that the letter is sent to all guest speakers.

Thank-you letters and feedback

Faculty need to understand that industry professionals are exceptionally busy, and while it may be flattering to be invited to a university to speak, it is also an extra responsibility in an already packed day. It is appropriate to present the speaker with some memento of their visit to campus. At the very least, a thank you letter is in order. The letter can be very important in personnel evaluations at some corporations, as being invited to a university is a sign of respect and demonstrates an employee's involvement with service to the community and company stakeholders.

It is very important to gain feedback from the students who were exposed to the speaker to determine effectiveness (Metrejean et al, 2002; Mooney, 1998). This and the course instructor's feedback can be provided to the guest speaker. If the expectation is that the speaker will be invited back or that the speaker will ask to come back, it is appropriate to point out where the presentation was especially effective in meeting class goals and what points would be good to be covered in the future. Of course providing feedback needs to be done very diplomatically, keeping in mind the relationship of the company with the program and the fact that guest speakers are essentially volunteers!

A MODEL/FLOW CHART FOR INCORPORATING INDUSTRY SPEAKERS

Figure 1 summarizes the process for interacting with guest speakers in a flow model. The model illustrates steps to make sure that the speaking engagement is a positive experience for everyone involved. Step one includes the initial approach by the speaker, administrator or faculty member. It is important to match up the expertise of the speaker with the appropriate course (or speaking outlet such as student groups or general presentations to large student bodies would follow the same format).

In step two it is important to determine the goals of the presentation. In step three, setting expectations and establishing an open line of communication is essential. This is when it is necessary to share course materials, syllabi, course objectives, and/or assignments that will aid the guest speaker in delivering a good message. Step four includes preparing the class or general audience for the guest speaker. An assignment on the guest speaker or the company will provide the students with the necessary background information to make them good participants.

Step five is the nuts and bolts part of getting the audio visual up and going. Our great technology offers great opportunities for good presentations and terrible disasters. Make sure there is a back-up plan. A set of overheads for the projector never hurts. The final stage, step six, finishes up the loop. This is where feed-back and thank you letters come in. Do not fall down on this step. This is when you can give important information to the presenter for the future and bond your working relationship.

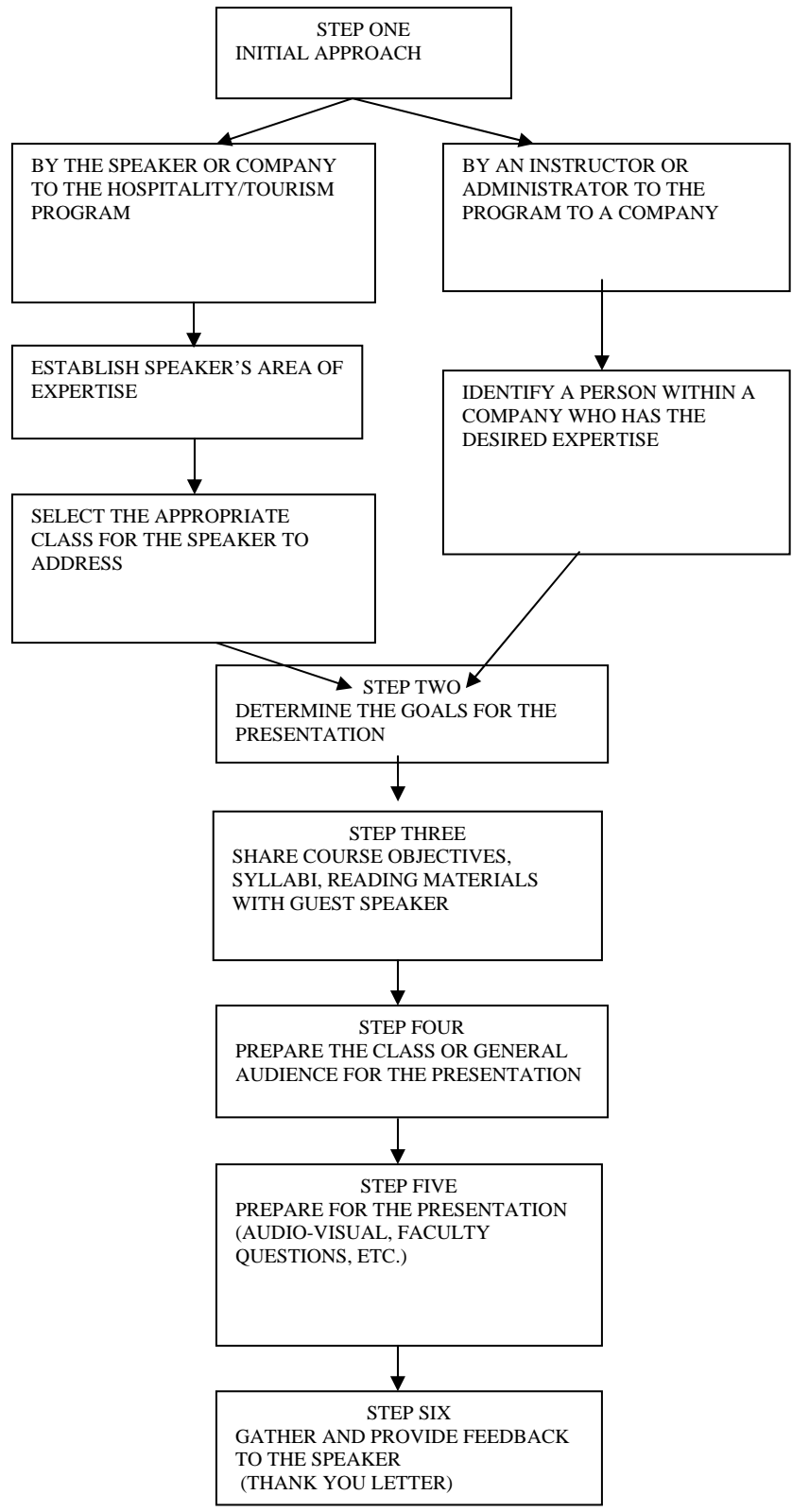


Figure 1: A Flow Model for Effective Guest Speakers

In our career we have seen many examples of guest speakers in classrooms that we would like to provide some insight with three real examples that we have titled “The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly”.

EXAMPLES: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE UGLY

The Good

The best situation for using industry guest speakers is when there is a positive benefit for both the speaker’s company and the hospitality program. An actual example of this is when the recruiter for a well known restaurant chain requested that she be allowed to speak to a hospitality class. One of the authors was teaching Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and the timing was such that the visit from the firm corresponded with a class session when the topic was branding and segmentation. It was requested that, in addition to talking about her firm, the recruiter tie the presentation into the branding and segmentation topic which seemed to be especially appropriate as the firm operated in several different segments with different concept names. Students were told ahead of time that when they read the material in the book to try to relate it to the company that would be coming and to prepare questions to ask. The recruiter modified her standard presentation to include a discussion of how the different brands were targeted to specific market segments. This opened a discussion of how segments were identified and selected and the importance of branding. The company was presented in a good light, different career opportunities were brought to light, students could relate textbook information on branding and segmentation to a real life situation and they were prepared to ask intelligent questions which made a favorable impression on the recruiter.

The Bad

In another actual situation, a company requested class time to acquaint students with the opportunities available with their company. Unfortunately, the company representative was not experienced in working with universities and thought that the more classes he could address, the better. The problem was that each class received the same presentation without consideration of what the course was about. To make matters worse, many of the students were in two or more of the classes that were addressed and asked that they be excused (or didn’t bother to ask) which made for poor attendance. In a couple of instances an hour and fifteen minute class lasted only twenty minutes. There was wasted valuable class time and this made the presenter appear to be unprepared. Because many students had already heard the presentation and were never prepared for it in the first place, questions were minimal and the image presented to the company was of a student body that was not motivated.

The fault for this situation lies more with the contact from the program than with the industry professional. Exposure should have been limited and certainly controlled so that students were only exposed to the speaker one time. At the very least, the presenter should have been coached to discuss a different aspect of the company in each class so that the presentation fit with the course content.

The Ugly

Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, things just don't work out. In this last example, a graduate of a hospitality program who had been working in industry expressed an interest in addressing a class. Some people would consider it an honor, and indeed it is, to speak to a class, especially at their alma mater, and of course programs want to maintain good relationships with their alumni. In this particular instance, the speaker did not prepare and thus had an unfocused, rambling, self-aggrandizing account of his own limited industry experience. What made this situation not just bad, but ugly, was the use of ethnic slurs and minority stereotyping. The instructor quickly stopped the class, and needless to say, the alumnus was never invited to return. The only positive thing that came from this experience was that it sparked a lively discussion in the next class period about the importance of diversity to our industry and the necessity to understand and accept our differences.

CONCLUSION

Bringing industry speakers into the classroom provides a great amount of potential benefit for everyone involved. It can be the beginning of an ongoing relationship between hospitality and tourism program and a corporation that can lead to support for the program and a continuous supply of employees for the company. It can also lead to benefits for individual faculty such as internships and access to company information to use as examples and case studies in class. If personal relationships are formed between individual faculty members and industry practitioners, it provides hospitality and tourism programs with candid insights into the current state of the industry and helps provide vicarious experiences to relate in class. At the same time, the company can get an outside opinion on problems and current issues from an unbiased source on an informal basis.

To gain the maximum benefit for everyone involved, providing guidelines for faculty to follow in the use of guest speakers is advisable. An understanding of how to ensure that speakers enhance learning related to specific courses is important. Providing information about the course to the speakers that will help them provide the kind of information that enhances learning is good for the speaker as it improves receptivity by the audience being addressed. Preparing the students for the speaker is as important as preparing the speaker for the students. Interacting with speakers ahead of time is not meant to take away from spontaneity or to attempt to dictate what the speakers should say. However, setting up a more formalized program for the use of guest speakers from industry which includes providing guidelines for speakers enhances the possibility of a win-win situation for students, the company and the hospitality and tourism program.

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PREDICTING GUESTS' LEVEL OF PERCEIVED
AUTHENTICITY WHEN VISITING A THEME PARK:
THE EXAMPLE OF DISNEY'S EPCOT'S WORLD SHOWCASE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of authenticity within the guests' overall theme park experience and to explore the variables that may predict guests' perception of "reproduced" authenticity experiences when visiting a theme park. Interviews were conducted with 336 local residents, domestic, and international tourists who had visited Disney's Epcot Center's World Showcase that features ten international country pavilions. The findings revealed that in general guests perceived the various components featured at Epcot's World Showcase country pavilions (overall impression, architecture, and food) to be truthful, authentic, and realistic. Three regressions models predicted guests' perception of "truthfulness," "authenticity", and "realistic" experience at Epcot's World Showcase. The regression models suggested that duration of actual exposure to the attraction may yield a perception that the pavilions' architecture was less authentic. In addition, guests' extensive travel experience had a negative impact on the perceived level of authenticity of the ethnic food served at the pavilions. Furthermore, extensive traveling history yielded lower perceived level of authenticity with regard to food. Finally, patrons who allowed immersing themselves in an out-of-the ordinary experience perceived their experience at the World Showcase to be more authentic. The results of this preliminary study might assist designers, architects, landscape planners, chefs, and other theme park designers to develop guest experiences that may be perceived more authentic.

KEYWORDS: authenticity, guest experience, theme parks.

INTRODUCTION

Because of the contemporary shift to the experience economy, goods and services are no longer enough. The consumers today want experiences, memorable events that engage them in a personal way (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). However, in the current stage of the experience economy, consumers are faced with countless experience choices, many of them are consciously and exaggeratedly "staged experiences" that are unreal and imaginary. Gilmore and Pine (2007) argue that consumers' purchasing decisions are based on how real they perceive a product to be (Gilmore and Pine, 2007). They also argue that the success of companies no longer lies on its operational abilities but rather on sustaining consumers' perception of the experience as authentic (Gilmore and Pine, 2007).

The notion of authenticity has been discussed in leisure, recreation, and tourism literature for several decades. In spite of the search for authenticity in many aspects of human behavior, consumer experience in the leisure, recreation, and tourism industries have been artificially-simulated in pre-fabricated environments (Walmsley, 2003). When consumers want a so-called authentic experience, the "management of consumers' perception of authenticity becomes the primary new source for competitive advantage" (Gilmore and Pine, 2007).

This study is a pioneering attempt to evaluate empirically the impact of consumers' exposure to "real experiences" on their perception of "reproduced" authenticity experiences in a theme park. More specifically, an attempt was made to predict guests' level of perceived authenticity when visiting a theme park. Disney's Epcot theme park was chosen as a frame of reference for the study, as its World Showcase section features ten different international country pavilions that attempt to communicate authenticity and realism. The study did not address the respondents' frame of reference to eleventh pavilion that represents the U.S.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Authenticity has been defined as "being actually and exactly what is claimed" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2008). A more extensive definition was suggested by Ralph (1976) who defined authenticity as a "...genuine, unadulterated, without hypocrisy and honest to itself, not just in terms of superficial characteristics but in depth..." (Ralph, 1976).

In the tourism and travel discipline, most contributions suggest that research on the role of authenticity within the context of tourism and hospitality is in its infancy. Most researchers followed the initial analysis of authenticity in travel introduced by MacCannell (1973, 1976) who suggested that people feel unsatisfied with their immediate world and the modern lifestyle, so they travel in search of a different way of life, even for a short period of time. MacCannell (1973) also introduced the concept of "staged authenticity" as it relates to tourist settings. He analyzed the structure of the tourist settings by using the term stage set, and affirmed that contemporary industrial society is highlighted by touristy space. One of his examples shows how the Walt Disney Company uses it to its advantage (1973, p. 597).

Several scholars (Olsen, 2002; Reisinger and Steiner, 2006) conducted extensive literature review on the concept of authenticity within the context of tourism. Their reviews attempted to explore how authenticity is defined and applied in tourism. Reisinger and Steiner (2006) concluded that the term has generated "conflicting and irreconcilable differences" among scholars, and therefore "the notion of authenticity is too unstable to claim the paradigmatic status of a concept." They recommended that the word authenticity should be replaced by more explicit, less pretentious terms like "genuine, actual, accurate, real, and true" when referring to judgments that tourists and scholars make about the nature and origins of artifacts and tourism activities" (Reisinger and Steiner, 2006).

Recent empirical research suggested that the concept of authenticity is not free-standing and is linked in to several predicting on intervening variables. For example, Matheson (2008) investigated the concept of authenticity within the context of a Celtic music festival. She concluded that the festival audience attached authenticity to the music on the basis of their emotional interaction with the music. Cole's (2007) long-term study in Eastern Indonesia examined authenticity from three perspectives: government, tourists, and villagers. He concluded that the deliberations about authenticity should examine how the notion is articulated, by whom and for what purposes (Cole, 2007). Chhabra (2005) also suggested that because tourists and suppliers do not have harmonized characteristics, it is important to determine the changeability of definitions across categories of populations.

Tasci et al (2004) introduced the need for a balance between authenticity and familiarity in a tourism destination. He argued that this should be the goal for both the demand and supply sides of the tourism as a product. Tasci et al (2004) stated that this balance is essential to assure the tourists that they will attain the experience they desire. It also provides benefits to the hosts by saving their identity while achieving economic development (Tasci et al, 2004, p. 89).

With the continuing growth of the global tourism industry, it is necessary to investigate the impact of perceived authenticity on the guests' experience. For example, should an Italian restaurant be perceived by patrons as "real Italian?" Should a Cuban night club be exactly as a night club in Havana? Should a theme park truthfully represent audience-familiar landmarks? While there is no reliable measurement for "truthfulness" or "authenticity," guests' perception of their actual experience can be measured and the impact of truthfulness and authenticity on their overall experience can be evaluated.

Consumers' perception of authenticity within the context of theme parks could be used as a tool to guide designers and operators to offer products and guests' experiences that will respond to their needs and wants. It would also be interesting to find out to what market segments perceived authenticity as an important component of their overall experience.

As a concept, authenticity has assumed central importance within tourism studies, but its limited application outside ethnic, history or cultural tourism has led some to rethink its meaning and definition to justify and enhance its explanatory power (Wang, 1999). For the purpose of this study, authenticity is defined as true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, genuine, actual character, not counterfeited (Funk and Wagnall, 1993).

THE THEME PARK AND ATTRACTION INDUSTRY

Theme parks represent a relatively new concept of tourist attractions and strive to create a fantasy atmosphere of another place and time. Many designers and product development specialists concentrate on one dominant theme, more often with possible sub-themes. Visual and vocal statements primarily communicate the theme as well as other senses like scent and touch. In many themed attractions, hotels, restaurants and other tourist facilities, theming is reflected through architecture, landscaping, costumed personnel, rides, shows, food services, merchandising, and any other intangible products and services that contribute to the guest experience (Milman, 2008).

The global theme park and attraction industry has increased in popularity in the past few decades. The world's top 25 parks hosted 187.6 million guests in 2007, up 0.5% from 2006 (Rubin, 2008). Theme park spending worldwide is expected to grow at a 4.6% compound annual rate during the 2007-2011 period, from \$22.8 billion in 2006 to \$28.5 billion in 2011. The United States remains the largest market (PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, 2007).

According to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), there are about 400 amusement parks and traditional attractions in the United States that hosted 335 million people in 2006. According to the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA), 28 percent of Americans visited at least one amusement park in 2005. In addition, 50% of Americans indicated that they would likely visit an amusement park within the next 12 months (International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions, 2008).

While statistical data on the global visitor profile is scarce, theme parks and attractions appear to attract a higher proportion of visitors between optimum earning ages. A recent survey sponsored by the International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) reported that 39% of respondents in the 25-34 age group and 33% of the 35-49 age group attended a theme park or an amusement park during the May 2006-May 2007 period (Cliff, 2007). These figures represented the largest bloc of parental respondents within the sample.

In spite of the recent proliferation of the global theme park industry, very limited statistical data and empirical research is available on the motivation, experience, and consumption characteristics of their visitors.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of authenticity in the guests' overall theme park experience and to explore the variables that may predict guest's perception of "reproduced" authenticity experiences when visiting a theme park.

Limited empirical studies were conducted to measure or evaluate "reproduced" or "staged" authenticity." Matheson (2008) argued that the majority of empirical studies associated with the concept of authenticity were qualitative in nature. However, some qualitative studies were used for developing hypotheses and quantitative instruments (McIntosh & Prentice, 1999; Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Waitt, 2000).

The research instrument was adopted from the original authenticity framework initially developed by Lew (1987). Lew's framework consisted of twenty five "risk security continua" for assessing tourists' evaluations of destinations in terms of their desire to experience authenticity. The framework was modified by Saski (2000) who proposed 12 continua, and then revised by Naoi (2004) who studied visitors' evaluation of a historical district in Japan and adopted continua scales. In this study, the evaluation of authentic experience in a theme park consisted of twelve bipolar semantic-differential scales that were picked from the existing models according to clarity of their meaning and their relevance for visiting a theme park (Naoi, 2004).

The research instrument included three qualifying questions. In order to participate in the study, respondents had (1) to be over 18 years old, (2) to have visited at least one theme park in the past twelve months, and (3) to have visited Disney's Epcot theme park in the past twelve months.

The questionnaire included 39 variables: Respondents' travel behavior (2 variables), exposure to and frequency of visit of each of Epcot's Center's country pavilion (10 variables). The remainder of the questionnaire included questions pertaining to Epcot's visiting behavior (5 variables), evaluation of overall authentic experience in Epcot's World Showcase (12 variables), perceived authenticity of Epcot's World Showcase's architectural design, food services, and the country pavilions (3 variables) and demographic characteristics of the respondents (7 variables).

Following a pilot study and minor modification of the questionnaire, interviews were conducted in Central Florida with local residents, domestic, and international tourists over a period of eight weeks. Interviews of Central Florida's residents were conducted in private residences while tourist interviews were conducted in hotel lobbies and restaurants. A total of 632 subjects were approached and asked to participate in the study. After screening disqualified subjects and eliminating refusals, 336 subjects participated in the study to yield a response rate of 53.16%. The average length of the interview was 13.02 minutes with a standard deviation of 5.86 minutes.

DISNEY'S EPCOT THEME PARK

EPCOT, an acronym for Experimental Prototype Community of Tomorrow, was initially designed by Walt Disney to become a permanent living community for its guests. After Walt's death in 1966, Card Walker modified the proposed city concept into a theme park celebrating contemporary

technology (McDaniel, 2005). In 2007, Epcot was ranked sixth as the most visited theme park in the world. With attendance of 10,930,000 the third most attended park in North America (Rubin, 2008).

EPCOT Center opened in October of 1982 on a 260 acre site (McDaniel, 2005). The theme park and was designed as a permanent World's Fair that was divided into two distinct spatial areas: Future World and The World Showcase (Aero, 1993). The central idea was to implement a journey across the past looking to the future. The theme park is shaped as a loop and the main entrance located in Future World, highlights the Spaceship Earth Attraction – a 16 million pound sphere enclosing a full-feature ride (McDaniel, 2005). The Future World part of the park highlights science, communications, and technology by taking guests on a journey through eight separate pavilions that feature how civilization started and to what the future will hold (Hess, 2003).

The World Showcase features eleven country pavilions: Mexico, China, Germany, Italy, American adventure, Japan, France, UK, Canada, Norway, and Morocco. The World Showcase emphasizes architecture, shows, entertainment, merchandise, food services and native artisans (Hess, 2003). The various pavilions of the countries featured in the theme park offer “staged authenticity” guest experience. EPCOT Center's official name has been changed several times throughout the park's history. Most recently, it was changed to Epcot when it was realized that the outlook of the theme park was not to become a futuristic community (Florida Disney Holidays, 2008).

FINDINGS

General Profile of the Respondents

The respondents represented an array of age groups and had a median age of 19-30 years. Over one half of the respondents (53.4%) had a college degree or an advanced degree. The gender distribution between males and females was 57.2% and 42.8%, respectively).

The majority of the respondents were Central Florida residents (57.4%), while other participants were domestic and international tourists (42.6%). The majority of the tourists that participated in the study were U.S. residents (95.9%). The remainders were international tourists visiting Central Florida from the Bahamas, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Ireland, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

The respondents had an extensive theme park visiting experience. The patrons visited the theme parks an average of 4.75 times in the past twelve months, with a standard deviation of 9.92 times. The respondents visited a median of three theme parks in the past twelve months (Table 1).

Epcot's Visiting Characteristics

The typical Epcot patron visited the park a median of one visit in the past twelve months. The patrons visited Epcot an average of 2.19 times in the past twelve months, with a standard deviation of 3.51 times (Table 1). On a typical visit, patrons spend an average of 6.32 hours and a median of 6 hours in the park. The visiting time was divided between the two major sections of the park. A typical visit to Future World lasts in average 2.58 hours and a median of 2 hours. A typical visit to The World Showcase lasts 3.54 hours with a median of 3 hours (Table 1).

On a typical visit to Epcot, the respondents' average party size was 2.83 adults and 0.78 children. The median visiting party of adults and children was 2 and 0 visitors, respectively (Table 1).

Table 1: General Theme Park and Epcot’s Visiting Characteristics

	Mean	Std Dev	Median	N
How many times did you visit theme parks in the past 12 months?	4.75	9.920	3.0	291
How many times did you visit Epcot in the past 12 months?	2.19	3.514	1.00	293
How many hours do you usually spend at EPCOT?	6.32	1.918	6.00	333
How many hours at Epcot’s World Showcase?	3.54	1.585	3.00	336
How many hours at Epcot’s Future world?	2.58	1.320	2.00	327
On a typical Epcot visit, how many adults in your party?	2.83	1.220	2.00	333
On a typical Epcot visit, how many children are in your party?	.78	1.222	.00	330

The Authentic Experience: Respondents’ Actual Visit to Epcot Center’s Featured Countries

Respondents were asked to report on their actual experience with the countries featured in Epcot’s World Showcase. For each country featured in the park, with the exception of the American adventure, respondents were asked to report whether or not they actually traveled and visited the specific country, and if so, how many times in the past two years.

Over one half of the respondents (53%) actually visited at least one country featured in the Epcot’s World Showcase in the past two years. The subjects participated in the study reported a mean of 1.19 and a median of 1.00 countries actually visited in the past two years (Table 2). The most popular countries visited by the respondents were: Canada, Mexico, and France. Less popular countries were Norway, Morocco, and China (Table 2). Respondents’ visited Epcot’s World Showcase featured countries in average of 1.50 times and a median of one time in the past two years.

Table 2: Guests' Reality Exposure to the Countries Featured in Epcot's World Showcase

Number of actual Epcot's countries visits (in reality)		Percent
None (0)		47.0
1		25.4
2		12.4
3		6.2
4		4.4
5		1.8
6		1.2
7		.9
8		.3
9		.3
Total		100.0
Mean: 1.13; Median: 1.0; Std Dev: 1.56		
Actual countries visited	Responses	Percent of Cases
	N	N
Canada	94	52.5
Mexico	77	43.0
France	50	27.9
Italy	49	27.4
United Kingdom	47	26.3
Germany	39	21.8
Japan	10	5.6
China	8	4.5
Morocco	7	3.9
Norway	4	2.2
Total	385	

Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% due to multiple responses

The Stage Authenticity Experience: Respondents' Perceived Authenticity of Epcot Center's World Showcase

Respondents were asked to evaluate their experience at Epcot's World Showcase on twelve semantic-differential scales. The findings reveal that patrons' experience in the various country pavilions yielded more "unique" than "ordinary" experience, more "authentic" than "staged" experience and more "fantasy" than "reality" experience (Table 3). The guests' overall visit to the country pavilions also yielded more "secure" than "dangerous" experience, more "safe" than "unsafe" experience, and more "sanitary" than "unsanitary" experience (Table 3). We can conclude that Epcot's country pavilion yielded an "authentic" experience blended with uniqueness and fantasy. It is also interesting to report that the overall experience was also perceived as secure, safe, and sanitary. This might be an outcome of the immediate environment (a theme park), in which the guest practiced the overall experience.

Respondents were also asked to rate their perceived truthfulness of the Epcot’s World Showcase’s country pavilions, architecture design, and ethnic food services on a 1 to 7 semantic differential scale. Overall, Epcot’s World Showcase’s visitors perceived the country pavilions to be more “truthful” than “untruthful” (mean=4.88 and median =5.00 on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 was “not truthful at all” and 7 was “very truthful.”). The respondents also perceived the architecture design of the country pavilions to be more “realistic” than “unrealistic” (mean=5.24 and median =5.00 on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 was “not at all realistic” and 7 was “very realistic”). Finally, Epcot’s patrons perceived the ethnic food served at the various World Showcase pavilions to be more “authentic” than “unauthentic” (mean=5.03 and median =5.00 on a 1 to 7 scale, where 1 was “not authentic at all” and 7 was “very authentic”).

While there is no specific meaning to “authenticity” nor a valid measurement to quantify this multifaceted term, we may conclude that overall, guests perceived the various components featured at Epcot’s World Showcase country pavilions (overall impression, architecture, and food) to be truthful, authentic, and realistic. It would be interesting to explore, whether there are any predictors that may explain guests’ perception of authenticity when visiting Epcot’s World Showcase country pavilions.

Table 3: Patrons’ Desire to Experience Authenticity Index at Epcot’s World Showcase

Variable	Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	N
1. Ordinary-Unique	5.23	5.00	1.425	337
2. Staged-Authentic	4.74	5.00	1.314	336
3. Reality-Fantasy	4.11	4.00	1.367	336
4. Americanized-Exotic	3.86	4.00	1.527	337
5. Restful-Adventurous	3.80	4.00	1.453	337
6. Relaxing-Exciting	3.66	4.00	1.531	337
7. Touristy-Non Touristy	3.05	3.00	1.593	337
8. Familiar-Unfamiliar	3.03	3.00	1.500	337
9. Easy to Tour-Difficult to Tour	2.17	2.00	1.270	336
10. Sanitary-Unsanitary	2.13	2.00	1.268	337
11. Safe-Unsafe	1.79	1.00	1.291	336
12. Secure-Dangerous	1.67	1.00	1.001	336

Predicting Guests’ Level of Perceived Authenticity When Visiting Epcot’s World Showcase

Three regression models were employed to assess what variables may predict guests’ perception of “truthfulness,” “authenticity”, and “realistic” experience at Epcot’s World Showcase country pavilions.

In the first regression model, the dependent variable was guests’ overall perceived realistic presentation of the country pavilions’ architecture. The independent variables were: respondents’ travel behavior (2 variables), exposure to and frequency of visit of each of Epcot’s Center’s country pavilion (10 variables), Epcot’s visiting behavior (5 variables), evaluation of overall authentic experience in Epcot’s World Showcase (12 variables), and demographic characteristics of the respondents (7 variables).

The first regression model yielded an R² of 0.88 and revealed that guests’ overall perceived realistic presentation of the architecture of Epcot’s country pavilions was negatively correlated with the number of times the respondents visited Epcot Center in the past 12 months and the number of hours each guest spent in the other section of the park, Future World. More specifically, perception of realistic

representation of architecture “staged authenticity” was linked to the length of time the guests was actually exposed to the attraction. Guests who visited Epcot theme park *less frequently* and spent *more time in the Future World* (or less time at Epcot’s World Showcase part of the park) were more likely to perceive the country pavilions’ architecture to be more realistic. This may lead to a possible conclusion that fast and limited exposures to a “staged authenticity” theme park features may yield stronger belief among visitors that the “staged experience” is indeed closer to the “reality.” This makes sense as guests may not have enough time to evaluate the details of the “staged authenticity” feature.

Furthermore, guests who perceived their overall Epcot’s World Showcase experience to be more of a “fantasy” than “reality,” more “sanitary” than “unsanitary” were more likely to perceive the pavilions’ architecture to be more realistic. In addition, guests’ perception of realistic presentation of Epcot Center’s country pavilions’ architecture was also associated with the number visits to theme parks in general in the past 12 months and the gender of the respondent. Epcot’s patrons who visited theme parks more frequently and females were more likely to perceive the country pavilions’ architecture to be more realistic (Table 4). Theme park “regulars” as well as females more than males seemed to be more immersed with unauthentic experiences and may perceive more theme parks as an escape fantasy of another time and another place.

The final predictor was somehow unexpected. Guests who in reality visited more Epcot’s World Showcase featured countries were more likely to perceive the country pavilions’ architecture to be more realistic. We may conclude that exposure to reality (e.g. actual visit to France) may not necessarily yield negative perception of staged authenticity (e.g. France pavilion at Epcot’s World Showcase).

Table 4:
Regression of Perceived Realistic Presentation of Epcot’s Country Pavilions’ Architecture on Guests’ Visiting Experience, Travel Behavior and Demographics

	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R ² change
Number of times visited Epcot in the past 12 months?	-1.063	-7.834	.000	.202
Number of times visited theme parks in the past 12 months?	.432	3.141	.007	.398
Gender	-.541	-5.134	.000	.524
Number of hours spent in Epcot’s Future World?	-.570	-5.357	.000	.643
Perceived Experience: Reality versus Fantasy	.424	4.058	.001	.748
Perceived Experience: Sanitary versus Unsanitary	.326	3.084	.008	.821
Number of Epcot’s featured countries actually visited (reality)	.259	2.723	.017	.883

R² = 0.88

In the second regression model, the dependent variable was guests’ overall perceived authenticity of Epcot’s country pavilions’ ethnic food. The independent variables were: respondents’ travel behavior (2 variables), exposure to and frequency of visit of each of Epcot’s Center’s country pavilion (10 variables), Epcot’s visiting behavior (5 variables), evaluation of overall authentic experience in Epcot’s World Showcase (12 variables), and demographic characteristics of the respondents (7 variables).

The second regression model yielded an R^2 of 0.55 and revealed that guests' overall perceived authenticity of the ethnic food served in Epcot's country pavilions was negatively correlated with the frequency of the respondents' out-of-state trips. Epcot's visitors who generally traveled more frequently were more likely to perceive the country pavilions' ethnic food to be less authentic. Unlike the finding in the first regression model that predicted perceived realistic presentations of architecture, this was not the case with regard to the perception of the ethnic food's perceived authenticity.

Exposure to reality (e.g. actual dining in a French restaurant in France) may yield negative perception of staged authenticity (e.g. dining at a French restaurant in the France pavilion at Epcot's World Showcase). Previous exposure to the "real experience" may have an impact on the perceived validity of the "staged authenticity" experience.

In addition, guests who perceived their overall Epcot experience to be more "exotic" than "Americanized" and more "authentic" than "staged" were more likely to perceive the country pavilions' ethnic food to be more authentic (Table 5). Theme park visitors who immersed themselves in an out of the ordinary experience may perceive their theme parks experiences, including dining, to be more authentic.

Table 5:
Regression of Perceived Authenticity of Epcot's Country Pavilions' Ethnic Food on Guests' Visiting Experience, Travel Behavior and Demographics

	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R² change
Perceived Experience: Americanized versus Exotic	.506	3.195	.005	.276
Number of out of state trips taken in past 2 years	-.363	-2.285	.035	.425
Perceived Experience: Staged versus Authentic	.356	2.248	.037	.551

$R^2 = 0.55$

Finally, in the third regression model, the dependent variable was guests' perceived truthfulness of Epcot's country pavilions. The independent variables were: Epcot's visiting behavior (5 variables), general travel behavior (2 variables), evaluation of authentic experience in the theme park (12 variables), and demographic characteristics of the respondents (7 variables).

The third regression model yielded an R^2 of 0.62 and also revealed that guests' overall perceived truthfulness of Epcot's country pavilions was correlated to the frequency of the respondents' out-of-state trips and two demographic characteristics.

As revealed in the second regression model, Epcot's visitors who traveled out-of-state more frequently in the past two years were more likely to perceive the country pavilions' to be less truthful. Exposure to different destinations, whether or not featured in Epcot's World Showcase, might have had an impact on the perceived truthfulness of the pavilions' "staged authenticity." We may well conclude that frequency of travel has a negative impact on guests' perceived "authenticity" or "truthfulness" of "staged" theme park features. Furthermore, females and more educated guests were more likely to perceive the country pavilions' to be more truthful (Table 6).

Table 6:
Regression of Perceived Truthfulness of Epcot's Country Pavilions on Guests' Visiting Experience,
Travel Behavior and Demographics

	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	R ² change
Gender	-.748	-4.653	.000	.253
Educational background of the respondent	.566	3.428	.003	.402
Number of out of state trips taken in past 2 years	-.487	-3.242	.005	.623

R² = 0.62

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The study revealed that high perception of authenticity may be attained even when the “staged authenticity” experience is distant from the “real experience” and in situations where the guests do not have any previous exposure to the realistic phenomenon staged. This was also confirmed by Chhabra, Healy and Sills (2003) who concluded that high perception of authenticity can be achieved even when an event is staged in a place far away from the original source of the cultural tradition.

It is evident from this exploratory research that predicting guests' level of perceived authenticity, reality, or truthfulness is a challenging task. However, this empirical study may generate several hypotheses that could be used in future studies to predict who is more likely to perceive a “staged authenticity” experience to be closer to reality. This would be useful for investors, designers, and operators of “staged authenticity” projects that keep emerging in various parts of the globe. Such projects may include hotels, theme parks, man-made ski resorts, cruise ships, and more.

The three regression models suggested an array of predicting variables that could propose what groups of visitors are more likely to perceive more strongly the “staged authenticity” experience. Chhabra, Healy and Sills' study (2003) also concluded that different levels of perceived authenticity may be observed among different groups of visitors.

These predicting variables fall into several groups. First, actual exposure (in terms of time spent) to the “staged authenticity” experience may be an important variable to consider. Guests who spent more time and consequently were more exposed to the details of the “staged authenticity” experience were more likely to perceive the featured products (e.g. architecture) to be the less realistic.

Second, the guests' overall travel experience may also have had an impact on the perceived level of authenticity. Extensive traveling history yielded lower perceived level of authenticity with regard to authenticity of food and truthfulness of the overall experience. Third, although traveling experience is an important predicting variable, exposure to reality may not necessarily yield negative perception of staged authenticity. Epcot's guests who visited more countries featured in Epcot's World Showcase pavilions were more likely to perceive the pavilions to be a true representation.

Fourth, guests who perceived their overall Epcot World Showcase experience to be more “fantasy” than “reality,” more “sanitary” than “unsanitary,” more “exotic” than “Americanized,” and more “authentic” than “staged” were more likely to perceive stronger level of authenticity. Theme park visitors who immersed themselves in an out of the ordinary experience may perceive their visits to be

more authentic. Fifth, females and more educated respondents were more likely to perceive the staged experience to be more authentic.

These findings should be interpreted with caution. First, the study adopted an independent variable that was associated exclusively with actual travel experience to the various countries rather than knowledge of the destination. This was determined as there would be no control over each respondent's level of knowledge of the ten countries featured in Epcot's World Showcase. Second, the guest's evaluations were not elicited for each of the ten country pavilions, but rather then the overall authenticity perception of the Epcot's World Showcase. It might be that some respondents may perceive several countries to feature better authenticity than others. Third, while the dependent variables addressed overall experience, food and architecture, it is necessary to acknowledge that the reproduction of food might be easier than the reproduction of architecture.

The results of this preliminary study might assist designers, architects, landscape planners, chefs, and other theme park designers to develop guest experiences that may be perceived more authentic.

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COMPETENCE REQUIREMENTS OF TOURISM EMPLOYEES – THE INDUSTRY’S POINT OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Several changes and developments (changing labour market, growing world-wide competition, technological advances, changing demand patterns) require new employability skills from graduates that enable them to cope with the changing circumstances of the business world. Universities are therefore encouraged to embed key skills in their curricula, yet there is often a considerable gap between what educational institutions offer and what is needed and required by the industry. I.e. there is a need to create a hub and interface between the industry and the institutions of higher education. One attempt to actually create an interface and increase the chances for graduates to maintain or obtain employment, is to look at diverse skills and competencies that enhance employability of graduates. Although there have been considerable efforts to specify employability skills, the question of how these could be developed within the curriculum is a big issue. The purpose of the paper is to theoretically discuss the concepts of employability, skills requirements and competencies for graduates and to present the results of a quantitative survey carried out among domestic and international MCI internship partners to assess the required employability skills of the market from the employers’ point of view.

KEYWORDS: Industry Relations, Education, Curricula Design, Destination Partners, Skills and Competences

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

A rapidly changing labour market, growing world-wide competition, technological advances, changing demand patterns of multi-optional consumers and increasing uniformity of offers lead to new challenges for both, the tourism industry and the higher education system (Bagshaw, 1996). The interdisciplinary aspect of tourism is becoming more and more significant in the labour market i.e. recent challenges in the tourism industry have a direct impact on the

expectations the industry has regarding specific knowledge and competencies of managers and employees as well as on the overall vocation-oriented competencies (Zehrer et al., 2006). It has for instance been noted that when employers recruit graduates they are typically seeking individuals with not only specific academic skills and knowledge in a certain subject, but with the capability to be proactive, to see and respond to problems creatively and autonomously (Fallows & Steven, 2000). In order to meet the demands of the tourism industry both on a personal and job career level, people need to acquire competencies that enable them to cope with the changing circumstances of the business world.

Yet, there appears to be a considerable gap between what educational institutions offer as management level tourism education, and the needs and requirements as expressed by the tourism industry as regards the interpretation of which particular skills and competencies should be developed in students or which technical knowledge and academic know-how should be taught in tourism curricula (Barrie, 2006; Drummond et al., 1998). Or, as Amoah and Baum (1997, p. 6) put it: “When the main features of tourism education arise through initiatives by the tourism environment on the one hand and the world of education on the other, with no consensus between the two, problems arise for those on the receiving end of tourism education.”

One attempt to actually create an interface between what is taught in tourism education and what is actually needed by the industry, and to increase the chances for graduates to maintain or obtain employment, is to look at diverse skills and competencies that enhance employability of graduates. It is important to add that these discussions have resulted in considerable controversy on the list of skills or personal qualities that should be developed in students, or, if this should be an educational concern in higher education at all, as some feel that this might lead to a certain distraction from *academic* education and corporate interests could start to play a too powerful role (Morley, 2001).

PURPOSE

Several studies have been conducted in terms of job requirements in tourism-related fields, and a number of qualifications have been identified (Weiermair, 1999): communicative skills, empathy, motivation, decision-making abilities, planning abilities and improvisation abilities. The purpose of any teaching programme in tourism must be to explain the true nature of the tourism phenomenon through seminars, trainings, workshops, and academic curricula. Following the trend towards academic/practitioner collaboration, the paper sets out to contribute to the ongoing debate to what extent business can be integrated into the development of educational programs. Links between higher education and industry occur mainly through internship placements, guest speakers and field trips (Busby, 2005). Presently, internships or other forms of supervised work placement seem to be the most important link as outlined by Busby (2005) in his review. However, considering the aim to create a hub and interface between the industry and the educational institute, other forms of involvement and cooperation have to also be considered. The aim of this paper is to reveal the extent to which programs meet the prerequisites of the tourism industry as regards competencies of interns and graduates.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

The causal connection between education and economic growth has resulted in a worldwide growth of tertiary education (Barrie, 2006). Institutes of tertiary education are increasingly feeling the pressure of having to deliver programs that meet new requirements that are characterized not only by including 'new' factual knowledge and technology-driven skills in their curricula but also by the expectation to closely tie these programs to the industry by maintaining strong links with practitioners from the respective fields.

In industrialized countries throughout the world the connection between education and work has been scrutinized with the main goal to actually enhance employability of graduates (Barrie, 2006) and to enhance the overall competitiveness of the industries. In the western world, this has also become a concern of educational politics, mostly referred to by using the term 'life-long learning' and pointing at an overall concept where graduates are encouraged to develop skills for working life (e.g. European Round Table of Industrialists, 1995). In projects by higher education providers in the USA, Britain and Australia as well as in cross-European projects the issue of finding an interface between higher education and the labour market in terms of defining employability skills has been addressed. In Austria, this was also reflected through the introduction of Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS), a system that is characterized in particular by its close relations with trade and industry and by a strong practice-orientation in all programs, a focus that is also mirrored in the curricula of the respective study programs.

Due to the relatively young history of tourism higher education, compared to other disciplines in tertiary education (Tribe, 2005), international tourism education has always had a strong vocational focus in that curricula have always to some extent included training in specific skills and competencies that are vital for the work world. We could therefore also say that tourism education curricula have to some extent been shaped by the needs of the industry, which was also reflected in syllabi and curriculum development for tertiary education in tourism. These new circumstances have led to discussions focusing on integrated approaches to tourism education including contemporary, content-specific disciplines as well as a list of skills and competencies that have been termed e.g. 'employability', 'soft skills', 'personal skills', 'generic skills', 'attributes' or 'capabilities' (Hager & Holland, 2006; Holmes, 2001; Atkins, 1999). Taking into account that the tourism industry is in its core a service sector or more informally put, a people's business, this approach seems to be especially valuable.

SKILLS, COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYABILITY

Today, employers are looking for a more flexible, adaptable workforce as they themselves seek to transform their companies into being more flexible and adaptable in response to changing market and customer needs (Cox & King, 2006; Bennett, 2002; Clarke, 1997). Meanwhile, several studies have been conducted in terms of employability of graduates and job requirements in tourism-related fields, and a number of qualifications - communicative skills, empathy, motivation, decision-making abilities, planning abilities and improvisation abilities - have been identified (Cassidy, 2006; Raybould & Sheedy, 2005; Zinser, 2003; Cotton, 2001; Byrne, 2001; Verhaar & Smulders, 1999; Gaspers & Ott, 1998; Bagshaw, 1996).

There have been many attempts to ‘pin down’ employability skills and competencies and the discussion has also been shaped by the shortcomings and limitations these functional lists might have as they always include an element of choice (Knight & Yorke, 2003). Discussions of such lists use a variety of terms such as generic skills, graduate attributes, personal skills, capabilities, employability skills, communication and social skills or embedded skills to describe what, in literature, is often looked at as being synonyms for similar notions and concepts (Hager & Holland, 2006; Holmes, 2001; Atkins, 1999). However, there seems to be a consensus that employability in its broadest sense is somehow establishing a closer connection between education and work (Harvey et al., 2002) which is one of the aims education and vocational training have. And it also has to be noted that what is listed under the above mentioned terms often also relates to what in academia is referred to as cognitive skills like e.g. problem solving abilities, development of expertise, reasoning etc. (Anderson, 2000).

Employers seem to approach the issue of employability from yet another perspective, which can also be explained through the variety of business fields and foci. Several examples of such employer lists can be found in the literature (Knight & Yorke, 2003) varying in their degree of differentiation, sometimes also over-generalizing or idealising skills they would like to find in prospective employees and co-workers.

Therefore the problem of variation and notation seems to also stem from distinct interpretations of particular skills and competencies and the extent to which they are rated as being significantly important and should therefore be developed (Drummond et al., 1998).

Most taxonomies on competencies can be broken down into knowledge, abilities and skills, which suggests that a set of skills or abilities can be part of an overall competence. Sonntag and Schmidt-Rathjens (2004) define these three components as follows:

- *Skills* are automated components of tasks, which are undertaken with a relatively low mind-control. These skills include powered routine jobs as well as cognitive activities.
- *Abilities* are all kinds of innate skills of a person, which are necessary to perform tasks and services.
- *Knowledge* is acquired know-how, which is composed by propositional (knowing that) and procedural know-how (knowing how).

Literature also provides a variety of classifications of employability skills, categorizing various skills and abilities in e.g. ‘Intellectual Abilities’ vs. ‘Behavioural Aptitudes’ (European Round Table of Industrialists, 1997) or in ‘Technical Skills’ and ‘Non-Technical Skills’ (Cotton, 2001), or ‘Internal and External Employability Skills’ (Mallough & Kleiner, 2001). Cassidy (2006, p. 508) speaks about two skill categories, which are required in industry. While technical skills refer to “subject-specific or content-specific knowledge... non-technical skills are those skills which can be deemed relevant across many different jobs or professions.”

The definition of broader terms like ‘skills’ and ‘competencies’, seems to depend not only on interpretations influenced by culture and language but also on context i.e. in an educational context these two terms might be defined differently compared with definitions in an employment context. Trying to find a valid definition of employability skills and competencies is

therefore located between the poles of agreeing on a common definition of the terms ‘skills’ and ‘competencies’ and ranking these on a continuum of importance. All these problems might at times lead to the impression that lists of employability skills and competencies are somewhat eclectic, if not accidental, in nature. However, especially in view of the concept of life-long learning in a knowledge-driven society, most international research with regard to education and curricula development, also in varying degrees, comment on employability and links between education and work.

Originally, the concept of core competencies was developed in the field of management by Prahalad and Hamel (1990). In the German speaking world it has especially been the work by Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2003) that has been most influential when it comes to a general concept of generic competencies which in themselves consist of several components. Heyse and Erpenbeck (2007) translated this concept into an instrument (KODEX®) to assess, measure and diagnose personal competencies. It is important to note that these competencies have to be understood as *integrated* tonalities of expertise and know-how, processes and interests, personal motivations, knowledge and affections that are important to successfully complete a task (Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003). Competencies are usually understood as something ‘bigger’ than just a combination of the respective knowledge, skills, attitudes or abilities as a mere one-dimensional approach would suggest that competencies as such are easily attainable.

Therefore, in the present context it is the multidimensionality of the concept of competencies that is especially important i.e. going beyond merely specialist and methodological formal qualifications and including the field of often informally acquired competencies. Table 1 delineates the four competence fields as categorized by Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2003), examples have been added by the authors.

It has to be mentioned that there are other classifications that work with categorizing competence fields in ‘social-communicative’, ‘personal’ and ‘activity- and action-oriented’ fields, which can also be summarized among the collective terms ‘extra-functional’ (Dahrendorf, 1973) or ‘process-independent’ competencies (Kern & Schumann, 1970). Professional- and methodological competencies are often referred to as ‘functional’. From the perspective of curriculum development the main thrust of such debates is in particular units or modules that promote the learning of these abilities. In connection with human resource management, types and approaches of competencies can basically be summarized as follows (Kolb, 2002; Kauffeld et al., 2003; Sonntag & Schmidt-Rathjens, 2004).

- *Professional Competencies* comprise skills, abilities and knowledge which are necessary to meet the challenges and tasks of one’s profession.
- *Methodological Competencies* are universal problem-solving and decision-making competencies, which may be applied in one’s job, but also in one’s personal surroundings.
- *Social Competencies* are abilities to act in the social surroundings and includes cooperating with other people, interacting with them and building effective relationships.
- *Leadership Competences* are abilities to show inspiration for a shared vision, to enable others to act or to encourage them.

Table 1. Competence fields (Source: according to Erpenbeck & von Rosenstiel, 2003)

Ability (disposition) for self-organizational action with regard to...	Dimensions / Basic Competencies	Definition	Examples
... exposure to objects	professional- and methodological competence	... is the ability to fulfil profession-related tasks with methodological know-how.	updated and continued development of professional and methodological know-how with regard to the vocational field
... exposure to other persons	social-communicative competence	... is the ability to cooperate and communicate with other people.	e.g. communication ability, social networking skills, skills for conflict resolution, etc.
... oneself as a person	personal competence	... is the ability to be critical of oneself, to one's values, attitudes and ideals.	e.g. ability to work under pressure, self management, willingness and personal commitment, emotional intelligence, empathy, etc.
... one's own actions	activity- and action-oriented competence	... is the ability to implement all kinds of knowledge in terms of social communication, personal values and ideals and to thereby integrate all other kinds of competencies.	e.g. determination and goal orientation, innovative spirit, decision-making abilities, creativity, etc.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CURRICULUM

Although there have been considerable efforts to further define and specify employability skills and competencies as outlined above, the question of how these could be developed within the curriculum is still a problematic one. One basic question is if the respective skills and competencies should be taught and discussed in individual units or, if they should be integrated and embedded in the traditional curriculum (Cranmer, 2006).

Drummond et al. (1998, p. 21) list three general approaches how skills and competencies can be taught within the curriculum:

- *Embedded or integrated development*, where development takes place throughout the degree program e.g. through project-based development.
- *Parallel development* with skills being developed in extra-curricular modules offered through e.g. the institute's career services programs etc.
- *Work placements or work-based projects* consisting of e.g. internship programs that are an integral part of the curriculum.

Some authors argue that the development of employability skills and competencies should be best addressed by increasing employer involvement in university courses or offering

more employment-based training (Cranmer, 2006; Atkins, 1999) rather than trying to add more items to the curriculum.

Furthermore, taking into account that skills and competencies have both a 'performance' and a 'content' aspect and are only fully visible as an *integrated tonality consisting of multi-dimensional aspects* in students, the question of how to assess such complex learning processes within higher education, remains. Also, the attempt to develop formative and summative frameworks for such assessments might have to have a direct impact on overall curricula development and teaching methodology. The higher influx of students in higher education in advanced societies might also pose an additional problem in this context as necessary pedagogical changes as regards teaching methodology might not match with methodology that is used to teach larger groups.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

Universities are encouraged to embed key skills in their curricula, yet there is often little support on how to identify skills needed in the industry. Basically, there are two ways in doing so: either the skill requirements for graduates are surveyed from an employers' point of view or from the point of view of graduates. The present survey aims at assessing employers' perception of skills and competencies conveyed in the tourism degree programs at MCI. The vocational field for graduates includes entrepreneurial and management challenges in key branches of the tourism and the recreational industries, positions in hotels and gastronomy, in event management, lift operation and conference centres, in sports and recreational facilities or positions with tour operators and tourism associations.

METHODOLOGY

The research method employed in the study at hand belongs to survey research, which is used primarily around descriptive and normative questions. The questionnaire is one of the most frequently used methods of data collection in evaluation research. It provides the main source of data in a study or is a useful source of supplementary data. Usually, the questionnaire is self-administered in that it is posted to the subjects, asking them to complete it and post it back (Macionis & Plummer, 1998).

The paper presents a quantitative survey among domestic and international internship companies (n=145) of the tourism bachelor program¹ at the Management Center of Innsbruck

¹ The 'Tourism Business Studies' bachelor's program comprises 6 semesters and a total of 124 credit units of required courses, which equals a total of 1.736 hours of instruction. Attendance is mandatory in all courses. In the third year (semesters 5 and 6) the students are required to do an internship and they have the option to study one semester abroad. The internship takes place in the 5th semester. Students complete a 15-week, professional internship at a domestic or international company or organisation in the tourism and leisure sector. The goal of the study program is the development of entrepreneurs and managers for the local and international tourism and leisure industries. The special focus of this academic program lies in a distinct orientation to entrepreneurial approaches in tourism and leisure. The program is based upon a comprehensive business administration curriculum which is then specialised in the areas of marketing, finance, entrepreneurial studies and leadership (corporate governance). A further important feature of the program is the extensive number of courses in the area of applied information management (fundamentals in ICTs, e-business in tourism etc.). In addition to teaching a

(MCI) by means of a self-administered online questionnaire attempting to understand which skills, competencies and qualifications are essential for working the tourism industry. The research question posed is: Which competencies are regarded to be the most essential and important ones in the tourism industry? This research question is answered based on the following assumptions.

- A1. Professional and methodological competencies are the most important competencies graduates must possess in the tourism industry.
- A2. Social and personal competencies are more important than activity and action competencies when being employed in the tourism industry.

Given the high level of access, and frequent use of email as a communication medium it was felt that a web-based survey had the advantage of being relatively time-efficient for respondents. The study at hand made use of an email containing a link to the survey website (web-based survey), as it was considered to be an appropriate means of soliciting a response to the survey because of the generally high use of electronic mail in business. Researchers also looked into the issue of whether it is better to present a survey in one or more scrolling pages or in a series of separate pages that do not need scrolling. Literature has not yet provided a clear answer regarding this question. There is some evidence that grouping several similar questions on a page may result in answers that are more similar than when putting these questions on different pages. Some people may dislike scrolling down a long page, while others may dislike having to wait between questions when each is on a different page. Splitting the questionnaire into multiple pages has the advantage that if someone quits the survey halfway through, at least some answers the respondent has already given are saved. For this reason, the questionnaire at hand was split into four pages following the competence clusters developed by Erpenbeck and von Rosenstiel (2003). The sub-skills listed in each competence field stem from (a) skills listed in the KODEX® lists developed by Heyse and Erpenbeck (2007) and (b) from a list of core skills that were identified in the accreditation papers for the MCI tourism undergraduate program. Hence, the questionnaire was structured as illustrated in Table 2.

The questionnaire closed with a fifth page on socio-demographic data, asking for the tourism branch the respondents are working in, their current position, length of tourism background and work experience, as well as for gender and age.

high level of social and personal skills, the development of strong active language competencies in English and another foreign language are essential parts of the program.

Table 2. Questionnaire structure (Source: Own illustration)

Professional and methodological competencies	Social and communicative competencies	Personal competencies	Activity and action-oriented competencies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language competencies • fundamentals in management • fundamentals in economics and law • fundamentals in finance • fundamentals in information and communication technologies • tourism-related knowledge • skills and competencies in written communication • applying and using information to specific contexts • efficient text work • rhetorical skills • problem solving skills • conceptual skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skills for conflict resolution • social networking skills • social and team skills • ability and willingness to change • adaptability skills • proactive communication skills • active listening • persuasion skills • overall communication abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intercultural skills • ability to work under pressure • emotional intelligence • self reflection • empathy • self management • willingness and personal commitment • self motivation and willingness to learn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determination and goal orientation • innovative spirit • decision-making abilities • initiative and proactiveness • assertiveness • creativity

FINDINGS

The following paragraphs show the most important findings on competencies internship partner companies of MCI identify to be most important in university graduates. The SPSS statistics and Microsoft Excel packages were used for data analysis.

A) GENERAL FINDINGS

Altogether, 145 questionnaires were sent out in the first week of July (June 30th – July 4th). A reminder was sent out after the first week of response. The study resulted in a response of 48 questionnaires, 44 were completely filled-out and 4 were only partially completed. This results in a response rate of 33.10% (n= 48).

27.91% of the respondents work in a tourism organisation on a national, regional or local level, followed by the hotel and restaurant trade (18.60%) and events and/or congress organisations (18.60%). 11.63% of interviewees are employed in the marketing and PR field while 9.30% work as consultants (see figure 1).

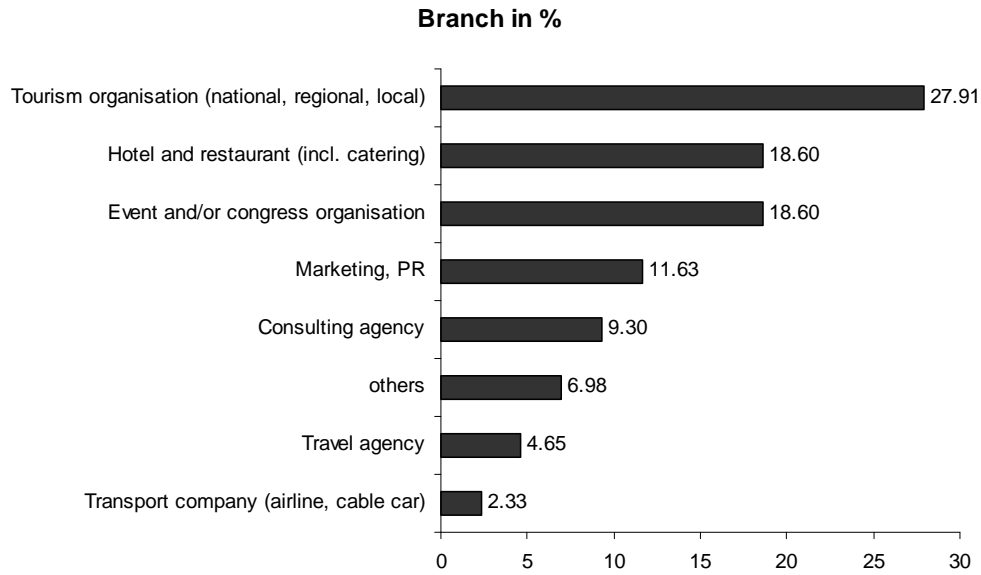


Figure 1. Branch of interviewees in percent (n=43)

As far as the position of the interviewees is concerned, around one third of them work in a management position (32.56%), 25.58% in a marketing department, 13.95% in human resource management, 9.30% in consulting, 8.98% in operations management, 4.65% work in event management, the same percentage accounts for those who work in destination management and 2.33% are employed in the field of infrastructure management (see figure 2).

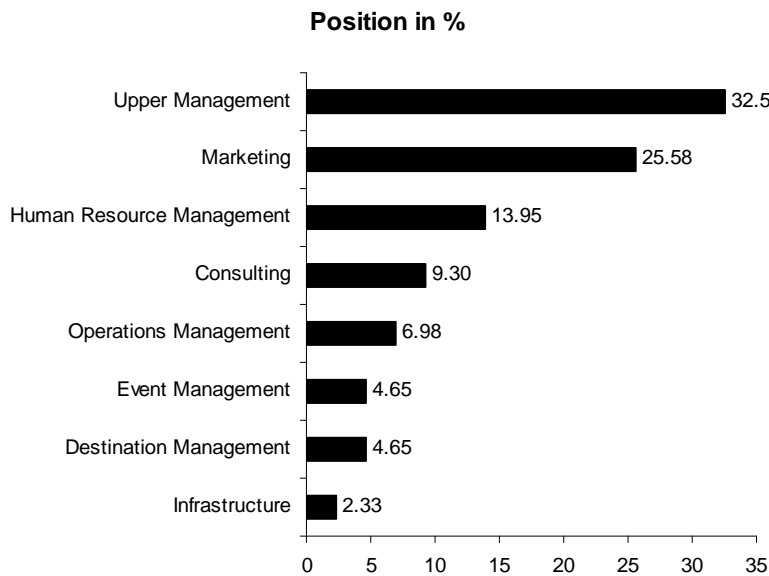


Figure 2. Position of interviewees in percent (n=43)

Another question dealt with the length of tourism background of respondents. Results show that most of the respondents do have considerable tourism background. 37.20% do have

between 10 and 20 years of experience in the tourism sector, while others can draw on between 20 and 30 years (16.3%) of work experience in the tourism field. 11.6% of respondents do have more than 30 years of work experience in tourism. This guarantees the reliability of responses delivered (see table 2).

Table 2. Length of tourism background (n=43)

For how many years have you been working in the tourism field?					
		frequency	percent	valid percent	cumulative percent
valid	up to 10 years	15	31.3	34.9	34.9
	between 10 and 20 years	16	33.3	37.2	72.1
	between 20 and 30 years	7	14.6	16.3	88.4
	more than 30 years	5	10.4	11.6	100.0
	total	43	89.6	100.0	
missing		5	10.4		
total		48	100.0		

46.5% of the respondents are female, 53.5% are male. 46.5% of the interviewees are between 30 and 39 years old, 20.9% are between 20 and 29 years of age, 18.6% are between 40 and 49 years old. 4.7% are older (50-59 years) and some 9.3% are over the age of 60.

Respondents were asked to rate competencies graduates should have when choosing to work in the tourism industry. The main results are presented in the following paragraphs.

B) PROFESSIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL COMPETENCIES

As already stated in the literature review, professional and methodological competencies relate to the ability to fulfil profession-related tasks with methodological know-how.

The first question asked internship partners to rate professional and methodological competencies on a scale of importance for graduates in the tourism industry. The following results (mean value and standard deviation) become apparent. The vertical black line symbolises each item's mean, while the horizontal grey line represents the standard deviation. Hence, the shorter the grey line is, the stronger is the item's relevance (see figure 3).

The picture of professional and methodological competencies is rather heterogenic; while some competencies are rated very important with mean values of 1.25 (language competence), 1.27 (conceptual skills) and 1.29 (problem solving skills), others are identified as important with a tendency towards the neutral scale, such as fundamentals in economics and law (2.00), fundamentals in finance (2.10) and fundamentals in information and communication technologies (2.23).

The most relevant competence according to internship partners of MCI is the language competence (std. deviation 0.48), most relevant skills are problem solving skills (std. deviation 0.54) and conceptual skills (std. deviation 0.57).

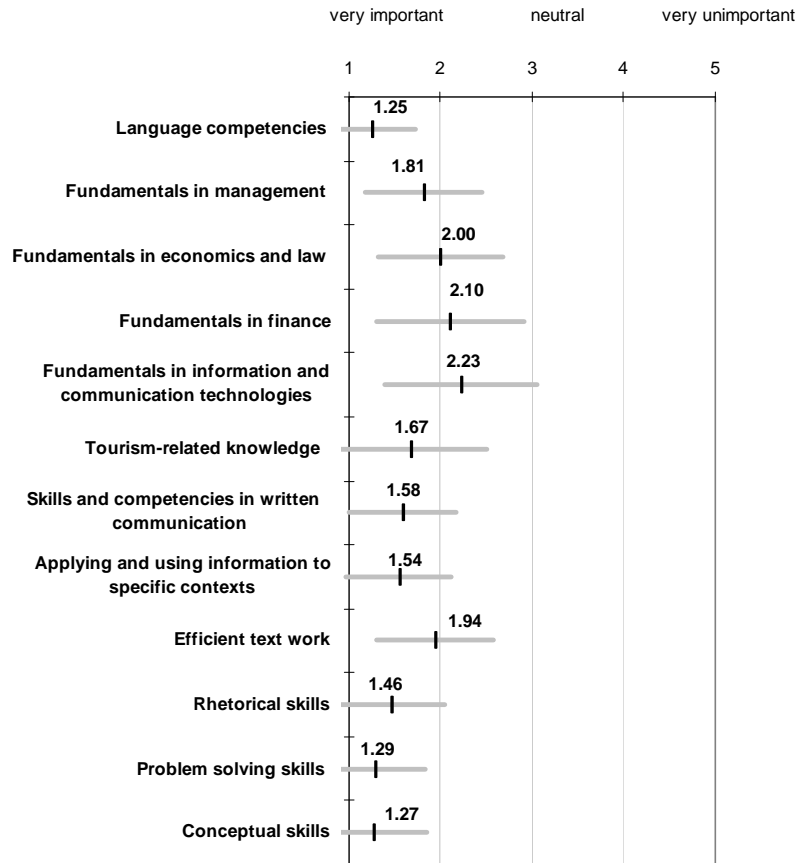


Figure 3. Perception on professional and methodological competencies (n=48)

C) SOCIAL AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCIES

Social and communicative competencies are the abilities to cooperate and communicate with other people. The second question therefore listed social and communicative competencies and asked internship partners to rate them according to their importance for graduates in the tourism industry. The following results become apparent (see figure 4).

Altogether social and communicative skills seem to have considerable importance for respondents with very high mean values between 1.21 (overall communication abilities) and 1.60 (persuasion skills).

According to respondents, the most relevant competence seems to be overall communication competencies (std. deviation 0.46), followed by active listening (std. deviation 0.50) and social and team skills (std. deviation 0.58).

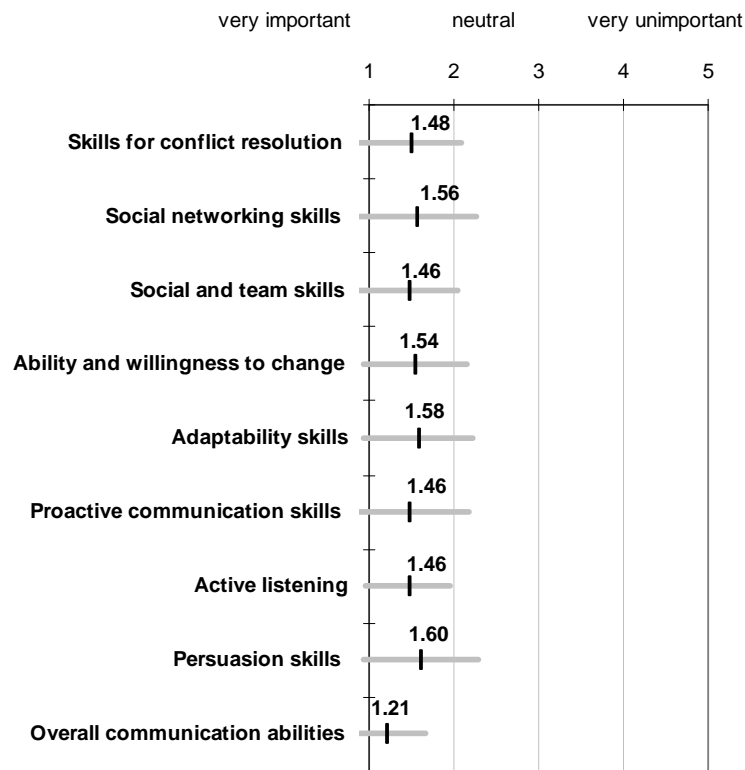


Figure 4. Perception on social and communication competencies (n=48)

D) PERSONAL COMPETENCIES

Personal competencies are the ability to be critical to oneself, to one's values, attitudes and ideals. The third question therefore listed these personal competencies and asked internship partners to rate them according to their importance for graduates in the tourism industry. The following results become apparent (see figure 5).

Altogether, personal competencies are regarded to be very important for a position in the tourism industry, as the highly service-oriented tourism industry largely depends on friendliness, hospitality and empathy towards the guests. Mean values range from 1.23 (self motivation) to 1.95 (intercultural skills).

The most important personal competence according to internship companies are skills related to self-motivation and the willingness to learn (std. deviation 0.42), followed by skills related to willingness and personal commitment (std. deviation 0.45) as well as the ability to work under pressure (std. deviation 0.54).

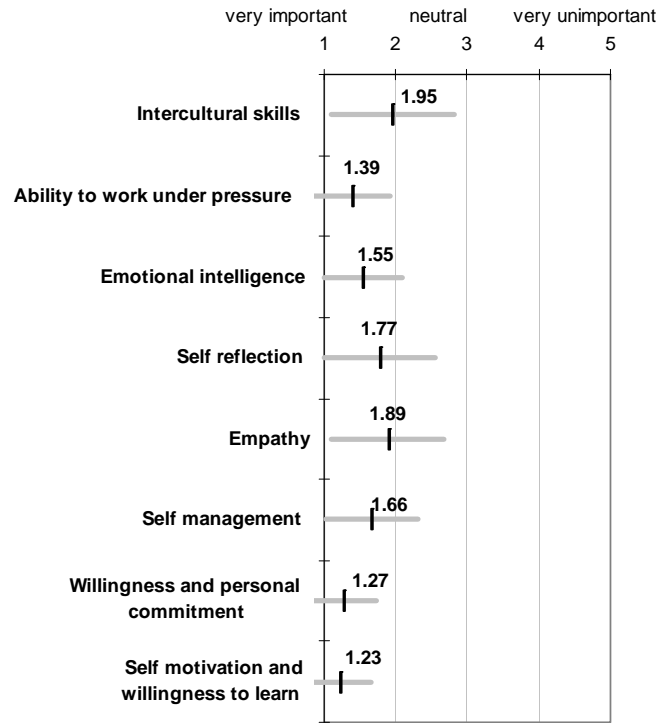


Figure 5. Perception on personal competencies (n=43)

E) ACTIVITY AND ACTION-ORIENTED COMPETENCIES

As already stated in the literature review, activity and action-oriented competencies refer to the ability to operationalize all kinds of knowledge in terms of social communication, personal values and ideals and to thereby integrate all other kinds of competencies. The fourth question therefore listed the respective skills and abilities belonging to this competence field and asked internship partners to rate them according to their importance for graduates to be employed in the tourism industry. The following results become apparent (see figure 6).

As far as activity and action-oriented competencies are concerned, initiative and proactiveness (std. deviation 0.49) and creativity (std. deviation 0.49) are evenly identified as being most important in the tourism industry.

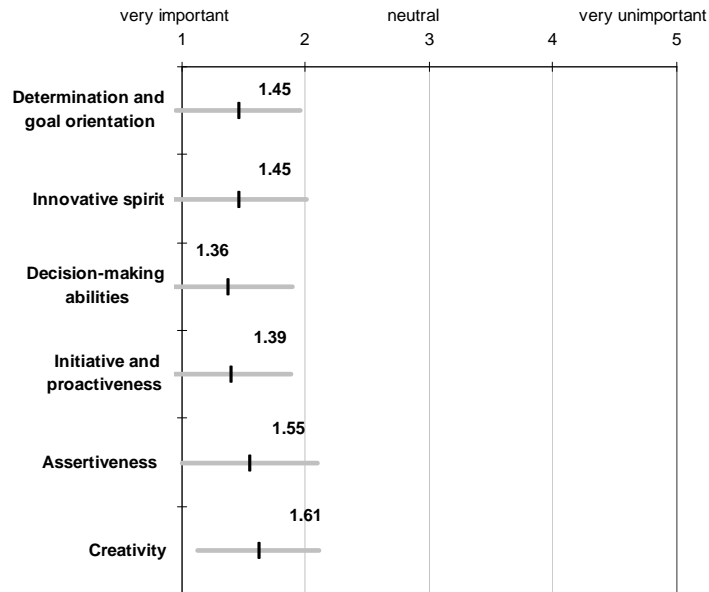


Figure 6. Perception on activity and action competencies (n=43)

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

As already indicated, the most relevant *professional and methodological competence* according to internship partners of MCI is the language competence (std. deviation 0.48), followed by problem-solving skills (std. deviation 0.54) and conceptual skills (std. deviation 0.57). There is little doubt that foreign language skills are invaluable when communicating with people from another country. This is nowhere more apposite than in the context of the cross-cultural interface between tourism enterprises and visitors. Furthermore it is interesting that problem-solving and conceptual skills emerge as the second and third most relevant skills to be derived from the educational process. This might relate to the fact that tourism destinations not simply seek employees to provide basic service to customers but to manage the service encounter.

According to respondents, the strongest *social and communicative competence* seems to be what was termed ‘overall communication competencies’ (std. deviation 0.46), followed by active listening (std. deviation 0.50) and social and team skills (std. deviation 0.58). Especially people employed in the tourism industry must be able to demonstrate verbal and written communication skills in a wide range of contexts. Moreover they need to be able to actively listen and accurately note information and needs and wishes of visitors in order to provide high quality service. Collaboration and networking have attracted a great deal of attention and have widened the perspective of economic systems such as tourism. It is a big challenge and responsibility for destinations to professionally collaborate and network in a sustainable way in order to guarantee high quality products and services and to remain competitive towards industry competitors. Effective social networking starts with the employee’s social and team skills.

The most important *personal competence* according to internship partner companies is self-motivation and the willingness to learn (std. deviation 0.42), followed by willingness and personal commitment (std. deviation 0.45) as well as the ability to work under pressure (std. deviation 0.54). Self-motivation and willingness to learn refer to the ability to motivate oneself and to strive for further knowledge. Particularly in the tourism industry employees must be willing to work on weekends, holidays, evenings, and long and unusual hours at times (also referred to as shift work), which might require more self-motivation than other jobs do, high personal commitment and an ability to work under pressure.

As far as *activity and action competencies* are concerned, initiative and pro-activeness and creativity (std. deviation 0.49) are evenly regarded to be most important in the tourism industry. Pro-activeness, initiative in reviewing and creativity for improving systems and procedures that impact the delivered service are an essential competence in the tourism field, as tourism has to keep pace with the changing circumstances and challenges of today.

The study can be regarded as confirmatory research, as it is involved in testing against assumptions elaborated on competencies and skills of graduates. Therefore, data is now interpreted in the light of the research questions and assumptions framed (see figure 7).

- | |
|--|
| <p>A1. Professional and methodological competencies are the most important competencies graduates must possess in the tourism industry.</p> <p>A2. Social and personal competencies are more important than activity and action-oriented competencies when being employed in the tourism industry.</p> |
|--|

Figure 7. Assumptions

A comparison of all four types of competencies shows the following result (see figure 8). Activity and action-oriented competencies are rated to be most important with an average of 1.47, followed by social and communicative competences with a mean value of 1.48, personal competencies with a mean value of 1.59 and professional and methodological competencies with an average mean of 1.68.

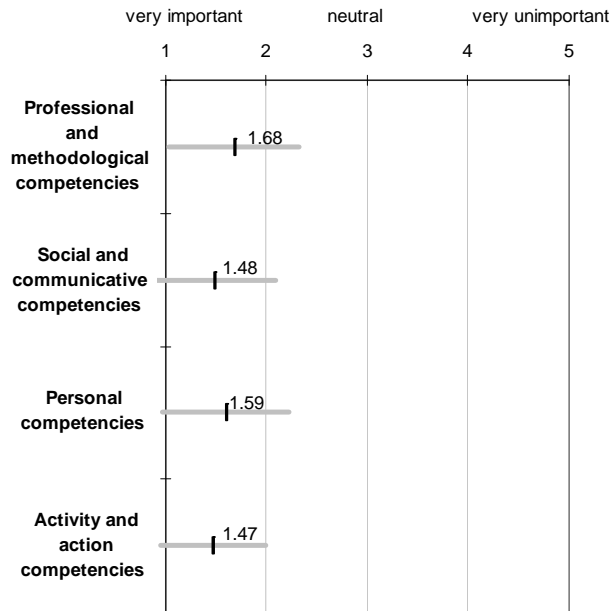


Figure 8. Overall results

These results are of particular interest and relevance, as the main focus of tourism programs always seems to be a sound education relating to professional and methodological competencies. Hence the study shows that extra-functional competencies such as social and communicative, personal as well as activity and action-oriented competencies are far more important from the employers' point of view. This might be a direct result stemming from the overall strong customer-orientation within the services industries such as tourism. The customer is the focus of attention when it comes to setting up new offers, bundling multi-optional services and hosting the guest in a destination at a very high level of hospitality and personal commitment.

A1 Professional and methodological competencies are the most important competencies graduates must possess in the tourism industry.

A1 cannot be falsified according to the study results, as professional and methodological competencies are regarded to be of least importance (1.68 mean) compared to the three other competencies and skills.

A2 Social and personal competencies are more important than activity and action competencies when being employed in the tourism industry.

A2 cannot be falsified, as activity and action competencies (1.47 mean) rank more important than social (1.48 mean) and personal competencies (1.59) do. Overall, activity and action-oriented competencies are regarded to be the most important competence altogether.

Figure 9. Testing of assumptions

If this result is now translated to the field of education, it might suggest to further focus and, where possible, teach these extra-functional competencies to respond to future tourism needs.

LIMITATIONS

The present study has certain limitations that need to be taken into account when considering the results of the study and its contributions.

One limitation of course is that solely internship partner companies of one single higher education institution were being surveyed and more importantly, that the definitions of graduate skills and competencies include the element of choice and are also limited by the emphasis the institution puts on them. To complete the overall picture, a broader survey within each vocational field by means of in-depth interviews with company directors would be most valuable.

Another limitation arises from the low response rate. The small sample size of 48 respondents demands to apply caution on the results of the confirmatory survey. It must be admitted that the findings might not be generalized for the field of tourism and hospitality research. This is a major shortcoming that might be explored and addressed in future research. Given the high level of access, and frequent use of email as a communication medium it was felt that a web-based survey had the advantage of being relatively time-efficient for respondents. Yet, even though research shows that e-mail response rates are higher, the study found response rates higher only during the first few days after the first invitation to participate in the study and after the reminder which was sent to the respondents (Bosnjak et al. 2001). Furthermore, in electronic mailings, people can easily quit in the middle of a questionnaire and are not as likely to complete a long questionnaire on the web, which has been evidenced in the empirical study at hand with 4 questionnaires being not fully completed. Although electronic studies show a wide range of advantages (cost-savings, ease of editing and analysis, faster transmission time, easy use of pre-letters, more candid responses, potentially quicker response time with wider magnitude of coverage), some disadvantages exist, such as sample demographic limitations, lower levels of confidentiality, layout and presentation issues of a computer questionnaire, missing additional orientation/instructions, potential technical problems with hardware and software, and the probability of discontinuation halfway through the questionnaire.

IMPLICATIONS AND OUTLOOK

The most recent global and regional developments bring about a change in vocational education and training (VET) needs required from new recruits in the tourism industry and ask for revised training programmes to be introduced for future decision-makers (Hofstetter, 2004). Students require a sound higher education that allows them to cope with the changing environment, making use of competencies such as the ability to handle conflict, creative problem solution, tolerance, social skills and flexibility. Of course, the degree to which these skills are required by employers varies depending on the type of job role to be carried out within an

organisation, i.e. these skills might be of particular importance for graduates taking up management positions (Raybould & Sheedy, 2005). They must be sound in decision making, problem solving, trouble shooting, and conflict resolutions, which are all key managerial skills.

The study among domestic and international internship partner companies of MCI clearly indicates that all competencies are highly important for graduates. It is interesting that activity and action-oriented competencies seem to have the greatest importance for tourism-related jobs, followed by social and communicative competencies, personal competencies and last but not least professional and methodological competencies. This result suggests that it is a big challenge and responsibility for education institutions to convey and promote not only professional, but also social, personal and activity and action-oriented skills in a sustainable way in order to guarantee a high quality program and good employability opportunities for graduates.

Furthermore, taking the strong divide concerning a general definition of employability skills and competencies into account, institutes of higher education have to clearly define these competencies for themselves and, in a second step, set clear learning and teaching goals by defining the desired outcomes.

The study also shows the importance of relatedness between industry requirements and industry partners and curriculum development at higher education institutions. The paper implies the need to involve industry in curriculum design especially with regard to the definition of graduate skills and competencies that are being developed at education institutions.

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DIMESIONS OF A HIGH PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE US CASUAL RESTAURANT SEGMENT

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ABSTRACT

Although executives cite human resources as their firm's most important asset, many organizational actions do not reflect this conviction. This paper uses the Delphi method to establish the most important dimensions of high performance management system (HPMS) in the casual restaurant industry. We discuss why some popularly cited work practices in manufacturing are not relevant to a service industry – such as restaurants, and the work practice dimensions that are applicable. We also examine what aspects of a firm's human resources can provide a source of sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) and present a framework to achieve it.

KEYWORDS: Strategy, Human Resources Management, Restaurant, Performance Measures, Managers

INTRODUCTION

In the past two decades scholars and practitioners alike have dedicated a substantial amount of effort to studying the relationships between a firm's performance and its human resource (HR) practices (Warech & Tracey, 2004). What has emerged from these studies is evidence that supports a linkage between a firm's HR practices and performance that leads ultimately to competitive advantage. However, what has become equally clear is that human resource practices do not operate independently from each other or from the firm's overall strategy. Instead, human resource practices operate in complex systems of interrelated parts. The systems identified in these studies have become known as high performance work practices systems or high involvement work practices systems in the literature within the field of strategic human resource management (Becker & Huselid, 1998). Firms able to implement such systems through complementary internal alignment have been shown to increase the intangible value of their human capital and create greater economic value for the business. These organizations can compete more effectively in their business segment and produce greater than average profits.

Studies on HR work practices systems in the service industry have mostly been limited to heavily regulated industries, such as banking. These results have limited validity for the restaurant industry; therefore, this study set out to identify a set of work practices for restaurant managers in the US casual restaurant business as a first step in identifying the link between HR practices and restaurant performance. A list of dimensions taken from the strategic human

resource management literature that generally reflect a high performance work system were used as the starting point to determine if they apply to the restaurant sector. The objective of this research is to conduct a qualitative study using interviews, the Delphi technique and company data that will gain consensus among restaurant industry professionals, academics and outside industry experts on the work practice dimensions in a HPMS.

The restaurant industry employs nearly 13 million people in 2007, making it the nation's largest private sector employer providing work for nearly 9% of those employed in the US. As casual restaurant companies learn to view their employees from a new perspective, as strategic human capital which possesses intangible assets (knowledge, experience, skill, etc.) that are valuable to the firm, evidence suggests that their business performance improves. In contrast, the industry's current HR practices have resulted in a paradigm of high turnover and low retention of employees which resulted in high levels of replacement costs, lost productivity, poor service quality, lack of employee skill, know how and experience. For restaurant firms to harvest the full potential of their employee's intangible value, they will need to undergo a fundamental change in this philosophy. They can do so by developing with clear understanding of the relationships between high performance work practice systems and sustainable competitive advantage.

MANAGEMENT THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

While past theories in business strategy have included the HR function as part of the implementation stage of strategy making, current approaches argue that human capital and the businesses that develop it can generate a sustainable competitive advantage (Barney, 1997). Some classic strategy theories take a strategic choice view and suggest that companies select a "generic" strategy to compete in the environment in which they find themselves (Porter, 1985). The conventional sources of competitive advantage discussed in the strategic choice literature include competitive methods such as technology, natural resources, productivity improvements and low cost leadership. In the US restaurant industry the ability of companies to respond to traditional choice strategies initiated by their competition occurs relatively quickly after they are introduced. Pick-up windows at casual restaurants, customer pagers and supplier distributions systems are but a few examples of traditional type "innovations" that were all picked up quickly by competitors and the industry as a whole. Alternatively, recent theorists have moved away from the choice perspective of organization strategy and focused on a resource based view (RBV) of the firm, arguing that businesses develop sustainable competitive advantage SCA only by creating value that is rare and not easily imitated by the competition (Barney, Wright & Ketchen, 2001). RBV theorists have argued that the traditional types of competitive advantages are becoming increasingly scarce, hard to develop and easy to imitate, particularly in comparison to a well thought out employment systems which are viewed as unique resources and capabilities of the firm.

The RBV implies that HR systems can contribute to SCA by making possible the development of core competencies that are company explicit, produce diverse organizational relationships, are rooted in a company's history and customs, and create implicit organizational knowledge (Connor, 1991). RBV focuses on how the individual firm obtains an SCA over other firms in its competitive environment through the use of the firm's unique resources. The

continued superior performance of some of the most successful restaurant firms, such as Outback and Cheesecake Factory, has been attributed to, in part, unique capabilities for managing human resources to gain competitive advantage (Murphy & Williams, 2004). To the contrary, to the extent that HR systems hinder the development of new competencies and/or tear down present organizational competencies, they may contribute to a firm's liability and competitive weakness.

The RBV is predicated on the concept that in order to create an SCA and produce value for the firm, individual policies or practices produce the greatest results when they operate in a complex system that is (1) not easily imitated, (2) creates positive value, (3) has rareness - unique resource, (4) and substitutability - cannot be replaced by other products or services (Barney, 1991). Resources are the "physical things a firm buys, leases or produces for its use, or the people hired on terms that make them effectively part of the firm" (Penrose, 1959). A company's resources can be "tangible or intangible assets which are tied semi-permanently to the firm" (Wernerfelt, 1984). Human expertise is viewed as a separate resource class (intangible asset) and as a distinct resource, which in today's knowledge-based economy contributes more of a value adding element to the organization than through traditional profit generating resources such as the manufacturing of goods.

The potential of human capital to learn and thus continually improve its services, to shift its knowledge from one organization to another, and to combine other resources in more useful ways "makes human beings distinct from other types of resources". Human capital capable of yielding SCA is that which meets the test of rare value, relative immobility and superior appropriate talent (Boxall, 1998). Restaurant firms that achieve ongoing viability have the potential to build a human resource competitive advantage through superior human capital and organizational processes. These sources of superiority depend on the quality of alignment between the restaurant company's interests and their employee's interests. It is for this reason that HR strategies could become important sources of SCA in the future; "the challenge for management will be creating value through people rather than using them as objects" (Olsen & Zhao, 2002).

SHRM VOID

The field of strategic human resource management (SHRM) has gained much recognition over the past two decades due to the increasing need of businesses to create value in new ways and the importance of intangible human capital to organizations as a competitive advantage. Research clearly shows a link between the rewards a company offers and those individuals that are attracted by the rewards into working for the firm, and those employees who will continue to work for the business (Lawler, 1987). In recent years the reward systems have expanded both in terms of type and quantity. Traditionally, restaurant general managers were rewarded with a base pay and a business period bonus based on meeting preset goals for revenues and expenses. In general rewards have been divided into monetary and non-monetary, but with the advent of "chain" restaurant style plans these two categories have become blurred. What were previously thought of as "soft" HR work practices have become increasingly important to restaurant managers, if not paramount to successful HR restaurant strategies. Employees that are in high demand are increasingly acting as their own agents negotiating individual arrangements, much like professional sports players, based upon their employment value to the firm.

There is an emergent body of evidence demonstrating that “the methods used by an organization to manage its human resources can have a substantial impact on many organizationally relevant outcomes” (Delery, 1998). The change of focus on organizational resources is noteworthy in that it shifts the traditional emphasis in the field from micro human resource management practices to a macro system of practices that the organization uses to manage its human capital. Imbedded in the discussion of HR systems is the concept of high performance work practices. Confounding the research on HR work practices is a general disagreement among researchers on the micro HR practices which comprise an SHRM system; there is little consensus among scholars and practitioners with respect to specifically which human resource work practices should be incorporated into an HPMS construct (Guest, Conway & Dewe, 2004). There are several key unresolved questions in need of future study, with the development of an agreed upon set of work practices as the first step. Indeed, construct development and validation of measures is fundamental to the progression of model development (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Some progress has been made in conceptualizing the content of an HPMS; this is demonstrated by the emerging agreement that an HR system should be formulated to guarantee that employees obtain a high degree of skills, motivation, ownership and participation, information sharing, performance based rewards and the prospect of a proper work/life balance. The combined outcome should be value-added performance and increased shareholder value. Since each of these elements is essential, the HR system should consist of an appropriate combination of practices designed to elicit them. While many researchers have focused on a high performance system, some have been more concerned with closely related concepts such as a high involvement system or a high commitment system. These variations demonstrate the significance of linking the conceptual analysis of the goals of an HR system to an appropriate set of work practices, and by doing so they identify the potential sources of confusion about what constitutes a suitable HR system.

Besides the difficulties in conceiving the components of an HPMS system, there is also difficulty in combining multiple HR work practices. The ability to find the most effective combination represents both theoretical and practical challenges. Although, there have now been many studies of the efficacy of high performance HR systems, very little direct evidence has come to the forefront to suggest that a coherent system of HR practice is needed and of great consequence. An understanding of the dimensions of HPMS for the restaurant industry is essential if organizations are going to be able to measure the returns on investment in their unit level management human capital. This is why the intent of this study is to discover the HR practices for a service industry that make up an HPMS for restaurant unit level management.

METHODOLOGY

Since this study was exploratory in nature, the approach chosen to answer the research questions was a case study method that used a combination of data collection techniques: interviews for the pilot study, the Delphi method for broader consensus building and secondary data collection. Independently owned restaurants, chain restaurants, consultants and academics were chosen to consider the components of a high performance management system construct for unit management in the US casual restaurant business. First, a priori assumptions were made based on a review of the SHRM literature and secondary data. Next, experts at the Vice President level or above were interviewed to refine and further develop the Delphi questionnaire instrument and collect primary data. Finally, a Delphi study was conducted to gain a further consensus.

Case study

A case study is an "empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin, 2003, p. 13). It is appropriate when no experimental control can be used in the data collection process and when a researcher seeks an answer to "what", "how", and "why" questions (Yin, 2003; Adler and Ziglio, 1996). Since this study was exploratory in nature and seeks to answer "what" questions, the case study research methodology was deemed to be appropriate. This study has characteristics of an exploratory case study that is focused on contemporary events and seeks to answer "what" questions (Benbasat, Goldstein, & Mead, 1987). A case study approach may lead to a more informal basis for theory development through analytical rather than pure statistical generalizations (Gunasekaran, Love, Rahimi, & Miele, 2001). A theory can be defined as a set of concepts and generalizations. Sutherland defined theory as an "ordered set of assertions about a generic behavior or structure assumed to hold a broad range of specific instances" (Weick, 1989). Thus, a case study was used in this study to establish the salient dimensions of a high performance management system. This case study was designed for the reliable investigation of contemporary ideas on restaurant manager employment practices used by HR leaders and the gathering of appropriate information used in the decision making process. The outcome is a list of practices that are common to the casual restaurant industry and a more in-depth exploration of key industry HR problems and challenges.

Interviews

The rationale for the study required that primary data used to answer the research questions come from US casual themed restaurant companies both large and small, and industry experts from various backgrounds. Thus a Delphi instrument was required as a data collection technique. However, it was expected that some detailed qualitative data could not be gathered through the Delphi. Therefore, eight semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with an expert group (Table 1) and used for the purpose of narrowing a gap between academic literature used to develop the Delphi instrument and restaurant industry practitioner's domains. This enabled the authors the ability to gain clarification to a response or give clarity to a question. It was expected that some of the questions may not be interpreted in the intended way. Thus, the questionnaires were pre-tested among and revised based on suggestions of the researcher's colleagues who had experience in HR and managing restaurants in the past.

Interview scripts were prepared and used during the interviews. Scripts allowed a researcher flexibility of giving clarification to questions or asking alternative questions to be better understood by the interviewees.

The information gleaned from the interviews was used to develop and test the final instrument to be used in the Delphi rounds. Additionally, secondary data was collected including company documents, government documents and periodicals pertinent to the companies for use in data verification. The participants provided crucial contextual information on the work practices dimensions under consideration for the Delphi instrument. Revisions based on the pilot study interviews were made and two work practice dimensions were added, Diversity (# 15) and Employer of Choice (#16) to the final Delphi questionnaire.

Table 1: Interviewees

Position	Restaurant
SVP of Group HR	Darden Restaurants
Southeast Partner	Fleming’s Steakhouse and Wine Bar
SVP of Family Resources	Buca De Beppo
Chief People Officer	Donnatos Restaurant
VP and Managing Director	HVS International
VP of Training and HR	Tony Romas
Regional Employment Director	Longhorn Steak House
Assistant Professor	University of Central Florida

Delphi Method

The Delphi Method is based on a “structured process for collecting and distilling knowledge” from a assembly of experts by means of a series of surveys intermingled with controlled opinion feedback (Adler and Ziglio, 1996). According to Helmer (1977) Delphi represents a useful communication mechanism among a group of experts and thus facilitates the development of a group consensus. Wissema (1982) states that the Delphi method has been developed in order to make dialogue between experts feasible without permitting certain types of negative social interactive and impeding opinion forming. Baldwin (1975) surmises that lacking full scientific understanding, decision-makers have to rely on their own perception or an expert. While the Delphi technique along with cross-impact analysis were developed as forecasting tools, in recent years the Delphi method has gained popularity for non-forecasting applications, such as this study.

Our study used a Delphi technique to establish the most important dimensions of high performance management system within the casual themed restaurant sector. One of the key objectives of the Delphi method is to obtain consensus from a group of experts in their particular field. To this end we asked a group of restaurant experts to evaluate HR work practices initially identified in prior research and add to these HR practices using their knowledge of the industry. This serves to validate earlier ideas and often takes several iterations before full consensus is achieved. The important aspect of this step is that experts contribute in privacy so they are not

influenced by group discussions and key thought leaders. We used a cross section of restaurant industry experts including company executives, consultants, academics and investors/owners to achieve the greatest breadth of results and agreement between scholars and industry leaders.

In putting our panel together we contacted restaurant industry executives, academics and HR consultants with whom expressed a willingness to participate (Table 1 & 2). This selection method was used intentionally to help insure a wide range of participant perspectives and that all participants were fully versed in the relevant subject topic. Restaurant companies of all sizes, both public and private franchised as well as company owned were selected to participate in the Delphi. Twenty-two executives at all levels, ranging from recruiters to Vice Presidents who are involved in the HR function, were chosen to participate. Additionally, ten consultants and academics at all levels from small business owners to Vice Presidents whom are involved in HR research and oriented work were chosen to participate to top out the field of experts at thirty-two.

Table 2: Delphi Participant Organizations

Longhorn Steak House
Darden Restaurants (2 participants)
Fleming’s Steakhouse and Wine Bar
Buca De Beppo (2 participants)
Donnatos Restaurant
Red Lobster
Maggianos Little Italy
TGI Fridays
Chillis Bar & Grill
Houston's Restaurant
Sonny's BBQ (2 participants)
Tony Romas
Olive garden
Levy restaurants Inc.
Smokey Bones BBQ
Cheesecake Factory
E-brands restaurant
First Watch Restaurant
Applebee’s Bar & Grill
University of New Orleans
Za-Bistro Consulting
Virtual Path Ways
HVS International (2 participants)
California Consulting
UCF (2 participants)
Virginia Tech
University of Nebraska

The final Delphi instrument was prepared based on information gathered through research of the appropriate literature and 14 work practice dimensions were chosen initially as possibilities (Table 3) from 7 prior empirical works (Huselid, 1995; Pfeffer, Hatano & Santalainen, 1995; Delery & Doty, 1996; Pfeffer, 1998; Morgan, 2001; Hartog, 2004; Murphy, & Williams, 2004). Revisions based on the pilot study interviews were made and two work practice dimensions were added, Diversity (# 15) and Employer of Choice (#16). The final questionnaire was assembled, pre-tested for clarity and then distributed using electronic protocol.

Table 3: Delphi Work Practice Dimensions

1. Employment Security: Means that employees are not quickly laid-off for economic downturns or the strategic mistakes, over which employees have no control. (Morgan 2001).
2. Selectivity In Recruiting: Rigorous selection developed over time through feedback and learning, to ensure that the firm can identify the skills it is seeking. (Pfeffer, 1998).
3. High Wages: Can take many forms such as pay increases, share ownership, stock options, profit sharing, paying for skills acquisition and individual or team incentives (Morgan 2001).
4. Incentive Pay Based on Performance Appraisal: Can take a number of different forms, including gain sharing, profit sharing, pay for skill, or various forms of individual or team incentives. (Pfeffer, Hatano & Santalainen, 1995).
5. Employee Ownership: Other forms of financial incentives designed to align the interests of employees with shareholders. (e.g., ESOPs and proprietary/partner interests (Huselid, 1995).
6. Information Sharing: On issues such as financial performance, strategy, and operational measures conveys to the organization’s people that they are trusted. (Morgan 2001).
7. Participation And Empowerment: Encouraging the decentralization of decision making and broad worker participation and empowerment in controlling their own work processes. (Pfeffer, Hatano & Santalainen, 1995).
8. Self-Managed Teams: Qualitative and quantitative evidence shows that workers in self-managed teams enjoy greater autonomy, flexibility, discretion and job satisfaction resulting in teams out-performing traditionally work groups (Pfeffer, 1998).
9. Training And Skill Development: Training, cross-training and cross-utilization are an essential component of high-performance work systems (Pfeffer, 1998).
10. Reduced Status Distinctions and Barriers: Including dress, language, office arrangements and wage differences across levels (Pfeffer, 1998).
11. Job Design: Extent to which jobs are clearly and precisely defined(Delery, Doty1996
12. Promotion From Within: Offers an incentive for performing well which has a monetary as well as a status reward attached to it. Additionally, it provides a sense of fairness in the work place (Pfeffer, Hatano & Santalainen, 1995).
13. Measurement of the HR Practices: Including attitude assessment and measurement of the objectives are critical components in providing feedback and success of a HPWP system (Pfeffer, Hatano & Santalainen, 1995).
14. Quality of Work/Life: The degree of emotional, intellectual, or cultural satisfaction in a person's everyday life as distinct from the degree of material comfort. Or as one restaurant manager put it “more time with family, less time at work” (Murphy, & Williams, 2004).
15. Diversity: Defined as a collective mixture characterized by differences and similarities that are applied in pursuit of organizational objectives.
16. Employer of Choice: Defined as a term used to designate an organization that, because of its status and reputation, is always the first choice of world-class organization

RESULTS

Previous SHRM research has dubbed high value HR work practices as - High Performance Work Practices (HPWP). With few exceptions, these studies have been conducted mostly in manufacturing firms, multiple contextual settings, highly regulated industries and or countries which do not possess similar operational characteristics of the restaurant service industry. There are dramatic differences in the business models between the previously stated industries and the US restaurant industry and hence a subtle shift in the HR work practices that is required between them is apparent from the interviews results. In addition this study was specifically targeted to management in the casual restaurant industry, not overall employment as the other studies.

Interview Findings

Nine candidates agreed to participate in the interview group used to refine the final instrument. Only one of the restaurant executives became too busy to participate in the interview process. Hence, eight completed the interview process; all agreed that their interview comments could be used in the study. The dimensions included in the HPMS construct are discussed in detail below in order of their Delphi ranking first to last, with added comments from the interview participants and other secondary resources.

Training and skill development: Virtually all descriptions of high-performance management practices emphasize employee skill development. According to John Denapoli, regional partner for Outback Inc., training and development is “critical, so important, it takes an assistant manager to the next level of a managing partner”. Each manager at Outback Inc. “has a mentor” that helps them fully develop their potential. Richard Puttnick, the regional employment director for Longhorn Steakhouses states, “We firmly believe that the companies with the smartest people wins...two of our highest coefficients of success are “smartest (people) and education”. Longhorn is a “firm believer in on-going training and development – even for our seasoned managers. We recognize that keeping people challenged and continually learning creates a great work environment”. The SVP of group human resources for Darden Restaurants, Ron Bojalad, commented that training and development was focused “more around leadership development...managers are interested in what are you going to do for me to help me grow and become the next Joe Lee” (former CEO of Darden Restaurants).

Information sharing: The sharing of information on issues such as financial performance, strategy, and operational measures conveys to the organization’s people that they are trusted. People who are motivated and trained cannot contribute to enhancing organizational performance if they don’t have information on important dimensions of performance, training and how to interpret that information.

Employer of choice: According to Denapoli “corporate reputation gives employees pride. No one wants to work for a schlock (low quality) outfit – they want to work for the best. This is how you attract high quality applicants, good people come to you; you don’t get them on Monster.com”. Dave Mansbach, the Vice President and Managing Director of HVS Executive Search stated, “excellent reputation...customer brand vs. company brand (employment brand)...who do you

see as the best companies” (to work for). Sandee Pritchard, Chief People officer for Donatos Restaurants, states “the industry is not an employer of choice”. Donatos wants its managers to think of work as “a place people can professionally call home”. Donatos’ “company philosophy is based on a strong belief in product, principle and people. We promote from within and seek out diversity. Our number one priority is your professional and personal growth, so we offer a wide range of career opportunities for you to choose from”.

Selectivity in recruiting: Denapoli simply stated its “huge” and Pritchard says selectivity in recruiting is “off the charts” cannot emphasize enough the importance. Longhorn Steakhouses uses a “corporate assessment center to evaluate potential management” according to Puttnick. We aim to “hire the best (i.e. fast track GMs), but you need soldiers too”. We are “selective, but flexible”. Longhorn states this clearly on its homepage: “From your very first day, you’ll see why Longhorn is a great place to build a career. The atmosphere is relaxed, the energy is high and the salary and benefits are among the best you’ll find. We aim to be the casual dining industry’s Employer of Choice”.

Measurement of HR practices: While agreement was strong on the need to measure HR practices, the type of measurement and the methodology varied from company to company. Further indicating that agreement on how intangible HR work practices are measured is far from consensus. Rare Hospitality used a general employee survey that asked “specific HR questions” and has “one on one heart talks” to gage employee’s feelings about HR issues. Darden uses an employee engagement survey comparing year over year and Donatos has recently started an engagement program with their managers as well.

Promotion from within: This dimension offers an incentive for performing well which has a monetary as well as a status reward attached to it. Additionally, it provides a sense of fairness in the work place. Outback’s company information states that “historically we have developed our management candidates from our own ranks and promotion from within is “very helpful to keep employees”. Darden’s leadership and assessment center focuses on internal promotion with more than 50% of its managers promoted from within. Additionally they state “At Olive Garden, managers set their own pace for promotion, based on their skills and preparation. Our goal is to help you become successful as a manager and as a General Manager”.

Quality of work/life: According to Denapoli “important to managers and company... we want to provide our managers with the opportunity to pursue family and career interests outside the restaurant; therefore we are open for dinner only.” Bojalad stated that “quality of work life is Huge! It is not just generational...companies that gain the reputation for this (quality of work/life) will win the war”. Donatos restaurants uses Lets Get Engaged, LGE, a performance engagement program to help their managers achieve a healthy work life balance that would improve their performance on the job and at home. Longhorn is committed to hiring the best and providing the challenges and opportunities required to retain and grow its people. They have a guarantee 5 day work week and overtime pay for the occasional 6th day worked.

In its broadest context, *Diversity* is defined as "recognizing, appreciating, valuing, and utilizing the unique talents and contributions of all individuals". Puttick says “our diversity goal is to reflect the markets that we do business in”. Donatos won the 2005 Best Practice Award for

diversity from People Report. Diversity “should be part of company culture... (most of) the restaurant managers are still a white male” according to Pritchard. Darden has a diversity link on their homepage and a diversity vision statement, which states in part “Our commitment is based upon the recognition and belief that diversity is critical to our ability to excel in an increasingly diverse and dynamic marketplace”.

Incentive pay based on performance appraisal: Outback, Longhorn and Buca di Beppo have managing partners with an equity stake and these companies, as with Darden, represent that incentive pay is greater than base pay for the vast majority of general managers/managing partners. Denapoli added that the actual “performance appraisal must be clear and based on performance”. All the companies interviewed featured incentive pay as part of the compensation package.

Participation and empowerment: According to Longhorn published literature: “the number one quality of a successful Longhorn Manager is centered around an outlook of complete guest satisfaction. If something is not right in the eyes of our guests, our managers are not only empowered, but compelled to do whatever it takes to make it right – on the spot!”

Self managed teams: This translates into intrinsic rewards and job satisfaction resulting in teams out-performing traditionally supervised work groups. Denapoli added that we want managing partners to be “captains of their own ships”. In order for a self managed team to be successful in a restaurant it must have committed team members who recognize the value in working for the overall good of the organization and the self managed team.

Employee ownership: Other forms of financial incentives designed to align the interests of employees with shareholders (e.g., ESOPs and proprietary/partner interests). Puttick states that employee ownership “is important that’s why we created GM managing partner... We offer the opportunity to become a Managing Partner to those assistants that demonstrate great potential. For Outback Steakhouse the managing partner program has been a cornerstone of their success allowing them to attract the best. Denapoli suggests that “one aspect that attracts great people to Outback is the equity stake we offer to all Managing Partners. Additionally, Managing Partners have a 5-year contract, which contributes to our stable environment and low turnover of both management and hourly employees.”

High wages: The level of compensation sends a clear message to the organization’s employees if they are regarded as truly valued and valuable to the firm. Compensation can take many forms such as pay increases, share ownership, stock options, profit sharing, paying for skills acquisition and individual or team incentives. RARE Inc. “wants to be in the top 10% of compensation in the restaurant industry...our average managing partner earns in excess of \$100,000 annually”. Bojalad added “a seven plus when all compensation and benefits is included...total benefits package is important. Benefits are huge; people are concerned about retirement, medical, etc.”

The information gleaned from the interviews was used to further develop the final instrument used in the Delphi rounds. Additionally, secondary data was collected including company documents, government documents and periodicals pertinent to the companies for use in data verification. The participants provided crucial contextual information on the work

practices dimensions under consideration for the Delphi instrument. Revisions based on the interviews were made and two work practice dimensions were added, Diversity (# 15) and Employer of Choice (#16) to the final Delphi questionnaire.

Delphi Findings

The first round of the Delphi survey was completed by 24 out of 32 participants. A consensus on the dimensions of HPMS was not reached from the first-round survey according to the protocol, therefore another round was needed. The second round was done in the form of controlled feedback. Nineteen participants responded to the second round and consensus was reached according to the protocol, the Delphi was concluded at this point.

The Delphi panel validated 13 work practice dimensions which were developed from the general business literature and interviews. The panel members ranked 16 pre-selected work practice dimensions on a seven point Likert-type ordinal measurement agreement scale and made no other suggestions in the open response section (Table 4). The dimensions are listed in rank order of importance (as indicated by mean).

Table 4: Delphi Results and HPMS Dimensions

HPMS Dimensions*	N	Mean	Median	Std.
Training And Skill Development*	19	6.58	7.00	0.65
Information Sharing*	19	6.46	6.00	0.51
Employer of Choice*	19	6.41	7.00	1.01
Selectivity In Recruiting*	19	6.29	6.00	0.75
Measurement of the HR Practices*	18	6.21	6.00	0.88
Promotion From Within*	19	6.17	6.50	1.31
Quality of Work/Life*	19	6.09	6.00	1.31
Diversity*	19	6.09	6.00	1.35
Incentive Pay Based on Performance Appraisal*	19	5.88	6.00	1.33
Participation And Empowerment *	19	5.88	6.00	0.90
Self-Managed Teams*	19	5.71	6.00	0.75
Employee Ownership*	19	5.67	6.00	1.40
High Wages*	19	5.63	6.00	0.88
Job Design (excluded form HPMS)	19	5.58	6.00	1.47
Employment Security (excluded from HPMS)	19	5.50	6.00	1.44
Reduced Status Distinctions, Barriers(excluded)	19	5.25	5.00	1.15

Job Design, reduced status distinctions and employment security are not included in the restaurant manager’s HPMS construct. They mean ranked in the bottom quartile of the dimensions in the final round of the Delphi for the proposed HPMS. Following the research protocol of triangulation the researchers decided based on the literature and lack of information

in published company documents that were collected, industry reports on job design and the comments from the panelists in addition to their rankings that job design, reduced status distinctions and employment security should not be included in the HPMS construct. Job Design, Employment Security and Reduced Status Distinctions and Barriers that were included in previous studies do not apply to the US casual restaurant segment for unit managers according to the research results.

Additionally, grievance procedures and labor relations, two dimensions that are part of a manufacture base high performance work practice system were not included in the study based on their lack of relevance to the restaurant industry. As with many Likert-type agreement-scale survey instruments the responses from the participants tended to cluster at either end of the agreement scale. With pre-selected and highly researched dimensions this was more so the case. This required the research team to make qualitative judgments on the cut points based on multiple criteria from various sources of information, a process known as data triangulation.

CONCLUSION

Only one restaurant company made Fortune's list of the '100 best companies to work for in 2007', as the nation's largest private sector employer this is a rather negative indictment on the industry. With the future growth of the restaurant sector dependent to an extent on its' ability to find managers to operate units, the old ideas about work practices and attitudes about the quality of life outside of work are under going a transformation. Several reports cited in this study imply the old work concepts are under assault. Experienced managers are increasingly leveraging their value to the company and the shortage of qualified managers in the restaurant industry by making a statement about what they desire and how they want to work. The restaurant industry has been challenged by these issues for a long time and the inability of some to change continues to prolong the problem, employers, unwillingness to increase compensation, poor work conditions with long hours and little corporate recognition of good performance just scratch the surface on a list of inadequacies that aggravate employee flight from the industry. Progressive restaurant companies are shifting their paradigm and moving towards a HPMS.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

Previous SHRM research has dubbed a set of HR work practices - high performance work systems or some similar variation. The vast majority of these studies have been conducted in manufacturing firms, multiple contextual settings, highly regulated industries and/or countries which do not possess similar operational characteristics of the US restaurant service industry. The restaurant industry lands squarely in the service sector of the economy where the focus in leading companies is on the internal and external customers, guests or people. The result from this study is a second generation framework in the social science management field that focuses on the creation of value with an HPMS in the US restaurant industry. There is a fundamental difference in the way intangible human capital is viewed in high performing service organizations. In an HPMS people are viewed as value creating and value-adding to the firm and

are part of the firm's value proposition, versus a drain on company resources or an expenditure of the firm's capital.

The study's outcome is the dimensions of a High Performance Management System (Table 4), which are common to unit management in the casual restaurant industry and a more in-depth exploration of industry work practice problems and challenges for unit management. The three work practices that were not considered relevant dimensions to the casual restaurant industry and were removed from the final HPMS framework are: job design, employment security and reduced status distinctions and barriers as determined by the research team, the expert interviews and the Delphi research results. Additionally, grievance procedures and labor relations, two dimensions that are part of a manufacture base high performance work practice system were not included in the study based on their lack of relevance to the casual restaurant industry which is not unionized. This translates into a difference of seven work practices, between a manufacturing HPWS and a restaurant HPMS, that are either excluded or included in a restaurant HPMS.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

It is widely acknowledged in the restaurant industry that the management team, at the unit level, is one of the largest factors in individual store on store performance. The HPMS core competency supports the management team in the casual restaurant and can aid in reducing turnover and strengthening the quality of unit management ranks. The management team is the one that implements and executes the service plan. They are an intangible component in the guest service experience. They hire and conduct the training of service staff to ensure a great guest experience and they are the ones to make adjustments to improve the experience when necessary. High performing management is rare, not easily imitable, is value-adding and is difficult to replace, which are the four essential elements to produce a competitive advantage. A restaurant HPMS is different than a manufacturing work practice system because its focus is squarely on being a multifaceted core competency that supports the value-adding manager. Management is the intangible competitive advantage which oversees the execution of the production of outstanding food, beverage and service to achieve superior customer satisfaction and an HPMS can increase the quality of unit management by attracting the best managers and keeping them.

In most high performance restaurant companies, managers are given the freedom to have control of their work environment within clearly defined frameworks. As Denopli stated "they are captains of their own ship" and in charge of their own destiny; "I am here to help them be successful". In these work systems, managers become more knowledgeable about their operating environment as they have a clear stake in the restaurant's performance. HPMS recognize managers as assets that are capable of being key contributors to the success of the organization. Managers are given an opportunity to substantially contribute to the overall success of the restaurant firm. HPMS facilitate great management and helps inspire employees to achieve high levels of performance. Through the use of human capital, HPMS operate between the interaction of tangible and intangible assets.

Finally in the US casual restaurant segment, diversity and quality of work/life are important work practice dimensions in an HPMS. This is an important distinction from previous research and a significant finding of this study. Over the last several business cycles the US economy has successfully transformed itself from a manufacturing economy to a service and knowledge economy. However, the focus in mainstream accounting practices, academic business research and government statistics has not significantly evolved with this rapidly changing environmental reality. The future of the US economy clearly rests with the creation of value through the use of intangible knowledge works, whose value is hard to quantify and is highly mobile. Thus, knowing what components of an intangible value creating HPMS for unit level restaurant managers are required to attract and retain them will ultimately add value to the firm. In the search for competent restaurant managers that can successfully operate in today's increasingly competitive environment, there are work practice strategies that will work in attracting and preventing turnover among the management ranks. Organizations must develop a comprehensive HPMS that takes into consideration both monetary and non-monetary work practice elements to have value-adding operational management. Make a commitment to be a leader in work practices and bring a restaurant company's HR practice to the leading edge of all industries, not just the restaurant business. In order for a company to succeed at being a leader in the restaurant industry, it should lead with practices that will attract the best and create additional shareholder value for the firm.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study's use of exploratory qualitative information, which has not been previously done, while valuable, will need to be followed up by more in-depth quantitative methods in order to produce a study that will achieve a greater measure of validity. Now that the experts have spoken, what do the unit managers have to say? Will the managers, that have the responsibility of running the casual restaurants, feel the same way about the work practices? A comparison between this study's results and the managers will need to be examined to determine if there are differences in work practice dimensions and an HPMS construct. After further refinement of the work practice and performance dimensions a larger quantitative study of restaurant firm's alignment could be undertaken using public companies and those private companies willing to discuss the topic to further validate the model and theory.

An additional drawback of using qualitative study research design is the issue of generalization. The findings in this study may not be generalized to other firms within the same or other industries. However, this research is probative in nature and the generalization of the findings was not an objective. The study serves as an early step in the development of a decision-making model for investments in HRM work practices. Third, the individual work practice dimensions need further definition. Organizations need to know the most effective components of each of the work practice dimensions. For example, what selection methods achieve the best hiring results? What is the best type of manager ownership program? How much training and what type is valuable? Are we paying enough or too much? What is the right amount of work hours to achieve an effective work life balance for managers? What is the best type of employee survey to gauge employee opinion and feeling?

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PECULIARITIES AND PARAMETERS AFFECTING HEALTH AND FITNESS RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

As evidenced by the numerous multi-billion dollar industries with an explicit body focus, the health and fitness club industry has emerged as a powerhouse in international commercial leisure. In particular, there has been a growing academic interest in the explication of the health and fitness consumer from sociologists; many of whom have not been averse to commenting on matters of the body and the cultural practices used to maintain it. Although the behavior of the health and fitness consumer is a potentially fruitful area of enquiry, that objective is only tangential in this paper. Specifically, this conceptual paper presents a commentary on the early stages of the author's doctoral experience and those issues that have been deemed to be barriers precluding research within the health and fitness club environment. Going forward, the paper presents the various macro and micro issues affecting health and fitness researchers through an adapted illustration of the Ice-Berg Model. Finally, the paper, after opening up the discussion of the peculiarities and parameters affecting researchers, offers some suggestions to reconcile those issues in an attempt to move health and fitness related research forward.

KEYWORDS: Barriers to Research; Consumption experiences; Health and fitness clubs; Ice-Berg model; Micro and Macro Issues.

INTRODUCTION

The following conceptual paper presents a commentary on the early stages of the author's doctoral experience¹, which seeks to investigate the experiential aspects of health and fitness participation and the value derived therefrom. Findings are based upon prior experience, introspection and are also stimulated by a five-week ethnographic study of a rural health and fitness club in Co. Kildare Ireland. These findings suggest that the nature of the service offered and the practices performed within such clubs pose certain peculiarities that conceivably represent barriers to conducting research within that field. These peculiarities are a foremost priority in this paper. The primary objective of this paper is to highlight some of the factors impacting on the implementation of consumer research within a health and fitness context. Simply put, where does the prospective researcher fit in? While this discussion will not exhaust the unique dimensions of the health and fitness club as a site of research, it will touch on the

¹ The doctorate is being undertaken at the Dublin Institute of Technology under the supervision of Catherine Gorman (lecturer, DIT), Prof. Frédéric Dimanche (Professor of Marketing, CERAM Business School), and Dr. Sheila Flanagan (Head of the School of Hospitality Management and Tourism, DIT).

various micro and macro issues² that the authors deem to be barriers precluding the implementation of primary research. Additionally, this paper seeks to highlight such barriers for other researchers interested in exploring health and fitness phenomena in general and the behavior of health and fitness participants in particular through the illustration of an adapted Ice-Berg Model.

A Thought for the Health and Fitness Consumer

It's 16:55pm and Enda, a young professional who commutes to work every day, is getting ready to leave work. On his way home he will, as he does every Wednesday, drop into the local gym for his scheduled workout. After all, Wednesday is legs and abs day; as Bill Phillips has informed him in the book he recently read, *Body for Life*. He estimates that the bus will make it to the gym at approximately 17:50pm, as it usually does. Once he gets there, he has about ten minutes or so to swipe into the club, briefly flirt with the receptionist and, finally, hit the changing rooms. Then, he will adorn himself with his exercise specific training gear, mentally preparing himself for the workout to follow. Ready to work out, he will bound up the flight of stairs, briefly pause at the doors to the gym and organize the playlist on his i-pod. At the same time, he will gaze through the small window in the door to see if the gym is as busy as it was on Monday, when he had to wait for almost every machine. His disdain for the resolution-makers is quite strong, as it is for most regular gym-goers. After all, this is his mid-week break, his chance to disengage from both the responsibilities he has left behind in work, and the ones he will face when he gets home to his wife and young child. Once he enters the gym, he will follow the dominant male discourse of entering the weights area to mould, sculpt, and/or build the version of his desired body that has been branded into his mind (only of course after a brief five minute warm-up- as the book suggests). Among the many things he will do in the gym, Focus, Sweat, Push, Grunt, and Endurance are high on his agenda. All of which will be rewarded with a well-deserved cool-down, stretch and a figurative pat on the back. Once he has finished his workout, he will stride proudly, flushed with positive workout endorphins, out of the gym and down the stairs to freshen up and go home. After all, dinner is always at half seven. However, it is now 17:10pm and the bus is late. He is starting to get agitated, as he will not start his workout until 18:10pm. He wonders if the gym will be packed. In fact, he wonders if he will make it there at all.

This is an insight into the thoughts, feelings and fantasies of a regular gym-goer; an insight into his agitation at the routine-bashing tardiness of the bus driver; an insight into his routine, if not, his ritual; an insight into the many people that share such attributes; an insight into Enda Storey.

Consequently, this is not the end of the story as his name might suggest. Rather it is a passage replete with hypothetical activities that, on further inspection, emphasize the experiential aspects of health and fitness consumption. For example, taking Holbrook and Hirschman's (1982) three F's, the passage highlights the fantasies (about attaining the body beautiful or, indeed, acting upon his flirtatious exchanges with the club receptionist; also the entire passage is a fantasy), feelings (of disdain for neophyte participants; of escape from work/home pressures;

² For the purposes of this paper, macro issues refer to those which are structural or administrative to accessing populations, whereas micro issues are those concerned with accessing and explaining the phenomena under investigation

and of agitation towards the bus driver's inconsiderate timekeeping), and fun (felt throughout the experience in general and after the workout in particular) experienced by health and fitness participants. It recognizes that both time and deep levels of involvement are important resources for participation; both of which are possibly the foremost themes within the description. Furthermore, the passage emphasizes the complex (Fallon, 2003; Sassatelli, 1999a), individual (Smith-Maguire, 2008ab), transformational (Sayers & Bradbury, 2004), ritualized (Birrell, 1981; Lehmann, 1987; Sassatelli, 1999a), and engrossing (Chang & Chelladurai, 2003; Sassatelli, 1999b) nature of health and fitness participation; facets of consumption phenomena that are tantamount to the experiential perspective. As evidenced by the numerous multi-billion dollar industries that have an explicit body focus (Thompson & Hirschman, 1995), in Western society in particular, it is reasonable to assume that the behavior of the health and fitness participant is a powerful reflection of the postmodern consumer and, thus, a potentially fruitful area of enquiry. Although the explication of the health and fitness consumer has great relevance in an era of increasing materialism and aestheticization, the focus here, as the introduction alludes, is to highlight the barriers to accomplishing such an objective. In fact, whereas another study could use the aspects outlined above to discuss the behavior of health and fitness consumers more generally, that objective is only tangential here. Specifically, this paper considers many of the experiential aspects of health and fitness consumption - its micro issues or "peculiarities" - to be barriers to conducting consumer research within this environment. Additionally, the reality of privatization and seasonality - both of which characterize the health and fitness club industry - are considered significant macro issues or "parameters" affecting a researcher's access to health and fitness phenomena. Thus, taken together, this paper is concerned with macro issues - (i) the privatization of health and fitness, (ii) seasonality issues- and micro issues - (iii) the deep level of involvement inherent in health and fitness participation, (iv) the ritualistic aspects of health and fitness participation, and (v) the sensitive nature of the reasons for participating in health and fitness activities - affecting health and fitness researchers.

Visually, and borrowing from metaphors used in cultural analyses (e.g., French & Bell, 1979; Hall, 1959; Selfridge & Sokolik, 1975), these issues can be conceived of as the deepening levels of an ice-berg (see Figure 1). That is, whereas the two macro issues lie above the surface, the others are only encountered upon deeper enquiry. Although there are many ways of interpreting an Ice-Berg model - or any hierarchical model for that matter - for parsimony here, it illustrates the barriers faced by health and fitness consumer researchers as they move throughout the research process. The three important points to note when interpreting this model are (i) the researcher begins at the top (or tip) of the ice-berg, (ii) s/he moves downwards as the research progresses from macro issues (depicted above the surface of the water) to those micro issues that are submerged beneath the surface, and (iii) the area of the ice-berg depicted by each issue illustrates the extent to which the researcher has control over the said issues.

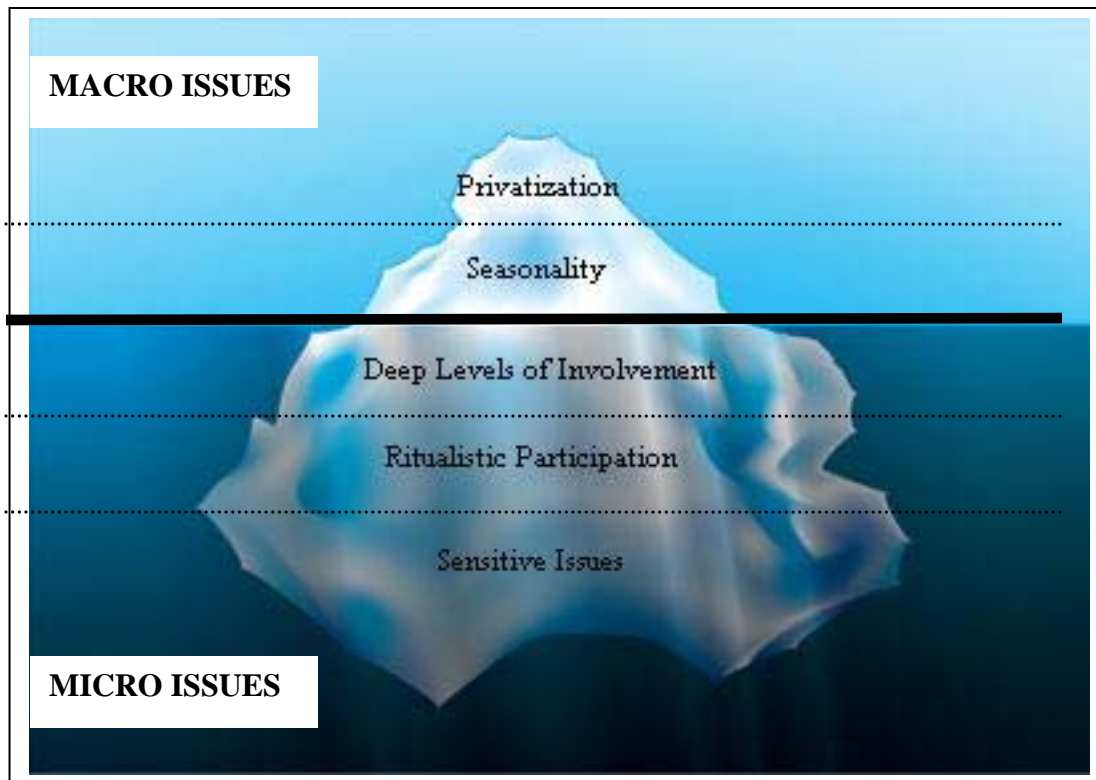


Figure 1 - The Ice-Berg Model
 (Adapted from French & Bell, 1979; Hall, 1959; Selfridge & Sokolik, 1975)

For example, at the start of the research process, one must choose (i) a site for the research to be undertaken, and (ii) when to undertake it; however, increasing privatization and seasonality within the health and fitness industry (macro issues) are the most obvious and observable barriers affecting the research going forward. Hence, their position is above the surface. Additionally, both of these macro issues permit the least amount of control for the researcher, which is illustrated by the amount of the ice-berg they actually inhabit. The structure of this paper herein charts the rest of this course, starting with an introduction to the macro and micro issues (separately) faced by researchers. It discusses some of the ways researchers can overcome such issues (if they can at all) and their level of control over them. And, finally, the paper ends with a discussion and summation of how, notwithstanding these barriers, health and fitness related consumer research can move forward.

MACRO ISSUES

The Privatization of Health and Fitness

According to Smith-Maguire (2008a), the proliferation of health and fitness clubs is one of the major elements reflecting the increasing privatization of leisure and, therefore, ‘exercise is

constructed as an activity for one's private time and- through fee-based club membership- a semi-private space' (p. 62). That is, although the contemporary health and fitness club is open to anyone with the cultural competence and economic capital to act as a consumer, its 'market openness contrasts with the protected nature of the practices included within' (Sassatelli, 1999a, p. 229). It is relatively separated from everyday reality as a 'specialized space... [and] thus both open and protected, both separated and connected to everyday life' (p. 229). The authors' textual analysis (a descriptive account of a site of ethnographic study; see Flick, 2002; Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Locke, 2001; Spradley, 1980) of the health club involved in the stimulation of this paper's themes confirms this, as the following passage describes:

Upon entering [the club], one encounters a contained and protected space; as in Sassatelli's (1999a) study of Italian gyms. At this point there is no confusion that this is a private club where the right of passage is either granted by a swift swipe of the membership key-ring or by the member of the staff who occupies this first area of physical space; the reception area. Non-members are routinely dismissed - without an accompanying member that is - although the option to join at this point is certainly available as the plethora of membership information upon entry will attest.

Perhaps this is the most obvious, yet significant barrier to conducting research within a health and fitness club environment. How does the researcher gain access to the subject of interest (without joining multiple health clubs across the country that is!)? Gummesson (1991) noted that access is the researcher's number one problem and those researchers often encounter many barriers in getting close to the object of study so as to find out what is happening. As a basic condition for research, physical access metaphorically can be represented by the "tip of the ice-berg" (as in Figure 1) and includes 'not only initial access but also the problem of assuring *continued* access' (Gummesson, 1991, p. 28) (emphasis added). Of course the health and fitness management has a duty to uphold in their relationship with the client member, but, access to such cohorts is conceivably more difficult than accessing leisure consumers in a broader sense. An example of this might be the investigation of consumers of public recreation amenities and facilities. As Smith Maguire (2008b, p. 74) noted in her study of New York health clubs 'once a new alternative to traditional sites of exercise, commercial health clubs *dominate* the contemporary fitness field' (emphasis added). Indeed, only one of the major chains (Aura Leisure) in Ireland could be categorized as being open to non-members, albeit it is still a semi-private space. More specifically, Afthinos, Theodorakis and Nassis (2005) questioned the generalisability of their own study of customers' expectations of service in Greek fitness centers due to the fact that there was no official agency with a complete list of fitness clubs. Even where agencies do exist, the Institute for Leisure and Amenity Management (ILAM) in Ireland for example, such lists can be out-of-date or, worse yet, deficient given the fact that many private clubs fail to associate with such organizations. Access and, indeed, the lack of information on the number, location and types of private clubs in the country, however, are barriers that are beyond reconciling; given the fact that the industry is not presently regulated (in Ireland anyway). From a researcher's perspective, however, these are pertinent issues worth highlighting nonetheless.

Seasonality Issues

Related to the problem of how to access health and fitness consumers is *when* to access them. Typically considered a troublesome issue unique to tourism providers (Butler, 1994; Jang, 2004), seasonality is also an overwhelming concern for health and fitness managers. For the most part, clubs will enjoy their greatest increases in demand, sales and revenue in the January-February period. That is, membership numbers, facility usage, renewals, and prospect tours are inclined to peak dramatically in the post-Christmas period; a likely response to the pressure of honoring one's New Year's resolution and also the ineluctable membership "deals" that abound in local media at this time one might assume. Various authors (Crossley, 2006; Hurley, 2004; Campbell, Nicholson, & Kitchen, 2006; Sassatelli, 1999b) have commented on the seasonal characteristics of the health club industry under the rubric of member retention, and it has been reported that approximately 50% of those people who begin a structured exercise program have difficulties sticking to it (Dishman, 1988). According to a US nationwide survey of health club members (as reported in Kufahl, 2007), 50.5% of resolution makers pledge to get in shape at the turn of every year but, by Valentine's day, 49% of them have relinquished their membership; or their dedication to exercise at the very least. While Figure 2 does not adequately illustrate this point, it *does* show how the first half of the year is considerably busier than other times and that the autumn in particular is the gyms slowest for business (both new and existing one would assume).

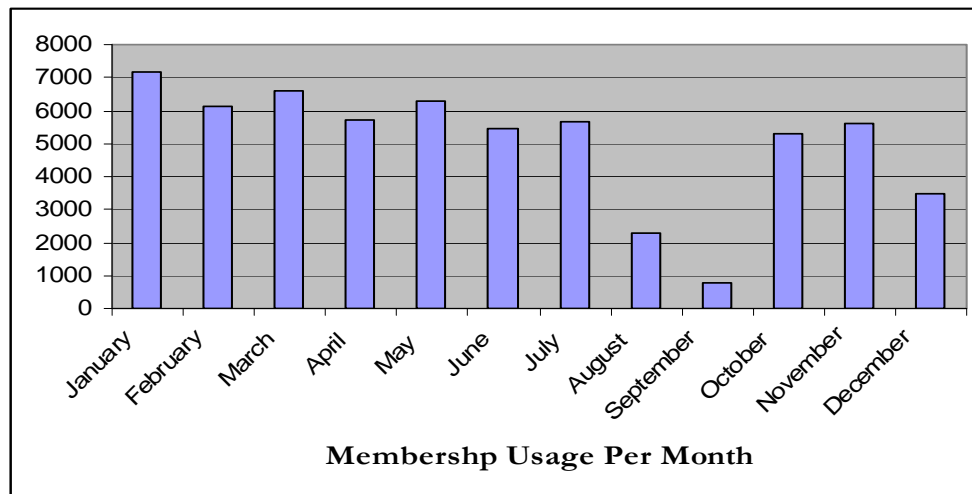


Figure 2 - Monthly Usage at Clane Health and Leisure 2007
(Source: C. Mitchell, personal communication, February 19, 2008)

Intuitively, one might suggest, then, that given the annual peak in the demand curve, the January, February and March (see Figure 2 above) period would be the most appropriate for conducting field research. The researcher argues that this is problematic for a number of reasons. First, during this period, where clubs might be especially busy, one could argue that staff and management might not necessarily be in the best position to facilitate an outsider's research agenda. Secondly, if the research was longitudinal by nature (i.e. investigating some dynamic construct), one might have difficulty with sampling. That is, many respondents might not be available for follow-up or clarification purposes (as in Fishwick, 2008). Finally, the

implementation of research at this stage is arguably open to respondent bias given the high levels of users that might defect soon after participating in the research. Thus, access, and continued access to the *typical* health and fitness consumer can be problematic. Like the reality of privatization, seasonality is a market force out of hands of any given researcher. Thus, it is not an issue that any single researcher or study is likely to resolve or overcome. It is, however, somewhat more controllable (as Figure 1 illustrates) than the former issue as the researcher can strategically choose the times of the year at which s/he will conduct his/her research. The use of health club staff (if available) as gatekeepers to both respondents and the times at which key informants might be most accessible is conceivably a useful strategy.

MICRO ISSUES

From Physical Access to Mental Access: The Deep Level of Involvement Inherent in Health and Fitness Participation

Although access to the physical site of health and fitness participation is a large structural barrier, and determining the appropriate time to do so is a seasonal one; once overcome, there are significant barriers in terms of accessing consumers more intimately. That is, ‘mental access’ (Gummesson, 1991, p.28) to health and fitness members might pose significant barriers; an ‘understand[ing] of what is actually happening in the setting, how to get people to describe it... [and] how to observe it’. Facilitating this shift from physical access to mental access requires researchers, as Figure 1 illustrates, to submerge themselves (under the surface of the water depicted by the thick black band in Figure 1) within the setting in order to understand the level of involvement with, and individuation of, health and fitness activities.

Smith-Maguire (2008a) noted that the nature of the activities presented in health and fitness clubs is an expression of the individuation of leisure that Rojek (1985) described more broadly. The reason for this is that training within health and fitness clubs not only promotes an official and clear focus of attention (i.e. the exercise itself), but also requires an almost continuous, deep involvement in it (Sassatelli, 1999a). In a broader sense, it has been suggested that high involvement is one of the main preconditions for leisure in general (Unger & Kernan, 1983). The importance of involvement as an element of health and fitness participation has also been documented, albeit less often. In a typical training environment, for example, participants can be described as being ‘entirely engrossed in the exercise’ (Sassatelli, 1999, p.233). Sometimes described as ‘energetic and vigorous, and at times agonistic’ (Chelladurai & Chang, 2000, p.7), even rest periods within a workout are highly involving as there can be elements of ‘self-absorption’ underlined by ‘expressionless, absent face[s]’ (Sassatelli, 1999a, p.243). Indeed, even those who might not be considered as highly involved as these quotes might allude are generally members of the ‘earphone culture’ that Smith Maguire (2008b, p. 79) described in her recent study. This point is also presented in the opening vignette insofar as our health and fitness consumer organizes his playlist on his i-pod as a means of helping him focus and switch off from the hoards of other exercisers that generally make the midweek visit to the local club. During a five week study, the author noted that this was one of the primary barriers to communicating and even approaching health club members. It is therefore, not only the modes and manner of exercise participation that have become increasingly individual (using treadmills

and one-person resistance machines as opposed to participating in group type activities) but also, the layout of health clubs and the accompanying commodities used during workouts have typically facilitated this type of atmosphere. Giant plasma screens surround exercise suites with thumping music being piped throughout the gym space. As Smith Maguire (2008b, p. 79) noted, these television screens, consoles and MP3 players not only allow, but also ‘encourage exercisers to plug in and tune out of the social milieu’; the social-space that health clubs have traditionally been described as.

So what barrier does the level of involvement and increasing individuation pose? In response to a critique on her study of diverse populations, Henderson (1998) asked the question; can an individual researcher, particularly if s/he is doing interpretive research, be a valid interpreter of the research if s/he is not a member of the researched group? If one takes Lehmann (1987), who cited that health and fitness participation can be aberrant or difficult for non-participants to comprehend, then one could argue that the researcher should be an exerciser, if not a health and fitness member. As the model depicts, then, this barrier is more controllable for researchers as they can participate in or recall their own experiences of health and fitness clubs in order to elucidate some of the inaccessible peculiarities inherent in such participation. This is not a resource afforded in many other leisure research projects. On the other hand, researchers who are knowledgeable fitness advocates might, perhaps, overlook or take as a given some aspects of participation whereas non-participants might seek further clarification and, hence, thicker descriptions of the practices of health and fitness consumers. It is likely, however, that some level of experience is preferable in order to position oneself on an equal basis with respondents (an important point discussed in further sections of this paper); especially in terms of the gym norms and vernacular in particular.

Dare the Researcher Interrupt the Ritualistic Aspects of Health and Fitness Participation?

Related to the notion that health and fitness is a highly individual and deeply involving experience is its conceptualization as being a contemporary consumer ritual. The opening vignette of this paper gives an insight into the ritualistic nature of health and fitness consumption. Although some might argue that the opening vignette depicts an atypical consumer, given the obsessive manner of his oneism, the notion that health and fitness can be considered as a consumption ritual is nonetheless important. Some might argue that such participation is either habitual or routinized (Crossley, 2006) as opposed to ritualistic; however, the nature of habits would preclude the level and depth of involvement discussed in the previous section (Khare & Inman, 2006; Wood, Quinn, & Kashy, 2002). Furthermore, to consider health and fitness as being routinized would be analogous to saying that it is partially if not wholly unmotivated (Crossley, 2006); which, of course is not entirely the case.

Although seldom observed, the contemplation of health and fitness participation as a consumption ritual is not new. Lehmann (1987), for example, depicted the long-term weightlifter as not only compulsive and somewhat irrational, but also as comparable to a proponent of some religious devotion. His broad analogy between experienced weightlifting and religion included (i) contempt for non-participants, (ii) an adherence to a set of principles, (iii) an element of proselytizing or conversion, and (iv) the notion that direction and purpose can be found in one’s actions. Thus, physical exercise takes on the characteristics of a consumption ritual (Hill &

Robinson, 1991). Although Lehmann (1987) only associates ritualistic tendencies with compulsive lifting, the ritualistic nature of health and fitness practices are more pervasive than he initially suggested. For example, even a glance at a glossary of health and fitness/exercise terms (e.g. sets, reps, rest-periods, warm-up, main activity, cool-down, stretching etc) supports the ritualistic nature of health and fitness practices. A brief conversation with Glen (a health club member) who, through informal conversation, confirmed the ritualistic nature of going to gym insofar as commitment to being at the gym is as important, if not more important for some than actually working hard during a workout. When he was asked how his training was going, Glen replied that it wasn't great and, without seeming too bothered he continued "I'm still here...not doing very much when I go up [to the gym]...but I'm still here" In another manner, Marge (another member) also alluded to the ritualistic nature of participation. The extent of her knowledge of the norms of the early morning club environment and how and why that particular day departed from such are a testament to this. For example, when she was asked why the gym was so quiet, she replied that "Wednesdays are always like this...certain people do different things on a Wednesday... [but] it'll be back to normal tomorrow". This idea of gym norms resonates well with Sassatelli's (1999a) work, which described the fitness gym as more than an ingredient in the search for the perfect body; a place with its own array of meanings, where rules are pervasive and separate identities are negotiated. Crossley (2006) also expands on such instrumental consumption theories and suggests that as exercising becomes more salient in a person's life; their orientation towards the gym is transformed.

So what does this mean for the prospective researcher seeking to explain such behavior? Is it unethical to interrupt (as the section heading suggests)? Does it demand more covert techniques? Are such covert techniques more unethical than brazen intrusion? Can one really describe the practices, meanings and rules of the health club environment with covert techniques? These are questions that need to be highly prioritized by health and fitness researchers. In fact, the notion of health and fitness participation as being highly ritualistic (and individual as the previous section described) resonates well with the fact that many of the recent studies in the health club environment have followed an ethnographic ideology, supplemented by few (if any) consumer narratives (Crossley, 2006; Fishwick, 2008; Sassatelli, 1999ab; Smith Maguire, 2008ab). While this approach fits well with sociological impetus towards explaining the structure and separation of space within certain social environments, it is uncertain how effective such methods are beyond this. A somewhat irreverent example can be drawn from the author's experience as a fitness leader insofar as much of his time spent in this position was spent observing people thinking "what in God's name are they doing" rather than drawing insightful conclusions about anything they think, feel or do in particular! Therefore, explaining the experiential aspects of health and fitness consumption is perhaps a stretch even for the ethnographer's accoutrements as they miss out on the voices of actual gym members-conspicuous by their absences within the extant literature (Fishwick, 2008). The following section uncovers some of the issues that might be considered important for health and fitness researchers who *are* interested in the health and consumer's voice and uncovering the elements of such contemporary consumption rituals.

Uncovering Sensitive Topics

An often overlooked aspect of designing and implementing consumer research is the notion that some sensitive issues might be present or, indeed, emerge. Perhaps this is a resulting factor of the 'laws of research, [which] make race, gender, and social class irrelevant, and that good research is good research regardless of the population studied (Henderson, 1998, p.163). If this were the case, then sensitive issues should not pose a significant barrier for implementing research. The growth of academic interest into the importance of such things as sensitive issues, however, strongly refutes such a claim. Moreover, the emergence of research ethics committees within higher education institutions (Truman, 2003) and the general reluctance of funding committees to support certain types of research is also testament to this (Lee & Renzetti, 1990).

Researching sensitive topics raises a broad range of barriers for research, most of which are technically and methodologically oriented. Several authors have noted the possible costs (Lee & Renzetti, 1990) or threats (Jaswal & Harpham, 1997) involved in enquiring into areas that might be considered private, stressful and/or sacred. Furthermore, it seems as though almost any area of enquiry could potentially be sensitive (by virtue of the subject matter, the respondent, and/or the tools and methods used) (Lee & Renzetti, 1990). Although the threats posed when conducting health and fitness research are unlikely to be considered as severe as those posed in studying deviant behavior (Hill, 1995) or drug abuse (Goode, 2002), the emotional or psychic consequences are important nonetheless. Health and fitness is an especially unique case for various reasons. First, as a protected space, the gym is an environment where 'people who occupy very different social roles overtly care for their bodies and forcibly display postures and movements which would normally be conceived of and felt as weird- if not indecent- outside them' (Sassatelli, 1999a, p.229). Secondly, in a broader sense, exposure to media images of beauty and excessive thinness has been shown to negatively affect both women's and men's self-perception, regardless of body weight (Kilbourne, 1994; Philips & Drummond, 2001; Wedell, Santoyo, & Pettibone, 2005). In fact, during a conversation with a personal trainer at a site of recent fieldwork (Matt), he discussed a client who he was helping to lose weight in the confines of her own home so that she could muster up the courage to do it by herself in a gym environment – should she feel comfortable that she has lost enough weight. Finally, the health and fitness club has long been associated with carnal body work (Featherstone, 1991; Frew & McGillivray, 2005). From the dominant ideals of the bodybuilder who works out despite recommendations to do otherwise (Lehmann, 1987), to the unrealistically high expectations fitness instructors place on their clients (Frew & McGillivray, 2005; Philips & Drummond, 2001); it seems that some will go to any lengths to transform their body to fit contemporary cultural ideals.

Although some empirical evidence suggests that respondents mock such practices and discourses (George & Rail, 2005), and others are seemingly unaware that such practices exist (Frew & McGillivray, 2005), there is a need for health and fitness researchers to be especially sensitive to such issues as aspirational body images. The gym is a relatively ocularcentric environment (Frew & McGillivray, 2005) and, therefore, methods such as covert or participant observation might be deemed inappropriate - as the author found out during a brief chat with one of the members of his institute's ethics committee (and rightly so). The reason for this is that too much probing into such topics could be construed as being indecent if not incriminating, if one

was to amplify anxieties in the research process. As Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) noted, much fantasy life and symbolic meanings lie just below the threshold of consciousness; that is, they are 'preconscious' (p.136) and necessitate empathetic methods to overcome sensitivity barriers. As the Ice-Berg model in Figure 1 depicts, sensitive issues represent the deepest barrier faced by researchers insofar as they are encountered only after all others have been somewhat consolidated. They are generally encountered at the level of interaction between researchers and respondents (the depth interview for example). Therefore, they pose barriers *not only* to sampling procedures, but also to successfully eliciting robust data from research subjects who actually agree to participate. For example, the stigma of being a compulsive exerciser might be undesirable for some respondents and, even if recruited, they might be averse to speak about such topics. As the model Figure 1 illustrates (given the fact that this issue takes up the greatest area of the ice-berg), this is perhaps the most controllable barrier when conducting research within this environment. One strategy to overcome such barriers, in an interview environment for example, is to position oneself on equal terms with respondents (Kvale, 1983; Reynolds & Gutman, 1988; Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989). Furthermore, such sensitive barriers can be overcome by using interview sites (if this is the main research tool used) that are comfortable and familiar for *them*, by fitting into *their* routine, by allowing *them* to speak freely and, most importantly, by ensuring that the interviewer (for example) is not deemed to be more knowledgeable or powerful within the research environment.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMATION

Admittedly, many of the issues discussed are not wholly unique to health and fitness contexts and have been reflected in a broader sense in an emergent stream of leisure research (e.g. Dupuis, 1999; Henderson, 1998; Henderson, Ainsworth, Stolarczyk, Hootman, & Levin, 1999). Furthermore, these might also be issues in any research study on behavior of complex or an irrational nature³; the micro issues in particular. In fact the complexity of 'lived leisure' has been prioritized in a recent special issue of Leisure Sciences (see Parry & Johnson, 2007, p.126). Although increasing privatization and seasonality (macro issues) were not topical in this special issue, this paper deems them to be important considerations for researchers interested in examining lived leisure nonetheless. The lack of control researchers have over such structural issues might explain their absence in such works. More closely related to the discussions in these studies are the increasing individuation of leisure, the ritualistic nature of the practices performed therein, and the sensitive reasoning behind participation; all of which heighten the complexity for health and fitness researchers. Specifically, these micro issues pose barriers that relate more specifically to the types of method and tools utilized within the research framework. Therefore, the capacity for traditional research approaches to accurately explore the experiential nature of health and fitness consumption, while arguably a means of overcoming sensitive issues, must be questioned. Dupuis (1999), for example has strongly argued that leisure researchers, overall, have bought into a culture dominated by an ideology of science. Similarly, the study of health and fitness consumers has not often escaped such treatment. Reflecting on the opening vignette (our ode to the health and fitness consumer), one might assume that such a culture could only partially explain the complex and, sometimes, irrational nature of his behavior. In fact, one might also argue that much of the context surrounding the experience of going to the gym (both work

³ As pointed out by one of the anonymous reviewers

life and home life) would be ‘filtered out...decontextualize[ed]...and otherwise simplified’ by such approaches (Parry & Johnson, 2007, p.120). Moreover, the static nature of such approaches might also render them particularly unsuitable to trace dynamic changes in the consumer’s degree of effort, involvement or indeed the transformational nature of health and fitness practices (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Sayers & Bradbury, 2004). Simply put, the nature of the phenomena under investigation demands that approaches become not only more humanistic, but also more reflexive (Dupuis, 1999), introspective (Holbrook, 1995) and creative (Parry & Johnson, 2007).

The preceding discussion posited that there are many issues that represent barriers to conducting research within the health and fitness field. Some are more administrative than others (particularly the macro issues outlined), whereas others are more concerned with the intimate interaction necessary to explain health and fitness participation. The use of the Ice-Berg model in this paper facilitated this discussion and showed how, as the research process evolves, researchers encounter significant barriers (at various stages) to accessing both the population for study and, ultimately, their thoughts, feelings and fantasies about health and fitness participation. Given an increasing focus on ethnography in recent years as a means of explaining health and fitness behavior, it seems as though these barriers are not being met head on- as the covert and concealed nature of observational techniques will truly attest. Another important point made throughout this paper is that some of these issues (micro ones in particular) *can* be overcome; albeit with the necessary methodological approaches (as outlined at the end of the last paragraph). In summation, if these aforementioned issues are barriers precluding the investigation of health and fitness consumers on a single project basis, then one might argue that the nature by which such issues are approached, collectively through appropriate strategies, methods and tools within research designs, is the main barrier precluding the development of health and fitness theory. From a justification vs. development perspective (Henderson et al., 1999) or confirmatory vs. exploratory perspective (Dupuis, 1999), it is clear that health and fitness research needs methods suitable for exploration and development considerably more than those for justification and confirmation in its seemingly embryonic stage.

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DESTINATION BRANDING – TRACKING BRAND EQUITY FOR A COMPETITIVE SET OF NEAR-HOME DESTINATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The topic of destination brand performance measurement is rare in the tourism literature. In particular there has been little reported about tracking destination brand performance over time. The purpose of this paper is to report the results of an investigation of brand equity for a competitive set of destinations in Queensland, Australia between 2003 and 2007. A hierarchy of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) was trialled. It is proposed the CBBE hierarchy provides an effective means for practitioners to monitor and report brand performance over time. The hierarchy also provides destination marketers with a tool for debating the rationale for brand tactics with stakeholders. A key implication of the results was the finding that there was no change in brand equity for the five destinations over the four year period. This supports the proposition that destination image change occurs slowly over a long period of time.

KEYWORDS: Destination Branding, Consumer-Based Brand Equity, Short Breaks, Destination Image.

INTRODUCTION

In the emerging literature related to destination branding, little has been reported about performance metrics. The focus of most research reported to date has been concerned with the development of destination brand identities and the implementation of campaigns (see for example, Crockett & Wood 1999, Hall 1999, May 2001, Morgan et. al 2002). One area requiring increased attention is that of tracking the performance of destination brands over time. This is an important gap in the tourism literature, given: i) the increasing level of investment by destination marketing organisations (DMO) in branding since the 1990s, ii) the complex political nature of DMO brand decision-making and increasing accountability to stakeholders (see Pike, 2005), and iii) the long-term nature of repositioning a destination's image in the market place (see Gartner & Hunt, 1987). Indeed, a number of researchers in various parts of the world have pointed to a lack of market research monitoring destination marketing objectives, such as in Australia (see Prosser et. al 2000, Carson et. al 2003), North America (Sheehan & Ritchie 1997, Masberg 1999), and Europe (Dolnicar & Schoesser 2003). The aim of this study was to track brand equity for a competitive set of near-home destinations between 2003 and 2007. For this purpose the efficacy of a hierarchy of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) was trialled. CBBE was first promoted by Aaker (1991) and more recently by Keller (2003) to supplement traditional balance sheet brand equity measures. The rational underpinning CBBE is that consumer perceptions of

the brand underpin any financial estimate of future earnings estimated in the financial measure of brand equity. Since a financial balance sheet brand equity measure will be of little practical value to destination marketers, the concept of CBBE is worthy of consideration by DMOs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the brand literature commenced there has been consistent recognition that branding offers organisations a means for differentiation in markets crowded with similar offerings (Gardner & Levy 1955, Aaker 1991, Keller 2003, Kotler et. al 2007). This is explicit in definitions of a brand, which have most commonly been variations of that proposed by Aaker (1991, p. 7):

A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods from those of competitors.

Enhancing the ability of the brand to differentiate can generate advantages for the firm, such as purchase intent (Cobb-Walgren et. al, 1995), lower costs (Keller, 1993), increased sales, price premiums, and customer loyalty, (Aaker 1991, 1996). Destination differentiation is critical given the increasingly competitive nature of tourism markets (Pike, 2008). For example, around 70% of international travellers visit only 10 countries, leaving the remainder of NTOs competing for 30% of total international arrivals (Morgan et. al, 2002). In the foreword to the first issue of *Place Branding and Public Policy*, editor Simon Anholt (2004, p. 4) suggested “almost nobody agrees on what, exactly, branding means” in describing place branding practice as akin to the Wild West. There has been a lack of consistency in defining what constitutes destination branding, both within industry and within academia (see Park & Petrick 2006, Blain, Levy & Ritchie 2005, Tasci & Kozak 2006). The most comprehensive definition to date has been that proposed by Blain et. al (2005, p. 337), which followed Berthon et. al’s (1999) model of the functions of a brand from both the buyer and seller perspectives:

Destination branding is the set of marketing activities that (1) support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that readily identifies and differentiates a destination; that (2) consistently convey the expectation of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; that (3) serve to consolidate and reinforce the emotional connection between the visitor and the destination; and that (4) reduce consumer search costs and perceived risk. Collectively, these activities serve to create a destination image that positively influences consumer destination choice.

The first papers on branding appeared in the marketing literature during the 1950s (see for example Banks, 1950). During the next 50 years, it was estimated that 766 major publications by 789 authors had been published (Papadopolous, 2002 in Anholt 2002). The first journal articles explicitly concerned with the branding of destinations were Pritchard and Morgan’s (1998) analysis of the brand strategy for Wales, and Dosen et. al’s (1998) brand image analysis of Croatia. Prior to this time research related to aspects of what is now considered destination

branding have been reported, such as destination image (for reviews see Gallarza et. al 2002, Pike 2002), destination positioning (Woodside 1982, Chacko 1997, Reich 1997), and destination slogans (see Pritchard 1982, Richardson & Cohen 1993, Klenosky & Gitelson 1997). Academic attention to branding appears to have been following the adoption of branding principles by DMOs around the same time. In an insightful analysis, Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) attributed the then neglect of the branding function in destination marketing plans to the long time dominance of the promotion orientation.

Gnoth (1998) suggested the special track on 'Branding Tourism Destinations' he convened at the 1997 American Marketing Science conference, which attracted four papers, represented the first meeting of practitioners and academics on the topic. The following year, the Tourism & Travel Research Association (TTRA) conference, which was themed 'Branding the Travel Market', featured eight destination branding papers. In 1999 the conference of the TTRA's European Chapter, themed 'Destination Marketing', featured a destination branding track. The 2005 initiative of Macau's Instituto De Formacao Turistica (IFT), in conjunction with Perdue University, to convene the first academic conference dedicated to destination branding, was justified with around 100 delegates from 22 countries, including destination branding pioneers Annette Pritchard and Nigel Morgan. The conference was again staged in 2007, with the intent to hold the meeting biennially (see Dioko et. al 2005, 2007). Destination branding texts did not emerge until in the new millennium. The first were Morgan et al's (2002, 2004) edited volumes of international cases and conceptual papers. These have since been followed by Baker's (2007) practitioner perspective on branding small cities in North America, and Donald and Gammack's (2007) research-based analysis of the brand identities of Sydney, Hong Kong and Shanghai in the context of tourism and film traditions. Destination marketing texts that include destination branding chapters include Pike (2004, 2008). The first journal special issue on destination branding was published in the *Journal of Vacation Marketing* (1999, Vol 5, 3). This has since been followed by *Tourism Analysis* (2007, Vol 12, 4). Also, a special issue on place branding was published in the *Journal of Brand Management* (2002, Vol 9, 4-5).

Given the increasing level of interest in this emerging field, it was considered timely to review the nature of the first 10 years of research published (1998-2007). The purpose of the review was to analyse the range of topics covered, and in doing so highlight research gaps. The focus is on refereed journal articles and edited book chapters, with conference papers excluded. The focus is the field of tourism destination branding. It has been argued that branding destinations for tourism purposes limits inclusivity of the wider range of stakeholders of place (see for example Kerr, 2006), although Gnoth (2002) developed a model for leveraging export brands through tourism destination branding. This review does not include place branding research papers, for which the journal *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* was launched in 2004. The tourism destination is but one of many component of place, and so the field of place branding encompasses a broader scope outside tourism, such as public policy, export trade, economic development, historical, sporting and cultural dimensions of which nations are constituted. For a brief overview of the emerging place branding literature, the reader is referred to Dinnie (2004), who argued academics have been slow to follow what has been a practitioner-led domain.

The review of the destination branding literature identified four categories of papers: i) cases, ii) research, iii) conceptual, and iii) web content analysis. The most popular type of destination branding paper has been cases. Such cases are valuable for bridging the ‘divide’ (see Pike, 2004) that exists between destination marketers and academics. Editor of *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* Anholt (2004), who is also an experienced practitioner, has described the real world of international branding as a “bloody business”, in comparison to the academic perspective. Table 1 summarises 32 papers that can be generally categorised as case studies. Readers should note these cases are not necessarily reporting a rigorous case study methodology as proposed by Yin (2002). Nonetheless, one of the strengths of this section is the seven practitioner perspectives, which provide rich insights to the real world of brand development at national, state and local levels, in the UK, USA and Australasia. As can be seen, the most common focus of interest has been reporting brand strategy development. Table 2 summarises 24 research papers, which feature international studies at NTO, STO and RTO levels. Table 3 summarises the focus of 10 conceptual papers. An new area of destination branding research in recent years has been content analysis of DMO websites. Table 4 summarises the focus of three such papers. The move towards the development of corporate websites for dissemination of information by DMOs to stakeholders has created a new resource for researchers, both in terms of access to secondary data and opportunities for content analysis of destination brand documentation.

Table 1 – Cases

Author	Year	DMO	Country	Focus	Author perspective
Pritchard & Morgan	1998	NTO	Wales	Brand strategy development	Academics
Morgan & Pritchard	1999	NTO	Wales, Australia	Brand strategy development	Academics
Williams & Palmer	1999	STO	Australia	Role of electronic media in brand development	Academics
Buckley	1999	NTO	Ireland	Brand strategy development	Academic
Crockett & Wood	1999, 2002	STO	Australia	Brand strategy development	Practitioners
Hall	1999, 2002a 2002b	NTO	Central & Eastern Europe	Developing a national identity for newly independent nations	Academic
Morgan	2000	NTO	Australia	Brand strategy development	Academic
Henderson	2000a, 2000b, 2007	NTO	Singapore	Brand strategy development	Academic
Curtis	2001	STO	USA	Brand effectiveness evaluation	Practitioner
Scott	2002	RTO	Australia	Brand strategy development	Academic
Pride	2002	NTO	Wales	Brand strategy development	Practitioner
Slater	2002	STO	USA	Brand strategy development	Academic
Morgan et. al	2002 2003	NTO	New Zealand	Brand strategy development	Academic Practitioner
Foley & Fahy	2003	NTO	Ireland	Analysis of imagery	Academic
Woods & Deegan	2003	RTO	France	Quality measurement	Academic
Williams et. al	2004	RTO	Canada	Influence of corporate brands	Academic
Hem & Iversen	2004	RTO	Denmark	Logo design	Academic
Ooi	2004	NTO	Denmark	Politics in decision making	Academic
Morgan & Pritchard	2005	NTO	Wales, New Zealand	Brand strategy development	Academic
Yeoman et. al	2005	NTO	Scotland	History as a retrospect for the future	Practitioner & academics
Scott & Clark	2006	RTO	Australia	Brand strategy development and tracking	Academic & practitioner
Peirce & Ritchie	2007	RTO	Australia New Zealand	Brand strategy development	Academic
Daniels	2007	CVB	USA	Brand strategy development	Academic
Niininen	2007	RTO	England	Brand strategy development	Academic
Pike	2007	NTO	New Zealand	Brand positioning research	Academic
Gotham	2007	RTO	USA	Rebranding post-disaster	Academic

Table 2 – Research papers

Author	Year	Focus	Country
Dosen et. al	1998	Brand image analysis	Croatia
Nickerson & Moisey	1999	Identifying positioning attributes	USA
Shanka	2001	Positioning slogans	Botswana, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Zambia
Brown et. al	2002	Contribution of event branding	Australia
Cai	2002	Conceptualising destination branding	USA
Konecnik	2004	Brand image analysis	Slovenia
Konecnik	2006	Brand equity	Slovenia
Hanlan & Kelly	2005	Image formation	Australia
Blain et. al	2005	Definition, Logos	International
Ekinci & Hosany	2006	Brand personality	International
Tasci & Kozak	2006	Definitions	International
Park & Petrick	2006	Definitions	International
Woodland & Acott	2007	Stakeholder consultation	England
Murphy et. al	2007	Brand personality	Australia
Woodside et. al	2007	Brand netnography	Italy
Nuttavuthisit	2007	Negative imagery	Thailand
Pechlaner et. al	2007	Umbrella brands	Italy, Austria
Phillips & Schofield	2007	Host community image	England
Merrilees et. al	2007	Host community image	Australia
Ekinci et. al	2007	Brand personality	Turkey
Cai et. al	2007	Brand image analysis	China
Kendall & Gursoy	2007	Brand positioning	Italy, Egypt, Morocco, Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Malta, Turkey
Tasci et. al	2007	Image bias	Turkey
Konecnik & Gartner	2007	Brand equity	Slovenia
Pike	2007	Brand equity	Australia

Table 3 – Conceptual papers

Author	Year	Focus
Flagestad & Hope	2001	Regional umbrella brands
Ryan	2002	Politics in destination branding
Morgan & Pritchard	2002	Contextualising destination branding
Mundt	2002	Myths of branding destinations
Palmer	2002	The role of high speed technologies
Gilmore	2002	Destination branding success factors
Pike	2004b	Destination brand slogan effectiveness criteria
Pike	2005	Destination branding complexity
Hankinson	2007	Framework for destination brand management
Gnoth	2007	Structure of destination brands

Table 4 - Website content analysis

Author	Year	Focus	Country
Lee et. al	2006	Brand building elements	USA
Gertner et. al	2006	Place name domains	Global
Pitt et. al	2007	Brand personality dimensions	Angola, Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe

As can be seen, the first decade of destination branding literature provides a rich resource for DMOs and researchers, particularly in the areas of destination brand strategy development and implementation. However, the literature remains in its infancy, and This

research project is concerned with addressing the lack of research reported about brand performance measurement over time. It should be noted however that brand metrics is also rare in the services marketing literature (Kim, Kim & An, 2003). Aaker (1996) proposed a brand as comprising the brand identity, which represents self-image and aspired market image, and the brand image, which is the actual image held by consumers. The brand identity should underpin marketing strategy, which should be to focus on developing favourable brand associations, linking the brand's attributes to consumer needs (Keller, 2000). Research is therefore necessary to monitor the extent to which destination image is congruent with the brand identity. However, brand equity encompasses more than the image construct alone. Under International Accounting Standards, a brand's value cannot be brought to the balance sheet unless acquired for financial consideration (James, 2007). Financial valuation is irrelevant if no underlying consumer-based value of the brand has been established (Keller, 1993). A more practical method of analysing brand performance by DMOs is the CBBE hierarchy, proposed by Aaker (1991) and championed by Keller (2003). CBBE places emphasis on market perceptions, which underpin any financial valuation, and provides a link between past marketing efforts and future performance. For DMOs, the hierarchy addresses the key aspects of the destination branding definition by Blain et. al (2005, p. 337), which was included in the introduction. At the foundation of the CBBE hierarchy is *brand salience*, which represents the strength of the brand's presence in the mind of the target. The goal should be more than achieving general awareness per se, but to be remembered for the right reasons (Aaker, 1996). *Brand associations*, which aid the consumer's information processing, have been defined as "anything 'linked' in memory to a brand" (Aaker, 1991, p. 109). The aim should be to increase familiarity with the brand through repeated exposure and strong associations with the product category (Keller, 2003). Keller argued brand associations need to be strong, favourable and unique, in that order. The latter point dictates the measurement of associations needs to be within the context of a competitive set of brands (see Hooley et. al, 2004). *Brand resonance* represents a readiness to engage with the destination, such as previous visitation. The highest level of the hierarchy is *brand loyalty*, which manifests in intent to visit, repeat visitation and word of mouth referrals. While a number of studies in other fields have identified associations between customer retention and increased profits (see Aaker, 1996, p. 22), there is a lack of literature relating to destination loyalty and switching costs.

A competitive set of near-home destinations was selected for the study, on the basis they would be more familiar to research participants. The geographic market of interest is Brisbane, which is the state capital of Queensland, Australia. Brisbane is the main source of visitors for each of the five near-home destinations selected. The five destinations were selected from a previous study that identified these as the most popular for short breaks (Pike, 2006). The destinations represent a mix of established and emerging destinations. For brand performance measurement purposes they have been defined by regional tourism organisation (RTO) boundaries: Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Northern New South Wales, Fraser Coast, and Bundaberg and the Coral Coast. Four of these RTOs are officially recognised by Tourism Queensland the state tourism organisation (STO). Tourism Queensland provides financial assistance to these RTOs, much of which has been directed towards destination branding initiatives. One of the catalysts for the research was the development of a new brand for Bundaberg and Coral Coast in 2003. The first stage of brand performance research commenced at the start of this new campaign, with the intent to monitor brand equity over time. The 2003

Bundaberg and Coral Coast brand was developed by the STO and RTO to achieve three key objectives, which mirror key aspects of the CBBE hierarchy:

1. to raise awareness of the destination
2. to stimulate increased interest in, and visitation to the region
3. to educate the market about things to do.

Given Brisbane residents' familiarity with the destinations, and the importance of the market to each destination, of interest was whether changes in equity would take place during the short term, in light of the proposition that destination image change takes place slowly over a long period of time (see Gartner, 1993).

METHOD

A characteristic of a latent variable from a research participant's perspective is that it is not constant (DeVellis, 2003). A key construct of interest in this regard is 'destination image', which is representative of *brand associations*, and is one of the most published topics in the tourism literature. It might be expected that, for an individual consumer-traveller, some aspect of the destination's image will change over time, as well as between different travel situations (Barich & Kotler 1991, Crompton 1992). Therefore it is important in destination image research to explicitly identify the travel situation in which the research participant is expected to make judgements. The travel situation of interest in this project was a short break holiday by car, defined as a short break of between 1 and 4 nights away. Short breaks have emerged as one of the fastest growing travel segments in many parts of the world in recent years. For example, Vanhove's (2005) analysis of gross holiday participation data for countries in Europe between 1990 and 2002 identified a trend towards a decrease in general holiday participation, but an increase in short break activity. Similarly, in Australia, domestic tourism growth has stagnated over the past 20 years, with a noticeable trend towards shorter stays (Tourism Research Australia, 2008). Tourism Research Australia predicted average domestic trip duration to further decline from 3.9 nights in 2006 to 3.3 nights in 2020.

The research involved three questionnaires distributed to Brisbane residents in 2003 and 2007. The 2003 study was undertaken longitudinally, with two questionnaires distributed three months apart. The first questionnaire was mailed in April to a random sample of 3000 Brisbane households selected from the telephone directory. The purpose was to identify characteristics of short breaks, including unaided destination preferences and attribute importance. A total of 523 completed questionnaires were received, representing a useable response rate of 19%. The second questionnaire was mailed in July to the 486 participants who indicated a willingness to participate in further research. This generated 308 completed questionnaires, representing a useable response rate of 63%. The purpose of this stage was twofold. The first was to analyse the association between stated destination preferences and actual travel. This aspect of the research has been previously reported (reference with held). The second was to identify brand equity benchmarks for the five destinations. The 2007 questionnaire was mailed in April to a new systematic random sample of 3000 Brisbane households selected from the telephone directory. The purpose was to compare brand equity with the 2003 benchmarks.

The CBBE hierarchy was operationalised similarly in 2003 and 2007. *Brand salience* was measured by two unaided awareness questions to identify i) each participant's top of mind awareness (ToMA) destination, and ii) the other destinations in their decision set. *Brand associations* were measured by asking participants to rate the perceived performance of each destination, across 22 cognitive scale items, and two affective scale items. The cognitive items were selected from a combination of literature review and group interviews with Brisbane residents. These were measured using a seven-point scale. A 'don't know' option was provided alongside each scale item. Affect was measured on seven-point semantic differential scales, selected from Baloglu and Brinberg (1997). In a separate section participants were also asked to rate the importance of each attribute, to enable importance-performance analysis (see Martilla & James, 1977). *Brand resonance* was measured by asking participants to indicate whether they had previously visited each destination. *Brand loyalty* was operationalised in 2007 with two questions. The first, which was not used in 2003, asked participants to indicate the extent to which they would recommend each destination to friends, using a seven point scale. The second asked participants to indicate the likelihood of visiting each destination in the following 12 months, using a seven point scale.

RESULTS

The 2007 survey generated 447 completed questionnaires, representing a useable response rate of 17%. This response was similar to the 19% obtained in April 2003. The characteristics of the 2003 and 2007 samples were similar, and were generally comparable to the characteristics of the 2001 Brisbane Census population. The characteristics of short breaks were similar in 2003 and 2007. The data shows that short breaks represent an activity of interest to participants. For example, both the 2003 and 2007 samples indicated taking an average of three such trips per year. The mean importance for taking a short break each year, using a seven point scale, was 6.3 in both 2003 and 2007. In 2003, 62% had taken a short break in the previous three months, while in 2007, 86% had taken a short break in the previous 12 months.

Brand salience

In both 2003 and 2007, over 120 destinations were elicited in response to the unaided preferred destination question. In Table 5 these destinations are categorised by RTO region. Again the results were consistent, and therefore show little change in preferences between 2003 and 2007. In 2003 the mean number of destinations elicited in participants' decision sets was 3.8. The 2007 mean was 3.1. The 2003 longitudinal study showed an association between stated destination preferences and actual travel. The implication is that those destinations not included in decision sets are less likely to be selected in the short term. The difficulty for a destination to stand out from so much local competition is summed up by the following comment: *Most holiday places are based nearby the beach. This makes them very similar* (Participant #3).

Brand associations

Table 6 shows the 2007 importance and performance ratings for the cognitive items. The Cronbach alpha for attribute importance was .79. The 2003 and 2007 data sets were pooled to

enable independent-samples t-tests for the attributes common to both questionnaires. There was no significant improvement in perceived performance for any of the destinations.

Table 5 – Preferred destination

Destination	2003 Frequency	2003 Valid %	2007 Frequency	2007 Valid %
Sunshine Coast	231	45.1%	202	45.9%
Gold Coast	96	18.8%	72	16.4%
Northern NSW	57	11.1%	64	14.5%
Fraser Coast	33	6.4%	24	5.5%
Coral Coast	11	2.1%	6	1.4%
Other	84	16.5%	72	16.3%
Missing	11		7	
Total	523		447	

Table 6 – Brand associations

Cognitive items	Importance 2007	Sunshine Coast	Gold Coast	Northern NSW	Fraser Coast	Coral Coast
Suitable accommodation	6.2	5.9	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.1
Good value for money	6.1	5.4	4.4	4.9	5.1	5.1
A safe destination	6.1	5.7	4.1	5.1	5.5	5.4
Affordable packages	5.4	5.1	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.9
Beautiful scenery	5.4	6.2	5.3	6.2	6.1	5.6
Pleasant climate	5.3	6.3	6.0	5.8	6.0	5.8
Within a comfortable drive	5.2	6.2	6.2	5.2	4.6	3.8
Uncrowded	5.2	4.5	2.7	4.5	5.0	5.0
Good cafes and restaurants	5.1	5.6	5.4	5.2	4.4	4.4
Friendly locals	5.0	5.0	3.7	4.9	5.1	5.2
Lots to see and do	4.9	5.7	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.0
Good beaches	4.8	6.2	6.0	5.9	5.6	5.1
High levels of service	4.7	5.5	5.3	5.0	4.6	4.4
Places for swimming	4.7	6.2	6.1	5.8	5.6	5.3
Not touristy	4.4	3.8	2.1	3.8	4.1	4.6
Places for walking	4.3	5.2	4.1	5.1	5.6	4.5
Family destination	4.3	5.8	5.1	5.1	5.6	5.4
Good shopping	3.9	5.2	5.7	4.4	3.7	4.0
Historical places	3.9	4.0	3.1	4.4	4.5	4.6
Marine life	3.9	5.3	5.0	4.9	5.5	5.3
Water sports	3.1	5.5	5.5	4.9	5.0	4.7
Trendy atmosphere	3.0	5.3	5.5	5.0	3.8	3.5

Given the closeness of many of the destination performance items, and to provide more meaningful positioning analysis, factor-analytic importance-performance analysis was used. In the initial factor analysis using Principal Components Analysis attributes only one variable (Suitable accommodation) did not correlate with any other variables at the .3 level. Following Child (1970), the cleanest rotated solution was obtained by omitting four variables: 'Suitable accommodation', 'Within a comfortable drive', 'Beautiful scenery', and 'Lots to see/do'. This solution generated five factors that explained 59.14% of variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling was .745 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant ($p = .000$). The five factors, each of which represent a positioning option, are highlighted in Table 7. The means for the importance and destination performance for each factor are shown in Table 8. These results are plotted onto an Importance-performance grid in Figure 1 to highlight positions held by each destination on each factor. As can be seen, the Sunshine Coast rated first on Factors 2

(Beach), 3 (Outdoor activity), and 5 (Affordable). The Gold Coast rated first on Factor 1 (Upmarket), while the Coral Coast rated first for Factor 4 (Escape). It is proposed that these represent positioning opportunities for each destination. Table 6 shows the mean affect scores for each destination. The first figure is the 2003 score. Independent samples t-tests again identified no significant improvement for any destination between 2003 and 2007.

Table 7 – Factor Analysis

Factor	Alpha	Factor Loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance	Comm.
1. Upmarket	.73		3.925	21.8%	
Good cafes/restaurants		.78			.66
High level of service		.78			.65
Shopping		.70			.56
Trendy atmosphere		.60			.55
2. Beach	.72		1.929	10.7%	
Places for swimming		.82			.72
Good beaches		.81			.74
Good climate		.54			.41
3. Outdoors	.64		1.854	10.3%	
Marine life		.72			.59
Historical places		.65			.64
Walking tracks		.62			.45
Water sports		.59			.62
4. Escape	.66		1.640	9.1%	
Uncrowded		.83			.71
Not touristy		.66			.50
Friendly locals		.66			.52
5. Value for money	.57		1.290	7.2%	
Value for money		.78			.62
Safe		.73			.60
Affordable packages		.67			.58
Family destination		.42			.53
Total Variance				59.1%	

Table 8 – Destination performance by factor

Factor	Imp.	Gold Coast	Sunshine Coast	Northern NSW	Fraser Coast	Coral Coast
1. Upmarket	4.14	5.43	5.38	4.87	4.05	4.02
2. Beach	4.90	6.02	6.20	5.80	5.73	5.38
3. Outdoor activity	3.78	4.47	5.00	4.81	4.81	4.82
4. Escape	4.84	2.82	4.38	4.29	4.69	4.89
5. Affordable	5.44	4.51	5.50	4.93	5.24	5.21

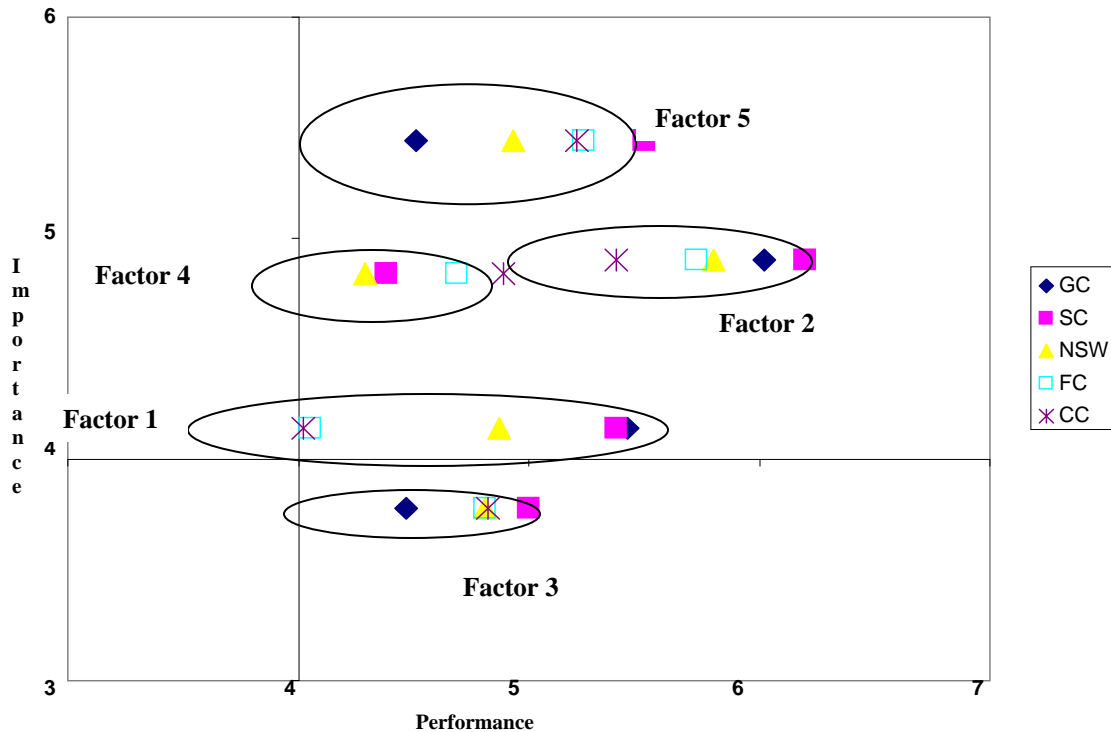


Figure 1 – Factor-analytic Importance-performance analysis

Brand resonance

The number of participants who had previously visited their ToMA destination was 92% in both 2003 and 2007. This has implications for those destinations with low levels of previous visitation. For example, there was a low level of usage of the ‘don’t know’ option provided in the attribute rating scales, except in the case of the Coral Coast. This emerging destination attracted around 30% ‘don’t know’ usage for each destination performance item. This indicated a lack of awareness of the destination’s features, which is consistent with the low level of previous visitation relative to the other destinations. Previous visitation levels are highlighted in Table 9.

Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty was measured with two questions. The first, which was not used in 2003, asked participants to indicate the extent to which they would recommend each destination to friends, on a seven-point scale, anchored at ‘Definitely not’ (1) and ‘Definitely’ (7). The highest mean was for the Sunshine Coast (5.8), followed by Northern NSW (4.8), Fraser Coast (4.8), Gold Coast (4.4), and Coral Coast (3.9). The second question asked participants to indicate likelihood of visiting each destination within the next 12 months. As shown in Table 9, this was the only section where results were inconsistent between the 2003 and 2007 samples.

Table 9 – Previous and future visitation

	2007 Previously visited	2003 Likelihood of visit in next 12 months	2007 Likelihood of visit in next 12 months
Sunshine Coast	94.6%	6.0	5.1
Gold Coast	93.5%	5.5	3.9
Northern NSW	72.4%	4.3	3.7
Fraser Coast	64.9%	3.9	3.3
Coral Coast	42.8%	3.1	2.7

CONCLUSIONS

Gartner and Hunt’s (1987) investigation of image change for the state of Utah over a 13 year period indicated positive image change is possible for a destination. However, the results in this study of near home destinations support the proposition that destination image change occurs only slowly over a long period of time. There was little evidence of any change in brand equity components for each of the five destinations over the four year period between 2003 and 2007. Rebranding and repositioning a destination’s image in the marketplace is therefore likely to require a significant and long term investment in resources. One implication for researchers is that they should be careful about recommending the use of rebranding and repositioning strategies for DMOs at all levels, but in particular for those with limited resources. In this study the destinations of interest included four well known destinations and one emerging destination, each within a comfortable driving distance for a short break. For example the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast are within a one hour drive of many Brisbane residents. It is suggested then that if image change is difficult for such contiguous destinations, the magnitude of the challenge will increase exponentially for more distant and lesser known places.

The objective of any brand positioning should be to reinforce the one or few determinant attributes for which the destination is already perceived positively and competitively. For example, while the emerging destination in this study, the Coral Coast, rated lowest in terms of previous visitation and decision set membership, a leadership position is held in the ‘Escape’ dimension. This represents a positioning approach that is not explicit in the brand launched in 2003, which is *Take time to discover Bundaberg and Coral Coast*. Politically however, justifying changes to a destination brand is challenging due to the complex nature of stakeholder relationships and DMO decision making at a governance level. DMOs are accountable to a diverse range of active and passive publics such as a board of directors, tourism sector groups, local taxpayers, and government, many of who will have different viewpoints that are not necessarily based on the holistic perspective expected by DMO management. In this regard it is proposed the CBBE hierarchy not only provides an effective means for practitioners to monitor and report brand performance over time, but also provides destination marketers with a tool for debating brand tactics with stakeholders.

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TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GREECE

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ABSTRACT

According to the available data, tourism education and training in Greece is progressing rapidly. It is provided by the the public and the private sector, by legal entities and other bodies. However, there are no data available in the central administration concerning the training establishments, their graduates and their absorption from the labour market. This paper seeks to record and depict the multi-level structure of tourism education and training in Greece. It is concluded that a lot of public and private bodies are involved in the field of tourism education and training, which often ignore the existence of one another and this fact leads to confusion. Moreover, these bodies communicate neither between them nor with the labour market, which makes it difficult for candidate students to select the appropriate school for them and jeopardises the survival of tourism schools as well as the quality of the educational system. In order to remedy this situation what is suggested in this paper is the specialisation based on the requirements of the labour market, the constant modernisation of the curricula, the connection between tourism education and training, life-long learning and the connection of higher education with research.

KEYWORDS: Tourism Education, Tourism Training, Greece

INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the biggest industries worldwide. It directly employs about 67.5 million people (i.e. 2.6% of the total number of jobs), whereas if the jobs indirectly created by tourism are taken into consideration, the number reaches 194.5 million (i.e. 7.6% of the total number of jobs all over the world). Furthermore, according to estimates by international tourism agencies and bodies, such as the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), this share will have reached 8.6% by 2012, creating a further 50 million new jobs. In the European Union about 19.5 million people are employed in the tourism industry (i.e. 11.9% of the total number of jobs) while in Greece the percentage is obviously higher. The employment in the tourist economy in Greece represents 20% of the total workforce. (WTTC, 2006:26)

Over the next few years, Greece risks losing a considerable part of its tourism clientele from countries which will offer the same or equivalent tourism product but with better quality and competitive prices. This is due to the fact that rival countries from the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean have recently entered the tourism market. Therefore, the future of the Greek tourism industry depends on improving the quality and the competitiveness of the tourism product. In order to attain this goal, certain innovations and improvements are required by the public and the private sector alike. A major condition for tourism development is the existence of personnel with specific qualifications, skills and abilities, which help to ensure a high level of services (WTTC, 2006:7). The WTTC includes human resources in the competitiveness indexes of tourism development which allows the comparison of countries at an international level (Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises, 2005:19-20). These qualifications are provided by tourism education. According to the 2008 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report published by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2008:18 & 218), Greece is ranked 62nd among 130 countries with regard to the availability of qualified labor in the tourism sector, while it is ranked 45th with regard to the existence of trained labor.

Education in general and the employees' training in particular are the factors that have a decisive impact on productivity because they define the quality of the human capital (Filiadis, 1983:207-209; Barro, 1991; Benhabib & Spiegel, 1994; Fayos-Sola, 1997:29) mentions that the training of the human resources personnel is an indispensable condition for the competitiveness of an enterprise. The interdependence of education and economy is essentially determined by the social reality as for each employee additional qualifications obtained through the different levels of education are required. The rationale states that the more qualifications an employee has the bigger his power is. Moreover, if the enterprise is not backed up by the appropriate personnel (in terms of quantity and quality of education) occupying the appropriate positions, even the smartest strategy may turn out to be fruitless. The in-house education and specialization plays a crucial role in enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of an enterprise and thus increasing the employees' remunerations (Krueger & Rouse, 1998; Blundell et al., 1999; Bartel, 2000).

With regard to the tourism industry all over the world, the participation of qualified employees possessing higher degrees from universities, technological institutes, tourism schools

or having received post secondary vocational training has been small until recently.¹ Moreover, the majority of the enterprises in the hotel industry, particularly the big ones, are themselves seeking themselves to provide their own employees with on-the-job-training instead of recruiting trained personnel, graduates from higher education and technical schools. Nevertheless, the importance of the academic and on-the-job training in the hotel industry is essential. According to a survey conducted by Prais, Jarvis & Wagner (1989) with regard to tourism education in Great Britain and Germany, the quality of the staff's education plays a vital role in the productivity and the competitiveness of a hotel unit.

By extension, the problems and the weaknesses of the educational system influence tourism studies with a negative impact on the industry and the economy. This is the reason why over the last twenty years initiatives with regard to education in tourism issues have been witnessed, particularly in the European Union (see Leslie, 1993; Baum, 1993). Regarding Greece, there are no significant studies on education and employment in the tourism sector. However, certain scientific articles pinpoint the need to enhance the employees' professionalism in the industry and the competitiveness of the hotel units, through the development of the education system and the implementation of specialised educational programmes in higher education (Christou, 1999; Goldsmith & Smirli, 1995; Moira & Anastasiou, 2006; Moira, 2007). In fact, in a study carried out by the Association of Greek Tourism Enterprises (2005:56) with regard to competitiveness it is highlighted that Greece cannot be differentiated from rival countries at a cost level but at a level of product diversification and supply of enriched tourism experiences. A prerequisite for this differentiation is the existence of well-trained manpower.

Nonetheless, the disadvantage of Greece in the tourism sector and in particular in the hotel industry is fragmentation that is, numerous small hotel units that operate mainly as family businesses (administration, services), which is a hindering factor for the recruitment of specialised staff and top executives in particular. Actually, the shortage of demand for specialised manpower seems to gradually lead to a decrease in demand for tourism studies. WTTC underlines in its report entitled "Greece: The impact of travel & tourism on jobs and the economy" that "[a] career in Travel & Tourism is currently perceived as a last-resort career. Many businesses in the tourism sector – particularly hotels and restaurants – have a reputation for difficult working conditions, including long and irregular working hours and inadequate salaries. This appears to be exacerbated by the application process for higher education institutions, which is based on academic ability rather than whether one is appropriate for a particular profession." (WTTC, 2006:8-9).

¹ The Greek Educational System consists of three successive levels: Primary, Secondary and Tertiary (higher) education level. Secondary education level is available in two cycles: Compulsory Lower Level Secondary Education offered at Gymnasiums and Post-compulsory, Upper Secondary Education which is offered by the Unified Lyceums and Technical Vocational Education Institutes. Post-compulsory Secondary Education also includes the Vocational Training Institutes (IEK), which provide formal but unclassified level of education. These Institutes are not classified as an educational level, because they accept both *Gymnasio* (lower secondary school) and *Lykeio* (upper secondary school) graduates according to the relevant specializations they provide. Tertiary education is divided into University education available from Universities and non-university education, which is offered by Higher Technological Educational Institutes and Higher Education Institutes. Source: National Center for Vocational Orientation. Retrieved on February 16, 2008, from <http://www.ekep.gr/english/education/main.asp> and http://www.ypepth.gr/en_ec_page1531.htm

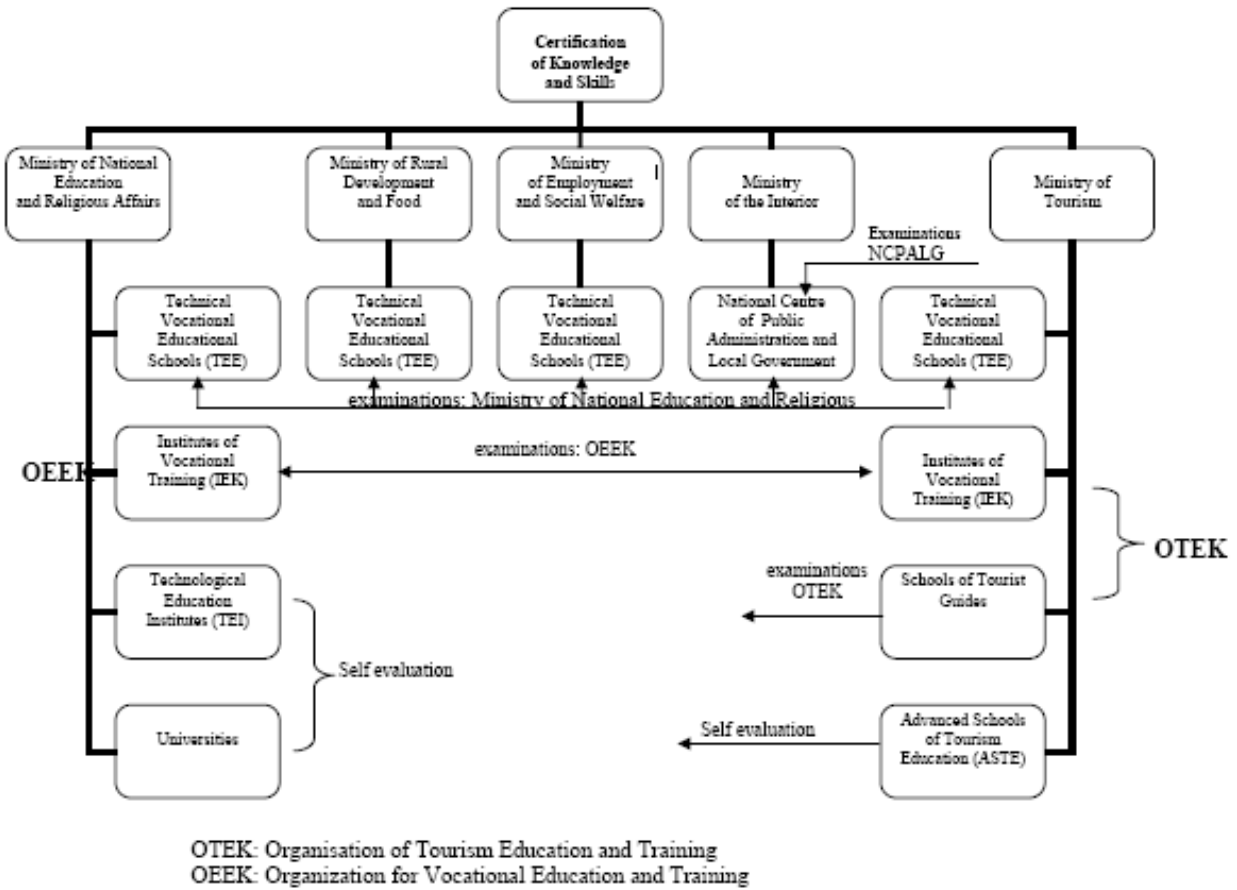


Figure 1: The structure of Tourism Studies in Greece
 Process-Presentation: P. Moira

Not surprisingly, for the academic year 2007-2008, the number of students at the Department of Tourism Industry Management, at the Technological Education Institutes, significantly decreased and this is reflected in the number of successful candidates at the eight (8) academic Departments and the two (2) Advanced Schools of Tourism Education all over Greece. Out of 1,725 available vacancies, only 386 places (i.e. 22.4%) were filled last year while 1,339 vacancies (i.e. 77.6%) were not filled (Table 1). Only the vacancies at the TEI of Athens were fully occupied, which is not surprising considering that Athens accounts for about 40% of the population of Greece.

TABLE 1. Number of candidates admitted to the TEI and the ASTE
for the academic year 2007-2008

DEPARTMENT OR SCHOOL	TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATION INSTITUTES	TOTAL NUMBER OF AVAILABLE VACANCIES	SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES ²	VACANCIES NOT FILLED
TOURISM INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT				
ATHENS	TEI OF ATHENS	85	85	-
SPETSES	TEI OF PIRAEUS	100	40	60
THESSALONIKI	TEI OF THESSALONIKI	140	37	103
PATRAS	TEI OF PATRAS	210	70	140
LARISSA	TEI OF LARISSA	250	29	221
HERAKLION	TEI OF CRETE	270	38	232
IGOUMENITSA	TEI OF EPIRUS	280	11	269
AMFISSA	TEI OF LAMIA	270	35	235
ADV. SCHOOLS OF TOURISM EDUCATION				
RHODES	ASTE	60	29	31
CRETE	ASTEAN	60	12	48
TOTAL		1,725	386	1,339

Source: OEFE (2008) Retrieved on February 12, 2008, from <http://www.oefe.gr/index.php?p=vaseis2007>
Process-Presentation: P. Moira

The purpose of this paper is to record and depict the multi-level tourism education and training in Greece. The fact that a lot of bodies are involved in this field without often knowing the existence of one another coupled with the fact that they do not communicate between them makes it difficult for candidate students to select the appropriate tourism school and cause problems in the survival of the schools of tourism education and training.

THE SYSTEM OF TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING

As the activities involved in the concept of 'tourism' are numerous and multidimensional, there cannot be limitations to the multiform and imaginative character of the tourism activity (Mylonopoulos et al., 2003:74). The field of tourism is dynamic and is constantly changing. Due to the progress of technology, entrepreneurship always creates and offers new forms of leisure. This dynamic character of tourism constantly generates new jobs which have an impact on the

² Students are admitted to these Institutes according to their performance at national level examinations taking place at the second and third grade of *Lyceum* every year. There is a fixed number of vacancies for each Department every year.

tourism working environment. In order to cover these needs the supply of relevant education and training is imperative.

John Dewey (1916) defines education as “[...] a process of renewal of the meanings of experience through a process of transmission, partly incidental to the ordinary companionship or intercourse of adults and youth, partly deliberately instituted to effect social continuity”. The term ‘vocational education’ involves a two-fold concept. On the one hand, it describes all the actions which an individual has to do for their education during their life in different learning environments and on the other hand, it is used to describe the introductory training, which constitutes the central part of education. In this sense, vocational education is considered to be associated with a particular profession – in this case, employment in the tourism sector – or the initiation to a profession or a group of professions, allowing individuals, on the basis of their abilities and skills, to occupy a stable position-role within the production procedure which defines the specific profession (Korellas & Tsiatras, 1993:93; Kotsikis, 1994:23). In Greece this term is used to refer to education preparation for non-technical professions, such as geotechnical engineering, management and economics, social services, etc, in the second part of secondary education, following compulsory education.

On the contrary, training and especially vocational training is that part of vocational education which provides trainees with special professional knowledge and skills that complete the trainee’s vocational proficiency and is the main subject of further vocational further education (Kotsikis, 1994:26). Training, in general, refers to that part of vocational education which is termed as specialization and covers the current needs of the labour market (Iakovides, 1998:57). A frequent distinction between education and training is that education is mainly provided by institutions such as universities, while training is usually provided by the employers. This distinction, which is the cornerstone of the traditional view with regard to the distinction between education and training, shows that education concerns professionals while training concerns the manual and the unskilled worker (Baum, 1995).

However, in the era of globalization and rapid technological developments, the traditional view on education and training has changed. Our era is characterized by the constant devaluation of initial qualifications, which have to be constantly upgraded and refreshed. The business world continuously requires higher levels of personal performance, efficiency and effectiveness. So both the professionals’ education and training is a continuous “life-long procedure”. In order to maintain their competitiveness, professionals have to acknowledge this challenge of change and undertake the obligation to constantly upgrade their knowledge and their skills. For these reasons, the absolute differentiation of education from training is not possible as they are two interdependent procedures. Both educational institutions (Fitzgerald & Cullen, 1991; Ford & LeBruto, 1995) and employers (Partlow, 1996; Harris, 1997) have always been aware of the need of lifelong education and training.

For tourism in particular, which is characterized by the existence of manpower with a relatively low level of skills, there is a demand growth for staff with extra qualifications especially by big enterprises (High Level Group on Tourism and Employment, 1998; ILO, 2001; Leslie, 1993:101-107). Thus there exists an intense and constant dialogue among educational

institutions, the tourism industry and public agencies with regard to educating skilled staff, with an emphasis on combining teaching with on-the-job training (Friis, 2001:2-3).

TOURISM EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GREECE

In Greece, tourism education and training is provided by a multitude of bodies both in the public and private sector (Moirá et al., 2004:59). However, the main stakeholder in the education and training sector is the government as is the case in other European countries as well. However, the problem which arises is that the bodies providing tourism education and training in Greece are not registered officially as such while the central administration has no data about the training establishments, the graduates, their labor market absorption, etc.³

In Greece, five ministries are in charge of tourism education and training. These are: The Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Rural Development and Food, the Ministry of Development and the Ministry of the Interior. Moreover, possible future action on tourism education and training may be taken by other ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity on thermal tourism and the Ministry of Mercantile Marine on marine and diving tourism⁴. In the public sector each ministry with the supervised legal entities of Public Law is a separate system of education and training in the tourism sector. (Figure 1)

Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs

The dominant public education system is provided by the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. This system includes Secondary Education consisting of Technical Vocational Educational Schools (TEE) and Higher Education divided into the university sector (Universities, National Technical Universities and the Athens School of Fine Arts) and the technological sector (Technological Education Institutes [TEI]⁵ and School of Pedagogical and Technological Education).

Post-compulsory Secondary Education, according to the reform of 1997, consists of the TEE. The duration of studies in the TEE is two years (a' level) or three years (b' level). The aim of Technological Vocational Training is on the one hand, to provide students with general education so that they are able to comprehend the developments taking place in the modern socioeconomic and technological working environment, and on the other hand, to develop their skills and professional abilities at a specialization level so that the graduates' entry into a professional working environment is facilitated. One of the technological fields of education is that of tourism. Technological education in tourism comprises a course in Hotel Industry while

³ WTTC underlines the fact that Greece has considerable margin for improvement with regard to the supply of reliable information and statistics concerning the tourism industry. Consequently, the performance measurements cannot be used by the industry in the framework of the planning and decision-making procedures. (WTTC, 2006:7)

⁴ See e-newspaper www.traveldailynews.gr

⁵ Technological Education Institutes were founded in Greece by virtue of the Law 1404 in 1983 and replaced the Centres of Advanced Technical Vocational Education (KATEE) founded in 1977. Before that, technical education in Greece was provided by the Centres of Advanced Technical Education (KATE) founded in 1970 which were classified as postsecondary or higher non-university education institutions.

there is also a course in Agrotourism and Rural Craft Business, falling under the Section of Agronomy, Food and Environment. By virtue of the Law 3475 of 2006, a new legislative framework was introduced for Secondary Vocational Training. According to the new provisions, secondary vocational education is provided by Vocational Lyceums and Vocational Schools. These educational units belong to post-compulsory secondary education and operate throughout Greece.

In higher public education, there are no university undergraduate courses in Tourism Studies. Nevertheless, individual tourism modules are taught in some academic departments, mainly Business Administration (Moira, 2004), either as mandatory or optional. The institutes providing higher education in tourism are the Technological Education Institutes (TEI), which, following the reform of 2001, gradually develop, by modifying their curricula and syllabi in order to fully meet the needs in this field. There are currently eight TEIs offering courses in Tourism Industry Management⁶.

Higher Institutes of Technological Education lay an emphasis on educating executives of high quality standard who, given the theoretical and applied scientific training they have received, form the link between knowledge and application, by developing the applied dimension of sciences and crafts in the relevant professional fields. Furthermore, their role is to transfer, use and promote modern technology as well as methods, practices and techniques in the field of applications. In this framework, TEIs combine the development of the appropriate theoretical studies background with lab and on-the-job training while at the same time they develop know-how and innovations in the respective professional fields. The Departments of Tourism Industry Management provide their graduates with the necessary scientific and professional education which will enable them to pursue a career as executives in every field of tourism e.g. hospitality, travel agency services, etc. either as freelance professionals in this area or as officers in the public sector mapping out and implementing tourism policy.

According to the provisions of the Law in force, TEIs cannot offer postgraduate studies autonomously. Thus five Universities are currently offering master's programmes in Tourism in Greece (Mylonopoulos et al., 2003:93) and one TEI in cooperation with a University:

- a) University of Piraeus, "Master's in Business Administration (MBA) – Tourism Management".
- b) University of the Aegean (based on Chios island), Interdepartmental programme "Planning, Management and Policy on Tourism"⁷.
- c) Athens University of Economics and Business, Business Administration Department, M.Sc. in Services Management (full-time programme) option "Alternative Tourism Services Development and Management"; MA Services Management (part-time programme for executives), option "Tourism".
- d) Hellenic Open University, M.Sc in Tourism Industry Management.

⁶ Athens, Piraeus/Spetses, Thessaloniki, Heraklion Crete, Larissa, Lamia/Amfissa and Epirus/Igoumenitsa, see map.

⁷ Four academic Departments of the University of the Aegean collaborate in the programme: Business Administration, Environment, Social Anthropology and Geography, Retrieved February 7, 2008, from <http://www.chios.aegean.gr/tourism/sdpt/index.php>

- e) University of Macedonia (based in Thessaloniki), Master's in Hospitality Business Administration.
- f) Interdepartmental programme for executives.
- g) TEI of Epirus/Department of Accounting in cooperation with the School ISUFI of the University of Salento in Lecce, Italy (starting from the spring semester 2007-2008) a Master's degree in the "Promotion of Cultural Heritage", specialization "Management of Alternative Forms of Tourism".

Moreover, the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs supervises the Organization for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK), which monitors the Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK), which offers an initial and complementary training. In the tourism sector, various courses are offered throughout Greece in order to meet the needs of the labour market. Some of these are: a) specialist in hotel services and catering, b) specialist in travel agency services, c) specialist in airlines, d) specialist in tourism events management, e) specialist in hotel animation, f) specialist in outdoor activities tourism, etc.

Ministry of Tourism

The Ministry of Tourism supervises the Organization of Tourism Education and Training (OTEK), a legal entity of Public Law was established as such by virtue of the Law 3105 of 2003⁸. OTEK is the specialized Greek state institution that provides education and training for professions in the field of Tourism. The aim of OTEK is to establish, organize and operate educational units of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (TEE), Initial Vocational Training (IEK), Continuing Vocational Training⁹, Schools for Tourist Guides¹⁰ as well as Advanced Schools of Tourism Education, which belong to Higher Education¹¹. The above schools form a network covering the whole of Greece. As of August 2006, TEEs (cycle B) were turned into Vocational Schools (EPAS).

Ministry of Rural Development and Food

The Organization of Agricultural Vocational Education Training and Employment (OGEEKA) "Dimitra" is a legal entity of Public Law and it is supervised by the Ministry of Rural Development and Food. The Organization implements vocational education and training

⁸ OTEK was established in 1937 under a different name.

⁹ OTEK offers courses in several Greek cities for professionals working in tourism enterprises, self-employed individuals in the hospitality industry, as well as those temporarily unemployed, who have only empirical knowledge of their field. Students have the opportunity to systematize and update their technical abilities as well as to acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge in order to improve their performance in the area of customer service. Moreover, the courses aim at enhancing employment opportunities, developing an entrepreneurial spirit and reinforcing the adaptability of tourism enterprises and professionals to the rapid developments in the hospitality industry. Retrieved from: <http://www.otek.edu.gr/en/met.htm>

¹⁰ Schools for Tourist Guides belong to post-secondary vocational education. They operate permanently in Athens and Thessaloniki and depending on the needs of the local tourism market in Heraklion,, Mytilini, Corfu and Rhodes.

¹¹ These Schools prepare graduates for advanced executive posts in the hospitality industry and they operate in Rhodes (ASTER) and in Agios Nikolaos, Crete (ASTEAN).

programmes addressed to the population living in the countryside. There are TEEs operating under its supervision offering a course in “Environment and Agrotourism”.

Ministry of the Interior

The National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (NCPALG) is a legal entity of Public Law supervised by the Ministry of the Interior. The NCPALG focuses on the vocational training and education of the whole staff of the central and regional administration, of the local government of the first and second degree, the legal entities of public law, the public utilities, the *societes anonymes* of the public sector, the legal entities of private law, the enterprises whose management is determined by the public sector and the enterprises of the Local Government organizations.

In 2003 the Department of Tourism Economy and Development was added to the specialisation departments of the National School of Public Administration. The aim of this new department is to generate executives specialised in tourism policy issues. The Department started operating in 2006 in Athens. The graduates of the Department are to be employed in the Ministry of Tourism, the Greek National Tourism Organisation (GNTO), the Organisation of Tourism Education and Training (OTEK)¹² as well as the administrative Regions of Greece.

The importance and necessity of the operation of the Department lies mainly in the fact that today, the governing bodies that map out and implement national tourism policy are in need of specialised executives who are able to meet the new demands of the international tourism environment.

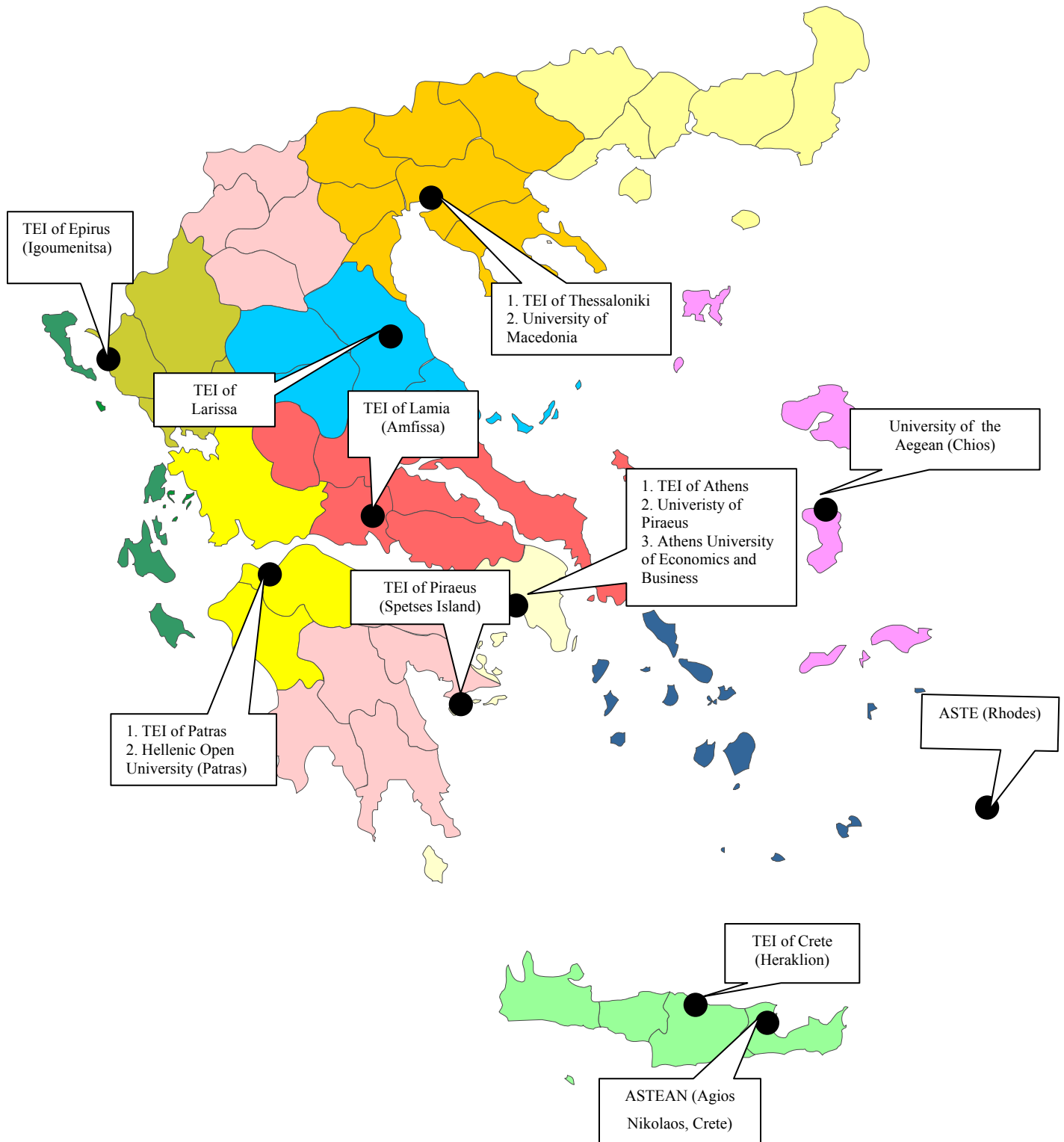
Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare

The Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) is a Legal Entity of Public Law supervised by the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. It was founded in 1954. OAED provides technical vocational education and training and implements Continuing Vocational Training programmes for employees and self-employed. Institutes of Vocational Training operate in OAED offering specialisations similar to those offered by the Organization for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK).

In the private sector, private Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK) operate providing training in different tourism specialisations. Private IEKs are checked and monitored by the OEEK with regard to their curriculum, duration of studies etc. Their graduates are certified by OEEK in accordance with the procedure provided for by the law sitting for theoretical and practical exams, in joint examinations with the graduates of the public IEKs. Moreover, Laboratories of Liberal Studies and other different schemes of tourism training are provided throughout Greece.

¹² The first 15 graduates of the Department were appointed in November 2007 as executives at posts in the three public bodies.

MAP 1: Location of Educational Institutions of Tourism Studies in Greece



Process-Presentation: P. Moira

In the sector of tourism vocational training, Centres of Vocational Training (KEK) can be established by both by public bodies and agencies (e.g. Prefectures, Higher Education Institutions etc.) and private sector agencies. In the province, there are “Demetra” Centres which operate in every prefecture. These centres are supervised by the Organization of Agricultural Vocational Education Training and Employment (OGEEKA) and implement Continuing Training programmes in the field of Agrotourism.¹³

The subsystem of continuing vocational training in the tourism field is too loosely structured. Continuing training has been systematically provided by public or private KEKs since their accreditation from the National Accreditation Center for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS)¹⁴. It is funded by the Operational Programme of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare. Nevertheless, these courses are addressed to the unemployed and not to employees who want to improve their knowledge and skills.

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, it can be concluded that the whole system of tourism education and training in Greece is complicated, multi-level and often overlapping. A grading of studies at different levels can be observed (e.g. secondary, higher, classified, unclassified, etc.) provided by different bodies (e.g. Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs, Ministry of Tourism, etc.). (Figure 1) This complexity causes confusion which is enhanced by the lack of official recognition or legal grandfathering rights in the exercise of professional rights.

The distinction between education and training is often not clear; as a result, professional bodies provide tourism education while educational institutions provide training in tourism professions. This confusion is carried to the tourism industry and causes problems to the recruitment of personnel in the tourism enterprises. This situation has a negative effect on the quality of the services provided. Tourism education and training institutions do not seem to be aware that gone are the days when tourism education was exclusively provided by two institutions at two levels (TEIs and ASTE) and that currently there is a full classification of studies at different levels. They do not take into account the fact that the objectives at each level of studies should be clearly distinct and not cause confusion and erroneous expectations. As a result, students do not know what posts to apply for, professional rights do not exist, employers take advantage of this chaotic situation and finally, the candidates for tourism studies decrease each year and at the same time the quality of tourism services remains stagnant or is downgraded. Tourism studies are provided in many towns of the Greek territory while the range of specialisations offered has widened through the introduction of new ones; however, there is not always preceding research with regard to the needs of the labour market. Part of the problem is due to the lack of cooperation and coordination between the bodies involved in tourism education and training especially between the Ministry of National Education and Religious

¹³ Retrieved February 14, 2008, from <http://www.ogeeeka-dimitra.org.gr/home.htm>

¹⁴ Retrieved February 14, 2008, from <http://www.ekepis.gr/site/>

Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism but also between the agencies of the public and private sectors.

Therefore, a weakness or delay is observed in adapting to the new requirements of the labour market. Certain institutions seem to be trying to update their curricula with new specialisations (e.g. Institutes of Vocational Training [IEK] by OTEK) or changes in the existing options of studies (e.g. Vocational Schools [EPAS] by OTEK) but often without result. The accreditation of professional qualifications is only possible through the system, with initial training provided by the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (OEEK). Nevertheless, the system is not adequate if it is not recognised by the labour market. It seems that the solution does not lie in upgrading tourism studies to higher education. Tourism requires an interdisciplinary approach and has a practical nature. In the Institutes of Vocational Training (IEK) by OTEK, as well as at its other schools an emphasis should be placed on the specialisations required by the market per geographical region and per forms of tourism. Moreover, there should be the possibility of flexibility and readaption of curricula and specialisations.

In Greece, a country where tourism is substantially developed with a variety of infrastructure and services, the existence of an Integrated System of Tourism Education and Training (ISTET) is required, consisting of different levels of education which must communicate, coordinate and compete between them, so that they can supply the labour market with a well educated and trained personnel (Moirira & Anastasiou, 2006:14). The international experience in tourism education proves that certain parameters for the development of such a tourism system are essential. These are: specialisation on the basis of the needs of the labour market, the constant modernisation of the curricula, the linking of tourism education with training and lifelong education, the production of specialised executives in tourism and finally, the linking of higher education with research. Therefore, communication and cooperation between the educational institutions and the tourism industry in Greece is regarded as necessary so that the curricula and the training provided are related with the needs of the market. The educational institutions have to provide a wider range of graduates, who will be able to cover the multitude of different posts required from the tourism industry. Moreover, the tourism industry has to be encouraged to work within the framework of the institutionalised education system and the tourism training programmes. This way it will be able to support the State by participating in training programmes, by offering internships and by highlighting the importance of the supply of quality services.

In this context, the initiative of the Ministry of Tourism since 2006 to form an Intranational Forum for the exchange of views and experiences with regard to tourism education and training aiming at the systematization of the attempts for a joint strategy targeting at the tourism development and by extension the national economic development is judged as positive.

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“IT’S NOT A HOLIDAY IT’S AN EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIP!”
IDENTIFYING STUDENT LEARNING ON A WEEKS STUDY VISIT
TO THE GAMBIA, WEST AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

Every year undergraduate students from the tourism department of Southampton Solent University, UK, take part in an educational field trip to The Gambia, West Africa. Whilst it is well recognised that participation in learning in a real life context can yield many benefits for higher education (Boud et al.1993; Xie 2004) there is little academic research specifically conducted on field trips and the learning experienced (Robson 2002) as all too often these visits are seen as holidays with little meaningful educational value. The main aim of this particular field trip is to create meaningful learning experiences by enabling students to experience tourism in action and see, first-hand, issues and problems of managing an emerging developing world tourism destination. Such a visit that immerses participants in a different culture should provide opportunities for experiential and deeper learning to take place. This paper explores whether student learning did indeed take place whilst in The Gambia. During the visit students were asked to record their experiences in reflective journals with the intention that this form of experiential education would engage the learner directly with the tourism phenomenon being studied (Cantor 1997), and encourage deeper reflection and learning. At the end of the visit the journals were collected and transcribed and then subjected to a qualitative content analysis to evaluate the level of learning. This paper therefore identifies the anticipated learning opportunities of the field trip, provides preliminary examples of evidence of learning taking place and provides preliminary indication of the types of learning evidenced.

KEYWORDS: Experiential Learning; Field Trips; Reflective Journals; Tourism in the Gambia.

INTRODUCTION

For the last seven years a student field trip to The Gambia, West Africa led by two members of staff from the tourism department at Southampton Solent University (SSU) has taken place. Whilst most tourism education occurs in the classroom with a teacher centred approach (Xie 2004) overseas residentials have become an integral part of the tourism

programmes at SSU as it is well recognised that participation in learning in a real life context can yield many benefits for higher education (Boud *et al.*1993). A field trip that immerses participants in a different culture should provide opportunities for experiential learning to take place. Field trips according to Chickering and Zelda (1987 cited in Xie 2004), provide four key benefits from the experience; students understand abstract concepts better, use their experiences for future research, are able to test theories and compare different sources of data, and from a teaching perspective instructors become more enthusiastic about the course. Manner (1995) suggests that in addition to a deeper appreciation of the academic discipline being examined field trips also assist in developing social consciousness.

In January 2008 a seven day educational field trip was undertaken by 1 male and 19 female SSU undergraduate tourism students from the UK and Europe accompanied by 2 members of staff.

The main aim of the annual visit was to enable students to experience tourism in action and to see first- hand issues and problems of managing an emerging developing world tourism destination. Students were encouraged to keep reflective journals for the duration of the trip with the intention that this form of experiential education would engage the learner directly with the tourism phenomenon being studied (Cantor 1997), and encourage deeper reflection and learning.

Robson (2002) indicates that there is little academic research on field trips, the reason being that these visits are frequently seen as holidays with little meaningful educational value. When the SSU Gambia field trips first began in 2000 his assertion rang true for although the field trip organisers had consulted and liaised with Gambia Tourism Concern regarding the itinerary, for the most part the experience for the student was that of a package tourist with some additional day excursions with a tourism education bias. Whilst students and staff were witnessing first hand some of the impacts that accompany tourism particularly in the developing world, the ‘package’ was such that the students were so busy simply being ‘tourists’ that the experience was rather superficial. The organisers felt that from an educational perspective little if any deep learning about the country, people, culture or themselves was taking place. Some students on early trips also voiced disappointment that they were ‘stuck’ with fellow tourists and were not easily able to meet and interact with Gambians. If anything the trip had served to create negative impressions about Gambians in part due to students’ encounters with bumsters described by Roe *et al* (2002:9) as “groups of unemployed young men who approach tourists in some cases to befriend them and in other cases to extract money from them” who congregated around the hotel complex. Whilst this problem was by no means confined to SSU groups (according to World Investment News (2001) 20% of tourists to The Gambia in 1999 stated that they would not return the following year because of the bumster problem) it was one of the consequences of staying in the Tourism Development Area (TDA).

What appeared to be missing from the early SSU field trips were opportunities for direct and more meaningful encounters with Gambian hosts whereby space could be created for more auspicious experiences with time to reflect (Power & Burton 2007). With this in mind a cultural broker, Gam-World Education Link a Gambian run charity whose aim is to promote educational tourism in the Gambia, was approached to act as an intermediary and to assist interaction. Gam-World acted as a facilitating rather than an isolating tour guide (Reisinger and Turner 2003) and a mediator (Dahles 2002) helping to plan and implement an itinerary which would include

leaving the confines of the TDA and travelling and staying up-country (see appendix for full field trip itinerary). This would enable the group to visit Gambian villages, witness the development of community-based enterprises in tourism, observe the way of life of the people and experience Gambian culture and heritage as well as providing an opportunity to experience the 'route less travelled'. The field trip subsequently evolved to the point that whilst the participants were still tourists they were also presented with a series of designed tourism experiences with opportunities for deeper and more meaningful learning. This paper identifies the anticipated learning opportunities of the field trip, provides preliminary examples of evidence of learning taking place and provides preliminary indication of the types of learning evidenced.

LEARNING

The nature of the tourism experience is much discussed in tourism literature (MacCannell 1973, Cohen 1979, Ryan 1993, 1997, Urry 1990, Li 2000) as being a tourist does by its very nature engage the individual in an act of consumption (Boorstin 1984) that involves experiences. From an education perspective Dewey (1938) asserts that learning also consists of a continuity of developing experiences, with individuals interacting with their environment, gaining insight and understanding from such experiences.

Beard and Wilson (2006:19) define experiential learning as "the sense-making process of active engagement between the inner world of the person and the outer world of the environment." Experiential learning underpins all forms of learning because it is essentially about making sense of new and significant experiences by incorporating them within a broader conceptual framework. Integrating learning with reference to tourism concepts, into tourism experiences within the tourism environment itself, would provide an appropriate scenario for students to engage with the subject contextually. This suggests a move in tourism education from information dissemination in didactic lecture format to the creation of learning environments where students are more active participants in the learning process (Ruhanen 2005). This paradigm shift towards the inclusion of more participatory methods of learning can be tied in with experiential learning theory, whereby a person processes multi-layered information from an active and immersive learning environment.

As experiences are often interconnected rather than isolated a process of transfer from one experience to another can occur. Although experience may be said to underpin all learning it does not however guarantee learning. In every day life we are bombarded by stimulants from all angles which form the backdrop to daily life. These stimulants are likely to be even stronger when in an unfamiliar environment such as The Gambia. There is a danger that as learners we selectively decide, consciously or subconsciously, what to engage with and what to ignore i.e. we apply cognitive filters (Beard and Wilson, 2006) as part of our mindset and disposition and for this reason may fail to see and understand things even when in the middle of them. For experiences to stand out and learning to take place there is a need for the learner to engage with the experience and reflect upon what happened, understanding the how and why. In this context SSU students were learners encouraged to apply and evaluate tourism theory to make sense of real world circumstances bridging the gap between knowledge gained in an academic setting and the practical, real world application of that knowledge, thus facilitating deeper learning.

Whereas surface learning is aligned with passive learning that focuses on the discourse itself and a reliance on memory to learn, deep learning is linked with active learning and understanding what the discourse is about, grasping the main points, making connections and drawing conclusions. In order to help make sense of the learning it is necessary to explore the nature of active, experiential learning. Kolb (1984) asserts that the transformation of experience creates knowledge and drew on the work of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget (Beard and Wilson 2006) to present a learning cycle based on experiencing/noticing; interpreting/reflecting; generalising/judging; and applying/testing.

Although Kolb's learning cycle theory seems to be a generally accepted theory of learning, perhaps due to its relative simplicity and ease of understanding, there have been some criticisms (Boud, Keogh and Walker 1985). It has been suggested that people do not necessarily progress sequentially through the learning cycle; rather they learn through a process of 'argumentation' which combines thinking, reflection, experiencing and action as different elements of the same process. Furthermore Beard and Wilson (2006:31) recognise that reflection does not necessarily take place in isolation 'divorced from social, historical and cultural aspects of self, thinking and action' but that it is debate with oneself and others which forms the basis of learning. Fenwick (2003:58) states that through conversation people 'both affirm their experiences and challenge them. We dialogue to connect with, learn from, or challenge the different experiences we have shared together'. Fenwick (2003:57) also asserts that relational learners may look for conversation to help clarify ideas and cites research by Flannery (2000) - that is particularly pertinent to this group of students who were almost exclusively female- who reports that women in particular prefer learning in supportive, collaborative relationships 'testing one's stories and perceptions with others.' Fenwick (2003:53) suggests that after an experience individuals evaluate these experiences through four processes namely 'association', relating new information to familiar concepts, 'integration' looking to connect the new with the old, 'appropriation' personalising the new knowledge thus making it ones own, and 'validation' determining the authenticity of the new ideas and the feelings of the experience. Debating and analysing with others assists this post-experience process.

Despite critiques of Kolb his four tenets of experience, reflection, judgement and application were deemed useful as a basis upon which to design a series of learning opportunities which incorporated time and space for debate and evaluation by self and with others. It was hoped that students would progress through Fenwick's (2003) four processes of association, integration, appropriation and validation. The field trip was therefore designed to enable learning to take place through experience and subsequent reflection on individual activities through keeping a journal. The sequencing of the itinerary was designed to move through learning opportunities from surface to deep as students become more immersed in Gambian culture with students being encouraged to complete journal entries about their experiences after each activity. On the first day students visiting the museums would reflect upon the culture represented to develop their ideas about life in The Gambia. The trip up-country and the specific activities undertaken would enable students to refine and test their theories and understanding. Return to the TDA would provide further space and context for reflection and 'sense making' which it was hoped would culminate in a deep and rewarding experience.

TOURISM IN THE GAMBIA

The Republic of The Gambia, West Africa is bordered by the North Atlantic Ocean to the west and Senegal to the north and south. The population is approximately 1.42m (mid-2001 EIU estimate), 90% of whom are Muslims. Most Gambians live in rural areas in Kundas or compounds with the extended family playing a major role in the social fabric of Gambian society and family networks taking responsibility for the well being and maintenance of its members. It has a number of different ethnic groups the largest of which is the Mandinka representing around 42% of the population, with other ethnic groups such as the Wolof, Fulani, Jola, and Searhuli each maintaining its own language and traditions with patriarchy a common thread. This ethnic mix leads to the potential for the tourist to experience a rich cultural diversity due to different cultural heritage traditions ranging from naming ceremonies, marriage celebrations to festivals and arts and crafts.

Tourism was introduced in The Gambia in the 1960s and in 1970 the TDA was established covering 1,000 metres inland from the beach between Kololi and Kartong (Bah and Goodwin 2003:8), driven predominantly by the overseas-dominated private sector. It has since developed along a 15 km strip of land just south west of the capital Banjul in the Kanifing Municipality. The tourism product is winter sun with a limited number of tour operators offering all-year round programmes. There are three key European markets for The Gambia, the UK (41.1%), Germany (24.4%) and Holland (11.8%), who accounted for 77.3% of non-African international arrivals in 1998 (ibid:9). Mitchell and Faal (2006:20) state that in an airport survey 84% of tourists are on a package tour and tend to stay in the beach hotels in the TDA. The Gambia Tourist Authority (2006:46) confirms this asserting that most of the tourists stay in the TDA with only 5% venturing into the interior and only 30% taking a formal one day excursion with few tourists even venturing outside their hotels.

Responsibility for tourism lies with the Department of State for Tourism and Culture, which has recently published a new Tourism Master Plan (July 2006) to cover the next 20 years. The challenges that The Gambia faces in its tourism sector are highlighted by the Gambia Tourist Authority (GTA) and include: infrastructure problems including electricity supply and waste disposal, access inland due to poor roads and transportation, environmental management and social aspects including in particular the bumster problem. Many of the impacts referred to in tourism literature on tourism development can be associated with tourism development in The Gambia, including sex tourism, hassle and environmental degradation (Responsible Tourism Partnership n.d) and have led for example to the GTA deploying the paramilitary national guard on the beach to reduce the presence of the bumsters (EIU 2003).

The Gambia with all these pertinent tourism issues presents opportunities for students to learn first hand through experience about issues that have been discussed in the classroom and read about in tourism text books.

METHODOLOGY

This paper follows on from previous research undertaken in The Gambia (Power & Burton 2007) on creating spaces for cultural tourism interaction to occur, and is part of a wider study being conducted by the authors on creating 'sweet experiences' (Pine and Gilmore 1999) within tourism educational field trips. For this research on field trip learning experiences the research design draws on a content analysis methodology. For each activity on the itinerary a framework of anticipated learning opportunities (ALO) such as information gathering, context setting, sense making (see Table 1) was identified. Each student was given a reflective journal on the day of departure for The Gambia and was asked to reflect upon the identified, pre-arranged activities/experiences. Individual student journal entries were transcribed by activity and then analysed to provide the type of learning evidenced such as fact finding and interpretation. It was anticipated that as the tour progressed evidence would be found of students exhibiting Fenwick's (2003) four processes of association, integration, appropriation and finally validation. Furthermore identification of these processes at work is intended to facilitate the next stage of this ongoing research where diary data will be fully coded to enable depth of individual learning to be analysed. Finally, all the above data will be cross referenced to video footage collected during the trip by the organizers to provide further reference points to evidence learning. Given the above this paper is concerned with confirming that field trips are not just holidays but opportunities for learning.

RESULTS

The findings for this stage of the research are presented in table format (see Table 1 below). For each day the activity is outlined along with the Anticipated Learning Opportunity. Following this a summary is presented of the Type of Learning Evidenced justified through a selected sample of quotations from student journals.

Table 1. Student Learning Experiences.

Activity	Anticipated Learning Opportunity (ALO) Type of Learning Evidenced (TLE)	Learning Evidence in student journals
Day 2, The Gambia National Museum, Banjul	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Gathering • Context Setting <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact Finding • Interpreting • Gathering new information • Cognitive Filter = student not engaging 	<p>“Learnt a lot about the whole of Gambia, especially Banjul. Also learnt about the recent Mayors and Chairmen of Gambia and about Gambian music”</p> <p>“Learning the different colours on the flag was quite interesting. The three colours represent different things red is sun, blue is Gambia river, green is agriculture white in between stand for peace and purity”</p> <p>“It was too much information with whole plaques with written info, too much to read.....and it was a bit unorganized. What I read was interesting however it didn’t grab me and it might have been the heat or not enough water but I couldn’t concentrate and felt a bit lost in a way”</p> <p>“There was a great deal of information there.....I felt we may have learnt more if pieces of writing were cut down, as there was a lot to take in”</p>

<p>Day 2 Tanjee Village Museum. Open Air and interactive.</p>	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Gathering • Context Setting • Sense Making Experience • Active Learning <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact Finding • Interpreting • Actively engaged with the artefacts and displays of culture 	<p>“ Excellent way of learning about the Gambian traditional way of life enjoyed the music at the end” “Something I found very interesting in Tanji museum was the trees that are used for illnesses. It is amazing how people use everything what’s around them to survive and provide food” “I really enjoyed this trip to the village museum we could touch and feel the articles in the museum, watch a craftsman weave and musicians perform. We got actively involved and I thoroughly enjoyed myself” “very informative, hands-on museum we could experience former life style” “loved the hands on instruments, although I have no rhythm I tried the drums with mixed results “</p>
<p>Day 2 Tanjee Fishing village</p>	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiencing • Context Setting • Sense Making Experience • Challenging perceptions <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive Filter prevents engagement • Inability to assimilate the experience • Generalising • Sense Making • Appropriation 	<p>“I really did not understand the purpose of this visit ” “Did not enjoy this experience at all. It was difficult to know what we were suppose to do” “It was very upsetting moment and very eye-opening how spoilt western society is, nevertheless I think it was a necessary experience makes you understand why tourists only stay in the hotel complex and never go outside! Nobody wants to ruin their holiday by looking at the reality. I would try to do something like that in a <u>more respectful</u> way next time (or maybe it was just me who felt really embarrassed)” “made us quite guilty. It was educational on the other hand, as it made me think about how to do something for others” “Humbling, frustrating, angry, upset. Initially I found it really hard to understand why we had to see this aspect of Gambian life. But then realised that a holistic view of the Gambian way of life helped see how tourism development could help the region economically, and how the Gambian government needed to find a way for the nation to receive tourists and behave in a way that was benefiting to the country”</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Day 2 Evening lecture on the Gambia Tourism Master Plan by Gambia Tourist Authority representatives.</p>	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information Gathering • Context Setting • Integration of new knowledge with old <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fact Finding • Contextualisation • Integration • Application 	<p>“The talk is really interesting and useful as we are doing Gambia in our marketing presentation”</p> <p>“Very educational. Learnt a lot about Gambia and its marketing and human resources and future plans. Interesting to see what other countries do compared to England and how they go about things”</p> <p>“We learnt that the UK and Scandinavia are the largest markets. We also learnt that customer service, education training for locals are the main priorities within the country in order to get repeat visitors and to ensure the Gambia remains a very friendly country”</p> <p>“This was very interesting and had a great impact on me. It made me analyse/understand Gambia’s tourist market from a tourist officer point of view. It helped to put Gambia internationally on the tourism scene and understand its strengths and weaknesses and its competitive advantages.”</p> <p>“I found the talk fascinating on every level and was able to relate it back to almost every area that I have studied in the last three years”</p> <p>“The talk lasted for about an hour and was very interesting and educational, as I could relate what they were saying to the subjects at uni. At the end I asked a question on female sex tourism, and the answer given was very good and will be used in our sex tourism presentation”</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">Day 3 & 4 Tendaba Ecocamp & Tendaba Village (Up country)</p>	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Context setting • Sense making • Gathering new information • Active Learning <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualisation • Integration • Sense Making • Appropriation 	<p>“This was an amazing experience. We had the opportunity to interact with the local community and get a greater understanding of their culture”</p> <p>“This was a brilliant experience, it was a more authentic experience of what Gambia is like”</p> <p>“Tendaba camp was a great example for a sustainable tourism camp”</p> <p>“The walk around Tendaba village provided a great insight into the way locals actually live. Very graphic and emotional especially the living conditions but they seemed very happy and pleased to greet you but for what benefit to them? It was hard to see the pros and con’s that tourism was bringing to their community”</p> <p>“A real eye opening experience/event. We had a girl with us she lived in the village and she was our guide, showed the village around and explained all the cultural elements of their society. She showed us how they live, how they cook and just their general everyday life. It was all very fascinating and at the same time very shocking. We went to see our guide Jainata’s house, where we danced with her and her friends. It was a real cultural experience, where we were an active participant and had a real taste of their culture. Further walking through the village we saw women who were washing their clothes, cleaning their homes and preparing their dinner. This was an educational experience and made me appreciate what I have at home. It was great to see how other people lived in another country from a ‘more than a tourist’ point of view. This event gave us more I find myself constantly comparing the way of life at home to things here”</p> <p>“More than a ‘touristic’ experience, we were able to really engage with the event, made us become an active participant and gave me a real feel for their culture.”</p>
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Day 3 Language lesson (Up country)	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Rote Learning & Memorisation <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memorise • Appropriation 	<p>”Afterwards we tried to talk to some of the children who don’t talk any English and they actually understood us!”</p> <p>“The language lesson was educational and made me feel more comfortable because I could actually greet people/staff around the camp without being a complete idiotic tourist who refused to speak in the country’s native tongue”</p>
Day 5 Sindola Camp Kamilai en route to Tumani Tende (Up country)	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Time for discussion & reflection in peer groups <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualisation • Integration • Sense Making • Appropriation • Contrasting perceptions 	<p>“The 5 star hotel was a good opportunity for us to compare with the ecocamp”</p> <p>“To me it just looked like every other hotel around the world, nothing special to do helping eco/sustain”</p> <p>“It turned into a lazy afternoon of learning about a wide variety of culture including Mandinka, Hungarian, Norwegian, Spanish and German. Our guides and driver joined us to discuss the values of Islamic marriages compared to Western as well as a variety lifestyle differences. It was an intriguing experience that surprised me and I felt a lot more understanding of traditional family values here in the Gambia at the end of it”</p> <p>“half the village came and we all started dancing together the traditional dance it was very funny and I really enjoyed it. It didn’t seem to be entertainment it was just so real”</p> <p>“The hotel entertainment looked forced and I didn’t feel it to be authentic purely just to make tourists happy. Then once they finished their attack a little old lady shoved a bowl in my face for money...not very amusing”</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Day 6 Tumani Tende Ecocamp (Up country)</p>	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Context setting • Sense making • Active Learning • Immersion & deeper reflection <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualisation • Integration • Sense Making • Appropriation • Validation 	<p>”This camp, smaller than Tendaba camp, very basic but nice community area, more cosy and friendly than Tendaba. If we would have known we could have bought some kola nuts for the chief”</p> <p>“Being absorbed into the culture of the Jola community felt incredibly good and although it was extremely staged being able to participate really helped to feel part of their community. The success they enjoyed as an eco-camp is obviously a recipe for success and I sincerely believe it could be used in communities throughout the Gambia”</p> <p>“The success with which they obviously run their garden business added to the full cultural eco-tourism business was a lesson in how successful small communities can be”</p> <p>“Very interesting and very entertaining. It’s absolutely priceless to learn what we’ve had a chance to learn there. We won’t read that in tour guidebooks.”</p> <p>“This was just a short insight for us the proper ceremony would be for 3 days!”</p> <p>“We all took part, and each joined in some local dancing this also gave us more of a chance to learn about Gambian culture and their traditions. I thought this was really entertaining as well as educational everyone joined in and had a real good time dancing was especially fun and the locals were more than willing to teach us the traditional dancing”</p>
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Day 7 Tourism Development Area Final Reflections	<p>ALO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contextualisation • Sense Making • Reflection <p>TLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalisations • Contextualisation • Integration • Sense Making • Appropriation • Validation 	<p>“We have had an opportunity to get to know Gambian culture and Gambian people. There were many occasions where we took part in activities which included Gambian communities. I think this is something that everyone should experience. Going on holiday just to stay in a hotel or by the pool never provides us with that experience”</p> <p>“Unique experience. Doing things together helped me to realise that interacting with local communities makes our holiday special and important for both us, and visitors and host country. It teaches us how to get to know the host community”</p> <p>“Overall I had a really good time in the Gambia I think it was a really good opportunity to learn about the different cultures and traditions in the Gambia”</p> <p>“All in all the whole trip to The Gambia was AMAZING, and very educational it has defiantly served its purpose. I have learned a lot about Gambia, its culture and the main thing about its tourism concerns”</p> <p>“Most of my memories are positive educationally I found that almost every aspect was analysed in every way imaginable and it is something that I will be able to apply academically. The visit also made me consider careers again”</p> <p>“This is a very poor country understandable that tourists only stay within the hotel complex because they don’t want to face the poverty of the people and the dirt. Hassle and harassment especially in the tourist areas a big problem, at the beginning we tried to understand why they are doing it but at the end of the week, it got really annoying and we’ve been fed up, some of us didn’t want to go to the beach again because of the hassle. In the countryside many kids running after the bus but no hassle from the adults, to some extent also our fault because we gave things out from the bus to the kids so they will keep running after the tourists buses”</p> <p>“Overall the whole Gambia experience will stay with me for a long time. Never before have I felt so guilty for such a long period of time. I often related my time in the Gambia with life at home and although I did not appreciate the lack of personal space from the strangers who would harass us, I learnt a lot and felt a lot from my trip. My life at home, I now feel will change for the better. I hope to take the lessons I’ve learnt home with me and I also would like to change things at home once I return. For example I feel my values are stronger than ever and that I will reconsider my priorities in life”</p>
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DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Early analysis of student journals indicates that entries are quite divergent and vary in length and detail. One of the most verbally articulate students often involved in insightful discussion about different experiences during the tour for example, only provided limited journal feedback. Even though time and space had been created for the students to complete their journal entries some were left blank despite students being encouraged by staff throughout the trip to complete them. This may be a result of the journals not being formally assessed and reflects the voluntary nature of the task.

Student's use of the terms 'learning', 'learnt' and 'educational' in their journals indicate that learning took place during activities traditionally associated with learning such as the visits to the museums, the talk from the GTA officers and the language and culture lessons. Whilst the term learning itself does not frequently appear in entries whilst up-county (except for the formal lessons) there are other suggestions of students applying learning and thus associating new knowledge with the familiar and integrating new with old.

New and unfamiliar Gambian terminology such as 'Jola', 'baobab' and 'Mandinka' can be found alongside familiar tourism terms such as 'eco tourism', 'sustainability' and 'authenticity', concepts which are much discussed during the programme of study in the U.K.. This implies that integration was occurring with some appropriation through acknowledged participation and internalisation of experiences and the settings in which these experiences took place suggesting that higher order learning may have been taking place. For example, a student recognised the performance element of the marriage ceremony in Tumani Tende and understood their part in the experience thus relating their conceptual knowledge of authenticity to practice. Whilst another identified that from a cultural perspective kola nuts were an appropriate gift when meeting the village chief and was regretful that she did not take some to the meeting. Return to the TDA prompted further reflection in a setting that reminded students of the wider Gambian tourism context. Closing entries show that in some instances both appropriation and validation were evident for example a student reflected on how members of the group had contributed to 'hassle' by handing out gifts from the bus, others considered the role of community participation in tourism having seen the benefits it can bring first hand. Many students asserted that they had undertaken a personal as well as physical journey, one student rethinking her career path, another stating that she was reconsidering previously held views, whilst another student stated that the trip had enabled her to reaffirm her personal values.

It was also apparent that whilst the majority of students were able to process information in some depth, for others cognitive filters were at work even at the end of the trip. At times students made generalisations, drew false conclusions or even misinterpreted situations due perhaps to a lack of detailed knowledge and unfamiliarity with the culture. On occasion the same learning opportunity produced contradictory results e.g. what was regarded by one as 'real' was seen by another student to be 'fake'. For some a transformation of experience took place whereby being in The Gambia enabled them to make sense and contextualise tourism theories and practice what they had only read about or heard about in lecture theatres. There is clear evidence of students using this opportunity to debate, affirm and challenge ideas.

It is accepted that a week's fieldtrip in The Gambia only allows surface learning about something as rich and complex as Gambian culture to take place. Nevertheless, what

can be asserted is that the field trip did indeed provide an environment whereby learning could take place. There is evidence based on the analysis of students' journals that through a combination of both staged and authentic encounters with Gambian culture, distinctions between the two were more often than not recognised, thus providing potential verification of deeper learning. At this stage of analysis what is not yet clear is the depth of that learning for individual participants; an acknowledged limitation of the work presented here and a focus for follow up research. The evidence from this paper suggests that a well planned field trip can bring the learning process to life. By immersing the student in an experience and encouraging debate and reflection, both formally through a learning journal and informally with peers, a valuable learning context particularly in tourism can be created. The authors encourage other tourism colleagues to contact them if they are considering planning a field trip to The Gambia.

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APPENDIX

Southampton Solent University 2008 Field Trip, The Gambia, West Africa

Day 1

Arrival Banjul. Met by cultural broker Gam-World* taken to hotel in Tourism Development Area, Kotu.

Day 2

Visit to Arch 22 a symbol of modernity and one of the largest buildings in the city built to commemorate the bloodless coup of 22nd July 1994.

Visit to local market.

Visit to Banjul National Museum, documenting the material culture of The Gambia.

Visit to Tanje Village Museum, 'the whole of The Gambia under one roof.'

Visit to Tanje Fishing Village.

Evening talk on tourism in The Gambia by Gambia Tourist Authority representatives.

Day 3

Depart for the ferry crossing point in Banjul.

Cross and depart for Tendaba ecotourism camp & conference centre located opposite the Baobolong Wetlands travelling on north bank of river.

Day 4

Visit to Tendaba village. Group split up into pairs and invited into the villagers' homes.

Language lesson.

Culture lesson.

Day 5

Depart for Kanilai camp in the Presidents' village Sindola.

Cultural entertainment.

Day 6

Depart for Tumani Tenda eco-tourism camp, situated 25 km East of Brikama and 3 km from Kafatu.

Meeting with the village Chief/Alikalo.

Tour of the village.

Tour of the village market garden.

Opportunity to assist with lunch preparation.

Cultural entertainment by all village members: Marriage Ceremony.

Day 7

Opportunity for students to be interviewed on radio programme at West Coast Radio.

Opportunity for students to be interviewed on national television.

Cultural entertainment at Faji Kunda Village for performance by Jalikebba and the Voice of Manding (Afro-Jamano traditional new generation music).

Day 8

Visit to International Business College Banjul for Tourism Careers Conference.

Depart for the UK.

* In order to facilitate this socio-cultural exchange a broker Gam-World Education Link - a Gambian organisation aiming to promote educational tourism in the Gambia was used. Gam-World is an educational charity set up by and run by Gambians. It is a non-profit making organisation whose focus is on wanting the benefits of tourism to filter down outside the main tourism area.

PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES OF THE IMPACT OF TOURISM
UPON FAMILY LIFE WITHIN THE SPHERE OF SOCIAL CHANGE:
AN UNCONVENTIONAL METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

The social impacts of tourism on a host country have been a subject of increasing concern to social scientists and planners all over the world. Research in the field of “Resident’s perceptions and attitudes on the social impact of tourism” conducted over the last three decades, consider tourism as a disruptor of traditional social structures and behavioural patterns. Furthermore, tourism seems to be blamed for all the ill fates of modern societies. However, the research of resident perceptions of the impact of tourism has been largely descriptive with the base knowledge about resident attitudes coming from the analysis of quantitative surveys, which ask respondents to indicate a level of agreement with positive, or negative statements about the impact of tourism, as if people think in ‘tick-boxes’ and ‘Likert-type’ scales. To a large extent, all studies come to broadly similar conclusions, which actually leave the impact of tourism unclear. Is there a need for researchers to closely associate their research with social change at large? Is there a need to take the issues of ‘Globalisation’, ‘modernisation of societies’, ‘neo-colonialism’ and the wider perspective of the progress brought about in societies by ‘modern changes in modern life’ into consideration? This paper attempts to investigate and draw conclusions as to the importance of the aforementioned issues when studying the socio-cultural costs and benefits of tourism.

KEYWORDS: Attitudes/Perceptions; Social Change; Social Impacts of Tourism; Societal Modernisation; Sociology of Tourism; Neo-Colonialism.

INTRODUCTION

The research of resident perceptions of the impact of tourism has been descriptive and largely atheoretical. Most of our knowledge about resident attitudes towards tourism has come from the analysis of surveys which ask respondents to indicate a level of agreement with positive or negative statements about the impact of tourism (Pizam, 1978; Belisle and Hoy, 1980; Davis, Allen and Cosenza, 1988; Allen, Hafer, Long, and Purdue, 1993), as if people think in ‘tick-boxes’ and Likert-type scales. A few researchers found a linear relationship between support for tourism and certain perceptions and personal characteristics (Milman and Pizam, 1987; Purdue,

Long, and Allen, 1987). Other studies infer that there are varying support levels for tourism within a community (Doxey, 1976; Dogan, 1989), and that the relationship may be nonlinear (Allen, Long, Perdue and Keiselbach, 1988). Yet, the dynamic and complex nature of the basis on which residents draw conclusions about tourism remains unclear.

The sociology of tourism is an emergent specialty concerned with the study of touristic motivation, roles, relationships and institutions and of their impact in tourists and on the societies who receive them. It is as yet an ongoing enterprise for which there is no universally accepted sociological perspective, thus it follows that there can be no single “sociology of tourism”. Instead, there have been several attempts to understand sociologically different aspects of tourism, departing from a number of theoretical perspectives. Although no established approach to tourism has been developed with its own unique blend of theory and method, there are a growing number of researchers who are willing to treat tourism as a recognised target domain requiring sociological understanding and explanation. Cohen (1972) was the first researcher to study tourism as a sociological specialty rather than merely as an exotic marginal topic. Since then, the field has grown rapidly and is attested by the publication of a series of treatises, reviews and general collection articles. However, and despite the fact that the literature covers the broad area of the sociology of tourism and the effects that attitudes, perceptions and behaviour have on tourism behaviour, it is this author’s belief that an important area in research which still remains weak, is that of the relationship of socio-cultural impacts to the modernisation of societies at large.

ATTITUDES, PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR

Ap (1990) used the term “perception” instead of “attitude”, defining perceptions as “the meaning attributed to an object”. He argued that many residents might attribute meaning to the impacts of tourism without necessarily having knowledge or enduring predispositions. This difference is important, as many studies appear to use the term “attitude” when in fact, they have measured “perceptions”.

According to Ap (1990), existing attitudinal research regarding tourism has been primarily exploratory and descriptive. Studies have revealed major impacts of tourism and related variables, but theory is under-developed: “Currently there is limited understanding of why residents respond to the impacts of tourism as they do, and under what conditions residents react to those impacts” (p.666). Husbands (1989) concurred, saying that “There is, so far, no theoretical justification of why some people are, or are not, favourably disposed to tourism”.

Several researchers have focused on specific issues in seeking to explain attitudes. Perdue et al (1987) focused on the differences in perceived impacts on tourism among resident types. Schroeder (1996), introduced socioeconomic variables on his Flagstaff, Arizona study, whereas, Husbands (1989) found that age and education were important variables in his Zambian study. Belisle and Hoy (1980), dealt with proximity to tourism development whereas Sheldon and Var (1984) dealt with the types and intensity of visitor-resident contacts in an attempt to test the importance of these variables in shaping resident attitudes. Most significant of these, at least in terms of attention paid by researchers, is employment and economic dependency on tourism (Milman and Pizam, 1987), because dependency is, in the majority of cases, felt to account for

positive attitudes towards tourism. It is worth mentioning here that many of these studies, however, have measured perceptions of costs and benefits rather than attitudes

Perhaps the most promising approach as explained by Ap (1990), is “social exchange theory” (discussed in the following section). Applying the theory to tourism, Ap suggested that residents evaluate the expected benefits and costs, which are realised in exchange for resources and services. He formulated a number of propositions which can be used as hypotheses, the essence of which is that positive resident attitudes toward tourism occur when perceived rewards, as opposed to costs, are satisfactory and balanced. Principles of “rationality” (reward seeking), “satisficing” (satisfying minimal aspirations), “reciprocity” (mutual gratification) and “justice” (fairness or equity) must be met. Support for the tenets of social exchange theory can be found throughout much of the related literature (as demonstrated in the following review), although results are somewhat mixed on specific relationships and causes.

Thus, the attitude of, and to, tourists is dependent on a complex pattern of not simply belief, but the importance of norms and the values attached to potential outcomes of behaviour. Host societies may not like some aspects of tourist behaviour, but tolerate it on the basis of expected economic benefits. What might be said is that the attitude of hosts towards tourists is not always revealed by the behaviour of hosts to tourists - their behaviour is simply the result of a series of compromises between conflicts of objectives of varying importance to them.

SOCIAL EXCHANGE AND TOURISM

The principles of social exchange theory do not appear to have been applied in the field of tourism, despite the fact that in the leisure context they can be found in a handful of Applications. Shamir (1984) discussed exchange theory from a sociological perspective in an analysis of tourist tipping. He dismissed it, however, in favour of a social psychological paradigm. Despite an apparent lack of application of social exchange in the tourism field, transactional approaches have been used in tourism settings. Nash (1989) adopted a transactional approach in examining dynamics of host-guest interactions, where he described the relationship between Western industrialised markets and developing destination nations as a form of imperialism. Transactional analysis has been applied by Villere, O'Connor and Quain (1983) in an examination of guest relations and management-employee relations within the hospitality industry. Transactional analysis adopts a psychoanalytical approach in examining interpersonal relationships and focuses upon “resources” of psychological nature.

To sustain tourism in a community, certain exchanges must occur. Participation by a community (residents, civic leaders, and entrepreneurs) in developing and attracting tourism to the area is generally driven by the desire by some members of the community to improve the economic and social conditions in the area. For others in the community, tourism is thrust upon them by certain individual or group advocates. Irrespective of how tourism is introduced and developed in a community, residents are important players who can influence the success or failure of the local tourist industry. Residents may contribute to the well being of the community through their participation (at varying degrees) in the planning, development, and operation of tourist attractions and by extending their hospitality to tourists in exchange for the benefits obtained from tourism. On the other hand, residents may discourage tourism by opposing it or

exhibiting hostile behaviour towards tourism advocates and/or tourists. The need of the visitors have to be satisfied because providing quality experiences for them by the host community will increase the desire for further interaction between hosts and guests (Hudman and Hawkins, 1989). The encounter between them may also lead to negative experiences. Knox (1982:77) commented that, "The tourist may have his vacation spoiled or enhanced by the residents. The resident may have his daily life enriched or degraded by the unending flow of tourists".

In developing and attracting tourism to a community, the goal is to achieve outcomes that obtain the best balance of benefits and costs for both residents and tourists. The theory of social exchange suggests that residents evaluate tourism in terms of social exchange, that is, evaluate it in terms of expected benefits and/or costs obtained in return for the services they supply. Hence, it is assumed that hosts seek tourism development for their community in order to satisfy their economic, social and psychological needs and improve the community's well being. Even for those in a community where tourism is forced upon them by others against their wishes, there is still an opportunity for them to evaluate the exchange, since it can be viewed as a dynamic process. In such instances, it is likely that the exchange will be perceived negatively because there is an imbalance of benefits and costs shared between hosts and guests and any stability in the relationship in terms of motivation and loyalty, is not maintained. However, benefits derived from the exchange may be perceived by residents as outweighing costs. Thus, perceptions may change to a more positive disposition, despite initial opposition stemming from having tourism forced upon a community.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM vs MODERNISATION AS AN AGENT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE

When visible and identifiable social and cultural changes occur in regions or countries, which have adopted a policy on tourism development, it is frequently tourism, as opposed to other factors, that is seen to be the cause of such change. Furthermore, the socio-cultural impacts of tourism are generally perceived to be negative, in particular in the context of tourism development in developing countries which are, potentially, more susceptible to Western influences. Yet, whilst there is little doubt that tourism can bring about changes which may both benefit host communities and be viewed as a "cost", it is important to point out that, in most cases, tourism "contributes" to social and cultural change rather than being the cause of such change.

Societies and cultures are constantly changing and, as a global, homogeneous culture emerges, no society is immune from outside influence. For example, there are very few communities which do not have access to a television, and hence, images of other countries and cultures. The activities of multinational corporations internationalising Western culture are catalysts of social change, whilst many countries are undergoing a process of modernisation, industrialisation, urbanisation and rapid population growth, which, potentially, have a far greater impact than tourism on social and cultural structures and values. The 'Westernisation' of many countries on the road to EU membership is another example which is bound to affect the social

and cultural fabric of the countries in question. As Smith (1989a:9) pointed out, “culture change, in the form of modernisation has made impressive inroads into the backward areas and the poverty pockets of the globe, and the process is both ongoing and accelerating”. She goes on to conclude in her study of Eskimo tourism in Alaska (Smith, 1989b:75), that it is the effort of the Government to improve housing, education, medical care and infrastructure, rather than the care of tourism that has been the key element in bringing about modernisation and culture change.

Frequently, little effort is made to distinguish the effects of tourism from other cultural changes occurring globally and it would seem that owing to the highly visible nature of tourism and tourists, the development of tourism has become a scapegoat for socio-cultural change (Crick, 1989). It is important, therefore, to recognise the dynamic character of all societies and cultures and to consider the potential socio-cultural impacts of tourism against this background. It is also important to set the parameters within which impacts of tourism are assessed. In other words, impact studies often display what Wood (1980) describes as “Western Ethnocentrism and Romanticism”. The social and cultural character of life in modern society is undergoing an identifiable process of transformation. Indeed, there is much debate amongst sociologists themselves as to whether modern society has moved beyond modernity, into a new condition which contemporary advanced industrial societies are alleged to have reached, and is now identified by a set of social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that may be amalgamated and described as the condition of ‘postmodernity’. What is certain is that many of the economic, political, social and cultural forms that characterise modernism have changed or are in a process of change. The momentum of change derives from internal forces and processes. The extent to which these changes are inter-related and signify an identifiable and all-embracing development in the nature of contemporary society is arguable but, nevertheless, postmodernism is a term that can be usefully applied to the organisational and cultural condition of modern society in the late twentieth century.

What Wood (1980) describes in the previous paragraph as ‘Western Ethnocentrism and Romanticism’, coupled with the concept of postmodernism, creates a bias and assumes that it is better to preserve cultures which are traditional and pre-modern rather than allowing them to develop and modernise. Thus, tourism developments which, from the Western point of view, “threaten” the social and cultural characteristics of many destinations are perceived as negative impacts although it is quite possible that local communities support such changes. Within the study of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism it is necessary, therefore, “to go beyond evaluations based on Western romantic ideals of cultural preservation to analyse the precise components of cultural change (Wood, 1980) and to assess the extent to which tourism is one of these components.

INTERNATIONAL TOURISM AS A FORM OF NEO-COLONIALISM

The notion that tourism is a new form of colonialism and imperialism is somewhat an extreme perception of the impacts of tourism in host societies (Matthews, 1977). However, evidence has been presented by a number of scholars, indicating that this perspective is not without a theoretical foundation. Highly valued evidence is presented in an article by Britton (1982) on the subject of the political economy of tourism in the Third World. Britton postulates that the international tourism industry is a product of metropolitan capitalist enterprise and when

a Third World country uses tourism as a development strategy, it becomes enmeshed in a global system over which it has little control. Nash (1989) attempted to investigate the theoretical foundations of imperialism and relate them to the emergence of a new “tourist system” within the societies of host destinations. He pointed out that, “at the most general level, theories of imperialism refer to the expansion of a society’s interests abroad. These interests, whether economic, political, military, religious or some other, are imposed on or adopted by an alien society, and evolving inter-societal transactions marked by the ebb and flow of power are established. Such transactions will have various consequences for the societies involved” (Nash, 1989:38). Nash advocates that the Western metropolitan centres possess the necessary economic power, not only to generate tourist traffic, but also to invest in the development of tourist centres in developing nations. He argues that, “it is this power over touristic and related developments that makes a metropolitan centre imperialistic and tourism a form of imperialism” (Nash, 1989:39).

Undoubtedly, the movement of metropolitan citizens from the highly developed economies of Europe and North America to societies of the less developed world has a long history. According to many authors, this movement of citizens changes form and magnitude but its colonial quality essentially remains the same (Perez, 1974; Perez, 1975; Bugnicourt, 1977; Matthews, 1977). In other words, although some developing countries have acquired political independence, their economic dependence in the western countries is still evident. The arguments regarding the economic inferiority of many tourist destinations and thus, their apparent vulnerability to foreign capital for their tourism development, is further supported by Foster (1964:219) who postulates that “a tourist region must then possess natural advantages and a slightly lower standard of living than the region from which it draws its tourists”.

It can be argued that three economic conditions may substantiate the claim that tourism is a form of neo-colonialism:

- Firstly, many developing countries have grown to solely depend on tourism as a means of achieving foreign exchange earnings and securing revenue (Mathieson and Wall, 1982). Developing nations willingly developed a tourist industry heavily based on foreign capital in order to cater for specialist types of mass or elite tourists from wealthy western nations. As Farrell (1979:131) notes, “Some, call aspects of this situation neo-colonialism and attribute its cause to a new breed of outsider, the developer, hotel operator, UN consultant or airline representative”. He also argues that the attributes of such foreigners - are the same attitudes of oppression and paternalism found in previous colonial times. However, sometimes, local participation fosters such types of “colonial development”. De Kadt (1979b:41) terms this “internal neo-colonialism” and Nash (1989:38) further argues that “the possibility of voluntary acceptance by native people and voluntary participation in transactions that further expatriates interests are an essential part of the conception of imperialism”. Similarly, Britton (1982:347) argues that at the international level, this industry structure ensures that Third World destinations have a largely passive and dependent role in the international system. Foreign multinational companies directly serve, and partially create the demand and the means by which tourists consume Third World tourist products. Destination countries on the other hand are the recipients of tourists. They provide the environmental attractions, novelty and superficial rationale for an overseas holiday.

- Secondly, a number of studies have indicated that “tourist development may be accompanied by a one way transfer of wealth from the destination area to points of tourist generation” (Mathieson and Wall, 1982:138). This essentially means that the economies of most developing destinations are not self-sufficient and self-regulated enough to retain the economic gains from tourism. As a result, a large proportion of profits and expenditure flow back to foreign investors. The high propensity of local economies to import goods and services inevitably leads to higher leakages (Murphy, 1985; Mathieson and Wall, 1982; Pearce, 1989).
- Thirdly, the employment of non-locals in professional and managerial positions also creates high leakages through salary remittance and transfers abroad and has also provoked charges of neo-colonialism (Farell, 1979; de Kadt, 1979; MacNaught, 1982).

The neo-colonial nature of tourism can also be justified by the fact that tourists transfer not only their wealth and economic superiority to local communities, thus emphasising economic disparities and inequalities, but also their culture and lifestyles. As it was previously mentioned, specific types of tourists expect western amenities and demand an environment identical to that of their own country. This has often been described as “cultural invasion”.

De Kadt (1979) noted that tourism emphasises the gap between the rich metropolitan tourists and the poor native hosts. Manning (1979) identified the difference between professional service and servility as observed in Bermuda. He argues that the advent of many elite tourists in the small and isolated community of Bermuda exposed the behaviour of the locals as servants, something that was deeply rooted in the colonial and racist structure of the society. Accordingly, Jafari (1974) pointed out that the protective familiarity or exploitative behaviour demonstrated by some tourists may generate the defensive reaction of some locals, especially those who have lived under colonial occupation.

Finally, many authors have argued that the commercialisation of local culture and the exploitation of traditional culture symbols for the purpose for entertaining specific types of tourists make tourism a neo-colonial activity (Perez, 1975:141; Bugnicourt, 1977:3; Matthews, 1977:23). Perez (1975:14), has specifically referred to “The transformation of the relics of past colonial regimes, such as old fortresses and historic buildings, into tourist attractions”.

However, and whatever the case may be, tourism is certainly welcomed by many Governments as a means of stimulating economic growth, regardless of the fact that tourists are being channelled within the commercial apparatus controlled by large-scale foreign and national enterprises which dominate the industry. An economic growth, which according to Britton (1982:355) allows the majority of locals to only participate in tourism through wage labour employment or small, petty retail and artisan enterprises, with severely limited income generating potential, whereas the greater commercial gains go to foreign and local elite interests. Nowadays however, one might argue that most developing countries are politically independent and as Mathieson and Wall (1982:148) put it, “...the manipulation and control of local politicians and elites by foreign metropolitan interests undoubtedly exists but is unlikely to be as influential and domineering as under colonial rule”. It is this author’s belief that the latter quote is somewhat superficial, and at least to date, international tourism is first and foremost a product of metropolitan enterprise and affluence. Whether this is likeable or not, the blunt fact remains

that it is the metropolitan tourism capital which is the single most important element determining the organisation and characteristics of tourism in underdeveloped countries.

CONCLUSIONS

The literature on social and cultural consequences of tourism seems to a great extent to make a bold statement prior to the study of the facts, that, 'it is inevitable that the physical presence of tourists will have some form of impact on local communities' A large number of case studies available in the literature indicate that the development of tourism in destination communities has resulted in the distraction of the social structure in those areas. As reported in the literature, tourism is often responsible for occupational changes, demographic disruption, changes in daily life, and cultural debasement. It is the opinion of this researcher that this conclusion reached by the majority of researchers is substantially biased, as it neglects entirely subjects such as: tourism through the context of neo-colonialism, the evolution of societies through time, the 'Western' direction of many societies, and the role of modernisation of societies at large. Furthermore, the tendency to attribute these causes of change in their entirety upon tourism is unjustified, hence academically unacceptable.

It can be argued in the literature that there are benefits and drawbacks to the influx of tourism to a destination and that tourism is a factor of social change and as such inevitably affects the traditional norms and institutions of local communities; however it is only with the right methodological approach that this can be elucidated. In the absence of the right approach it is obvious that tourism will be blamed for all the ill fates of modern societies.

AN UNCONVENTIONAL METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH: SUGGESTED RESEARCH DIRECTION

On the evidence presented, the issues that have been studied in this paper indicate a need for researchers to approach their research subject talking seriously into consideration that the parameters of the 'evolution of societies through time' and the 'modernisation of societies' at large, with all the known elements associated with that, cannot be neglected.

Quantitative investigations into the host perception of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism yield limited information, admittedly though about a larger number of people. Qualitative data on the other hand can be represented by perceptual and attitudinal dimensions, and real life events not readily converted to numerical values.

The overwhelming contribution of the literature to the thinking of this researcher is that perceptions and attitudes cannot be measured instantaneously. If tourism has made an impact, this is a shared impact. Furthermore, it is evident from the literature that impacts are not immediate, but reside at a deeper level of abstraction. Thus the rationale of this researcher is that, when attempting to measure perceptions and attitudes, it is impossible to have the subjects think in 'tick boxes' on a 'black or white' option, to an often pre-fabricated question which leads the respondents with or without their consent to an answer.

On the evidence presented in this paper, tourism has to be acknowledged as an inseparable part of modern life, and as such, tourism cannot be separated from the social changes and developments in family life. In light of the methodological approach employed by researchers so far, it is this researcher's belief that people should be given a broader opportunity when discussing the subject of impacts. It is suggested that further research should not look directly at the problem, but to firstly identify the type(s) of social change that have taken place in the area being studied over the past decades, identify what has changed for the best; what has changed for the worse and why; and secondly, identify to what degree such changes are attributed to tourism. Furthermore, it is suggested that further research in this direction should be carried out using groups. The rationale for dealing with groups as opposed to individuals, is that 'if tourism makes social impact, it is a shared impact, thus what is done with a group is not merely an extraction of the impacts, but it is also measuring whether it is shared or not (consensus)'. To achieve this, it is better for the groups not to be informed of the actual scope of the study. This can be achieved by furnishing the study under a broader subject area, such as, 'a survey on social change'. Issues to be brought forward for discussion should be designed to reveal the information the moderator wants, without going directly at it.

Another originality of the proposed approach is that this will revolve around a long-term cumulative path, which will be asking people to justify their thoughts and reflect back through time, rather than the instantaneous one-off measurement technique adopted by the majority of researchers to-date.

For this purpose, the proposed approach will give the opportunity to discuss the subject of impacts within the sphere of social change over the years, without alerting participants to the actual scope of the study, thus eliminating any bias for or against tourism. It is envisaged that such an indirect approach will help identify the degree to which such changes are attributed to tourism. Moreover, another innovation of the proposed approach is the dealing with groups as opposed to individuals in collecting data, thus utilizing the dynamics exerted by groups in capturing social impacts, which after all, might be shared impacts. In addition, the spontaneous and collective interaction of group members tends to produce insights that are otherwise impossible to obtain with the use of stereotypical research methods.

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EXAMINING THE USEFULNESS OF EXPENDITURE-BASED SEGMENTATION:
THE CASE OF GOLF TRAVELLERS

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ABSTRACT

Given the growing competition among golf destinations, along with the increasing costs in managing and maintaining such facilities, it is highly important to investigate and identify the characteristics of the heavy golf spenders, which might provide useful implications for golf destinations' marketers. This study utilizes an expenditure-based segmentation of golf travelers, based on a survey conducted among such travelers to one of the Southern Gulf regions in the U.S., which yielded a sample of 309 participants. The findings indicate that the heavy spenders were responsible for the lion share of the sample's total expenditures, while they exhibited clear spending patterns. Although the heavy spenders were not well differentiated along socio-demographics and information sources used prior to the vacation, it was found that the key variables in identifying them are golfographics and tripographics. The paper ends with an assessment of the contributions of the findings both to the literature on travel expenditure and to golf destination marketers.

INTRODUCTION

Sport tourism is one of the most important and the fastest growing sectors in the contemporary tourism industry (Higham & Hinch, 2002), leaving a substantial economical impact on local communities (Lee & Taylor, 2005). Among the active sport tourism activities,

golf has attracted the most attention from researchers. According to various estimations, there are over 60 million golfers worldwide, playing on over 30,000 golf courses (Palmer, 2004). The National Golf Foundation (2008) estimates that at the beginning of 2007 there were 28.7 million golfers in the U.S alone, playing on almost 16,000 golf courses nationwide. The states with the highest number of golf facilities are (in descending order) Florida, California, Texas, Michigan and New York. It should be mentioned, however, that golf is popular in smaller communities as well (Sinclair & Boger, 2006).

With the increase of golf players as well as golf destination facilities, the competition in the golf industry has escalated, leading to the requirement that studies focus on the golfers themselves (Petrick, 2002). Consequently, a series of typologies of golfers were formulated (Tassiopoulos & Haydam 2008), in order to better understand the participants in the sport and their characteristics. In addition, various studies have begun to focus on identifying their motivations, perceptions of service quality, and the main factors leading to a sense of satisfaction and to the intention to revisit (e.g., Petrick & Backman, 2002).

Golf is big business in the U.S., where golfers spent \$24.3 billion in 2002 on equipment and fees, and it was shown that golf-related spending has a significant economic impact on local communities (Agrusa & Tanner, 2002). Nevertheless, despite the increasing knowledge on who the golfers are, little research attention was directed towards understanding their expenditure patterns, which is highly useful information in such a competitive industry. As noted by Wilson and Thilmany (2006), at a time when golf destinations and facilities are competing not only among themselves, but also with other outdoor recreation activities, it would be highly valuable for golf marketers to target the “big spenders”, who are willing to spend more while at the destination. The need to attract not only more golfers to the destinations, but also golfers with high spending habits, is especially important in light of the rising costs associated with maintaining golf courses, an issue that golf managers are deeply concerned with (Chen, 2004).

Segmenting travelers based on their volume of expenditures, for the purpose of identifying the “big spenders”, has been gaining popularity in the tourism literature, as it was argued to be useful for travel organizers in their marketing efforts (Jang, Ismail & Ham, 2002). As noted by Wicks and Schuett (1993), with information on those persons who are likely to spend the most money when traveling, “inefficient practices could be discontinued in favor of those with a higher probability of generating a visit and increased return on promotional investments” (p. 78). Yet most of the expenditure-based segmentation in tourism was conducted on the general population (e.g., Pizam & Reichel, 1979), on visitors to specific destinations (e.g., Lagohérel & Wong, 2006), or on a combination of both (e.g., Jang et al., 2002). On the other hand, little consideration was given to applying this technique to special-interest tourists, such as sport-driven tourists.

In light of the need to identify heavy golf spenders, and the general lack of expenditure research among special interest tourists, the current study includes an expenditure-based segmentation on golf travelers to the Southern Gulf region of the U.S., while examining its effectiveness for golf destination marketers. It should be noted that applying such segmentation to golf travelers is expected to be a relatively difficult challenge, since they are perceived as having strong spending power in any case (Sinclair & Boger, 2006). Nevertheless, if we are able

to identify common characteristics among heavy golf spenders, it might prove to have important marketing implications for the industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Expenditure studies in tourism

Studies on expenditure patterns among visitors have been recognized to be of great value for planners, marketers and business managers. Nevertheless, studies on travel expenditures remain limited (Jang, Bai, Hong, & O'Leary, 2004), although such data may provide a good basis for market segmentation, leading to increased revenues (Petrick & Sirakaya, 2004). Most expenditure studies in tourism attempt to predict critical determinants of travel expenditure patterns. One of the comprehensive examinations in this regard was conducted by Wang, Rompf, Severt and Peerapatdit (2006), who focused simultaneously on three groups of variables: socio-demographics, trip-related, and psychographic. Taking visitors to Northern Indiana as a case study, they found that income, age and travel-related characteristics (such as the number of adults, length of stay, travel distance, etc.) have the most significant positive effect on total travel expenditures. Psychographic variables, on the other hand, were less effective in predicting spending patterns. Similarly, in a study on Japanese travelers to the U.S., Jang et al. (2004) found a positive impact of income, age and length of stay on travel spending. Using U.S. national poll surveys on leisure travel patterns, Hong, Fan, Palmer and Bhargava (2005) confirmed that travel expenditures increased with income, and also found a positive effect of education on travel spending. The critical role of travel party size was highlighted in a study on British and German tourists to Crete, Greece, where families were found to spend the most, and singles the least (Soteriades & Arvanitis, 2006).

Taking a different approach, Jang, Cai, Morrison and O'Leary (2005) sought to discover the effects of travel activities on travel expenditures, after controlling for income. Using path analysis, their study among French households revealed that the major activities influencing travel spending were 'nature' (visiting ecological sites, observing wildlife and taking nature trip), 'beach and outdoor' (swimming, climbing and hiking), and 'entertainment' (visiting casinos, theme or entertainment parks). The idea that different activities might affect expenditures differently has led to studies focusing on travelers who pursue specific activities. For example, the study of Mehmetoglu (2007) on nature-based tourists revealed that those who pursue adventurous nature-based activities such as diving and snorkeling tend to be heavy spenders, while those who pursue more relaxing activities such as visiting museums or attractions tend to be light spenders. It was also found, similarly to studies on general tourists, that a high income has a positive effect on spending. However, in contrast to previous research, older nature-based tourists tend to be lighter spenders than younger tourists. Another expenditure study on a special interest group was conducted by Thrane (2002), who focused on jazz festival visitors to Norway. His main finding was that visitors who were more interested in jazz would spend more on admission fees to concerts and other arrangements. In addition, tourists and high income visitors tended to have more travel expenditures, while older visitors tended to spend less. Lastly, Saayman et al. (2005) conducted a study among visitors to the World Cup Cricket matches in South Africa. They identified the heavy spenders as being above 35 years old, who spent more on accommodation, restaurants and souvenirs. The light spenders, on the other hand, were

younger visitors who spent more on alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages. These studies clearly point out to the need to specifically investigate special interest tourists (as opposed to studies among the general population) as they have the potential to provide unique and more precise implications for marketers.

The expenditure studies surveyed above, whether focusing on general tourists or on special interest groups, mainly used multivariate analytical methods (for the most part, multiple regressions) to assess the factors leading to higher spending (e.g., Mehmetoglu, 2007; Thrane, 2002; Wang et al., 2006). Other studies compare expenditure patterns using socio-demographic segmentation, such as age (e.g. Sayyman et al., 2005), or segmentation based on trip-related characteristics, such as party size (e.g., Soteriades & Arvanitis, 2006). However, few studies employed expenditure-based segmentation, which is a unique marketing technique aimed at distinguishing between heavy and light spenders.

Expenditure-based segmentation

Market segmentation is one of the most critical strategic concepts for businesses, and is based on the premise that “heterogeneity in demand functions exists such that market demand can be disaggregated into segments with distinct demand functions” (Dickson & Ginter, 1987: 4). Identifying distinguished segments allows companies to develop the right products and/or marketing mix for each segment, and/or to allocate vast marketing efforts to the most desired segments, thus creating a competitive advantage (Dolnicar, 2002). Kotler, Bowen and Makens (2003) stated that segmentation can be based on a variety of criteria, such as geography (customers’ origin), demographics (age, gender and income), psychographic (social class, lifestyle, motivations and personality) and behavior (e.g., loyalty status, benefits sought and activities). Segmentations based on various criteria have also been heavily used in the tourism and hospitality industries and research (Bowen, 1998). Nevertheless, although applying segmentation is a popular technique, not all the segmentations prove to be useful or worthwhile. While several segmentation assessment criteria were suggested to evaluate the quality of market segments, Loker and Purdue (1992) recommended that in assessing the viability of a market segment the following questions should be answered: “Is the segment profitable? Are segment members accessible through the media? And, once reached will positive interest and desire be generated?” (p. 35).

One of the most popular segmentation criteria, which is part of the behavioral segmentation approach, is segmentation based on the usage rate (dividing the market based on the number of purchases made per year). This criterion for segmentation has been gaining popularity since the early evidence that a small percentage of the households is responsible for seventy-five percent or more of the total purchases of a variety of product categories (Twedt, 1964). Usage-based segmentation was also used to some degree in hospitality and tourism research (e.g., Goldsmith & Litvin, 1999). Litvin (2000) advocated usage segmentation because it is relatively simple and practical to carry out and because it can easily be combined with other segmentation approaches. Nevertheless, as can be seen as a continuation and improvement of this approach, the current trend calls for focusing on the actual spending as a basis for segmentation, rather than on the rate or frequency of usage. The logic behind the move from usage- to expenditure-based segmentation in tourism is that “in today’s competitive business

environment, destination marketers are trying to expand their market share by seeking travelers who will spend money, and not just time, on their tourism products” (Mok & Iverson, 2000: 299). Jang et al. (2002) also mentioned that since most tourism marketers are mainly interested in identifying and targeting the big spenders, segmentation based on travel expenditure will be the most effective for them.

As noted above, expenditure-based segmentation research is an integral part of studies on expenditure patterns among visitors. One of the first attempts to differentiate between tourists based on their volume of expenditures was conducted by Pizam and Reichel (1979), who used the 1972 U.S. Consumer Expenditure Survey. Based on travel-related expenditures reported by the participants, the researchers examined the lower quartile (“little spenders”) and the upper quartile (“big spenders”) in terms of vacation trip expenditures. Using discriminant analysis it was found that big spenders tend, among others, to be married Caucasians with a higher education, living in the North of the U.S. Surprisingly, as opposed to various later studies which were described in the previous section (e.g., Hong, et al., 2005), heavy spenders and light spenders were not distinguished by income level. A most prominent and cited expenditure-based segmentation study in tourism was later conducted by Spotts and Mahoney (1991), who investigated visitors to natural parks in Michigan. The methodology used in this research was widely adopted in future studies as well. The visitors were divided into three groups based on their level of expenditure per trip: the “light spenders” were those in the lower third of the expenditure distribution, the “medium spenders” in the middle third of the distribution and the “heavy spenders” in the top third of the distribution. It was found that the expenditures of heavy spenders accounted for 78% of the sample’s total expenditures, while they spent more in each of the expenditure categories (lodging, restaurants and souvenirs). Heavy spenders were further characterized by bigger party size, more extended length of stay, more attractions visited and more information sources used before the trip. Similarly to Pizam and Reichel (1979), the groups were not differentiated by income level. As opposed to other later studies described previously (e.g., Mehmetoglu, 2007), no differences between the segments were found based on the respondents’ age.

More recently studies have tended to focus on general tourists. Mok and Iverson (2000) investigated Taiwanese tourists to Guam, and found that the expenditures of heavy spenders accounted for 50% of the total sample’s expenditures, while light and medium spenders accounted for 20% and 30% respectively. Yet there were no significant differences in expenditures regarding transportation and entertainment. In this study, heavy spenders were found to be slightly younger with smaller party size, but similar to Spotts and Mahoney’s findings (1991), they spent more time at a destination and were not distinguished by income. Another similar study was conducted by Jang, Ismail and Ham (2002), who focused on Japanese outbound travelers. Here the heavy spenders accounted for 60.6% of the sample’s total expenditure, while the medium and light spenders accounted for only 26.4% and 13.0% of the sample’s total expenditure, respectively. The heavy spenders were characterized by a more advanced age, while annual income was not statistically significant. In addition, although it was found to be of significance, the segments were not meaningfully distinguished by level of education. Similar to previous studies, heavy spenders tended to have bigger party size and more extended length of stay. Regarding information sources used before the trip, heavy spenders tended to use more brochures, while light spenders tended to use more books, newspapers and

magazines. More recently, Lagohérel and Wong (2006) investigated visitors to Hong Kong, and concluded that the best profile of heavy spenders is high income tourists with extended length of stay. As opposed to most previous studies, the researchers also considered the participants' expenditure per day. It was found that in this regard all the predictors were similar, but in this case shorter stays led the travelers to higher daily expenditures.

Finally, one of the few expenditure-based segmentation studies on special-interest groups was conducted by Moufakkir, Singh, Woud and Holecek (2004) on casino visitors. Considering only non-gambling expenditure, it was found that the heavy spenders accounted for 90.5% of the sample's spending. As with the previous study, heavy spenders spent more nights at the destination. Similar to some previous studies they also tended to have bigger party size, and to engage in more activities during their stay. Regarding socio-demographic characteristics, the heavy spenders were slightly younger, with a higher income.

A review of the studies on expenditure-based segmentation in tourism, as well as other related relevant studies on travel expenditure, reveals mixed and sometimes contradicting results. It seems that the factors which distinguished the heavy spenders are highly contextual; they depend on the tourists' characteristics, origin, destination, and main activities sought, among others. Therefore, destination marketers should be cautious when applying results from previous studies to their particular marketing strategies. In light of these findings, in the case of attempting to identify the heavy spenders among golf travelers, there is a vital need to empirically investigate their spending patterns.

METHODOLOGY

Data and sample

The data for the current analysis was collected from golfers who traveled to one of the Gulf Southern regions in the U.S. and participated in golf activities during their stay. In addition to its wide variety of golf facilities, the area is also characterized by a flourishing casino industry. In order to distribute the study questionnaires to the golf travelers, the study was assisted by a regional golf association, which serves as an umbrella marketing organization for 21 golf courses in the area and holds a database of their visitors. Questionnaires were sent through the association to 1,992 golf travelers who previously visited at least one of its member courses, along with a cover letter that clarified the study's objectives and an incentive coupon for survey participation. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire and send it back to the association via anonymous self-addressed envelope. A total of 309 usable questionnaires were returned to the association by mail, constituting a response rate of 15.5%. The completed questionnaires were then sent back to the researchers for encoding and analyses.

Instrument and variables

For the purposes of the current study, five types of variables from the questionnaire were used: socio-demographics, tripographic, golfographic, information sources used to plan the trip, and expenditures. Socio-demographic variables include age, level of education and annual

income. In the case of age and annual income the study considered both the variables' mean and their distribution. Second, in the tripographic (trip-related characteristics) section the respondents were asked to state the size of their travel party, number of nights spent during the last visit at the destination, means of transportation to the destination (airplane/automobile), and type of accommodation. Regarding the last variable, the participants could have marked more than one option, in case they stayed in more than one type of accommodation during the vacation. Thirdly, the participants' involvement in golf was measured in the golfographics (termed by Petrick, 2002) section, where they were asked to report on the number of years they have been playing golf, their average golf score (18 holes), average rounds of golf played per year, and number of different golf courses played at during the last visit. Finally, the respondents were asked to state which information sources they used while planning the last trip to the destination.

The last section included information on the respondents' spending patterns, regarding five expenditure categories: transportation (airfare, rental car, mileage on personal vehicle), accommodation, food and beverages, golf, as well as gambling and other entertainment activities. The last category is of great importance since, as mentioned before, the destination is one of the dominant gambling destinations in the U.S. The segmentation of the golf travelers was conducted based on total expenditure, which was calculated as the sum of the five categories. The visitors were divided into three segments, based on the method initially used by Spotts and Mahoney (1991), which was also adopted in other related tourism studies (e.g., Jang et al., 2002). Light spenders were defined as those in the lower third of the total expenditure frequency distribution (N=98) and were those who spent less than \$1070 during their last trip to the destination. The middle third of the distribution (N=94) were defined as medium spenders, who spent between \$1071 and \$1650. Finally, heavy spenders were defined as those in the upper third of the distribution (N=104), and were those who spend more than \$1650. Since there could be, in addition to the total expenditures per trip, important marketing implications for daily expenditure as well (Lagohérel & Wong, 2006), the current study also considered expenditures per-day, when comparing the segments.

FINDINGS

Expenditures

Overall, the golf travelers participating in the study spent a total of \$505,870 during their last visit to the destination. Out of that, \$309,123 (61.1%) were spent by the heavy spenders, \$124,254 (24.6%) by the medium spenders, and only \$72,494 (14.3%) by the light spenders. As can be seen in Table 1, the respondents spent an average of \$1709.02, yet the heavy spenders spend \$2972.34 in average, which was 2.25 times more than the medium spenders (\$1321.85), and more than four times as much as the light spenders (\$739.73). When considering the total expenditures per-day, the gaps between the segments are still significant, but are considerably smaller. The heavy spenders spent an average of \$454.23 per-day, which was only 1.32 times more than the medium spenders (\$344.20), and 1.73 times more than the light spenders (\$263.08). Statistically significant differences were found with regards to each of the spending categories, concerning both total and per-day expenditures, although the Scheffe post hoc test showed that in some categories, not all the segments were significantly different from each other

(see Table 1). Nevertheless, in all the expenditure categories the heavy spenders spent significantly more than both the medium and the light spenders, in relation to expenditures per-trip, and more than the light spenders in relation to expenditures per-day. No significant differences were found between the heavy and the medium spenders regarding expenditures per-day for transportation, lodging and golf. In addition, no significant differences were found between light and medium spenders regarding lodging, food and beverages, golf, and gambling, in both per-trip and per-day expenditures.

Table 1: ANOVA Tests of Expenditures by Spending Segment

Expenditure Variable (Avg.)	Total Sample (N=296)	Light Spenders (N=98)	Medium Spenders (N=94)	Heavy Spenders (N=104)	F Value	Sig.
Total expenditure	1709.02 (100%)	739.73 ^a (100%)	1321.85 ^b (100%)	2972.34 ^c (100%)	93.423	0.000***
Total expenditure per-night	356.05 (100%)	263.08 ^a (100%)	344.20 ^b (100%)	454.23 ^c (100%)	21.664	0.000***
Transportation	279.14 (16.3%)	134.49 ^a (18.2%)	286.65 ^b (21.7%)	408.65 ^c (13.7%)	40.397	0.000***
Transportation per-night	64.44 (18.1%)	48.25 ^a (18.3%)	76.15 ^b (22.1%)	68.99 ^{ab} (15.2%)	5.693	0.004**
Lodging accommodation	410.22 (24.0%)	201.30 ^a (27.2%)	325.84 ^a (24.7%)	683.37 ^b (23.0%)	37.165	0.000***
Lodging accommodation per-night	81.95 (23.0%)	66.83 ^a (25.4%)	82.64 ^{ab} (24.0%)	95.53 ^b (21.0%)	6.366	0.002**
Food and beverage	298.85 (17.5%)	135.97 ^a (18.4%)	232.87 ^a (17.6%)	511.97 ^b (17.2%)	48.270	0.000***
Food and beverage per-night	62.55 (17.6%)	48.91 ^a (18.6%)	61.17 ^a (17.8%)	76.64 ^b (16.9%)	11.322	0.000***
Golf	356.03 (20.8%)	139.66 ^a (18.9%)	256.81 ^a (19.4%)	649.60 ^b (21.9%)	8.428	0.000***
Golf per-night	63.60 (17.9%)	49.79 ^a (18.9%)	64.42 ^{ab} (18.7%)	75.85 ^b (16.7%)	6.052	0.003**
Gambling/entertainment/other recreation	364.78 (21.3%)	128.32 ^a (17.3%)	219.68 ^a (16.6%)	718.75 ^b (24.2%)	41.147	0.000***
Gambling/entertainment/other recreation per-night	82.93 (23.3%)	48.78 ^a (18.5%)	59.82 ^a (17.4%)	135.87 ^b (29.9%)	16.798	0.000***

Note: F and significant level are presented for the initial One-Way ANOVA analysis. Significant differences in expenditures between pairs of the three expenditure segments (light, medium, heavy), based on the Scheffe test are indicated by the letters a, b or c. Pairs of means that do not have the same letter are significantly different whereas those pairs of means that have the same superscript are not significantly different. Percentage may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

- * Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.
- ** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.
- *** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

With respect to the distribution of expenditures across the spending categories, taking into account the total sample, most of the expenditures were allocated to lodging (24.0%), followed by gambling (21.3%), golf (20.8%), food and beverages (17.5%), and transportation (16.3%). Yet, differences were found between the spending segments in this regard, as well. The most noticeable difference concerns spending on gambling and entertainment. The heavy spenders spent the highest proportion of their budget (24.2%) on this category, in contrast to the light and medium spenders, for whom gambling and entertainment constituted the smallest segment of their total expenditures (17.3% and 16.6%, respectively). In addition, in comparison

to the light and medium spenders, the heavy spenders spent a considerably smaller share of their budget on transportation (13.7%), lodging (23.0%), and food and beverages (17.2%), but more on golf (21.9%) and on gambling and entertainment. It is interesting to note that, when considering the expenditures per-day in the case of golf, the picture is reversed, with this category contributing more to the daily spending of light and medium spenders (18.9% and 18.7%, respectively), than to that of heavy spenders (16.7%). On the other hand, the gap between heavy spenders and light and medium spenders only expands when looking at gambling and entertainment per-day, with the former spending almost 30% of their daily budget on this category, while the latter spent significantly less (18.5% and 17.4%, respectively).

Characteristics of spending segments

As noted above, profiling the segments was conducted using socio-demographics, tripographics and golfographics. First of all, the socio-demographic variables are presented in Table 2. As can be seen, in general, the average age of golf travelers is 53.21 (over 67% were over 50), with 61% holding an undergraduate or graduate degree, and with an average annual income of \$105,812.24 (58.8% earn more than \$100,000). Nevertheless, the segments were not distinguished from each other in terms of socio-demographic characteristics, as no statistically significant differences were found in relation to age, level of education, and annual income.

Table 2: Segmentation Analysis by Socio-Demographics

Variable	Total Sample (N=296)	Light Spenders (N=98)	Medium Spenders (N=94)	Heavy Spenders (N=104)	F or χ^2 Value	Sig.
Age (Mean)	53.21	51.76	53.64	54.17	F=1.323	0.268
25-39	11.6%	14.6%	9.8%	10.6%	$\chi^2=3.437$	0.752
40-49	21.2%	22.9%	23.9%	17.3%		
50-59	41.8%	40.6%	39.1%	45.2%		
60 or above	25.3%	21.9%	27.2%	26.9%		
Level of Education						
High-school diploma	21.2%	21.6%	22.3%	19.8%		
Associate degree	17.8%	13.4%	13.8%	25.7%		
Undergraduate degree	28.1%	27.8%	34.0%	22.8%		
Graduate degree	32.9%	37.1%	29.8%	31.7%		
Annual Income (Mean)	105,812.24	105,243.59	108,024.69	104,244.19	F=0.148	0.862
< \$50,000	12.2%	10.3%	11.1%	15.1%	$\chi^2=7.173$	0.709
\$50,001-\$75,000	16.3%	16.7%	19.8%	12.8%		
\$75,001-\$100,000	12.7%	16.7%	7.4%	14.0%		
\$100,001-\$125,000	34.3%	35.9%	32.1%	34.9%		
\$125,001-\$150,000	13.1%	10.3%	14.8%	14.0%		
150,001 or over	11.4%	10.3%	14.8%	9.3%		

Note: F and significant level are presented for the One-Way ANOVA analysis. χ^2 and significant level are presented for the chi square test of association. Percentage may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

* Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.

** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

*** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

The tripographic variables were then considered, as shown in Table 3. In relation to the whole sample, golf travelers had an average party size of 5.41, while spending 5.12 nights at the destination. Most of the participants (60.5%) arrived to the destination by automobile, and the popular accommodations were casino hotels (64.5%), non-casino hotels (20.3%), and rental properties (17.2%). When comparing the segments, only minor differences were found. Heavy spenders had a statistically significant longer length-of-stay (7.82) than both light spenders (3.17) and medium spenders (4.23). However, no significant differences were found between the segments regarding the average number of people in the travel party. Regarding lodging, the distribution of accommodation types for each segment was relatively similar; the only statistically significant difference was that a higher proportion of heavy spenders (23.1%) and medium spenders (23.4%) used a rental property, compared to the light spenders who hardly used this type of accommodation (5.1%). Finally, a significant difference was found between the segments in the type of transportation used to reach the destination. While most of the light spenders (73.2%) and the heavy spenders (61.2%) used automobiles, most of the medium spenders (53.2%) reached the destination by plane.

Table 3: Segmentation Analysis by Tripographics

Variable	Total Sample (N=296)	Light Spenders (N=98)	Medium Spenders (N=94)	Heavy Spenders (N=104)	F or χ^2 Value	Sig.
Average number of people in the travel party	5.41	5.54	5.58	5.16	F=0.204	0.816
Average number of nights at Mississippi Gulf Coast	5.12	3.17 ^a	4.23 ^a	7.82 ^b	F=34.399	0.000 ^{***}
Lodging[†]						
Casino hotel	64.5%	69.4%	58.5%	67.1%	$\chi^2=2.531$	0.282
Non-casino hotel	20.3%	22.4%	20.2%	18.3%	$\chi^2=0.546$	0.761
Rental property (condominium, apartment, etc.)	17.2%	5.1%	23.4%	23.1%	$\chi^2=15.113$	0.001 ^{***}
With friends	3.7%	4.1%	5.3%	1.9%	$\chi^2=1.646$	0.439
Bed & Breakfast	1.0%	1.0%	2.1%	0.0%	$\chi^2=2.228$	0.328
Other	1.7%	3.1%	1.1%	1.0%	$\chi^2=1.664$	0.435
Transportation to Destination					$\chi^2=13.940$	0.001 ^{***}
Airplane	39.5%	26.8%	53.2%	38.8%		
Automobile	60.5%	73.2%	46.8%	61.2%		

Note: F and significant level are presented for the initial One-Way ANOVA analysis. Significant differences in the expenditures between pairs of the three expenditure segments (light, medium, heavy), based on the Scheffé test are indicated by letters a, b or c. Pairs of means that do not have the same letter are significantly different, whereas those pairs of means that have the same superscript are not significantly different. χ^2 and significant level are presented for the chi square test of association.

[†] Respondents were asked to state all the accommodation types they stayed in during their visit.

* Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.

** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

*** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

Thirdly, within the context of the current study, the segments were compared in relation to their golfographic variables (see Table 4). A typical golf traveler in this study has been playing golf for an average of 26.44 years, plays 64.91 rounds of golf per year, with an average

golf score (18 holes) of 86.54. In addition, the average number of golf courses played in the previous visit to the destination was 3.73. In the ANOVA tests, it was revealed that the segments were distinguished in all four golfographic variables. A statistically significant difference was found between the segments regarding the number of years of golf playing, although only at the 0.10 significance level. The heavy and the medium spenders have more years of experience playing golf (27.76 and 27.7, respectively), compared to light spenders (23.81). In addition, heavy spenders have a better average golf score (83.84) than both light and medium spenders (87.93 and 88.13, respectively). Heavy spenders also play more rounds of golf per year than light spenders (73.94 vs. 57.04). Nevertheless, no statistically significant difference was found in this regard between medium spenders (63.26) and the other two segments. Finally, heavy and medium spenders played on more golf courses in the last trip to the destination (4.17 and 3.86, respectively) than light spenders (3.12).

Table 4: Segmentation Analysis by GolfoGraphics

Variable	Total Sample (N=296)	Light Spenders (N=98)	Medium Spenders (N=94)	Heavy Spenders (N=104)	F Value	Sig.
No. of years of playing golf	26.44	23.81	27.70	27.76	F=2.639	0.073 ¹
Average golf scores (18 holes)	86.54	87.93 ^a	88.13 ^a	83.84 ^b	F=5.829	0.003 ^{**}
Average rounds of golf per year	64.91	57.04 ^a	63.26 ^{ab}	73.94 ^b	F=3.404	0.035 [*]
Number of different golf courses played at during in current visit	3.73	3.12 ^a	3.86 ^b	4.17 ^b	F=10.815	0.000 ^{***}

Note: F and significant level are presented for the initial One-Way ANOVA analysis. Significant differences in the expenditures between pairs of the three expenditure segments (light, medium, heavy), based on the Scheffe test are indicated by letters a, b or c. Pairs of means that do not have the same letter are significantly different whereas those pairs of means that have the same superscript are not significantly different.

1. Statistically significant at the 10% significance level.

* Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.

** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

*** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

Use of information sources

As indicated above, the participants were asked to state all the information sources used in planning their last trip to the destination. As can be seen in Table 5, the most common sources used in the whole sample were the official web site of the Gulf Coast Golf Association (54.1%), followed by friends (25.7%), some golf magazine (20.9%), an official golf guide (17.6%), and “Fun Time Guide” (10.8%). On the other hand, the golf travelers hardly used the radio (0.0%), television (0.3%), a travel magazine (4.1%) or direct mail (4.7%), as sources of information.

There were almost no statistically significant differences between the segments regarding sources of information. The only differences that were found concerned the use of a golf magazine and the State Tourism Office of Mississippi which, as can be seen in Table 5, were only significant at the 0.10 significance level. A link was found between spending and consulting a golf magazine, as the rate of the heavy spenders who used this source was 27.7%, followed by medium senders (20.2%) and light spenders (14.3%). In addition, heavy spenders were more

likely to use the State Tourism Office of Mississippi as a source of information (13.5%) than both medium (7.4%) and light spenders (5.1%).

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the study provide important theoretical and managerial implications. This study validates the vital role of the segment of heavy spenders in the overall expenditures at a destination, and indicates that this also applies to special interest groups, such as golf travelers. However, the traditional reliance on differentiation based on socio-demographic characteristics might not be useful, at least in the context of the current study. Alternatively, golf destinations should design marketing programs based on the travelers' tripographics and golfographics characteristics. The study also indicates that the conventional method of accessing heavy spenders specifically, through pre-trip information sources, might also have limited effectiveness. However, other means of direct marketing for the heavy spenders can be generated from the results of the study. The key characteristics of the heavy spenders' segment among golf travelers, as they emerged from the current study, are elaborated below, in addition to the marketing implications that derive from them.

Table 5: Segmentation Analysis by Information Source

Source of Information	Total Sample (N=296)	Light Spenders (N=98)	Medium Spenders (N=94)	Heavy Spenders (N=104)	χ^2 Value	Sig.
GolfCoast.com	54.1%	54.1%	50.8%	56.2%	$\chi^2=0.264$	0.876
Official Golf Guide	17.6%	15.3%	18.1%	19.2%	$\chi^2=0.562$	0.755
Golf magazine	20.9%	14.3%	20.2%	27.9%	$\chi^2=5.680$	0.058 ¹
GulfCoast.org	7.1%	4.1%	8.5%	8.7%	$\chi^2=2.019$	0.364
"Fun Times Guide"	10.8%	8.2%	8.5%	15.4%	$\chi^2=3.485$	0.175
State Tourism Office of Mississippi	8.8%	5.1%	7.4%	13.5%	$\chi^2=4.708$	0.095 ¹
Television	0.3%	0.0%	1.1%	0.0%	$\chi^2=2.156$	0.340
Radio	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	$\chi^2=N/A$	N/A
Direct mail	4.7%	7.1%	3.2%	3.8%	$\chi^2=1.940$	0.379
Friends	25.7%	23.5%	25.5%	27.9%	$\chi^2=0.517$	0.772
Travel magazine	4.1%	2.0%	5.3%	4.8%	$\chi^2=1.560$	0.458
Other	17.9%	16.3%	21.3%	16.3%	$\chi^2=1.065$	0.587

Note: χ^2 and significant level are presented for the chi square test of association.

1. Statistically significant at the 10% significance level.

* Statistically significant at the 5% significance level.

** Statistically significant at the 1% significance level.

*** Statistically significant at the 0.1% significance level.

First of all, heavy spenders spend most of their budget on gambling, entertainment and other recreational expenditures (more than they spend on golf). Clearly, golf courses should

expand their services and provide further entertainment and recreation options to golfers, thus gaining at least a portion of this spending category. Alternatively (or additionally), collaboration with other hospitality ventures might also prove efficient in attracting heavy spenders. It is especially important if high expenditure per-day is desired, since heavy spenders are particularly dominant in per-day spending on gambling and entertainment.

Secondly, heavy spenders tend to spend more time at a destination, while using more rental properties. Therefore, the challenge faced by destination marketers is to get golf travelers to extend their stay (even when per-day spending alone is considered). This could be achieved by broadening the opportunities offered to golf travelers, and by increasing their awareness of the existence of sightseeing, dining, shopping, gambling, recreation (e.g. spa treatments), and nightlife activities. In addition, golf courses should collaborate with bodies who offer rental properties, by having the latter provide their guests with brochures and other marketing materials on their properties.

Thirdly, heavy spenders are more experienced golfers, play more per year and on more golf courses in a trip, with better golf scores than the other two spending segments. These findings clearly indicate that golf destinations should collect golf-related data on their guests, for the purpose of identifying golfers with these characteristics, and market directly to them. Incentives should be provided to golf travelers so that they share with golf courses their golfographic background; this way, specific marketing efforts can be directed to those who are the most likely to be heavy spenders, and thus to encourage repeat visitation on their part. Collaboration with golf associations which collect information on scores and experience from their members may also be an effective method to target heavy spenders. In addition, the finding that heavy spenders also tend to play on more golf courses per trip also points to the importance of service bundling, this time among golf courses themselves. Finally, although this may not be significant, advertising in golf magazines and State Tourism Offices may also contribute towards targeting heavy spenders.

Expenditure-based segmentation proves to be a practical method of segmentation in the case of the golf travelers. It provides further evidence on the need to shift the marketing focus from socio-demographic characteristics, to a differentiation based on tripographics and context-specific variables (in the case of golfers – golfographic variables). Another important finding in the current study is that traditional sources of information may not be the most effective for marketing directly to golfers that are heavy spenders, while more creative ways to access them should be identified.

Limitations and future research

The current study has its limitations. First of all, travel expenditure is only one factor in determining profitability for destinations. It may be that although they show higher expenditure, heavy spenders are more costly in terms of marketing and/or service efforts. Thus, future studies should also include other profitability indicators in order to verify the value of heavy spenders. Secondly, it should be noted that the results of the study relate to a specific destination and should be validated with studies conducted at other golf destinations, as external validity seems to set some limitations to the study. Finally, the study relies on the golfers' report on their

expenditures, which might not fully reflect their actual spending at the destination. To reduce this threat to the internal validity, future research should be conducted at the destinations themselves, at the end of the golfers' vacations, thereby significantly minimizing recall bias and enhancing the accuracy of the findings. More generally, further expenditure-related studies should be directed to other sports activities, such as tennis, running, and skiing, so that the findings on golf travelers can be compared to those on other active sport travelers.

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTRIBUTE PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION: A NEW PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the gaps in previous customer satisfaction studies that conceptualize the relationship between attribute-level performance and overall satisfaction as linear or symmetric. For that purpose authors examined asymmetric responses of customer satisfaction to different types of attribute performance and tested if interactions between attributes would provide an explanation for the observed asymmetry. A web-based quasi-experiment design was used to collect data from the faculty and staff of a major Midwestern university. Research hypotheses were tested using t-tests and regression analysis. Results of the study confirmed asymmetrical attribute performance effects on customer satisfaction. Moderating effects of attribute type explained the asymmetrical relationships between attribute performance and customer satisfaction, thereby providing theoretical rationalization to the observed, but often ignored, phenomenon.

KEYWORDS: Asymmetrical Effects; Attribute-Level Performance; Core and Facilitating Attributes; Customer Satisfaction; Performance Optimization, Two-Factor Theory

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between attribute-level performance and customer satisfaction (CS), which has been a key question to most CS researchers, has been generally conceptualized as linear or symmetric (Mittal, Ross, & Baldasare, 1998). This prevailing view suggests that an adequate performance at an attribute level would lead to a certain amount of positive effect on satisfaction that would be counter-proportionate to the amount of negative effect if the performance was inadequate to an equal degree (Oliver, 1997).

Nonetheless, several studies have shown that such a symmetric relationship would not always hold true (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988; Hui, Zhao, & Au, 2005; Johnston, 1995; Kano,

Seraku, Takahashi, & Tsuji, 1984; Mittal et al., 1998; Oliva, Oliver, & Bearden, 1995). To illustrate, dirty flatware in a restaurant can cause strong dissatisfaction, but it may not cause the same degree of satisfaction when presented clean. A complimentary desert can produce high satisfaction, but when not offered, may not entail any negative effect on CS. Asymmetrical effects were empirically observed not only by academics but also by practitioners who have reported that equally investing in greater performance along all service attributes to increase satisfaction would neither be effective nor justify resources invested (Hui et al., 2004; Mittal et al., 1998).

The studies by Johnston (1995), Chowdhary and Prakash (2005), and Mittal et al. (1998) provide evidence that the strength and direction of the relationship between CS and attribute performance tend to depend on certain conditions. Some attributes have a strong positive impact on satisfaction and this impact may get stronger if other attributes perform adequately. This implies a non-linear, multiplicative rather than a linear, additive nature of the relationship between CS and its determinants, which points to possible moderator effects.

Addressing issues of non-linearity and moderator effects is important because it would strengthen the predictive validity of attribute performance for CS. The problem with the linearity assumption is the inability to provide cogent explanations for the observed inconsistent relationship between attribute performance and CS. Additionally, the linearity assumption is geared only to performance maximization, not performance optimization, because this approach constitutes that a better performance on a certain attribute will always correspond with higher levels of CS.

Though several studies indicate that attributes produce asymmetric effects on CS, these findings leave certain questions unanswered (Ting & Chen, 2002). For example, it has not been explained why the effect of attributes on CS could be asymmetric, especially under different performance conditions, and which attribute characteristics caused such asymmetry. Also, which one of the negative or positive attribute performance effects on CS is larger? Without answering these questions, CS theories remain vulnerable to inconsistent results.

The purpose of this study was to strengthen the conceptual and empirical power of CS measurement and management by investigating the asymmetric response of CS to attribute performance. This study attempts to provide an explanation to the asymmetric effects of attribute performance on CS by investigating if interactions among attributes would be the cause of the asymmetric effects. To this end, this study takes a two-factor approach, which classifies performance attributes into two different types, and such an approach is relatively new to hospitality research.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

A Two-factor view on CS determinants

The pioneering study exploring how different determinants have asymmetric effects on satisfaction was conducted in the area of job satisfaction by Herzberg (1957). Herzberg did his study to discover the ultimate motivators or “satisfiers” in the work environment. He applied the

Critical Incident Technique to determine the events that caused respondents to be exceptionally satisfied or dissatisfied with their job. Content analysis of the obtained responses revealed two sets of factors: *satisfiers*, predominant in the incidences of satisfaction, and *dissatisfiers*, predominant in the incidences of dissatisfaction. Herzberg argued that these two groups of factors have separate and distinct influences on employees: *satisfiers* act only to increase satisfaction (motivators), *dissatisfiers* only increase dissatisfaction and have no or little effect on satisfaction (hygiene factors).

Swan and Combs (1976) found some support for the two-factor model. They classified the determinants of CS into *instrumental*, for attributes associated with the physical performance of products, and *expressive*, for attributes associated with the psychological performance of products. Their study indicated that expressive attributes appeared to have a stronger positive effect on CS and instrumental attributes had a more pronounced negative effect. Later, Maddox (1981) and Peterson and Wilson (1992) provided limited support for Swan and Combs' suggestions, but confirmed that low values on an expressive attribute would have only incremental negative effects on CS while high values would increase CS significantly. These studies indicated that consumers' responses asymmetrically vary across attributes and things that satisfy customers were different from things that dissatisfy customers.

Mersha and Adlakha (1992) examined factors that satisfy and dissatisfy customers in the service context and their findings complied with the two-factor theory. Johnston (1995) applied the two-factor approach conducting his study in the banking setting and concluded that the determinants associated with dissatisfaction were significantly different from those that created satisfaction, thus again, introducing the asymmetry of positive and negative effects of attributes on CS.

Cadotte and Turgeon (1988) developed a typology of attributes to explain how hotel guests used different attributes in their satisfaction judgments. They also found that the attributes that caused dissatisfaction when customers found them to be poor represented the necessary but not sufficient conditions of product/service performance; for example, higher levels of performance along this dimension did not necessarily lead to high levels of satisfaction and compliments. On the other hand, the group of attributes that were associated with satisfaction tended to have a high positive effect on complimenting behaviors when performing well, but when lacking positive performance had little or no negative effect on CS.

In summary, all the above mentioned authors provided evidence that certain factors had a more pronounced positive effect on CS and were strongly associated with satisfaction; other factors tended to have a stronger negative effect and were related more closely with dissatisfaction. Though noticeable and important, these studies failed to provide theoretical rationales to observed effects. Therefore, the existing body of knowledge in this area seems to be incomplete and calling for theoretical explanations.

Non-linear relationship between attribute-level performance and CS

Attempts have been made to fill some conceptual gaps left in the previous two-factor application studies. Mittal et al. (1998) showed, for example, that satisfaction was affected

asymmetrically by attribute level performance and disconfirmation in that “although positive and negative performance of an attribute are two sides of the same coin, each side of the coin buys a different amount of overall satisfaction” (p.45). They also pointed out the need to identify why the magnitude of the asymmetry was different for different attributes. Mittal et al. also raised a very important question: *was the observed asymmetry related to the specific qualities of an attribute?* Though leaving this question unanswered, they referred to Kahn and Meyer (1991) reporting that attributes could be *utility-preserving*, also known as *core* attributes (Levitt, 1983; Kotler et al, 2003) that seemed to have a stronger association with dissatisfaction, or *utility-enhancing* or *facilitating* attributes that might have a higher potential for creating satisfaction (Levitt, 1983).

Chowdhary and Prakash (2005) also examined the asymmetric impact of attribute performance on customers’ evaluations and proposed a slightly different classification of attributes. They classified attributes as *vantage* or *qualifying* depending upon the state and nature of competition. According to this study, attributes could be *vantage* factors that enabled offerings to qualify for competition or be *qualifying* factors that put companies above competition by motivating customers to choose against the competitor. Though this classification provided a distinct view on the division of attributes, it complied well with the *satisfiers-dissatisfiers* (Herzberg, 1957) and *core-facilitating* (Levitt, 1983) topologies in a way that when the performance of the qualifying factors was below the acceptable level, consumers felt dissatisfied regardless of the performance of the vantage factors.

To summarize, all these studies advocate *the asymmetry between different levels of negative and positive attribute performance and satisfaction such that a good performance along some attribute dimensions does not necessarily lead to consumer satisfaction and an inadequate performance on some other attribute dimensions does not automatically initiate consumer dissatisfaction*. They also categorized attributes in terms of their effects on satisfaction and dissatisfaction. It is also important to mention that it appears, in spite of different labeling, that dissatisfying/ core/ qualifying attributes refer to the same group of attributes required to deliver the basic offerings, and thus a must that is expected by consumers to be present. On the other hand, satisfying/facilitating/ vantage attributes represent a group of attributes that supports basic functions but rather provides indirect, secondary benefits to customers.

The Proposed Framework and Research Hypotheses

In this study, service attributes were categorized into two groups, *facilitating* and *core* (Kotler et al, 2003; Levitt, 1983; Mittal et al, 1998), similar to vantage and qualifying attributes of service quality by Hui et al. (2004) and Chowdhary and Prakash (2005). This decision was based primarily on the fact that the core/facilitating categorization was most commonly used in the marketing area, specifically in the CS literature.

The core attributes are the attributes that are important to customers but have less pronounced positive effects on CS when performing adequately because their presence alone no longer attracts the consumers, but only qualifies for the competition. Core attributes have strong negative effects when their performance is unfavorable; their absence would alienate customers because this group of attributes has a narrow zone of tolerance (Johnston, 1995). At the same

time, when core attributes perform adequately, they have a minimal or no effect on CS (Hui et al., 2004).

Customers' evaluations are also substantially influenced by facilitating attributes as differentiators of a particular offering. Consumers are more tolerant about an inadequate performance of facilitating attributes (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988; Oliver, 1997). Facilitating attributes tend to correspond to satisfaction when performing well, but have no or a diminishing effect on CS when performing poorly.

Based on the expected effects of core and facilitating attribute performance above, the following hypotheses were proposed to examine the effects of core and facilitating attribute performance on CS:

H1: When both groups of attributes perform above the acceptable level, core attribute performance has a weaker positive effect on CS than facilitating attribute performance.

H2: Core attributes performing below the acceptable level have a greater impact on CS than core attributes performing above the acceptable level.

H3: Facilitating attributes performing above the acceptable level have a greater impact on CS than facilitating attributes performing below the acceptable level.

Several studies suggest that facilitating attributes tend to have a stronger positive effect on CS when core attributes performed adequately above the expected level (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988; Chowdhary & Prakash, 2005). When the strength or direction of relationships between constructs changes under certain conditions, it is a strong indication of the presence of an interaction between the constructs, or moderator effects (Baron & Kenny, 1986). However, previous studies on CS have not addressed this issue effectively and, therefore, there is a further need to understand the relationship between attribute-level performance and CS with inclusion of a potential moderating effect of core attribute performance on the relationship between facilitating attribute performance and CS. The following hypothesis is proposed to test the moderator effect:

H4: Core attribute performance moderates the effect of facilitating attribute performance on CS. Specifically, facilitating attribute performance have stronger effects on CS when core attribute performance is above the acceptable level than when core attribute performance is below the acceptable level.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample and Design

A quasi-experimental design was applied to an online survey to collect data. The design employed a role-play of a customer whose hotel stay experience was described in a written scenario. The experiment was a 3 (core attributes performance: excellent, acceptable, poor) x 3 (facilitating attributes performance: excellent, acceptable, poor) between-subjects factorial design. The respondents were randomly assigned to one of the nine scenarios and completed a questionnaire that contained the same set of questions for all scenarios designed to measure the effects of experimental manipulations. The faculty and staff of one of the Midwest universities comprised the sample for this study. An invitation to the study was sent to 5,567 people and 1,080 useable responses were obtained yielding a 19.5% response rate.

The Instrument

A pilot test was conducted to determine the set of attributes that would represent core and facilitating groups. The pilot test was attempted with a randomly selected group of 170 representatives of the research sample, but yielded 45 usable questionnaires. As a result, four attributes that were most consistently defined as “absolute musts” included room cleanliness, bed/pillow comfort, property safety, and responsiveness of essential personnel; they were used as core attributes in the experiment. Using these attributes as core attributes was generally supported by previous studies such as Barsky and Nash, (2003), Cadotte and Turgeon, (1988), and Shanka and Taylor (2003).

Facilitating attributes identified in the pilot test included personalized services (customized bathroom amenities, firmness of pillows, and breakfast-on-the-go), complimentary snacks, ambience of public facilities, and hot tub/sauna. These attributes were shown to provide tangible and intangible benefits or embellishments to a hotel offering not only in the pilot test but also in other studies (Shanka & Taylor, 2003).

The eight attributes specified above were described in scenarios portraying a hypothetical hotel experience of a vacation traveler using a mid-priced (\$90-\$150) popular chain hotel. A vacation context was used because people had fewer opportunities for business travels than for vacation travels. Therefore, more respondents would be able to relate to a hotel stay situation on vacation. The mid-price range and popular chain hotel conditions were selected because more respondents would be familiar with such conditions. Experimental manipulations were conducted in a consistent direction in each scenario; all four attributes were described as excellent, acceptable, or poor. Table 1 summarizes the scenarios.

Table 1. Scenarios for Treatment Groups

Attributes	Attributes Condition	Provided Information	Scenario ^a
<u>Core</u>	Excellent (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clean room/ bathroom ▪ Comfortable bed/pillows ▪ Safe and secure property ▪ Responsive essential personnel 	1, 2, 3
	Acceptable (Medium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Moderately clean room/ bathroom ▪ Adequately comfortable bed/pillows ▪ Partial safety features employed ▪ Moderately responsive essential personnel 	4, 5, 6
	Poor (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dirty room/ bathroom ▪ Uncomfortable bed/pillows ▪ Safety features not employed ▪ Essential personnel not responsive 	7, 8, 9

Table 1. (Continued)

Attributes	Attributes Condition	Provided Information	Scenario ^a
<u>Facilitating</u>	Excellent (High)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Personalized services (customized firmness of pillows/ bathroom amenities, breakfast-on-the-go) ▪ Complimentary snacks ▪ Good ambiance of public facilities ▪ Jacuzzi and hot tub 	1, 4, 7
	Acceptable (Medium)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limited personalized services (firmness of pillows) ▪ Some complimentary snacks ▪ Adequate ambiance of public facilities ▪ Partially functioning jacuzzi/ hot tub 	2, 5, 8
	Poor (Low)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No personalized services ▪ Damaged complimentary snacks ▪ Unpleasant ambience of public facilities ▪ No jacuzzi/hot tub 	3, 6, 9

^a 1- Excellent core, excellent facilitating; 2 - Excellent core, acceptable facilitating; 3- Excellent core, poor facilitating; 4- Acceptable core, excellent facilitating; 5- Acceptable core, acceptable facilitating; 6- Acceptable core, poor facilitating; 7- Poor core, excellent facilitating; 8- Poor core, acceptable facilitating; 9- Poor core, poor facilitating

The questionnaire following the scenario was split into two sections. The first section included questions evaluating attribute performances described in the scenario as well as five questions evaluating the level of satisfaction with the hypothetical hotel stay. The second section included a set of questions about demographic profiles of the respondents.

The performance of both core and facilitating attributes was evaluated on a seven-point “poor-excellent” rating scale with a higher rating indicating a better performance (Preston & Colman, 2000). The study used a multiple-item scale to measure CS, adopted from Söderlund

(2006), and included five questions operationalized on a seven-point Likert type scale with different semantic anchors (i.e. “delighted/ terrible”, “not at all satisfied”/very satisfied”, “never return, “definitely come back”, etc.).

The instrument was pre-tested to check the clarity of wording, proposed categorization of attributes, experimental manipulations, and the reliability of the measures. Several questionnaire items were modified from the original items to better fit the nature and context of the research. All obtained statistical indicators were satisfactory.

RESULTS

Demographic description of the sample

Approximately 60% of the respondents were females. The average age was 46 and 80% of the respondents were in their 40s and 50s. Most respondents were married (76.4%). Annual household income ranged from \$60,000 to \$100,000 for 42.5% of the respondents, from \$30,000 to \$60,000 for 26.3%, and more than \$100,000 per year for 24.4%. The level of education varied among the respondents, but most of them had a college or post-graduate degree (29.8% and 55.0%).

On average, the respondents stayed 7 nights per year at a hotel on business trips and 8 nights per year for leisure purposes. The majority of the respondents paid from \$50 to \$150 for a hotel room on a business trip (80.6%) and from \$50 to \$100 for a hotel room on a vacation (59.6%). The information provided by the respondents confirmed that although the percentage of females and education level were higher than a typical lodging customer, the overall sample profile matched closely the general hotel guest profile based on the other demographic characteristics examined in this study (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2006).

Reliability and factor analysis

Cronbach’s alpha was computed to evaluate the reliability of the five satisfaction items that had a mean range of 3.39 to 3.67. Cronbach’s alpha for the five items was .98, which indicated high internal consistency among the satisfaction measures and supported aggregation of the five items for use in the subsequent analysis (Nunnally, 1978). Factor analysis showed that all items loaded on the same factor (Eigenvalue = 4.58, 91.59% of variance explained), providing additional support for combining the satisfaction items.

Factor analysis of the 8 items resulted in two factors as expected. Clean room/ bathroom, comfortable bed/pillows, safe and secure property, and responsiveness of essential personnel loaded on the same factor forming a core attribute dimension (Eigenvalue =5.15, 64.35% of variance explained). Personalized services, complimentary snacks, ambiance of public facilities, and jacuzzi/hot tub items loaded on the other factor forming the dimension of facilitating attributes (Eigenvalue = 2.11, 26.38% of variance explained).Based on these results, core and facilitating attributes were each averaged to form a composite score representing the core and facilitating dimensions for use in the subsequent analyses.

Hypothesis 1

To test if core attribute performance had a weaker positive effect on CS than facilitating attribute performance when both groups of attributes performed above the acceptable level, the scenarios containing high core (HC) and high facilitating (HF) attribute performance were analyzed. A regression approach was employed to compare the effect size of two attribute groups. To this end, CS was regressed separately on the core dimension variable and the facilitating dimension variable to derive an individual effect of the core and facilitating variables on CS (see Table 2). To examine the proposed strength and asymmetry of the attribute performance effects, the difference between two beta coefficients was tested applying a t-test for beta coefficients suggested by Pedhazur (1997). No significant difference between beta coefficients for core and facilitating dimensions ($p > .05$) was identified. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported.

Table 2. Hypothesis 1 test results

Condition ^a		Beta	SE	C12 ^b	t-value	Sig.
HCHF:	Core	.55	.08	-.016	.21	.74
	Facilitating	.54	.08			

^a H-excellent, C-core attributes, F-facilitating attributes

^b C12 is the off-diagonal element of the covariance matrix of betas.

Hypothesis 2

To test if core attribute performance that was below the acceptable level had a greater impact on CS than core attribute performance that was above the acceptable level, the conditions when the core dimension performed below and above the acceptable levels were compared in terms of CS mean values within the same facilitating dimension conditions (see Table 3). Univariate analysis of variance was used for that purpose (Hand & Taylor, 1987). The results indicated significant differences ($p < .05$) in the CS scores for all pairs of the compared attribute performance conditions. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 was supported.

Hypothesis 3

To test if facilitating attribute performance above the acceptable level had a greater impact on CS than facilitating attribute performance below the acceptable level, the conditions when the facilitating dimension's performance was below and above the acceptable level were compared in terms of the CS mean values within the same core dimension performances (see Table 4). The test of CS mean differences indicated that CS scores were significantly larger in all the three scenarios in which facilitating attributes performed above the acceptable level ($p < .05$). Thus, Hypothesis 3 was supported.

Table 3. Hypothesis 2 test results

Condition ^a	CS cell mean	t-value	Sig
HCHF	6.51	60.01	.00
LCHF	1.72		
HCMF	4.86	31.26	.00
LCMF	1.40		
HCLF	4.03	27.11	.00
LCLF	1.26		

^a **H**-excellent, **L**-poor, **M**-acceptable, **C**-core attributes, **F**-facilitating attributes

Table 4. Hypothesis 3 test results

Condition ^a	CS cell mean	t-value	Sig.
HCHF	6.51	22.42	.00
HCLF	4.03		
MCHF	5.26	17.19	.00
MCLF	3.13		
LCHF	1.72	6.73	.00
LCLF	1.26		

^a **H**-excellent (above expectations), **L**-poor (below expectations), **M**-acceptable (as expected), **C**-core attributes, **F**-facilitating attributes

Hypothesis 4

To examine moderator effects and see if facilitating attribute performance had a different impact on CS when core dimension performance was above the acceptable level than when core dimension performance was below the acceptable level, three sets of regressions were conducted. First, CS was regressed on three independent variables: core dimension performance, facilitating dimension performance, and the interaction term between core and facilitating dimensions (see Table 5). To reduce potential multicollinearity effects when including the interaction term, the independent variables were mean-centered (Cronbach, 1987). The results indicated a significant interaction ($p < .05$) between the core and facilitating attribute performance dimensions, thus supporting Hypothesis 4.

Table 5. Regression with interaction term results for Hypothesis 4 (N=1,080).

$$\text{Model: } CS = \text{core} + \text{facilitating} + \text{core} * \text{facilitating}$$

Factors	B	SE	Beta	t-value	Sig. ^a	VIF ^b	R ²
Core	.69	.01	.76	63.32	.00	1.28	.88
Facilitating	.31	.01	.32	25.72	.00	1.34	
Core*Facilitating	.04	.01	.06	5.63	.00	1.11	

^a P-value less than 0.05 was used as an acceptance criterion

^b VIF value less than 10.00 was used as an acceptance criterion

Second, CS was regressed on two independent variables: facilitating dimension performance and a dummy variable for core dimension performance that had a value of 1 when core attribute performance was above the acceptable level and a value of 0 when core attribute performance was below the acceptable level. Three levels of facilitating attribute performance were examined in combination and separately (see Table 6).

Table 6. Regression with dummy variable results for Hypothesis 4

$$\text{Model: } CS = \text{facilitating} + \text{core}, \text{ where}$$

$$\text{core}=1, \text{ if core attribute performance is above the acceptable level, and}$$

$$\text{core}=0, \text{ if core attribute performance is below the acceptable level}$$

Facilitating attribute performance	Factors	B	SE	Beta	t-value	Sig. ^a	VIF ^b	R ²
Overall N = 720	Facilitating	.38	.02	.36	25.38	.00	1.13	.87
	Core	3.16	.06	.74	52.61	.00	1.13	
High^c (N=240)	Facilitating	.21	.04	.11	5.21	.00	1.91	.94
	Core	4.41	.11	.89	42.19	.00	1.91	
Medium^c (N=240)	Facilitating	.45	.05	.28	9.06	.00	1.81	.87
	Core	2.75	.11	.72	23.13	.00	1.81	
Low^c (N=240)	Facilitating	.37	.06	.19	5.75	.00	1.18	.79
	Core	2.54	.10	.80	24.28	.00	1.18	

^a P-value less than 0.05 was used as an acceptance criterion

^b VIF value less than 10.00 was used as an acceptance criterion

^c **High**=excellent facilitating, or above the acceptable level; **Low**=poor facilitating, or below the acceptable level; **Medium**=acceptable facilitating

The beta coefficients for the dummy variable reflecting the dichotomy of core attribute performance were significant ($p < .05$) for all four facilitating attribute performance conditions thus supporting Hypothesis 4.

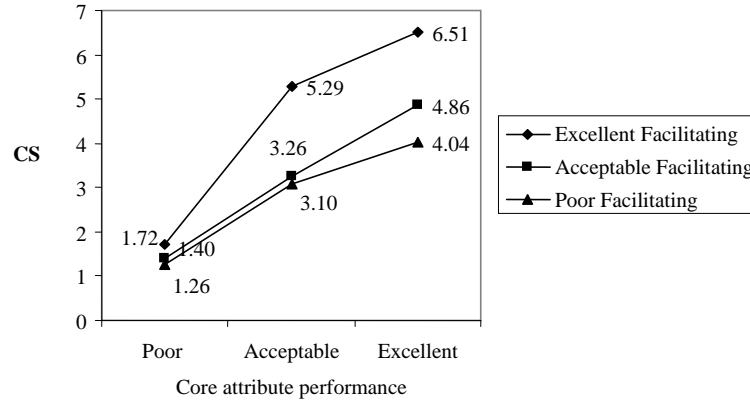


Figure 1. Patterns of CS response for different levels of core attribute performance*
 *The entries in Figure 1 display CS cell means for different levels of attribute performance.

Figure 1 provides an additional support for Hypothesis 4 and illustrates that facilitating attribute performance had different CS response patterns across different core attribute performance conditions. The CS cell mean was higher when facilitating attribute performance above the acceptable level was combined with core attribute performance at or above the acceptable level. However when core attribute performance was below the acceptable level, there was a small difference in CS cell means between the poor facilitating and excellent facilitating attribute performance conditions. The effects of facilitating attribute performance on CS diminished when core attribute performance fell short of the acceptable level. These comparisons provide additional evidence supporting Hypothesis 4.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study expanded on what has been previously reported in the CS evaluation literature and attempted to advance this topic by examining asymmetric response of CS to different types of attributes. The results suggested that interaction effects between core and facilitating attributes played a significant role in the formation of CS, and supported earlier suggestions that core and facilitating attributes had asymmetrical effects on CS.

More importantly, the results indicated that moderator effects that core attribute performance had on the relationship between facilitating attribute performance and CS explained the asymmetry, thus providing theoretical rationalization to the observed phenomenon. Therefore, the conceptual relationships proposed and tested in this study provided new knowledge about the relationship between attribute performance and CS, and these findings should be accounted for while assessing levels of CS and making decisions about how to achieve high levels of CS with an optimal amount of resources.

The results of this study were consistent with the results of several prior survey studies suggesting that CS was affected asymmetrically by performances of different attributes (Cadotte & Turgeon, 1988, Johnston, 1995, Mittal et al, 1998). While important, these studies had certain flaws; they overemphasized the importance of facilitating attributes that these tended to have a greater impact on satisfaction and the ability to differentiate from competitors. This study provided a different perspective.

The effect of core attribute performance on CS was multifaceted. It was, for example, relatively weak when core attributes performed in the positive range (at or above the acceptable level); however, it becomes strong when core attributes performed below the acceptable level. The results of this study showed that in such cases the magnitude of negative effects on CS was larger than that of positive effects.

This discrepancy may stem from the nature of core attributes. These attributes are considered a norm or an industry standard. Often, their importance becomes unobvious because consumers become accustomed to the point of indifference to core attributes as most hotels learn to make competitive offerings on these attributes. However, in cases of performance failure, core attributes become critical because without them an offering loses its fundamental value and becomes inferior.

That is why previous studies associated core attributes with *dissatisfaction* only and often call this group of attributes *dissatisfiers* (Johnston, 1995; Levitt, 1983; Swan & Combs, 1976). This study provides evidence that this view may be limited. The results indicate that core attributes do contribute to satisfaction and are essential for positive customer experiences.

Another important feature of core attributes identified in this study stems from their moderator role and can be described as *enhancing*. When core attributes performed in the positive range (acceptable - excellent), they boosted the effect of facilitating attributes on CS and allowed a maximum positive impact of facilitating attribute performance on CS. At the same time, when performing inadequately, core attributes counteracted the positive effects of facilitating attributes on CS. Therefore, efforts and resources spent on facilitating attributes may be wasted if there is a failure in core attribute performance. This further substantiates the importance of core attributes to both CS and the relationship between facilitating attribute performance and CS.

Facilitating attribute performance is essential, yet should be viewed differently. The results of this study indicate that facilitating attribute performance has a strong effect on CS only when combined with positive core attribute performance. At the same time, it was shown that if not performing well, facilitating attributes has a small effect on CS.

This raises an issue of attribute performance optimization. The findings suggest that in order to achieve an optimal resource distribution, core attribute performance should be kept in a positive range, or at least maintained at an acceptable level. If this condition is met, facilitating attributes will play their positive role and investments into facilitating attributes will yield meaningful returns by generating higher levels of CS and a higher competitive advantage.

In summary, the findings provide evidence that both core and facilitating attributes are important and can be very influential on CS. Yet, these two types of attributes exhibit different impact patterns that should be accounted for while assessing CS and allocating resources. This research showed that the relationship between CS and attribute performance had an asymmetric component originating from the moderator function of core attributes. The effects of facilitating attributes were hinged on the level of core attribute performance. Results of this study confirmed that the combined effects of core and facilitating attributes were multiplicative rather than additive in nature, and such interactions should be accounted for in attempts to manage and measure CS.

Managerial implications

This study offers a framework that allows for resources *optimization* while forming processes to develop budgets and place people to improve service. The findings have important implications for service strategy and decisions on how to distribute organizational resources because they provide evidence contrary to the traditional view based on the additive nature of relationships between attribute performance and CS (Oliva et al., 1992).

The traditional perspective puts more emphasis on facilitating attributes because they were considered as “wow” factors that bring a high return on investments in terms of CS. Many hospitality operators, including major brands such as Hilton and Marriott, have been expanding substantial resources on providing “unexpected delights,” services that fall into the facilitating category and are designed to “win customers” over competitors in the market (Oliver, 1997).

This strategy of “putting all the chips” on facilitating attributes can be inefficient in view of the results of this study. Facilitating attributes have marginal effects on CS when core attributes fall short of an acceptable level. Therefore, hospitality managers should employ a strategy that would ensure that core attributes perform in a positive range, and then allocate resources to the facilitating attributes category where significant increases in attribute performance will yield a considerable increase in CS.

Moving from tactical issues discussed in the illustration to a more concrete approach pertaining to hospitality service strategies, the following steps are recommended for hospitality managers on the basis of the findings of this study:

1. Identify which attributes would pertain to the core category and which would pertain to the facilitating category.
2. Implement a system that would allocate sufficient resources to ensure that core attributes are performed in a positive range.
3. Identify facilitating attributes from which major increases in CS can be gained for reasonable investments and employ them into the service portfolio.
4. Implement a service staff training that helps performing in a way that would optimize the effects of core and facilitating attributes.
5. Monitor the allocation of resources making changes if needed to prevent performance failures in the core attributes set.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The findings and implications of this study should be viewed in light of a number of limitations. First, interpretation and generalization of the findings should be taken with caution because the sample of the study, university faculty and staff, was not random. Future studies should address this limitation in research design. Second, a more extensive examination of core and facilitating attributes should be conducted. This study included a limited number of core and facilitating attributes in a specific context of a vacation stay at a mid-price hotel. Different attributes may be considered as core or facilitating in other contexts. Therefore, future research may concentrate on categorization of attributes within the core-facilitating framework in different contexts, such as hotel star rating or type, price, location, and purpose of a trip.

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THE INTRAPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE SERVICE INDUSTRY IN THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory investigation is to delve into the social psychological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal variants of sexual harassment of female employees in the service industry in the Republic of Cyprus. In particular, it aims at identifying: (a) instances of sexual harassment based upon how it comes to be socially constructed and privately experienced by its victims, (b) the nature of the optimal interpersonal conditions under which sexual harassment is likely to occur, (c) the intrapersonal (that is, psychological and emotional) and occupational ramifications of sexual harassment for both the harasser and the harassed, and (d) how sexual harassment episodes are dealt with by management in the service industry. Specifically, the current study seeks to identify the negative consequences of sexual harassment in terms of high absenteeism and turn over rates as well as low productivity, work ethic, and morale. In addition, it aims at pinpointing the negative consequences of sexual harassment for the female service industry employees in terms of their physical, psychological, and emotional health as well as in terms of their relations with their significant others (spouses, children, parents, relatives, and close friends). Finally, this study attempts to develop specific strategies for minimizing the incidence of sexual harassment by offering both general awareness seminars and guest lectures to the public as well as training sessions to employees and employers at various business and governmental organizations. This research project uses a combination of field observations inside various service industry businesses, and in-depth interviews with sexually harassed female employees, to provide explanations of the various dynamics of sexual harassment in Cypriot service industry workplace.

KEYWORDS: Emotional; Hyper-masculinity; Machismo; Psychological; Sexual Harassment; Service Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination and may be defined as any unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment tends to occur when submission to or rejection of this conduct,

explicitly or implicitly, affects an individual's employment (in terms of security and promotions), unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, intrapersonal well being, and interpersonal relations due to significant psychological and emotional impairment, and/or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Most definitions of sexual harassment make clear the fact that both women and men can be sexually harassed and the person doing the harassing does not necessarily have to be a member of the opposite sex. The harasser can be a boss, supervisor, someone working on behalf of the employer, a co-worker, or even someone working elsewhere in the organization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

O'Hare and O'Donohue (1998) have identified a number of perspectives on the causes of sexual harassment. According to the *Natural/Biological* model, sexual harassment is a "common and routine" manifestation of the "natural" sexual attraction between women and men. Given that men supposedly have a stronger sex drive than women, they are more inclined to behave in a sexually assertive manner, which may in turn be perceived as unwanted and unwelcome by the targeted females, thereby leading to sexual harassment.

Moreover, the *Organizational* Model holds that the power hierarchy of the workplace socially constructs a climate in which those with more power and authority are likely to abuse their positions and roles to satisfy their sexual needs by harassing those who work for them (Tangri, Burt, & Johnson, 1982).

The *Sociocultural* model views sexual harassment as an occupational form of male dominance that serves to keep men in positions of leadership and intimidates women into either unwontedly giving in to the harassers' requests or leaving the workplace. This, in turn, results from the different socialization practices men and women receive from childhood, mainly the former being active and assertive (as predicated by a traditional patriarchal masculine orientation) and the latter passive and submissive (as predicated by a traditional patriarchal feminine orientation).

The *Sex-Role Spillover* model views sexual harassment in the workplace as a "spillover" from general prevailing sociocultural expectations about women that have nothing to do with work and everything to do with their feminized behaviors. According to this view, sexual harassment is likely to occur because a woman's sexuality may be more conspicuous than her professional role and may become an overriding attribute thereby leading to unwelcome sexual advances (Gutek, & Morasch, 1982).

Finally, O'Hare and O'Donohue's (1998) *Four-Factor* model of sexual harassment, postulates that each of the following factors is, in some combination, explicitly related to the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace:

- Motives for sexual harassment. These often focus on a man's need for power and dominance, his need for control, and his sensitivity to a woman's physical attractiveness with sexual advances being an overt expression of these needs for

power; perhaps a result of his lifelong socialization into the patriarchal premises of hypermasculinity.

- Overcoming internal inhibitions against sexual harassment. These factors are related to a man's understanding of the illegalities involved in harassment, the immoral and unethical nature of harassment behaviors, and the ability to imagine what a woman might be experiencing when she is being sexually harassed.
- Overcoming external inhibitions against sexual harassment. These factors involve the existence of a clear grievance policy and procedure as well as understanding of the outcomes of one's actions and the negative personal and professional consequences of harassing activities.
- Overcoming victim resistance. These factors focus on a man's awareness of a woman's recognition of harassing behaviors and her capacity to thwart those behaviors.

Because of the complicated legal issues surrounding sexual harassment and the possibility that a relationship gone sour can be thoroughly disruptive in a work climate, companies of all sizes in Northern European countries and North America have hired consultants to stop or prevent sexual harassment. In fact, sexual harassment has become something of a legal industry in its own right with attorneys, consultants, private investigators, labor mediators, psychotherapists, and counselors all trying to get into the sexual harassment "bandwagon." For, when a company or an organization is faced with the choice of possibly paying millions of dollars or Euros in a sexual harassment lawsuit, spending a few thousand dollars or Euros for a day-long workshop about sexual harassment in the workplace makes good sense. Training seminars are, therefore, believed to be the most effective preventive measure against sexual harassment in the workplace.

THE PRESENT STUDY

The purpose of this exploratory investigation is to delve into the social psychological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal variants of sexual harassment of female employees in the Greek-Cypriot (GC) service industry workplace. In particular, it aims at identifying: (a) instances of sexual harassment based upon how it comes to be socially constructed and privately experienced by its victims, (b) the nature of the optimal interpersonal conditions under which sexual harassment is likely to occur, (c) the intrapersonal (that is, psychological and emotional) and occupational ramifications of sexual harassment for both the harasser and the harassed, and (d) how sexual harassment episodes are dealt with by management in the service industry.

The specific objectives of the current project are as follows:

Identify the negative consequences of sexual harassment in the GC service industry workplace in terms of high absenteeism and turn over rates as well as low productivity, work ethic, and morale.

Identify the negative consequences of sexual harassment for the female service industry employees in terms of their physical, psychological, and emotional health as well as in terms of

their relations with their significant others (spouses, children, parents, relatives, and close friends).

Develop specific strategies for minimizing the incidence of sexual harassment in the GC service industry workplace by offering both general awareness seminars and guest lectures to the public as well as training sessions to employees and employers at various business and governmental organizations.

METHODOLOGY

To enable the successful integration, combination, and application of the different research methods that were utilized for the purpose of this study, a developmental multiple triangulation design was applied. Such method, according to Dreher and Hayes (1993), uses a multi-conceptual and methodological approach to study a single phenomenon. The researchers further noted that triangulation “is not just a combination of methods but a back and forth movement between the quantitative and qualitative components throughout the research process (1993, p.217). In pure definitional terms, triangulation implies that a single point is considered from three different and independent sources. The concept was derived from topography and was first used in the military and navigation sciences, but later was fruitfully adapted to social science inquiry. According to Decrop (1999), many researchers employed triangulation in the mixing and matching of qualitative and quantitative methods in a complementary manner. According to Dezin (1978) (cited in Decrop, 1999) combining various data sources, methods, and theories, opens the way for richer and potentially more valid interpretations. Also as Henderson noted (p. 11, 1991 cited in Decrop, 1999) by employing triangulation, the researcher can also “guard against the accusation that the study’s findings are simply the artifact of a single method, a single data source, or a single investigator’s bias.”

This research project utilized a combination of field observations inside various service industry businesses, in-depth interviews with sexually harassed employees, and a survey of 650 employees from the service industry sector in Cyprus to provide explanations of the various dynamics of sexual harassment in the Greek Cypriot (GC) service industry workplace. Observational data was primarily collected to supplement interview data and to assist us in describing the work environment of sexually harassed female service employees including their physical setting, contacts between employees (employees and clients, and employees and management), as well as the overall atmosphere of the work environment (Marshall, & Rossman, 1989; Van Manen, 1990).

There exist a number of ethical, moral, and legal issues that characterize the study of such a sensitive topic as sexual harassment in the workplace (Adler, & Adler, 1993; Jones, & Koenig, 1994). However, an ethical, moral, and reliable qualitative investigation in the study of such a sensitive topic can be realized through a careful and methodical mapping-out of the research process. For this, we conducted multiple (about 20) short-form preliminary interviews as a way to gain a more widespread perspective into the study of the interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics of the lives of sexually harassed female service industry employees. Their replies to these early pilot interviews enabled us to construct a more generalized, reliable, and accurate picture of the real-life circumstances surrounding their lives.

For the main part of our qualitative investigation, we conducted 80 in-depth interviews with sexually harassed female employees in various GC places of service industry employment. To this end, we utilized interview questions that are most relevant to investigating the typifications and personifications of sexual harassment for such employees. Participants were recruited by the research team either during field trips to randomly chosen businesses and establishments in the greater Nicosia metropolitan area, or through snowball sampling, that is, by following recommendation leads to other sexually harassed female employees by the ones interviewed (Bogdan, & Biklen, 1998). Each interview was audio taped and took place in a location that was most convenient and comfortable for the respondent (e.g., their home, a private space at their place of employment, or any other local establishment of their choosing). All interviews lasted approximately one to two hours and were conducted informally to allow the participants to freely express themselves, as well as to allow for exploration of new or unanticipated topics that usually arose during the course of interviewing (Kaufman, 1994). The interview material was thoroughly read and coded and members of our research team recorded the emergent conceptual theme categories. As noted by Glaser and Strauss (1967), “in discovering theory, one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept” (p.23). In writing up the findings, we used interview quotations as examples of the responses provided by the sexually harassed female employees thus validating the various conceptual theme categories that emerged from data analysis (Allen, 1989; Gubrium, & Holstein, 1994; Luborsky, 1994; Miles, & Huberman, 1994).

The quantitative part of this study is based on the results of a comprehensive questionnaire that was used as a basis for extracting information from employees contacted at their workplace using a stratified random sampling procedure. The design of the questionnaire was based on a comprehensive literature review in the general topic of sexual harassment. The questionnaire was split into three major sections, each one addressing separate issues, and was subsequently tested with a number of respondents prior to its final distribution. The purpose of such testing was to safeguard the questionnaire’s applicability as a tool for extracting the needed information.

A careful selection of the sample was carried out based on methodologically acceptable criteria. Based on the rationale and procedures described above, the survey was carried out in a sample of 650 employees using personally administered questionnaires. The sampling error associated with the selected sample was 3.8% at 95% confidence level for a population of 35,000 employees working in the service industry sector. Next, the survey data were coded and entered into SPSS to allow for more detailed statistical experimentation.

RESULTS & CONCLUSION

In the Republic of Cyprus, acknowledging and reporting incidents of sexual harassment is currently at an embryonic stage due primarily to long held sociocultural attitudes and taboos. As further elaborated in the discussion section, the prevailing patriarchal machismo attitudes and behaviors generate a hostile climate that tends to discourage victims of sexual harassment

(especially females) to proceed with the reporting of incidents. Furthermore, the lack of a legal framework regarding sexual harassment in the workplace up until 2003—such as the absence of safeguard mechanisms and procedures as well as the ignorance and inexperience of qualified government bodies and authorities to handle such incidents—has provided a “safe heaven” for the magnification of the phenomenon. Five years after the introduction of the new law regarding sexual harassment have done very little in ameliorating the problem as the vast majority of the workforce is still in dark about it. As a result, the number of reported cases and formal complaints for sexual harassment in Cyprus is minimal.

Table 1: Types of sexual harassment reported by victims

TYPES OF BEHAVIORS	Spontaneous reference %	Aided references %
Unwanted contact or touch	41	56
Pressure for starting a relationship	39	61
Comments for the body or body parts	31	50
Pressure for sexual contact	31	48
Pressure for a date	28	50
Inviting glances	28	57
Provocative gestures	19	24
Unwanted telephone calls/messages	19	56
Comments or discussions of sexual content	19	31
Comments for attire/overall appearance	17	35
Breach of personal space	9	19
Raunchy jokes of sexual content	9	35
Attempt for rape	4	4
Displaying/showing pornographic material (e.g. photos, posters, emails)	4	4
Whistling or other provocative sounds	2	6
Presentation or distribution of pornographic material	2	4
Pressure for the fulfillment of sexual desires in exchange for a raise or promotion	-	6
N=54 (8.3% OF THE SAMPLE)		

Source: Survey data

Table 1 above presents the types of sexual harassment behaviors which were reported (spontaneously or as an aided answer) by victims. From the table, it can be inferred that the most common and frequent types of sexual harassment is “unwanted contact or touch”, the exertion of pressure to start a relationship, comments for the body and pressure for sexual contact.

Survey results have also indicated that 23% of the sampled respondents were aware of incidents of sexual harassment, which have taken place against friends, relatives and colleagues

(see Figure 1 on the next page). This finding is worrisome since one in four respondents is aware of an incident of sexual harassment, while official statistics show a totally different picture with only three reported cases actually presented in court.

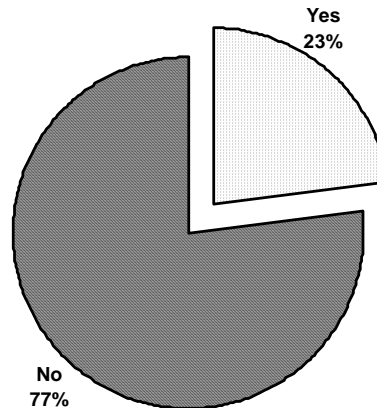


Figure 1: Indirect knowledge of incidents of sexual harassment.

In addition, according to the Equality Authority from the Office of the Ombudswomen of the Republic of Cyprus, during the period January 2004 to December 2007, only nine complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace have been filled. Three of these cases were suspended due to the lack of evidence, while in one case, the person accused was relieved from his duties. Two investigatory reports were in favor of the complainants and three cases were under investigation by the end of 2007.

Figure 2 on the next page presents a more detailed account of people who have experienced sexual harassment by gender. It is surprising the fact that almost 1 in 3 victims of sexual harassment (27.8%) were males. This empirical finding comes into direct contrast with the prevailing patriarchal machismo notion in the GC sociocultural environment being conducive to female sexual harassment in the workplace.

Results indicate that victims of sexual harassment in the Greek-Cypriot service industry workplace face a number of serious adverse effects in both their professional and personal lives. More specifically, concurring with Gutek (1985), we also found that such victims tend to display a marked decrease in their work output, while also facing important problems in both their professional careers as well as in their relations with their colleagues. During our face to face interviews with victims of sexual harassment, we also found that they tend to suffer a host of psychological and physiological symptoms, such as: stress (particularly post traumatic stress disorder), generalized anxiety, restlessness, fear, denial, depression, and anger. In addition to these symptoms, Dansky & Kilpatrick, (1997), Gutek, (1985), and Gutek & Koss, (1993), also reported irritability, weight loss, tiredness, and intestinal problems. Moreover, our interviewees reported a number of emotional problems including recurring feelings of guilt, embarrassment, humiliation, distancing, and alienation.

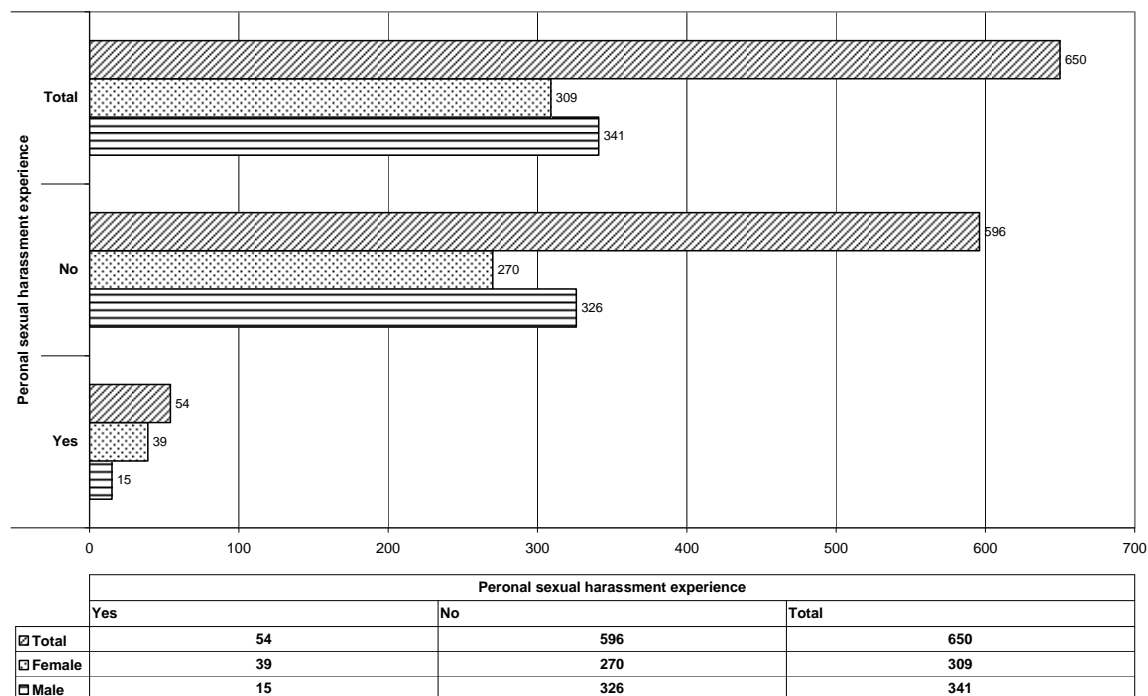


Figure 2: Personal experience of sexual harassment by gender

As reported by Fitzgerald, Drasgow, Hulin, Gelfand, and Magley, (1997) and Schneider, Swan, and Fitzgerald, (1997), in our current investigation, we too have found that sexually harassed women tend to experience decreased satisfaction in their lives in general. Moreover, current findings indicate that such women also tend to experience relatively low levels of self-image, self-concept, and self-esteem. A notable finding that emerged from our face to face interviews is that most of the women who experienced sexual harassment reported an overall feeling of threat in their daily lives. As Menninger (1990) and McGlynn and Metcalf (1989) reported, individuals who feel threatened in their daily lives experience a moderate, albeit significant, amount of stress exemplified in a variety of physiological and psychological symptoms, such as loss of control and self-monitoring, decreased capability at carrying out daily tasks, psychological trauma, feelings of guilt, and decreased self-esteem. In our current study, female victims of sexual harassment reported various stress symptoms, such as increased heart palpitations, perspiration, general weakness, neuroses of the stomach, nausea, diarrhea, an overall feeling of fear and terror, heavy breathing, twitches, an overall feeling of concern and an inability to relax, body pains, dry mouth, urinal frequency, excessively abrupt reactions to comments by others, lack of concentration, sleep disturbances, irritability, and impatience. Edelman (1992) points that a number of chronic illnesses are associated with stress, such as asthma, coronary heart disease, ulcers of the stomach, and gastrointestinal disturbances.

According to the model of disability proposed by Seligman (1975), a depressing individual believes that he/she is unable to sustain any meaningful control over his/her own life. In particular, the individual comes to believe that there exists no way to escape from the

situations that cause him/her stress and consequently gives up. For such individuals, the researcher contends, negative symptoms ensue in the form of desperation, passivity, and negative expectations, whenever the individual is confronted with a stressful situation. In the work environment, individuals believe that they have a considerable amount of personal control over their professional advancement, such as promotion, demotion, firing, etc, therefore, losing personal control due to sexually harassing experiences, tends to have repercussions in their beliefs about controlling their occupational advancement in their workplace (Thacker, 1992). In other words, victims of sexual harassments feel that they lose their self-control and that their labor rights have been violated. Thacker (1992) also notes that when various organizations and private businesses ignore or tolerate sexual harassment in their workplace, they inadvertently come to promote and sustain a feeling of learned helplessness amongst their employees. In our current investigation, sexually harassed female employees rated positively not only to the general indicators of depression but also to those of learned helplessness as shown by their relatively high scores in the following symptomatology: sorrow, sadness, pessimism, discouragement, annoyance, demoralization, and anger. In addition, such employees also reported an increased frequency of outbursts of anger and accusations towards others, loss of pleasure in the carrying out of various daily tasks, decreased appetite, decreased energy, sudden weight fluctuations, insomnia, hyper- or hypo-activity, slowness in speech or thought, and long pauses in their answers when asked certain questions.

Piotrkowski (1998) defined sexual harassment as an occupational stress factor, since such a phenomenon threatens the immediate and future quality of life of the individual in terms of his/her economic, psychological, and physiological viability and prosperity, while simultaneously hindering the individual's efforts to escape from the harmful effects of the harassing behavior. Similarly, in a research conducted by Loy and Stewart (1984), 75% of their sample of sexually harassed women experienced symptoms of emotional and physiological danger, such as nervousness, irritability, and anger. In addition, Crull (1982) in a sample of 92 women who asked and sought help from Working Women's Institute due to their experiencing sexually harassing behaviors in their workplace, found that such women experienced considerable occupational stress with negative repercussions in their work productivity and efficiency, as well as in their psychological and physiological health. Analysis of current findings revealed that sexual harassment constitutes a serious source of occupational stress whereby prolonged and/or intense exposure to which tends to lead to bodily symptoms, tiredness, decreased work satisfaction and motivation, interpersonal and familial problems, and even to serious illness.

Self esteem constitutes one of the most important variants of a person's well being and has been investigated thoroughly in psychological and social psychological research in the past couple of decades. Various researchers have consistently pointed out that self-esteem tends to have positive and negative effects on a person's daily interpersonal interactions and is closely associated with a person's well being, self-efficacy, as well as perceptive and memory capabilities (Bandura, 1978/1992). More specifically, it has been found that low self-esteem is mostly responsible for a person's inability to effectuate normal social relations with those around him/her (Olmstead, Guy, O' Maily, & Bentler, 1991), while also that well balanced and happy individuals tend to have a realistic view of themselves, and, hence, tend to enjoy a normal "dose" of self-esteem (Colvin, Block, & Funder, 1995). Self esteem, however, appears to be influenced

from a person's immediate social environment and, in particular, from the amount and quality of social support he/she receives from it (Oosterwegel, & Oppenheimer, 1993). In our current study, we found that a person's work environment constitutes an important source of his/her self esteem as most individuals tend to spend a considerable part of their lives at work and work in itself constitutes one of the most important personal aspirations of the person. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the sexually harassed employees we interviewed scored considerably low on the self esteem scales and reported low levels of life satisfaction and quality of life. Overall, sexual harassment episodes are both humiliating and degrading to the victims by diminishing their self worth as productive, effective, and efficient employees.

At the individual level, the financial costs of sexual harassment tend to negatively influence the quality of life of the harassed individuals by exacerbating their psychological, emotional, and physiological problems. In most developed and developing countries, work in itself constitutes one of the most fundamental rights of a person—and therefore assumes central importance in the person's life—as it is oftentimes viewed as a means to his/her psychological and material well being and hence happiness and satisfaction (Imellou, 2007). In related research, MacKinnon (1983) found that physical attractiveness and appearance oftentimes constitutes an indirect (unspoken) important prerequisite for job stability, promotion, and a good salary for female employees and that those who neglect their appearance tend to suffer financially. In the present study, we found that sexual harassment did pose direct economic threats and losses to the harassed female employees, which, in turn, seriously impaired their professional future in terms of: income reduction, delayed or missed promotions and other occupational opportunities for advancement, loss of valuable professional references from their superiors, loss of professional reputation, and in some cases, possibly even job loss through dismissal.

DISCUSSION

The repercussions of sexual harassment incidents are both multileveled as well as long- and short-term and they not only affect the victims, but also others, such as colleagues, family members, and friends. Obviously, however, the victims are the ones who suffer the most severe negative repercussions of such incidents. More specifically, in our current investigation of sexual harassment in the Greek Cypriot workplace, we found that victims suffered a number of short- and long-term negative consequences, such as: loss of employment through lay offs or resignations, decrease of their self-esteem, self-confidence, self-image, and self-efficacy, deterioration of their physical, emotional, and psychological health, and negative effects on their professional careers. Only a small minority of victims did not report any serious negative consequences related to their physical, emotional, or psychological health. Commenting on the various effects of sexual harassment on the victims, Hemming (1985) reports that a number of emotional reactions result from the psychological pressure such victims bear under sexually harassing environments, such as fear, guilt, shame, anger, negativity, cynicism, irritability, loss of motivation, etc. In our study, we too concur with Hemming (1985) as many of the answers provided by the victims through the open-ended interviews revealed many of aforementioned symptoms.

Given the prevalence of masculinity and machismo that is “seamlessly” blended in the Greek-Cypriot culture, there exist numerous unreported incidences of sexual harassment in the service industry workplace. Upon deconstructing GC machismo culture, the intricacies of a machismo ethic surface, an ethic that tends to stifle the nurturing and the development of healthy male intimacy with repercussions in the personal and interpersonal domains (Philaretou, & Allen, 2001; Pollack, 1998). For a considerable number of GC men who are “steeped” into the intricacies of hypermasculinity, personal problems tend to be manifested in terms of intrapsychic trauma resulting from inadequate caregiver identification, limiting male adolescent sexual development, sexual rebellion, as well as the development of male sexual anxiety in adolescence and throughout adulthood (Philaretou, & Allen, 2003). Negative manifestations tend to also take place in the interpersonal domain primarily in the form of promiscuous sexual behavior (Philaretou, 2004) and initiation of sexually harassing episodes (Philaretou, & Allen, 2005).

Most of GC males’ upbringing has been characterized by an emotionally oppressive machismo ethic, which may have significantly contributed to their preoccupation with female sexuality as a viable avenue to prove their manhood and self-worth (Gilmore, 1995; McGrane, & Patience, 1995). In the GC sociocultural environment that continues to reward men with strong masculine personas, those with weak masculine identities tend to become marginalized. Therefore, GC men tend to consciously and unconsciously find themselves in a constant quest to prove their masculinity by developing a generalized cognitive preoccupation and ideation for the pursuit of female sexuality, manifested through a recurring physical desire for sexual acting out behaviors, such as sexual harassing behaviors. As Philaretou (2004) and Philaretou and Allen (2003) explained, such sexual ideation and risky sexual behaviors are fueled by an unattainable hypermasculinity ethic that tends to be manifested in an anxious psychological sexual preoccupation the consequences of which lead to sexual addiction, sexual harassment, and lack of intimacy and emotional connectedness with marital or dating partners (Philaretou, & Allen, 2005).

This project constitutes an important undertaking that is overdue for the GC service industry workplace. Overall, findings point that: (a) incidences of sexual harassment in the service industry workplace tend to be seriously underreported, (b) a considerable number of female service employees are oftentimes not even aware that they are being, or have been, sexually harassed, (c) a considerable number of sexually harassing episodes are not taken seriously by management, and (d) sexual harassment tends to cause a significant loss of productivity and a high turnover rate among service businesses as well as considerable psychological upset and low self-esteem among female service employees.

In general, it appears that sexual harassment is in fact “detrimental to one’s health,” by “polluting” the individual’s work environment (Committee of Employment and Social Affairs of European Parliament, 1992) thereby rendering it considerably “unhygienic,” uncomfortable, and unpleasant. This is done primarily by negatively influencing the employee’s psychological, emotional, and physiological health as well as delimiting his/her confidence, trust, morale, and work output (Imellou, 2007).

Concerning strategies to control sexual harassment in the workplace, Rutter (1996) suggests teaching employees that just as each person should have the right to exercise control

over his/her own sexual boundaries, each individual must also take responsibility for controlling how they express themselves sexually towards others. The researcher suggests that the key to controlling sexual harassment is to enable employees understand how each other communicates his/her sexual boundaries as well as learning to respect such boundaries. Rutter (1996) further notes that it is rare for an individual to face charges or fines based on one act unless it is considerably offensive. Rather, it is the harasser's inability or unwillingness to correctly ascertain the negativity of the feedback he gets from his victim after the harassing episode that gets him into trouble. The reason may be twofold. First, his elevated male ego prevents him from admitting his wrongdoing first to himself and then to the victim and others. Second, he may ignore her negative responses to his offensive behavior because he is caught up in a fantasy, that is, he believes she is attracted to him so he tunes out her negative responses and misinterprets all of her actions as signs of her attraction towards him. Rutter recommends counseling men by encouraging them to acknowledge their fantasies, to recognize that they have their place but that they are not reasonable interpretations of any real-life situation, and that they must keep the fantasies private.

The victim must also take responsibility for stopping or containing the harassing behavior by developing and/or sharpening her detection skills in immediately identifying sexually harassing behavior from a fellow co-worker. For this reason, she needs to handle the sexually harassing episode as swiftly and firmly as possible by being assertive, using clear, direct language that leaves no room for interpretation: "I do not want you to touch me that way," as well as adopting a posture, vocal tone, eye contact, facial expression and personal distance that quickly and unambiguously delivers the message to the harasser that: "I won't tolerate any more such behavior from you." Sometimes, however, the best response is no response at all, such as walking away from someone telling an offensive joke. Many women prefer this option because speaking out sometimes may lead to a major incident out of what could have been minor misunderstanding, an omission, or tactlessness on behalf of the harasser.

In today's more egalitarian work environments, it is imperative for women to be both responsible for maintaining a clear delineation of their sexual boundaries as well as accountable for how they express themselves sexually to others. Men tend to respect women who exert control over their bodies, but are more likely to harass those who appear unaware of their sexuality or are hesitant to control it appropriately. For example, it is far more preferable for a female employee to wear sexy clothing at work, be aware of it, and still carry herself with dignity—thus making herself abundantly clear of her sexual boundaries—than to habitually dress overly sexy and choose to ignore the impact of such action on her fellow workers. First and foremost, a woman must have an awareness of what and how much she intends to communicate, what the ultimate reason for such action is, and how men around her will likely interpret such message.

As a company attempts to develop viable strategies to eliminate or contain sexual harassment, Petrocelli and Repa (1994) recommend the following steps in determining whether a problem currently exists in the company. First, the researchers suggest looking for possible instances of mild, moderate or even overt sexual hostility. For instance, are there materials lying around or behaviors initiated, such as posters, jokes, pornographic emails, or other indicators that sexual boundaries are being violated and female sexuality imbued with violence and hostility? Next, are there displays of traditional patriarchal behavior among both men and women? For

example, when meeting as a group in the office premises, are male employees on one end of the room and female on the other? Finally, critical to any company's success in preventing and controlling sexual harassment is the selection and support of a resource person responsible for implementing company policy by listening, investigating, mediating, and counseling. Such individual should participate in ongoing training seminars in order to keep up to date on various issues surrounding sexual harassment in general. In most cases, given the nature of sexual harassment, the right person will be a woman, as it is generally easier for female victims to report harassment to a female enforcement officer. If possible, however, the company should have both a male and female person available who ought to frequently consult with each other in order to minimize gender prejudice.

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A MODEL FOR NETWORKED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN HERITAGE TOURISM: DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED TOURISM ENTERPRISES

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the findings about product development based on heritage interpretation in tourism business networks through the model for networked product development in heritage tourism. The discussion is considered through a case of interpretative processes around the theme of the Russian General Alexander Suvorov and his history in Finland in the 1790s. The Finnish lake environment is considered a significant tourism resource but it is clearly underexploited by the tourism business. Lakes are generally seen as background for tourism activities but not as a functional part or symbolic representation of local heritage. The paper focuses on discussing how it is possible to develop heritage-based lake tourism through the cooperation of actors in tourism and culture.

KEYWORDS: Heritage management; Heritage tourism; Interpretation; Networking; Partnership.

INTRODUCTION

Heritage tourism is one of the most common types of tourism on the global scale. Estimates by the World Tourism Organization indicate that 40 percent of all international trips are motivated by an interest in experiencing heritage places. (Timothy & Boyd 2003.) Heritage defined in the context of heritage tourism is explained as the present-day use of the past (Ashworth 2003; Timothy & Boyd 2006). It can include inherited values of the past experienced through local traditions, historical events, historical houses, arts, cultural activities, or natural character, etc. (Drummond & Yeoman 2001; Garrod & Fyall 2000; Yale 1991). In addition to the values of the heritage site, tourists' motivations are in the key role when defining heritage tourism (Poria et al. 2001). Tourists' motivations to travel and experience heritage are naturally related to their perceptions of the heritage site they are going to visit. If the motivation to travel is not based specifically on experiencing the heritage of the destination, the activity would not be heritage tourism but some other form of tourism. (Garrod & Fyall 2001.)

The connecting factor between the heritage site and tourists' perceptions of it is interpretation (Moscardo 1996). Interpretation is described as an educational process which aims to reveal meanings and relationships of the topic or place and connecting them to the visitors' experience (Tilden 1977). A useful means for realizing interpretation is through meaningful storytelling which offers revelation based on information and makes the interpretation intriguing (Beck & Cable 2002).

During the era of globalization, tourism providers have to think about alternative methods of attracting tourists who have a greater choice of services and products than before (Drummond & Yeoman 2001). From the point of view of heritage tourism, one alternative solution to maintain competitiveness in the tourism field is inclusive planning which incorporates the linkage between heritage tourism and other sectors of the tourism business (Timothy & Boyd 2006). In addition, this includes development of traditional heritage tourism further from passive sightseeing of historical sites towards more interactive participation by the tourists. Richards and Wilson (2006) use the term creative tourism to describe the active involvement of tourists. In addition to only spectating or being there, creative tourism involves reflexive interaction by the tourists. Interactive tools can be used in heritage interpretation in order to achieve deeper meaning and an educational point of view for a visitor (Tilden 1977). The realization of creativeness in tourism services by the means of interpretation requires cooperative planning around heritage sites (e.g. Jamal & Getz 1995). Cooperation allows all stakeholders to participate in decision-making and accordingly supports networked product development (NPD). In other words, cooperation enables comprehensive product planning (Timothy 1998). Comprehensive product planning through networking and partnerships between tourism entrepreneurs and culture actors make it possible to add cultural performances, such as elements of drama, to a traditional tourism product with the intention of interpreting local heritage for tourists. In this way, networking can be seen as an effective interpretative tool. (Timothy & Boyd 2001.) Networking and cooperation with local partners are many times a matter of survival for small and medium-sized tourism enterprises (SMTEs) during the ongoing globalization in the tourism business (Kokkonen & Tuohino 2007). Inclusive planning of cultural and touristic activities through NPD represents a means of gaining added value for traditional tourism services, deepening cooperation among the tourism actors at the destination and improving service quality to meet the demands of more sophisticated tourism consumers. Today's scarce funding, however, places greater importance on cooperation with entrepreneurs from the heritage site administration point of view (Timothy 2007).

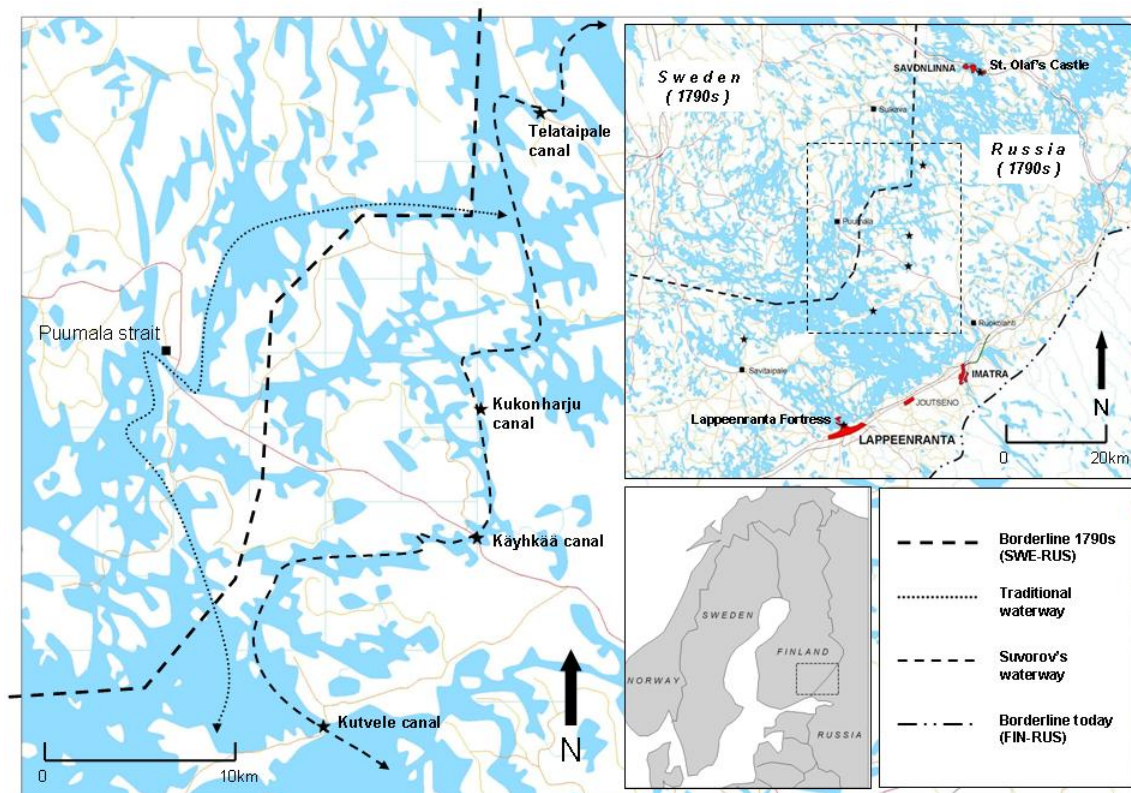
The paper focuses on considering local partnerships and networking as a tool for creating profitable tourism business based on interpretation around heritage sites. The discussion is based on the exploration of the NPD process and its usability in comprehensive planning of heritage products from both tangible and intangible angles. The paper also highlights some points about relations between tourism business and heritage management at the destinations.

The University of Joensuu managed a project called "In the Waves of Saimaa Flotilla" (2005-2007) which aimed to develop heritage interpretation and history-based tourism around the theme of the Russian General Alexander Suvorov (1730-1800) in southeastern Finland. The research work for this paper, through participant observation (e.g. Decrop 1999) and informal interviews, was done within the product development processes carried out during the project.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR GENERAL SUVOROV'S HERITAGE IN SOUTHEASTERN FINLAND

The boundary between Sweden and Russia determined in the Turku Treaty in 1743 split Lake Saimaa (Fig. 1). Due to the frontier determination, Lappeenranta and Savonlinna became Russian towns. The provision of the Russian forces residing in St. Olaf's Castle became difficult when the Puumala strait remained Swedish. (Kauppi 2007.) The Puumala strait is an important point on the water route from southern Lake Saimaa northwards to Savonlinna. General Suvorov was commissioned by Empress Catherine II to lead the construction work of four military canals that would ensure an open water route for the Russian Saimaa Flotilla. (Hakala 2007.) During 2002-2008, the Finnish National Board of Antiquities (NBA) carried out restoration work at the canals. The renovation of the canals formed a significant continuum of historical sites starting from the Fortress of Lappeenranta in the South and extending to St. Olaf's Castle in the North.

Figure 1. Suvorov's waterway and the frontier area between Sweden and Russia in the 1790s.



General Suvorov is famous mainly due to his exploits during the 1799 war against France. Suvorov was honored with the highest military title of Generalissimo of Russian Troops. (Lukirsky 2007.) As the area of today's southeastern Finland has also belonged to Sweden, the history related to Suvorov is clearly heritage of three nations. The framework for General Suvorov's heritage connected to the unique lake environment forms a considerable tourism resource based on nature and local heritage. The Finnish lake landscape is a significant nature tourism resource. The lakes and forests represent the last part of still-existing European wilderness. (e.g. Tuohino 2006.) Despite the fact that the lake landscape can be seen as a

functional part or symbolic representation of local heritage, in the tourism field the use of the resource is often restricted to its concrete characteristics. In other words, the lake landscape is seen as background for tourism activities rather than a place containing deeper meanings. Cooperation between tourism entrepreneurs and culture actors can be a means of reviving the inherited values of the lake. A primary step in the enlivening process is to expand the traditional heritage tourism further from passive sightseeing of historical sites towards more interactive participation by the tourists. This process gives at the same time an opportunity for tourism entrepreneurs to reorient their views of the tourism business towards more creative product development.

The main focus for the project “In the Waves of Saimaa Flotilla” was to figure out how the fortresses, castles and renovated canals in the area could better serve the interests of the tourism business. A crucial point in expanding the tourism business around the heritage sites is the development of partnerships between local entrepreneurs in order to create comprehensive tourism products. Furthermore, the partnership between the entrepreneurs and heritage site managers, in this case NBA, plays also a significant role.

Four business networks were established in southeastern Finland during the project. In Lappeenranta, a network was built for implementing a guidance product in the Lappeenranta Fortress; the fortress was also partly planned and built by General Suvorov. Another network was created for a cruise product between sightseeing boat entrepreneurs. In Savonlinna, similar products were planned for interpreting Suvorov’s history in St. Olaf’s Castle and on the sightseeing boats. The four product concepts are based on a drama play carried out by actors during the guided tours in the fortresses and during cruises on the boats.

HERITAGE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE MODEL FOR NETWORKED PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

In many cases, tourism actors do not see local culture as a valuable resource for heritage interpretation. They are more likely to consider “culture” in the meaning of the fine arts although the cultural environment includes a variety of physical cultural elements such as historical sites, buildings, churches, waterways, etc. Moreover, the cultural environment includes intangible elements such as stories and traditions that may not be visible for tourists without interpretation. (Kolb 2006.) The model for NPD in heritage tourism can be seen as an educational process which offers SMTEs a useful tool for creating local networks with other tourism entrepreneurs and culture actors. The model is a four-stage system that creates an outline for controlled implementation of a heritage-based product development process. The product development process, according to the model, is carried out through interactive training workshops. Product development and networking are controlled by skilled network mentors who instruct the staff of the firms on practical operational methods.

The four business networks formed during the project were outlined through the NPD process. The stakeholder network involved in the product development process consisted of tourism entrepreneurs, such as sightseeing boaters and culture actors, and heritage managers responsible for maintaining the heritage to be interpreted. Entrepreneur-level cooperation between tourism and culture actors in the case of drama-based interpretation is important, but

when considering tourism development around tangible or intangible heritage, also the heritage management level should be involved in product planning. The relationship between heritage management and tourism is widely discussed in literature (e.g. Aas et al. 2005; Garrod & Fyall 2000; Hall & McArthur 1996; McKercher & du Cros 2002). Cochrane (2007) found in her study that local cooperation between heritage site managers and tourism enterprises can be successful in practice although tensions could easily arise between conservation and tourism interests. This type of partnership is a good way of combining the strengths of the public sector and market forces. The interests of all stakeholders can best be taken into account when the inclusive planning process is carried out through a network which contains all actors involved in the destination planning.

STAGE 1: RESOURCE ANALYSIS AND CUSTOMER SEGMENTATION

The first step for launching the implementation of NPD is the selection of the theme of heritage to be interpreted. The theme can be anything from myths and legends to real persons or phenomena that have been present during past times. The groundwork at the first stage includes exploration of resources and typical local features on which the heritage interpretation could be based. The better the linkage between the historical theme and the possible existing heritage infrastructure is, the easier it is to create an attractive product combination within the network.

Customer orientation is an axiom in product development. When planning products and services, the expectations and values of the chosen customer segment should be taken into account. One of the core goals of interpretation is to enrich the visitor's experiences (Hall & McArthur 1996). As the customers today are quality conscious, the heritage site must deliver added value for a customer. This is even more important in a destination where the heritage product is based on interpretation carried out by a drama performance. This type of product may be more expensive for a tourist but, when well implemented, it can offer the tourist a deeper experience of the place visited. Customers are willing to pay for quality and this fact places the seamless cooperation and creativity through the NPD in an important role in product planning.

Through the resource analysis and choice of theme a defined picture emerges: Which product development is preferable and what the main customer segment is. Another outcome of the groundwork is to define what is possible to accomplish with the resources available.

STAGE 2: ORGANIZING THE NETWORK

The second step in the process is to organize the network around the core enterprise(s) and heritage managers. When the thematic issues are figured out in the first step of the process, the network needed for the realization can be outlined. The network is based on the elements of which the entire product consists. The operational environment is to be drawn within the model for NPD. The outline includes discovering whether all the elements the product requires can be found within the core enterprise(s) or not. If the answer is negative, the network mentors together with the participating entrepreneurs establish where the missing links can be found. An example of a missing link could be for instance a scriptwriter in the case of a story-based interpretation carried out by means of drama.

A properly planned heritage tourism product based on a network takes into account also the conservational issues as well as the interests of the site manager. This means that the network can not be built only around the entrepreneurs, the heritage manager should also be involved. The touristic value of the sites, which means tourists' interest in visiting them, rationalizes the conservation in many cases. Cooperation and comprehensive planning would promote the mutual goals for both conservation and tourism business. Garrod and Fyall (2000) direct attention to the old-fashioned "curatorial approach" that still prevails in the heritage sector. The term is topical in the case of planning how to develop tourism and preservation of Suvorov's canals. Thus, the first step towards realizing the NPD would be to "soften" the curatorial approach. The definition of the curatorial approach is the maintenance of sites just for the purpose of preservation. Possible tensions between the tourism business and the heritage management places the network coordinator in a key role when planning and implementing a comprehensive product.

Stage two of the NPD finds out which actors are needed within the network and with which tools they will be working.

STAGE 3: PRODUCT DEFINITION

Before the plan for interpretation can be made, the process requires a great deal of research and organization (Beck & Cable 2002). The strategy of the product implementation and the method of approach in accordance to the selected theme and time period are planned during the workshop training. In addition, the workgroup members discuss the components required in implementing the product and adapt the realization in relation to the resources available. One result of group working on this stage is a general view about the product dimensions. The product analysis includes assessment of the core elements of the product and its supporting elements. (Kolb 2006.) In accordance to product implementation, the common goals and responsibilities between the network members are decided.

As the tangible heritage is important at the destinations, so is also the intangible. When interpreted in the right way, intangible elements of heritage promote the cultural values of the site. Most of all, the intangible assets are important for the tourism sector. Intangible heritage values enable the tourist to gain deeper understanding of the destination (Beck & Cable 2002; Hall & McArthur 1996). From the management point of view, the identification and preservation of intangible heritage require surveys by researchers to gather information about the processes that change the traditions. (McKercher & du Cros 2002.) Such information is highly valuable for the tourism sector when planning interpretative products.

Financing heritage maintenance is an eternal question. The funding issues are brought out within product definition because heritage and tourism cooperation in product development can be a means of gaining financial benefits for site maintenance (Garrod & Fyall 2000; McKercher & du Cros 2002; Timothy & Boyd 2003). The funding issues were widely discussed also during the product definitions around the theme of Suvorov. Considering tourism activities, the renovated canals of Suvorov are now in good state. However, the remaining attractiveness and value of the sites for the foreseeable future require constant maintenance of the touristic infrastructure. Generally, getting maintenance funding for heritage destinations is difficult, and even more challenging if the destinations are located in remote locations, as Suvorov's canals

are. The canals are not suitable for a “customer pays principle” (e.g. Burns & Holden 1995; Garrod & Fyall 2000; Timothy & Boyd 2003) in a way of collecting an entrance fee at the destination. Instead, various interpretative tourism packages that utilize the infrastructure and the historical theme could, if properly planned, be a way to gain benefits also for destination maintenance. This is where the cooperation between entrepreneurs and site managers could be profitable. Timothy and Boyd (2003) continue by giving some proposals for gaining extra funding: In addition to interpretative products, also events are a good way of attracting a great number of people who usually are willing to pay if they get some extra value for their visit. Sponsorships are also conceivable in the case of events. Furthermore, Timothy and Boyd list retail, accommodation, equipment hire and catering as possible ways of gaining profits. These means are also considerable in the case of Suvorov’s sites.

Stage three of the NPD process finds out the dimensions of the product and cooperators’ relations within the network.

STAGE 4: TECHNICAL DEFINITION AND TESTING PHASE

The last stage of the model for NPD is to build a structure for the technical implementation of the product. Pilot testing is an essential step for preparing a product for selling. Running a pilot test reveals the weaknesses of the product and possible needs for further development before offering it to paying customers. The feedback of the test group is systematically collected and analyzed by researchers. The indicators and the feedback collection tool for the future monitoring of the customer satisfaction and quality of the product are assigned to the network. The evaluation of the product on the grounds of the pilot test and the proposals for improvements are given to the network as a result of the research. Furthermore, pricing, selling and marketing issues are considered with the guidance of the network mentors and business experts. The margins of the product are defined also in the technical implementation.

Garrod and Fyall (2000) listed in their “Heritage Mission” five crucial criteria which make a successful heritage attraction. Two of the criteria are based on money: The attraction must be inexpensive and it must deliver value for money. Other factors are: balance between visitor’s needs and conservation, accessibility and authenticity. After all, pricing issues seem to be among the most important for a successful heritage product. Furthermore, customer experience is a key factor when evaluating a product’s success. Tourists’ experiences related to an interpretative tourism product should be considered total experiences which include attributes of leisure, culture, education and social interaction (de Rojas & Camarero 2007). The experiences tourists get during their visit are subjective, which means that a service supplier does not provide the experiences but opportunities for getting them. This viewpoint makes customer orientation and feedback collection even more important when planning tourism products.

The testing phase outlines the technical implementation of the product and answers the question: Does everything work as planned? The features of each stage of the model are listed in Table 1 through keywords and concretizing.

Table 1. The four stages of The Model for NPD in Heritage Tourism.

Process stage	Framework	Concretizing
1. Resource analysis and customer segmentation	Resources Idea Interests Customer potential Customer segmentation Current infrastructure Thematic definitions	What? To whom?
2. Organizing the network	Realizers Coordination Operational environment Rules of the network Schedule Agreements	Who? With what?
3. Product definitions	Approach Core vs. supportive elements Tangible vs. intangible Resources vs. realization Working methods Responsibilities Roles of the members	How are the operations divided between the network members?
4. Technical definition and testing	Defining margins Pricing Quality Testing Marketing Selling Feedback	How does it work? Evaluation and further development

A CASE STUDY: SUVOROV'S DRAMA CRUISE

BACKGROUND

The framework for lake tourism development around General Suvorov's heritage in southeastern Finland merges various touristic elements. The renovated military canals offer four different sites for exploring Suvorov's history in the case of historic waterways. Because Lake Saimaa is a shallow and broken-up body of water, the waterway created by the canals is not suitable for large sightseeing boats to sail from end to end. However, some parts of the route as well as some of the canals are reachable by cruisers. The best way to explore the entire waterway is by a canoe or small boat.

The northern end of the water route is St. Olaf's Castle in the town of Savonlinna and the southern end is the Fortress in the town of Lappeenranta. The two townships are considered, among 11 other municipalities, the most attractive Finnish towns when measuring cultural attributes (Leinonen et al. 2007). The towns and castles have significant value in the field of cultural tourism. Together with the historic waterway, which connects the towns to each other, they form an interesting network of heritage tourism sites within a relatively small geographical area. Savonlinna is located in the heart of the Finnish Lakeland and it is by the central water route from southern Lake Saimaa to northern parts of the lake area. Savonlinna and the medieval St. Olaf's Castle, which is located in the town centre, are considered some of the most important tourism attractions in Finland (Leinonen et al. 2007). St. Olaf's Castle hosts the annual Savonlinna Opera Festival which gathers a crowd of about 70,000 spectators seasonally (Finnish Tourist Board 2007). St. Olaf's Castle originates from the 15th century and it was modernized by General Suvorov during his stay in Finland in the 1790s. The linkage between the history of St. Olaf's Castle and the history of Suvorov makes an interesting point of view for heritage interpretation. The history of the Russian Generalissimo is rarely noticed by the local people but clearly it plays an important role in the heritage of the town and the castle. During the restoration work of the canals, an idea was raised of promoting the history of Suvorov linked to the canals through an interpretative cruise product which would follow the wake of Suvorov's gunboats.

Suvorov's drama cruise is an interpretative tourism product which aims to give people a hint of life in the area in the time of General Suvorov. The interpretative program is based on a carefully planned drama play which brings out historical facts of the period in an entertaining way. The onboard drama play gives the tourists an opportunity to experience the feeling of sailing with the ancient officers and their troops along the same waterways and places that Suvorov did in the 18th century. Despite the modern-style sightseeing boats, the consciousness of being in the same place where historical things happened can bring the tourists a feeling of being "inside" the ancient landscape. (Moscardo 1996; Relph 1976; Tuan 1977, 1979.) Suvorov's cruise is an example of product development around intangible heritage, as during the sightseeing tour tourists may not visit a historical site at all but a heritage experience can be absorbed through a story. Following Timothy and Boyd's (2006) guideline for inclusive planning and combining the intangible values of heritage to more conventional and traditionally popular tourism activities, the awareness of existing heritage can be increased among the people. At best, the glimpse of history absorbed during a sightseeing boat tour can encourage tourists to visit also the tangible places related to the heritage represented.

In the case of Suvorov's canals, the heritage has to be considered from two different points of view. While canals, castles or fortresses are tangible heritage, intangible heritage includes traditions, stories, myths, legends, etc. According to McKercher and du Cros (2002), three different types of tangible heritage are discussed: buildings and archaeological sites; heritage cities, routes and cultural landscapes; and movable cultural property and museums. Suvorov's tangible heritage is clearly included in all of the three types of assets. The canals, castles and fortresses represent the first-mentioned type; Suvorov's waterway is a tangible route and a cultural landscape; and the collection of the Suvorov Museum in St. Petersburg exemplifies movable cultural property. The tangible heritage sites are important for tourists so that they can connect the intangible heritage to something concrete. Through the means of interpretation, the tangible and intangible values are connected to each other and the heritage will be comprehensively represented. After all, the person whose heritage is interpreted is in the core of the product. An example of successful product development based on the heritage of an ancient person is In Arn's Footsteps in Sweden (Mattsson & Praesto 2005). The framework for product development around the theme of Arn is on a basis quite similar to the case of Suvorov in Finland.

THE PRODUCT WITHIN THE NETWORK

The core of the sightseeing boat network (Fig. 2) in Savonlinna consists of five ship owners/entrepreneurs, one scriptwriter and director, and two actors of the drama play. In the case of this study, one of the actors was also skilled in carrying out the duties of the scriptwriter and the director. In addition to the core network, the local municipal tourism marketing organization, Savonlinna Travel, plays the role of marketer and seller in the network. Props and costumes were made in cooperation with local vocational institutes and polytechnic. All the equipment needed for the product were planned and manufactured by local students. University of Joensuu played the role of network coordinator during the project. The network mentors responsible for arranging the workshop trainings were members of the university staff. Furthermore, NBA in the heritage manager's role was an essential member of the network. Additional facilities such as accommodation and restaurant services are also important when planning comprehensive tourism packages.

An interpretative product based on a drama play is highly dependent on the adaptability of the dramatic content of the play. This fact gives the group of actors a creative freedom in product implementation. In the case of the Savonlinna network, the actor group was responsible for the network coordination. This was reasonable as there were five ship owners with a total of nine ships but only one group of actors. Therefore, the availability of the product depended on the bookings of the actor group.

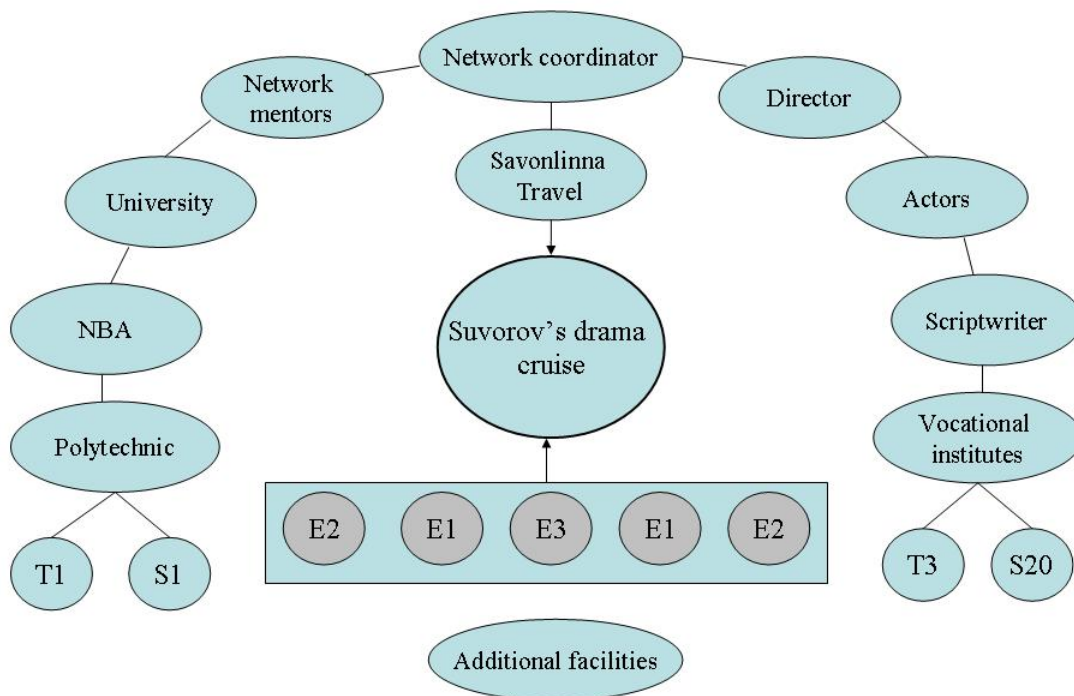


Figure 2. Network for the Suvorov's drama cruise. (E# = Number of boats for each sightseeing boat entrepreneur. T# = Number of teachers involved. S# = Number of students involved).

The Finnish sightseeing boat tours, as well as many other products offered by SMTEs, are usually marketed by highlighting the boat or the enterprise which executes the product. In the case of Suvorov's drama cruises, the product itself has been raised to the front in marketing and the boat where the drama takes place depends on the booking situation of the boats as well as the size and interests of the customer group. The customer segment of this type of drama cruise consists mainly of tourists who are interested in exploring local history and heritage in addition to experiencing the lake environment. The ticket for a Suvorov cruise is more expensive than one for a traditional sightseeing tour, but the customers get added value from this type of product. As the drama play is carried out by professional actors, it can be regarded as a small-scale theatrical production which takes place in an unusual setting. The drama cruise represents a new experience that differs from a traditional sightseeing cruise, and people who are interested in visiting theaters may consider a Suvorov cruise as an alternative for a traditional theatrical performance. In addition to attracting tourists, interpretative programming is a good way of attracting also local people who may not have had much interest or opportunities to explore the heritage of Suvorov earlier; through a dramatic performance, the values and attributes of historic places related to Suvorov may get more attention. (Beck & Cable 2002; Carter 2001.)

SUMMARY

Successful planning and implementation of an interpretative product carried out by a network such as the case of Suvorov's cruises require active and well-organized cooperation between tourism and culture sectors. Successful planning in a well-working network can produce a lucrative product, but it requires common goals from the network members who should not work at cross purposes. Furthermore, information and data sharing between the actors play an important role. As Halme (2001) has noted in her study, working with networked products can also be time-consuming when the development process takes time and quick advancements can not be expected. The model for NPD in heritage tourism gives a useful framework for planning interpretative products within a network that consists of a variety of members with different skills and professions. Workshop training gives the network members an opportunity to discuss their own interests and integrate them into the ambitions of the whole network. Moreover, product development is a learning process for network members.

Based on experiences of the four cases of product networks around the theme of Suvorov, the usability of the model for NPD in heritage tourism appears to be encouraging. Entrepreneurs were interested in creating tourism business around heritage sites and participation was active, especially within the networks of sightseeing boat entrepreneurs. At least, not many of the boaters dared to be left outside the product development. As the development of the model is based on just four cases, it clearly needs further investigation and testing before its usability in the majority of cases can be ensured.

In regard to the partnerships and comprehensive planning in heritage tourism, if the interpretation is well planned through a multi-skilled network, the heritage experience does not always require a straight link to historical sites. During the sightseeing tour by a boat, tourists may not visit a historic site at all but an intangible heritage experience can be absorbed through a story. Interpretative storytelling can highlight historic attributes of a present-day landscape, such as in the case of Lake Saimaa where a rich history of nature modified by the Ice Age meets the history of human activities and the heritage of three nations. A traditional lake landscape contains a range of historic values which remain hidden without proper interpretation. A successful interpretation process and a tourism product development around it require seamless cooperation between actors in tourism and culture. Furthermore, the model for NPD in heritage tourism is a move towards realizing the connection between the tourism business and heritage site preservation. The next stage would be to activate cooperation between heritage managers and tourism entrepreneurs.

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DOING THE JOB IN BETWEEN.
MULTI-UNIT HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF AN
INTERNATIONAL SPORTS EVENT

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ABSTRACT

Exploring the role of managers who are responsible for different operating units has caught the attention of several researchers in the context of service operations in the hospitality and restaurant industry. This paper explores multi-unit human resource management of service industries in the context of an international sports event where the coordination of the different event elements and units is a crucial success factor. The theory and principles of multi-unit management are presented and subsequently applied to a case study of the European Athletics Championships 2006 in Gothenburg, Sweden. The findings reveal that the particular event characteristics set multi-unit principles in a specific context with regards to organisation development, career aspects as well as responsibilities, skills and success criteria. It is concluded that one of the particular challenges that event related multi-unit executives are confronted with is to use the synergies between the units. As a result, training recommendations are given for personnel with multi-unit tasks to guarantee that these employees are prepared effectively for their role as a synergy user.

KEYWORDS: Event Management; Human Resources; Multi-Unit Management; Sports Event.

INTRODUCTION

Managing a major event is a very complex issue (Emery 2001); a lot of efforts are required to ensure that all elements work smoothly together during the execution phase (Masterman 2004). This does not only affect the event location itself, but also additional elements as for example accommodation and transportation facilities. The more complex an event, the bigger is the challenge to coordinate the different event related activities that might be spread over several geographically dispersed locations and the more staff is needed to do so (Shone and Parry 2004). Especially in the case of international sports events, an extensive number of volunteers are required to guarantee a successful interaction of all event units (Emery 2001). Recruiting the right people who have the skills and knowledge to cope with this challenge is one of the key success factors for event organisers (Masterman 2004).

Similarly, exploring the role of employees that are responsible for different operating units is what has caught the attention of several researchers in the context of service operations as for example the hospitality and restaurant industry. Multi-unit theory suggests that managers in multi-unit positions are confronted with specific challenges and that particular skills are needed to succeed (Goss-Turner and Jones 2000; DiPietro et al. 2007). How does this look like in the context of an event where the coordination of the different elements is so crucial? What can event organisers learn from multi-unit theory in service organisations to make sure that the right people are recruited that have the skills and knowledge to cope with this challenge? These are the central questions this paper focuses on by transferring multi-unit theory to the hotel service multi-unit structure of the European Athletics Championships 2006. After presenting the principles of multi-unit management in service organisations, the findings of this research are illustrated. Parallels to multi-unit theory are drawn. It is the aim of this report to explore and illustrate event specific issues of multi-unit activity, to have a look at the specific challenges the corresponding jobholders are faced with and to identify the skills that are required to succeed in this position.

MULTI UNIT MANAGEMENT IN SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

In many developed service organisations especially in mass retail services the company-specific service delivery concept is often operated in different units spread over a wide geographic area (Goss-Turner and Jones 2000). It is this feature that characterizes a so called multi-unit organisation defined as an "organisation that competes in the industry with more than one unit of like concept or theme" (Olsen et al. 1992 in Boella and Goss-Turner 2005, p.287). This geographic dispersion of units is considered to be the consequence of a company's growth and development (Boella and Goss-Turner 2005). In 1978, Sasser et al. (in Goss-Turner and Jones 2000) proposed to transfer the concept of the product life cycle to service organisations and to replace it by the service life cycle. They stated that "the growth of the service organisation and of its operating units (or 'service delivery system') were so interlinked that the firm was likely to follow the familiar pattern of introduction, growth, maturity and potential decline (...). [They] identified that the structure of the organisation, the role of managers and critical success factors would all change as the firm increased in size and spread its operating units further and further afield" (Sasser et al. 1978 in Goss-Turner and Jones 2000, p. 51 f.). Goss-Turner and Jones (2000) outline that for example in the hotel, restaurant and pub retail sector a company's growth is directly linked with the need to introduce standardisation procedures and to centralize control of the operating units. According to the two authors, these processes inevitably lead to the introduction of an additional management level, the so called multi-unit management, situated immediately above the unit managers.

In their comprehensive study of eight major UK hotel, restaurant and pub retail companies, Goss-Turner and Jones (2000, pp. 60 ff.) identified four dimensions that characterize the nature of multi-unit organisations:

- **Geographic density:** "The number of units relative to the size of the area"
- **Unit conformity:** "The extent to which units within an area are identical or not"

- **Job scope:** “The range of tasks and responsibilities at area management level”, varying from being narrowly defined around an operational role to having a wide range of responsibilities
- **Organisational congruence:** “The extent to which all managerial levels within the firm share a common vision and work together towards a common purpose”

The authors continue to suggest a typology of multi-unit managers based on two key influence factors:

- **The number of concepts:** the extent to which the operating units of a company are based on a single concept or multiple ones
- **The approach to maturity:** the extent to which companies perceive the industry as mature and see themselves as driven by external factors or consider themselves to operate in a dynamic environment and seek for new and innovative solutions (Goss-Turner and Jones based this factor on the maturity-dynamism continuum proposed by Baden-Fuller and Stopford 1994)

<i>Number of concepts</i>	Multiple	Multi-brand manager Responsibility for more than one concept Application of almost identical ‘rules of the game’ to them all	Business manager Responsibility for more than one brand Applying creative solutions to each of their units
	Single	Archetype Responsibility over strongly branded identical units Tightly and narrowly defined tasks	Entrepreneur Responsibility for a single concept Developing the potential of each unit as a business
		Mature	Dynamic
<i>Approach to maturity</i>			

Figure 1. Typology of alternative multi-unit management approaches
(Based on Goss-Turner and Jones 2000 pp. 63 ff.)

What these four types have in common are two aspects: they *do a job in between* in a double sense of meaning. First of all, multi-unit managers are considered to be the “most influential interface between corporate strategic management and the operational outlets in which the service encounter takes place” (Goss-Turner 2002 in D’Annunzio 2002, p. 121). They do a job in between strategic management - often located in a company’s head office - and the operating units. That is also the reason why the multi-unit position is considered to be “a career

development aspiration for many unit managers (...) essential in reaching the operations management apex” (Goss-Turner 2002 in D’Annunzio 2002, p. 118). Secondly, multi-unit managers are responsible for different units that are physically distant from each other (Jones 1999). They are doing a job in between in the sense of having to commute between the units and being on site only for a limited period of time. Furthermore, they are often physically distant from their colleagues and immediate superiors which makes coordination and collaboration very difficult (Goss-Turner and Jones 2000). Following from these particular features, DiPietro et al. (2007) as well as Goss-Turner and Jones (2000) have identified that the challenges and tasks multi-unit managers are faced with differ very much from those of unit managers and that specific skills are therefore required to succeed in this position. Preece, Steven and Steven 1999 (in Goss-Turner 2002 in D’Annunzio 2002, p. 123) summarize this issue by considering a multi-unit manager to be an “implementer and controller of strategy, with the ‘make a difference’ attributes of influencer, coach, guide and facilitator of communication”.

How does *doing the job in between* look like in the context of an event where “the most common management technique used by event coordinators is ‘management by wandering around’ ” (Shone and Parry 2004, p. 210)? It was the aim of this research to identify event specific issues of multi-unit activity and to investigate the challenges jobholders might be faced with when they coordinate different event sites.

APPLYING MULTI-UNIT MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES TO AN INTERNATIONAL SPORTS EVENT

Methodology

An inductive, qualitative approach was adopted, reflecting the investigator’s involvement as group leader hotel service during the European Athletics Championships 2006 in Gothenburg. Research sources included the investigator’s 39-page diary as well as the documents kept from the event. It needs to be pointed out that this paper was written 18 months after the event with the investigator adopting a retrospective point of view. Consequently, there might be some bias in the findings. To check the own findings against other resources and to get additional information, a semi-structured interview was conducted with one of the group leader colleagues, Maria Zetterqvist. In the course of the project, a three step process was applied. First of all, the investigator searched for multi-unit key elements in a corresponding literature review. In the next step, research materials were evaluated and checked against these elements to note the parallels. Finally, the results were matched with the specific features of an event to identify the event related issues of multi-unit activity. Due to the fact that a single case study approach was conducted focusing on one department only, the results cannot be generalized. However, this paper aims to gain an understanding of multi-unit activity in sports events as this might help event organisers to develop specific volunteer training programs as well as assist them to employ the right people that have the skills and knowledge to succeed in the multi-unit position.

Findings

Organisation development

The European Athletics Championships were hosted by the city of Gothenburg in Sweden and took place from 6th until 13th August 2006 with 1,288 athletes from 48 nations (Got Event AB 2006). In October 2001, the European Athletics Association took the decision that the city of Gothenburg should host the event. After this project initiation stage, the project planning was launched with the foundation of the local organising committee (LOC). The LOC members had the overall responsibility of directing and leading the project and of controlling the budget. Got Event AB, Gothenburg's event office, was responsible for the operative planning. (19th European Athletics Championships 2006a) A functional structure (Bühner 1999) was built up including the departments Administration & Human Resources, Competitions, Infrastructure & Venues, Ceremonies, Logistics, Marketing, Sponsoring and TV & Media (19th European Athletics Championships 2006b). This function based organisation structure in the planning stage was executed by full-time staff working for Got Event AB, project-related employees and interns. They all had the common task to contribute to the event goal that served as a principle guideline to strive for:

“To provide the best event that has ever taken place in Sweden and to reach this with a balanced budget” (19th European Athletics Championships 2006a)

For the successful event execution nearly 3,000 volunteers were recruited working in teams related to the specific functions. They were guided by a second hierarchical level of group leaders working as volunteers as well.

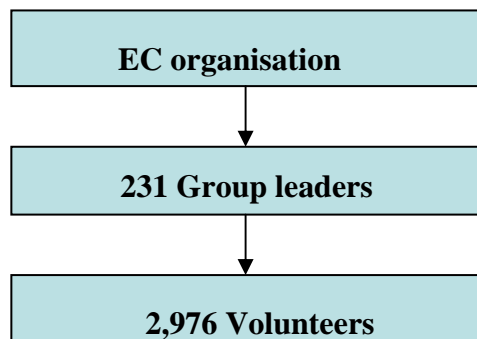


Figure 2. European Championships organisational structure
(Based on 19th European Athletics Championships 2006a)

The Administration & Human resource department launched the online application process in April 2005. Applicants were asked to indicate their motivation, job preference for the event, educational background, job experience and language skills. Additional questions asked for leadership skills and previous experiences as volunteers in sports events. According to the human resource department at that time, especially those last two criteria were decisive for the

selection of the group leaders. Potential group leader candidates were invited to a volunteer job interview whereas the function related volunteers were selected upon their online application data. To prepare the volunteers for their jobs, several trainings were offered. The training sessions started in December 2005 with a general group leader training day in collaboration with SISU idrottsutbildarna, the professional sports training organisation in Sweden. In the course of this training, the group leaders were made familiar with the organisational structures of the Championships. Furthermore, the group leader role and skills were discussed. The group leader values were determined to be:

- Tydlighet – to be clear
 - Öppenhet – to be open-minded
 - Att gi energi – to give energy
 - Att vara ett föredöme – to lead by example
- (19th European Athletics Championships 2006b)

The group leader training was followed by a general training for all volunteers. After these general trainings headed by the human resource department, the following trainings were related to the specific functions and were offered by the functional specialists. The training activities emphasized general facts and helped to establish contacts and a network with the future colleagues as the following interview statement illustrates:

“The training was held on a very general level and I would say no that did not help me in the daily job as a leader. But it did provide me with a group feeling and I established contact with other leaders.” (Zetterqvist 2008)

Multi-unit activity – the hotel service concept

The accommodation department was part of the logistics department and was responsible for accommodating the visitors from all over Europe for the time of the event. Visitors were divided in four different groups:

Table 1. Hotel overview
(Based on 19th European Athletics Championships 2006a)

<u>Team Hotels</u>	<u>VIP Hotels</u>	<u>Media Hotels</u>	<u>Officials</u>
Athletes	EAA staff	Journalists	Referees
Trainer staff	Special Guests	TV staff	Technical staff
Medical staff	Sponsors	Photographers	
	Politicians		

As the organising committee was considered to be a major client of the hotels, multi-unit activity was not related to being responsible for the hotels themselves, but for the so-called hotel service desks the European Athletics Association prescribes:

“An information desk will be located in the lobby of each Team hotel to assist athletes and officials with hotel check-in procedures and provide details on shuttle services, transportation and local information.” (19th European Athletics Championships 2006c)

The desks were established in each hotel reception hall and were decorated with the championships’ sign, flag and tablecloth. The desks were operated four days prior to, during and one day after the event. The following table shows the overall structures of the hotel service desks:

Table 2. Multi-unit structure hotel service
(Based on 19th European Athletics Championships 2006a)

<i>Hotel Group</i>	<i>Team Hotels</i>	<i>VIP Hotels</i>	<i>Media & Officials Hotels</i>
Number of hotels	4	3	12
Group leaders			
Multi-unit executives	3	4	4
Hotel service			
volunteers			
Unit staff	27	24	40

The details of the multi-unit structure related to the **team hotels** will be described by applying above mentioned multi-unit classification dimensions. To accommodate the athletes, the organising committee had selected four hotels that were all located in the city centre and within walking distance of the main competition venue, the Ullevi stadium. *Geographic density* was high to meet the needs of the athletes to be close to both the competition venue and the city. All team hotels were classified as 4-star hotels. Yet, here again it needs to be underlined that the multi-unit structure was not based on the hotels themselves, but on the hotel service desks following the same concept in each hotel. Therefore, *unit conformity* was generally high. Yet, the number of teams that were accommodated in each hotel ranged from one team up to 23 teams which affected the work load of the hotel service teams. The more teams were accommodated in

the hotel, the more frequently the desks were visited. To analyse the multi-unit *job scope*, the official job descriptions of the hotel service unit volunteers and the hotel service group leaders (with multi-unit tasks) are compared in the following table:

Table 3. Comparison of unit and multi-unit job descriptions
(Based on 19th European Athletics Championships 2006a and 2006b)

<i>Hotel service tasks</i>	<i>Hotel service multi-unit tasks</i>
To provide an outstanding service in collaboration with the hotel employees	To visit the hotels
To inform about the event, EC festival and Gothenburg city	To plan staff rotas for the shifts
To help with problems and answer questions	To ensure smooth processes in the operations of each hotel service desk
To book team meetings and physiotherapy rooms in the hotel	To coordinate with functional specialists in the organising committee and the volunteer center
To represent the EC and Gothenburg	To assist hotel service volunteers with solving problems

Based on the diary and interview analysis additional group leader tasks were identified as follows:

- To train hotel service volunteers on site e.g. how to book the meeting rooms
- To contribute to process optimisation and improvements by communicating issues upwards and downwards e.g. how to ensure effective coordination of airport shuttle services when the drivers were picking up the athletes in the hotel lobby
- To communicate effectively between functional specialists in the organising committee, hotel employees, hotel service volunteers, volunteer centre by having daily meetings and a constant flow of email news

- To gather and disseminate information and ensure knowledge transfer by making sure all new information was documented for those who were not on duty
- To cover unit shifts

Whereas hotel service volunteers were responsible for operational tasks related to athlete specific accommodation needs, the group leader tasks included human resource issues like staffing, training and motivating, operations and process improvement as well as knowledge transfer and effective communication of current issues up- and downwards. Consequently, the job scope was wide, yet excluded issues as for example financial issues and marketing that were not directly related to the hotel service desks. The key role of the hotel service group leaders was to act as an interface between the functional specialists in the organising committee and the volunteers working at the hotel service desks as the following interview statement confirms: “Our aim was to act as a link between the organisation and the volunteers.”

Having a look at the *organisational congruence* dimension, the event goal was determined to be “To provide the best event that has ever taken place in Sweden and to reach this with a balanced budget” as mentioned above. The general goal all volunteers should be striving for was slightly modified: To provide “The Best Event Ever”! (19th European Athletics Championships 2006a) Consequently, only the event related part was emphasized taking into consideration that the volunteers were not involved in the planning and budgeting of the event. This underlines again that all volunteers should focus on their specific task. In the case of the hotel service team, the mission everybody should be striving for was “to provide a great experience for all visitors” and “service with a smile” (19th European Athletics Championships 2006b). This service-oriented mission clearly underlines that a flexible approach was more appropriate than an orientation towards determined systems. As presented above, one of the most important hotel service group leader tasks was to contribute to process optimisation. Their knowledge of what happens in the hotels was actively used to improve operations. The example of the group leaders discussing airport shuttle procedures with the transport team to find the best solution for ensuring a smooth coordination in the hotel lobbies illustrates the interdepartmental striving for the common goal.

DISCUSSING ASPECTS OF MULTI-UNIT ACTIVITY IN THE CONTEXT OF AN EVENT

Research revealed that in the case of the European championships 2006, the hotel service group leaders were *doing a job in between* in above mentioned double sense of meaning: they were not only responsible for the hotel service desks in different units being physically distant from each other, they were also acting as a critical interface between the organising committee and the hotel service volunteers. Consequently, it is justified to speak of multi-unit activity in this case. Yet, when having a look at the characteristics of an event, there are grounds for assuming that multi-unit activity during an event happens in a particular context. Not only is an event of limited duration with a clear starting and finishing point (Getz 1991) in a one-off organisation (Torkildsen 1994 in Emery 2002), it is also very staff-intensive in that more staff is needed for the operation of the event than for its planning (Shone and Parry 2004). Furthermore,

every event is unique, even if recurring and taking place every fourth year as in the case of the European Athletics Championships. Or to speak in terms of Ansoff, every event is a new product in a new market (Schmalen 1996). The execution of an event cannot be predicted in detail and is always targeted at different visitors and participants (Freyer 2000 in Dreyer 2000). Another event feature is that everything happens “within a dynamically evolving and significantly changing local organisational structure” (Emery 2002, p. 320).

These event features have particular implications when applying principles of multi-unit management. In terms of *organisation development*, the enormous need of additional staff is required only for the period of the event execution. Applying the project life cycle in the event context (Morris and Hough 1993 in Emery 2002) and drawing a parallel to above mentioned service life cycle, it becomes apparent that multi-unit activity in an event context is not a natural consequence of a company’s growth, but is restricted to the requirements of the event execution.

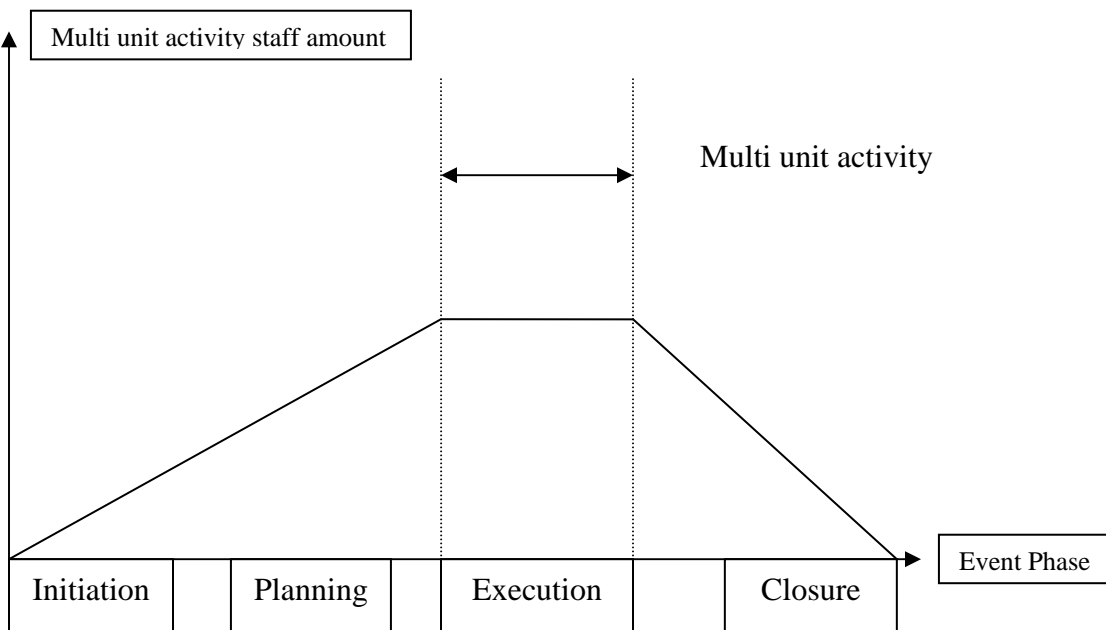


Figure 3. Multi-unit activity related to the project life cycle
(Adapted from Morris’ and Hough’s 1993 project life cycle in Emery 2002)

As seen in the case of Gothenburg, the hotel service volunteers were recruited only for the period of the event itself, even if the recruitment and training process started more than one year before. No involvement was necessary any longer in the last stage of the project life cycle, the project closure, after the last athletes had left. Both hotel service volunteers and the group leaders started and finished their jobs at the same time. This, however, means as well, that no *vertical career development* was possible within the same event structure which illustrates a big difference to the long term multi-unit management in service organisations as discussed above. On the other hand, it has to be kept in mind that previous volunteer experiences were one of the

crucial selection criteria for the group leader position. If taking into consideration that the next step could be a full time job in an organising committee, a parallel can be drawn to the vertical career development path, yet, not within the same event structure. A systematic talent management system is therefore difficult to implement.

In the case of Gothenburg, the limited duration of the multi-unit activity directly affected another aspect. The *responsibilities* of the hotel service multi-unit group leaders were related directly to the optimisation of the event execution. As presented above, they should focus on contributing to the “Best event ever” by “providing a great experience for all visitors”. In the daily meetings with the functional specialists, the hotel service group leaders were encouraged to propose process improvements themselves as in the case of the airport shuttle issue. Even when taking into consideration that the case study findings might be biased by the fact that - following Hofstede’s dimension of uncertainty avoidance (Kasper, van Helsdingen, and de Vrier jr. 2006) - the Swedes are generally supposed to cope with unpredictable situations in a very flexible way, the airport shuttle problem had to be solved in all units within a very short time underpinning the dynamic environment in which an event takes place. In this context, the knowledge of a problem in one unit was used to find solutions that were applicable to the other units as well. This aspect is directly linked to the specific *skills* that were required to be successful in the group leader position. Both the investigator and the interviewed group leader agreed that coping with uncertainty and adapting to rapid changes in a very short time, clear communication upwards and downwards the organisation as well as a rapid knowledge and information transfer to the hotel service volunteers in all the units were important *success criteria* for the multi-unit job matching both with the event uniqueness feature as well as the group leader values developed in the course of the training: to be clear and open-minded, to give energy and to lead by example.

CONCLUSION AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

This paper has analysed multi-unit activity in the context of the European Athletics Championships 2006. Multi-unit managers in service organisations are confronted with the specific challenge of being responsible for several operating units that are physically distant and of being the crucial interface between strategic management and unit operations. These aspects of *doing a job in between* could be confirmed in the case of the European Athletics Championships. Yet, the particular event characteristics set multi-unit principles in a specific context with regards to the duration of the multi-unit job, career development aspects as well as responsibilities, skills and success criteria. In their position as intermediary between the planners and the front-line, multi-unit executives in Gothenburg needed to identify critical unpredictable points in the units, communicate them upwards, help to solve them and communicate the solutions back to the units. As problems that occurred in one unit were used to improve the processes in all other units as well, it can be concluded that the hotel service group leaders’ main challenge was to use synergies between the fairly identical hotel service units in a dynamic environment. Coming back to Goss-Turner and Jones’ (2000) multi-unit typology, it is proposed that the *synergy user* replaces the entrepreneur type in this event case study. Further research might be necessary to explore the specific role of multi-unit executives who are responsible for multiple concepts in the dynamic environment of an event.

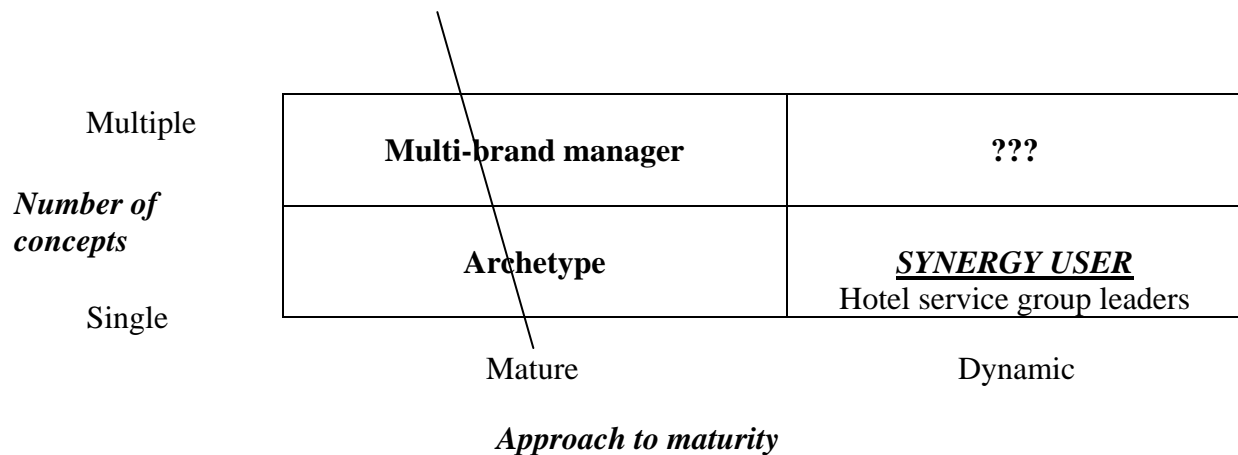


Figure 4. Typology of alternative multi-unit management approaches in an event context
(Adapted from Goss-Turner and Jones 2000, pp. 63 ff.)

By transferring the principles of multi-unit management in service organisations to the context of an event, this study might help event organisers to increase awareness of the specific multi-unit structure that is applicable in their case. The more complex an event, the more important is it to recruit volunteers with excellent communication and problem solving skills who are able to cope with uncertainty and to ensure rapid knowledge and information transfer. To make sure that they are prepared effectively to their role of a synergy user, the following training recommendations are given:

- 1) Discussion of multi-unit theory in the training to raise awareness of the role
- 2) Case study work and hotel service role plays based on concrete examples and group discussions on how to deal with the simulated situations.
- 3) Invitation of jobholders of a similar position in an earlier event to make them share their experiences.

Especially the last aspect seems to be important not only for future jobholders, but also for future organisers. Due to their specific position between the planners and the front-line, event related multi-unit executives should be encouraged to document their experiences and to play a crucial role in the process of knowledge transfer to future organisers. In this way, the uniqueness of the future event can be made at least a little bit more transparent and predictable.

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THE PREFERENCES OF POTENTIAL MARINE RESEARCH TOURISTS FOR DIFFERENT MARINE RESEARCH TOURISM PRODUCTS IN AUSTRALIA

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ABSTRACT

Marine research tourism is a form of marine tourism whereby marine research is an important part of the tourism attraction. Research was undertaken to further understand the preferences of potential marine research tourists for different marine research tourism products and benefits. Such information can be used to identify suitable markets, develop effective promotional campaigns, and design effective and different products. To achieve the research goal, an online survey (n=311) and benefit segmentation approach was used. Different marine research tourism products (n=12) were devised from a typological assessment of forty two marine research tourism ventures. Benefits (n=26) were devised from an assessment of related tourism types and discussions with key stakeholders. Results indicate that potential marine research tourists who regularly watch nature documentaries, volunteer, are a member of a conservation group, have a natural sciences background, SCUBA dive, snorkel or cetacean watch, have notably higher interest in more marine research tourism products. Furthermore, females and international survey respondents had notably higher interest in more marine research tourism products. The most important benefits for survey respondents were the opportunity to explore marine phenomena and discover new things (86%), and learn from marine researchers (86%). The least important benefits for survey respondents were an offshore boating or sailing experience (40%) and a high level of social interaction with others (46%). This paper identifies and affirms the existence of a set of likely relationships between marine research tourism market segments, preferred benefits and product types. Such information can be used for marine research tourism product design and marketing.

KEYWORDS: Marine, Research, Tourism, Benefits, Preferences, Products

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INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines preliminary results from research into the preferences of potential marine research tourists (n = 311) for different marine research tourism products and associated benefits. Specifically this paper reports on;

1. A benefit segmentation and online survey method for this research
2. The preferences of potential marine research tourists for 12 different marine research tourism products
3. The preferences of potential marine research tourists for 26 different benefits
4. The preferences of potential marine research tourists and their varying interest in 12 different marine research tourism products
5. The different market segments that prefer different marine research tourism products

Marine research tourism is defined as marine ecotourism where marine research is an important part of the tourism attraction (adapted from Benson, 2005). Marine research tourism products are defined as marine research tourism attractions, destinations, benefits and activities. In this paper, a marine research tourism venture must last for one or more days, be advertised publicly, take paying tourists or volunteers, and operate on a commercial basis (adapted from Ellis, 2003a).

BACKGROUND

As tourism advances and evolves as an industry, many new specialised forms of niche tourism have emerged. Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper (2003) reported on a trend in the western tourism market from the 1980s to the present, whereby travel motivations of tourists are changing from passive activities towards learning and broadening their horizons. Among these tourism markets is the marine research tourism market where marine research is an important part of the tourist attraction (Wood & Coghlan, 2008).

Cousins (2007) and Ellis (2003b) reported that the majority of regional or globally focused marine research tourism operators worldwide are organised from companies based in the UK or USA. Examples of companies that offer marine research tourism experiences are the Earthwatch Institute, The Oceanic Society, Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Tethys Institute, Global Vision International, and the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society.

The primary conceptual framework for this research was to envisage marine research tourism as a combination of better known tourism typologies namely; marine, ecotourism, volunteer, scientific and educational tourism, wildlife, adventure and cultural tourism (adapted from Benson, 2005; Silberberg, 1995). Inherent within this conceptual framework is that combinations of many traits from those better known tourism typologies can be manifested and measured within marine research tourism ventures.

This paper seeks to understand the preferences of potential marine research tourists who are analogous to purposeful cultural tourists as described by McKercher and du Cros (2002). Purposeful marine research tourists place a moderate to high value on marine research as part of their overall decision to visit a destination, and they seek a relatively moderate to highly deep experience when participating in marine research tourism (adapted from McKercher & du Cros, 2002).

MARINE RESEARCH TOURISM IN AUSTRALIA

Based on discussions with marine research tourism stakeholders in Australia and searching the Internet, marine research tourism in Australia is mostly characterised by approximately 25 small and independent ventures. An exception to this is The Earthwatch Institute who offer two marine research tourism ventures in northern Australia. Ten of these twenty five enterprises operate in the Great Barrier Reef region of Australia, eleven operate in temperate Australia, five in north Western Australia, and two in the Gulf of Carpentaria. Ten of these twenty five enterprises are known to offer marine research tourism experiences on a regular basis, while the remainder offer marine research tourism experiences on a seasonal and/or one off basis. Ten enterprises offer marine research tourism experiences that last one or more weeks and seven enterprises offer predominantly marine education experiences that can last for one day. Twelve of these enterprises offer marine research tourism experiences that actively involve the tourist in official marine research activity while the others generally offer more passive, comfort orientated and/or educational experiences.

In hard currency terms, it is not known what tourism revenue is generated from marine research tourism in Australia. The cost for tourist participation in marine research tourism can range from \$A60 per day to \$A1, 100 per day (Wood, 2008a). Cost will depend on the venture's level of volunteer activity, comfort/hospitality, technology, and/or environmental remoteness. Marine research tourism frequently involves marine wildlife as the major research attraction for the tourist. Hence, the tourism revenue from a marine research tourism enterprise is in many ways, comparable to tourism revenue gained from marine tourism based on free ranging marine wildlife as described by Birtles, Valentine and Curnock (2001). Similarly, it is not known what marine research revenue is generated from marine research tourism in Australia. However, in many cases, marine research tourism ventures are known to offer frequent, ongoing and viable opportunities for professional marine researchers and enthusiasts to carry out marine research projects. In some cases, outcomes from these projects include academic papers (Birtles, Valentine, Curnock, Arnold and Dunstan, 2002; Arnold, and Birtles, 1999) that have influenced the conservation management of endangered dwarf minke whales and increased conservation based zoning of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia.

Notably, not all marine research tourism enterprises have a high focus on quality marine research or management outcomes. For example, other enterprises advertise marine research as an important part of their attraction for tourists, but focus on offering quality providing quality marine education, marine adventure and/or marine wildlife tourism experiences. Both cases focus less on implementing official marine research projects and often have less significant marine research outcomes. This can be a dilemma for marine research tourism enterprises that

seeks to involve marine researchers because most marine researchers will prefer only to be involved in ventures with high quality marine research (Wood & Coghlan 2008). Furthermore, marine researchers will also prudently prefer involvement in those marine research tourism enterprises that demonstrate economically sustainable markets and products (Ellis, 2003b).

A BENEFIT SEGMENTATION RESEARCH METHOD

Knowledge gained from market segmentation can enable tourism suppliers to identify suitable markets, design effective and different products, and develop effective and appropriate promotional campaigns (Blamey 1997; Garrod, 2008; Weaver 2001). Garrod (2008), Frochot and Morrison (2000) and, Murphy and Norris (2005) highlight benefit segmentation as a useful method to further understand the preferences of different groups of tourists for different products and benefits. For example, Murphy and Norris (2005) undertook benefit segmentation on visitor survey data from 2215 tourists to the Great Barrier Reef (GBR). Their results identified four notable market segments. Differences amongst these four market segments were attributed to the tourists' different preferences for different levels of involvement with the reef and desire for information and learning (Murphy & Norris, 2005).

Hence, to further understand the preferences of potential marine research tourists for different marine research tourism products and benefits, a benefit segmentation method was used. To achieve this, this research was required to develop;

1. An accessible and representative set of potential marine research tourists
2. A representative set of marine research tourism products
3. A conceptually sound set of benefits for marine research tourists
4. Survey questions to identify demographic characteristics of survey respondents

1. Identification of a representative set of prospective marine research tourists

Wood and Coghlan (2008) reported that much of the variation in the nature of a marine research tourism venture is due to the tourist's level of active involvement and required technical skills while on different types of marine research tourism ventures. Their research also determined that marine research tourism can appeal to a wide cross-section of potential tourists. For example, some marine research tourists may prefer a highly active, adventurous and remote experience with limited comfort, and some marine research tourists may prefer a less active, low risk, more educative and comfortable experience.

Research by Benson (2005), Clifton and Benson (2006), Cousins (2007) and, Weiler and Richins (1995), and a preliminary assessment of 42 marine research tourism venture web sites, generated a list of potential marine research tourists (Table 1). This assessment also indicated that potential marine research tourists are usually relatively highly educated, interested in marine research, and affluent enough to travel to and participate in marine research tourism. However, such information does not clarify, in any depth, what the preferences of potential marine research tourists are for different marine research tourism products and benefits.

Table 1: Potential Marine Research Tourists.

Marine wildlife tourists	Scuba divers	Nature enthusiasts
Adventure tourists	Volunteer tourists	Repeat marine research tourists
Marine resort tourists	Educational tourists	Trained marine researchers
Ecotourists	Gap year travelers	Marine tourism holiday makers
University students	Snorkellers	

2. Development of a representative set of marine research tourism products

Wood and Coghlan (2008) developed a classification methodology to classify marine research tourism ventures worldwide based on information obtained from the World Wide Web. This methodology was applied to classify 42 marine research tourism ventures worldwide into six classes (i.e. Classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6) of marine research tourism ventures (Figure 1). The character of these six marine research tourism venture classes is largely explained by the underlying variation of seven main factors as illustrated in Figure 1.

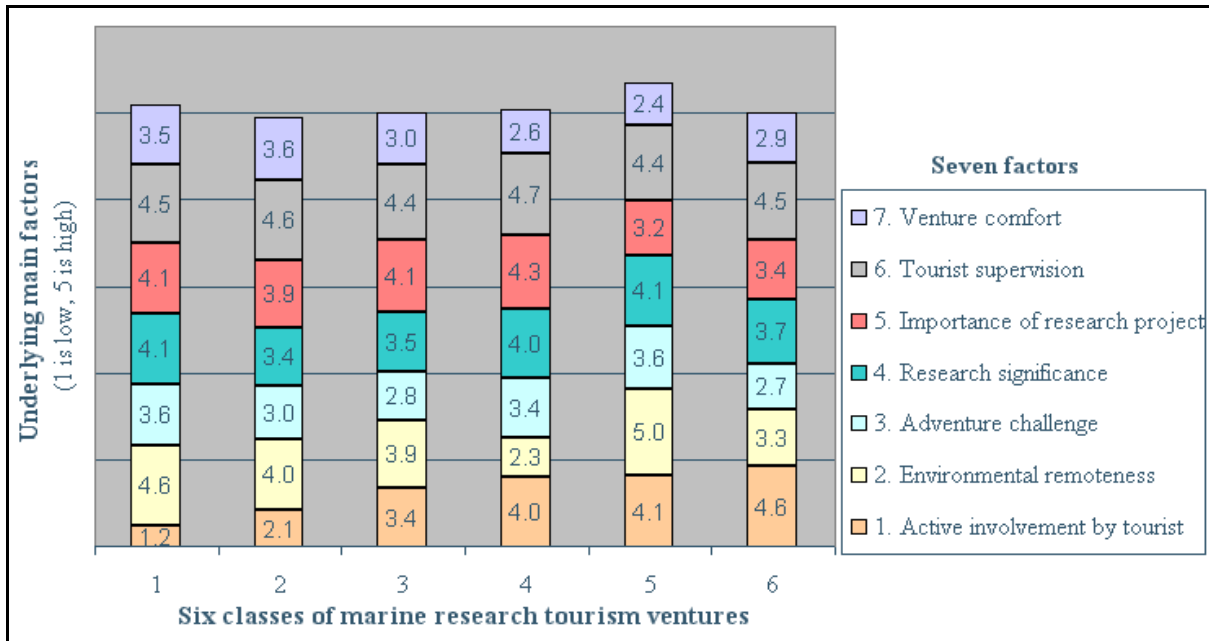


Figure 1: Seven Classes of Marine Research Tourism Ventures (Source: Wood & Coghlan, 2008).

In terms of the seven underlying main factors, the level of active involvement (Brown & Lehto, 2005) accounted for 32 % of the variation, while environmental remoteness (Orams, 1999) accounted for 16 %, the level of adventure (Swarbrooke, Beard, Leckie & Pomfret, 2003) for 10%, research significance of the marine research project that the tourist is involved with (7%), importance of the destination for the tourist when compared with the research project (Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Swarbrooke et al. 2003) (6%), tourist supervision by researchers (6%), and level of tourist comfort (4%).

12 one page examples of marine research tourism products within Australia (Table 2) were developed from this classification scheme. These example marine research tourism products (Wood, 2008a) are based on existing marine research tourism products both in Australia and elsewhere. It was these one page examples that survey respondents were asked to refer to when considering their interest in different marine research tourism products. When survey respondents were asked about their level interest in different marine research tourism product, they were asked to answer as if the cost of each product was not an obstacle to any participation.

Table 2: 12 Types of Marine Research Tourism Products used for Online Survey.

Name of example marine research tourism product	Class	Notable feature
1. A coral spawning research and adventure trip on a tropical coral reef	1	Live-aboard vessel
2. A submersible research expedition to Australia's Bon Hommey undersea ridge	1	A submersible
3. A bottlenose dolphin education holiday on the southern Australian coastline	2	Pub accommodation
4. Day trip to the reef with some marine research as part of the attraction	2	Day trip
5. Volunteer at a penguin rescue centre on the southern Australian coastline	3	Temperate setting
6. Research, education and adventure across the Whitsundays of tropical Queensland	3	Tropical setting
7. Work with marine turtles and indigenous rangers in remote northern Australia	4	Coastal based
8. Biodiversity and habitat mapping in north Western Australia	4	Rugged trip
9. Sail, volunteer and track blue whales in the Southern Ocean	5	Sailing vessel
10. A continuous sailing expedition to explore and help research the oceans of Australia	5	Continuous expedition
11. Survey coral reefs and help assess the impacts of climate change on coral reefs	6	Reef attraction
12. Volunteer and train at an Australian whale and dolphin research institute	6	Cetacean attraction

3. Development of a set of conceptually sound benefits for undertaking benefit segmentation

Table 3 shows a set of benefit criteria that were used to undertake effective benefit segmentation via an online survey of potential marine research tourists. This information was derived by applying the previous conceptual framework, and other information previously gained from recent discussions with 54 key stakeholders who had experience with marine research tourism in Australia. Survey respondents were asked to indicate if their preferences for different benefit criteria were; very important, important, somewhat important, or not very important.

Table 3: Benefit criteria that were used to Assess Tourist Preferences for Different Marine Research Tourism Products.

Benefits criteria for assessing tourist preferences	Reference
The importance of marine research program to the marine research community	Discussions with stakeholders
Learning from the marine researchers	Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003
A high level of involvement in the marine research program	Brown and Lehto, 2005; Callanan and Thomas, 2005
The high level of marine research training that you can receive	Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003
The high number of training days you can be involved with	Discussions with stakeholders
The high level of skill and knowledge needed to participate	Discussions with stakeholders
A high level of marine research education you can receive	Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003
The marine research technology or research facility that you can be involved with	Discussions with stakeholders
The experience of the marine researchers who are undertaking the research	Discussions with stakeholders
The venture's high level of involvement in conservation of marine wildlife or habitat	Ecotourism, 2008; Weaver, 2001
The destination (e.g. an island, a coral reef, the southern ocean, a sailing trip, a resort, etc.)	Discussions with stakeholders
The opportunity to have fun	Coghlan, 2006
The main vessel (e.g. ship or boat) that is used for travel or research (if applicable)	Discussions with stakeholders
The marine wildlife that is being researched	Discussions with stakeholders
A high level of adventure found on the venture	Swarbrooke et al., 2003
The duration of the trip (including any time on a boat)	Callanan and Thomas, 2005
The high quality of the marine researchers who are undertaking the research	Discussions with stakeholders

Table 3: Continued.

A high level of solitude, tranquillity, and closeness to nature whilst on the venture	Orams, 1999
A high level of social interaction with others on the venture	Orams, 1999
A high level of interaction with the local people	Ecotourism, 2008; Weaver, 2001
Avoiding sun burn, cold exposure and/or sea sickness	Discussions with stakeholders
A high level of self sufficiency needed while on the venture	Orams, 1999
An opportunity to receive recognised marine research education and training	Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003
There is an offshore boating or sailing experience	Orams, 1999
The opportunity to scuba dive	Garrod, 2008
The opportunity to explore marine phenomena and discover new things	Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper, 2003

4. Development of survey questions to identify demographic characteristics of survey respondents

To complement this information, a range of survey questions were designed to identify market segment characteristics of survey respondents (Table 4).

Table 4: Survey Questions to Identify Market Segment Characteristics of Survey Respondents.

Market segment characteristic
What country and town are you presently from?
Are you male or female?
What is your age group?
What is your occupation?
When on a marine based holiday, what group of potential marine research tourists (Table 1) would you generally describe yourself as?
What is your formal educational background?
When at home, how many times per week would you watch television nature documentaries?
Do you have a working background in natural science or the environment?
Are you a supporter of an environmental conservation organisation?
Are you an active member of a volunteer organisation?
What is your whale or dolphin watching experience?
What is your snorkelling experience?
What is your SCUBA diving experience?

Develop, implement, analyse and interpret an online survey

Based on the information in Tables 1 to 4, an online survey instrument was devised (Wood, 2008b). The survey request was e-mailed out to at least 1800 people across Australia and the world that were likely to match the profile of potential marine research tourists that is shown in Table 1. The group comprised the researcher's associates and their colleagues, and a set of specific market segments namely; repeat marine research tourists, SCUBA divers, marine researchers and university students. The great majority of the researcher's associates could be broadly typified as professional working people or university students, and as people who are not directly involved in marine research or marine tourism. Organisations contacted included the Project Aware Foundation, Reef Check Australia, the Australian Marine Science Association, Flinders University, James Cook University, Melbourne University, Murdoch University, University of Queensland, the CSIRO, and the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

At the time of this paper, 311 people had completed the online survey. The age, gender, education and nationality demographic breakdown of survey respondents is in Table 5. There were 199 Australian and 109 international survey respondents. International survey respondents were from North America (n = 42), Central and South America (n = 16), SE Asia (n = 16), Europe (n = 22), and South Pacific, Africa and China (n = 13).

Table 5: Age, Gender, Education and Nationality Demographics of Survey Respondents.

Age	Gender		Education			Nationality	
	F	M	High School	Technical college	University	Australian	International
18 – 30	62	33	2	1	93	67	29
31 – 40	39	43	5	6	71	49	33
41 – 50	32	42	9	6	59	46	28
51 – 60	17	33	7	7	36	34	16
61 -70	2	5	1	1	4	3	3
Total	152	156	24	21	263	199	109
Not stated	3		1	0	2	1	2

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistical analysis was undertaken on the survey results to identify the;

1. Preferences of potential marine research tourists for the 12 different marine research tourism products
2. Preferences of potential marine research tourists for 26 different benefits
3. The benefit preferences of survey respondents and their varying interest in 12 different marine research tourism products
4. Market segments that prefer different marine research tourism products

The statistical methods used to derive the results for C and D included a discriminant analysis and heat map analysis. For results C, the discriminant analysis technique used the survey respondents' preference ranking of the benefit criteria (Table 3) as variables and the marine research tourism product names (Table 2) as the factors. For results D, the discriminant analysis technique used the survey respondents' preference ranking of marine research tourism products (Table 2) as variables and the market segment criteria (Table 4) as the factors. Results from the discriminant analysis represent the average value of the variables for each of the different factors. A heat map analysis was applied on the discriminant analysis results so as to better communicate the low to high variability of results through a colour scheme ranging from blue (i.e. low value) to tan (i.e. moderate) and yellow (i.e. high).

A. Preferences of potential marine research tourists for 12 different marine research tourism products

Table 6: The Preferences of Survey Respondents (n = 311) for 12 different Marine Research Tourism Products.

Marine research tourism venture	Very interested	Possibly interested	Not interested
2. A submersible research expedition to Australia's Bon Hommey undersea ridge	57%	18%	14%
1. A coral spawning research and adventure trip on a tropical coral reef	55%	31%	7%
9. Sail, volunteer and track blue whales in the Southern Ocean	53%	26%	13%
7. Work with marine turtles and indigenous rangers in remote northern Australia	52%	30%	13%
11. Survey coral reefs and help assess the impacts of climate change on coral reefs	52%	32%	11%
4. Day trip to the reef with some marine research as part of the attraction	44%	31%	22%
6. Research, education and adventure across the Whitsundays	44%	31%	17%
10. A continuous sailing expedition to explore and help research the oceans of Australia	43%	37%	15%
12. Volunteer and train at an Australian whale and dolphin research institute	41%	30%	23%
3. A bottlenose dolphin education holiday on the southern Australian coastline	37%	41%	16%
8. Biodiversity and habitat mapping in north Western Australia	34%	36%	22%
5. Volunteer at a penguin rescue centre in southern Australia	32%	36%	23%

Table 6 describes the overall preferences of potential marine research tourists (n = 311) for 12 types of marine research tourism products. Notably 57% survey respondents were very interested in product 2 (i.e. the submersible expedition) and 55% were very interested in product 1 (i.e. coral spawning research). Just 32% of survey respondents were very interested in product 5 (i.e. volunteering at a penguin rescue centre). Only 7% of survey respondents were not interested in product 11 (i.e. surveying coral reefs) and 23% of survey respondents were not interested in product 5 (i.e. volunteering at a penguin rescue centre).

B. Preferences of potential marine research tourists for different benefits

Table 7 lists the 5 top and bottom benefits preferred by survey respondents (n = 311). In terms of very high or high importance to survey respondents, the top benefits were the opportunity to explore marine phenomena and discover new things (88%), learning from marine researchers (86%), the quality (83%) and experience (82%) of marine researchers, and the opportunity to have fun (80%). The bottom benefits included; an offshore boating or sailing experience (40%), social interaction (46%), skill and knowledge (46%), a high level of self sufficiency (53%), and a high number of training days (54%). The latter results could be interpreted as a preference by many survey respondents for a less active marine research tourism experience that requires less skill, knowledge, training, education, self sufficiency and social interaction.

Table 7: The 5 Top and Bottom Benefits Preferred by Survey Respondents (n=311).

Top 5	Benefit	Important or very important
1	The opportunity to explore marine phenomena and discover new things	88%
2	Learning from the marine researchers	86%
3	The high quality of the marine researchers who are undertaking the research	83%
4	The experience of the marine researchers who are undertaking the research	82%
5	The opportunity to have fun	80%
Bottom 5		
22	The high number of training days you can be involved with	54%
23	A high level of self sufficiency needed while on the venture	53%
24	The high level of skill and knowledge needed to participate	46%
25	A high level of social interaction with others on the venture	46%
26	There is an offshore boating or sailing experience	40%

C. The benefit preferences of survey respondents and their varying interest in 12 different marine research tourism products

Table 8: Notable Benefit Preferences for Survey Respondents who were Very Interested in Participating in One or More of the 12 Marine Research Tourism Products.

Benefit	Product Number											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
The opportunity to SCUBA dive	3.0	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.0
There is an offshore boating or sailing experience	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.4
Avoiding sun burn, cold exposure and/or sea sickness	2.0	1.9	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.1
The destination (e.g. an island, a coral reef, the southern ocean, a sailing trip, a resort, etc.)	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.9
The main vessel (e.g. ship or boat) that is used for travel and research (if applicable)	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.7

Note: Key. A value of 2 (blue) is somewhat important, 3 (tan) is important and 4 (bright yellow) is very important.

Table 8 shows the notable benefit preferences for those survey respondents who were, on average, very interested in participating in one or more of the 12 marine research tourism products. For example, those survey respondents who were very interested in products 5 and 8 (i.e. both land based ventures) placed less importance on the opportunity to SCUBA dive and the main vessel that is used for travel and research. Those survey respondents who were very interested in product 10 (i.e. A continuous sailing expedition) placed a higher level of importance (i.e. 2.7) in an offshore boating or sailing experience. Notably those survey respondents who were very interested in all products considered avoiding sun burn, cold exposure and/or sea sickness as only somewhat important. Additionally, all survey respondents who were very interested in all products considered the destination to be important when choosing a marine research tourism venture.

Table 9 shows the notable benefit preferences for those survey respondents who were, on average, not interested in one or more of the 12 products. For example, those survey respondents who were not interested in products 1, 2 and 10 (i.e. all open ocean expeditions) placed more importance on avoiding sun burn, cold exposure and/or sea sickness. Those survey respondents who are not interested in product 10 (i.e. a continuous sailing expedition) considered an offshore boating or sailing experience as least important (1.7). Furthermore, those survey respondents who were not

interested in products 1 and 11 (i.e. coral reef ventures) considered SCUBA diving as least important (i.e. values 2.0 and 2.1).

Survey respondents who were not interested products 3 and 4 (i.e. ventures with less active involvement and less research significance) considered a high level of involvement in the marine research program, conservation of wildlife, and marine research education and training, as most important. Additionally, survey respondents who were not interested in product 11 (i.e. survey reefs on a tropical island and assess the impacts of climate change) placed the least importance on involvement in the marine research program, conservation of wildlife, and marine research education and training.

Table 9: Notable Benefit Preferences for Survey Respondents who were Not Interested in Participating in One or More of the 12 Marine Research Tourism Products.

Benefit	Product Number											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Avoiding sun burn, cold exposure and/or sea sickness	2.6	2.5	1.8	1.9	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.2
The opportunity to SCUBA dive	2.0	2.5	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.1	2.4
A high level of involvement in the marine research program	2.6	2.9	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.5	2.7
Your high level of involvement in conservation of marine wildlife or habitat	2.6	2.8	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.9
The high level of marine research training that you can receive	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.5
A high level of solitude, tranquillity, and closeness to nature whilst on the venture	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.8	2.6
A high level of marine research education you can receive	2.6	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.3	2.5

Note: Key. A value of 2 (blue) is somewhat important, 3 (tan) is important and 4 (bright yellow) is very important.

D. Market segments that prefer different marine research tourism products

Table 10 shows the level of nature documentary viewing by survey respondents and their notable levels of interest in different marine research tourism products. Results indicate that when compared with survey respondents who do not watch nature documentaries (i.e. not at all), more frequent viewers (i.e. 3 or more times per week) of nature documentaries were notably more interested in a larger range of different marine research tourism products. For example, those survey respondents who did not watch nature documentaries at all were notably less interested (i.e. 1.7) in product 12 (i.e. Whale and dolphin research centre) than those who watched nature documentaries more than 5 times per week (i.e. 2.7).

Table 10: Level of Nature Documentary Viewing by Survey Respondents and their different Levels of Interest in the 12 Marine Research Tourism Products.

Product	Number of survey respondents			
	53	177	56	25
	Not at all	Once or twice	3 to 5 times	More than 5 times
1. A coral spawning research venture	2.1	2.4	2.6	2.6
2. A submersible research expedition	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.4
3. A bottlenose dolphin holiday	1.9	2.1	2.5	2.4
4. A day trip to the reef	2.0	2.1	2.4	2.4
5. Volunteer at a penguin rescue centre	1.7	2.0	2.1	2.3
6. Research, education and adventure trip	1.9	2.2	2.5	2.4
7. Marine turtles and indigenous rangers	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.6
8. Biodiversity and habitat mapping	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.5
9. Sail, volunteer and track blue whales	2.0	2.4	2.5	2.4
10. A continuous sailing expedition	2.0	2.2	2.4	2.2
11. Survey coral reefs and climate change	2.1	2.3	2.5	2.8
12. A whale and dolphin research institute	1.7	2.1	2.4	2.7

Note: Key. A value of 2 (blue) is possibly interested and 3 (bright yellow) is very interested.

Table 11 shows the notable levels of interest of volunteer, conservation group and natural sciences background market segments for different marine research tourism products. The broad distribution of tan and yellow colours on Table 12 show that survey respondents with a volunteer, conservation and/or a natural sciences background are notably more interested in all marine research tourism products. Particularly, those survey respondents with a volunteer background had higher interest in four products (i.e. products 1, 2, 9 and 11). Those survey respondents that were members of a conservation group and/or a natural sciences background were most interested in products 1, 7 and 11. Those survey respondents without a volunteer, conservation or natural sciences background showed most interest in products 1, 6, 7, 9 and 11 (i.e. coral reef, whale or turtle ventures). All survey respondents had lower interest in both products 5 and 8 (i.e. land based ventures that could involve some endurance).

Table 11: Volunteer, Conservation Group and Natural Sciences Market Segments, of Survey Respondents and their different Levels of Interest in the 12 Marine Research Tourism Products.

Number of survey respondents						
	110	180	122	189	175	134
Product No.	A volunteer	Not a volunteer	Member of conservation group	Not a member of a conservation group	A natural sciences background	Not a natural sciences background
1.	2.6	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.3
2.	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.1	2.5	2.1
3.	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.2
4.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
5.	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.0
6.	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2
7.	2.4	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.3
8.	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.2	1.9
9.	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.3
10.	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.1
11.	2.5	2.3	2.5	2.2	2.5	2.2
12.	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.1	2.1

Note: Key. A value of 2 (blue) is possibly interested and 3 (bright yellow) is very interested. See Table 10 for product names.

Table 12 shows the interest levels of gender and nationality based market segments for different marine research tourism products. In broad terms, females appear to be more interested in marine research tourism. Specifically, females were significantly more interested in products 3, 4, 5, 7 and 12. Males were notably more interested in product 2 (i.e. a submersible expedition). When compared with Australians, International survey respondents appear to be also more interested in marine research tourism. The exceptions to this are products 5, 8 and 10 where both groups show similar levels of interest. To qualify these results, it should be noted that many international survey respondents had higher levels of SCUBA diving experience when compared with Australian survey respondents.

Analysis of the preferences of survey respondents with different levels of cetacean (i.e. whale and dolphin), snorkelling or SCUBA watching experience produced some interesting results. As cetacean watching experience increased from no experience to 11 or more experiences, there was a notable increase in interest in products 1, 3, 9, 11 and 12 (i.e. all cetacean watching, the coral spawning, and coral reef survey ventures). Conversely, for the same range, there was almost no increase in interest in products 4, 5, 7 and 10 (i.e. day trip to the reef, penguin rescue, marine turtles and continuous sailing expedition). With snorkelling, as experience increased from no snorkeling experience to 51 times or more, there was a notable increase in interest in products 1, 2, 6 and 11 (i.e. the three coral reef ventures and the submersible expedition).

For SCUBA diving, as experience increased from no experience to 101 times or more, there was a notable increase in interest in products 1, 2, and 11 (i.e. two specialised SCUBA experiences and the submersible expedition). Notably, for snorkelling and SCUBA diving, there was an increase in the level of interest (e.g. average interest level 2.05 to 2.27) for all marine research tourism products as the survey respondent's experience increased from none to one or more experiences. For this range, the highest increases in interest for snorkelling were for products 4, 6 and 7 (i.e. day trip to reef, research - education and adventure, and marine turtle ventures). Similarly, the highest increases in interest for SCUBA diving were products 1, 6 and 11 (i.e. coral spawning, research - education and adventure, and survey coral reef ventures).

Table 12: Gender and Nationality Market Segments of Survey Respondents and their different Levels of Interest in the 12 Marine Research Tourism Products.

Number of survey respondents				
	152	156	111	200
Product	F	M	International	Australian
1. A coral spawning research venture	2.4	2.4	2.6	2.3
2. A submersible research expedition	2.3	2.0	2.3	2.1
3. A bottlenose dolphin holiday	2.2	1.8	2.1	1.9
4. A day trip to the reef	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.3
5. Volunteer at a penguin rescue centre	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.3
6. Research, education and adventure trip	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1
7. Marine turtles and indigenous rangers	2.3	1.9	2.3	2.0
8. Biodiversity and habitat mapping	2.3	2.1	2.3	2.1
9. Sail, volunteer and track blue whales	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.3
10. A continuous sailing expedition	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.2
11. Survey coral reefs and climate change	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.2
12. A whale and dolphin research institute	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2

Note: Key. A value of 2 (blue) is possibly interested and 3 (bright yellow) is very interested.

SUMMARY

This paper identifies and affirms the existence of a set of likely relationships between marine research tourism market segments, preferred benefits and product types. For example, market characteristics such as nature documentary viewing, membership of volunteer groups, professional background, gender, and SCUBA experience are shown to significantly influence the interest of survey respondents (n=311) for different marine research tourism products. Similarly, the preferences of survey respondents for different benefits such as a marine exploration and discovery, SCUBA diving, volunteering, educational, social, and/or fun experience are shown to notably influence their interest in different marine research tourism products. Such outcomes also demonstrate the effectiveness of using a benefit segmentation approach for identifying the preferences of potential marine research tourists.

This research contributes new information about the preferences of potential marine research tourists for different marine research tourism products and benefits. It is possible that prior to this research, much of this information could have seemed reasonable to those with some knowledge of the marine research tourism topic. For example, it could have been reasonable to propose that many potential marine research tourists would like to have the opportunity to explore marine phenomena and discover new things, or frequent viewers of nature documentaries, cetacean watchers, snorkellers or scuba divers would have higher interest in more marine research tourism products. However, the significance of the above research is that these and other propositions have been empirically tested. The implication of this is that such information can be used by marine research tourism suppliers to help identify suitable markets, design effective and different products, and develop effective and appropriate promotional campaigns.

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SECTION II
ILLUSTRATIVE PAPERS
(POSTER PRESENTATIONS)

CONSUMER BRAND EQUITY FOR MULTINATIONAL HOTEL BRANDS – WHEN HOSTS BECOME GUESTS

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INTRODUCTION

Branding strategies allow hotel companies to expand across geographical boundaries, not only in their home country, but also to foreign countries. Yet it is difficult for these companies to enforce uniformity in products and service standards of their brands. In the process of expansion, multi-national hotels tend to modify their products and other marketing strategies in order to adapt to local culture and market situations, and to satisfy customers in the hotel companies' host countries. Consumers in these countries are therefore exposed to communication messages and form perceived images that are different from those in the hotel companies' home countries.

The modification strategies adopted by multinational hotel companies may backfire when the consumers of brand host countries travel to the home countries of hotel brands. In making purchase decisions on lodging services based on their current brand knowledge, consumers may feel confused, disappointed even unsatisfied, for what they are provided doesn't match or meet their expectations. The unsatisfied experience adversely affects consumers' attitudes towards the hotel brands, and in turn, affects their brand equity.

Brand equity refers to the added value of brand names to products, which is usually defined in economic terms (Biel, 1992). However, it is increasingly recognized that that this value won't materialize unless the brand is meaningful to the consumer (Cobb-Walgren, Ruble, & Donthu, 1995; Crimmins, 2000). This recognition underlines an emerging field of research on brand equity from the perspective of consumers. The current study was designed to conceptualize a model of consumer brand equity for multinational hotel brands, and to examine how their brand equity is affected by the different messages projected to consumers in the hotel companies' home and host countries.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

The study drew on both general marketing and branding literature (e.g., Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993), and specific tourism and hospitality literature (e.g., Cai, 2002; Konecnik &

Gartner, 1999; Kim & Kim, 2004). Psychological and sociological theories, based on which branding concept is founded, were also consulted in forming the conceptual model and developing propositions.

The consumer brand equity refers to “the differential effect that brand knowledge has on consumer response to the marketing of the brand” by (Keller, 1993). In the present study, the brand knowledge of a multinational hotel brand consists of its awareness by the consumers in the brand’s host country, and its image held by these consumers. The response is the consumers’ attitude towards the brand. The conceptual model is illustrated in Figure 1 with the following propositions:

1. The brand message communicated by the multinational hotel brand in the brand’s host country is the primary source of the brand awareness held by the consumers in the host country.
2. The brand image projected by the multinational hotel brand in the brand’s host country is the primary source of the brand image perceived by the consumers in the host country.
3. The brand awareness held by the consumers is positively related to their attitude towards the brand.
4. The brand image perceived by the consumers is positively related to their attitude toward the brand.
5. The effect of consumers’ perceived brand image on their attitude is greater than the effect of the brand awareness.
6. The consumers’ attitude towards the brand remains the same when they travel to the home country of the brand.
7. The brand message communicated by the multinational hotel brand in the brand’s home country is different from that in the brand’s home country.
8. The brand image projected by the multinational hotel brand in the brand’s host country is different from that in the brand’s home country.

CONCLUSION

Extant research on hotel brands is more business driven than consumer based. It emphasizes the brand equity predominantly in financial terms. The study of consumers’ response such as attitude in relation to brand knowledge does not exist in the discipline of hotel management and marketing. To date, globalization by multinational hotel companies is by and large unidirectional, that is, expansion to foreign markets. Little consideration is given on how their branding strategies are affected by the new order of global tourism, that is, when consumers in the hotel companies’ host country become the guests of their properties in the home country of these companies. In these regards, this study makes both conceptual and practical contributions.

As the key component of brand knowledge, brand image and the consistency of it are critical to the building of brand equity. Although the concept of image has been examined and applied in the field of tourism for several decades, the image of hotel brands remains unexplored. Image dimensions and measurements remain undeveloped for hotel branding. Attitude toward a

hotel brand is a critical part of consumers' response to the marketing activities of the brand. While favorable attitude towards a brand is believed to lead to favorable behaviors with respect to that brand, intervening effects on the casual relationship by other factors such as motivation have yet to be examined.

The study will be followed by an empirical investigation, which will examine the consumer brand equity of the U.S. hotel brands in China. In addition to operationalizing the various components in the conceptual model, the role of Chinese consumers' motivations of traveling to US will also be explored in their knowledge of and attitudes towards the U.S. hotel brands.

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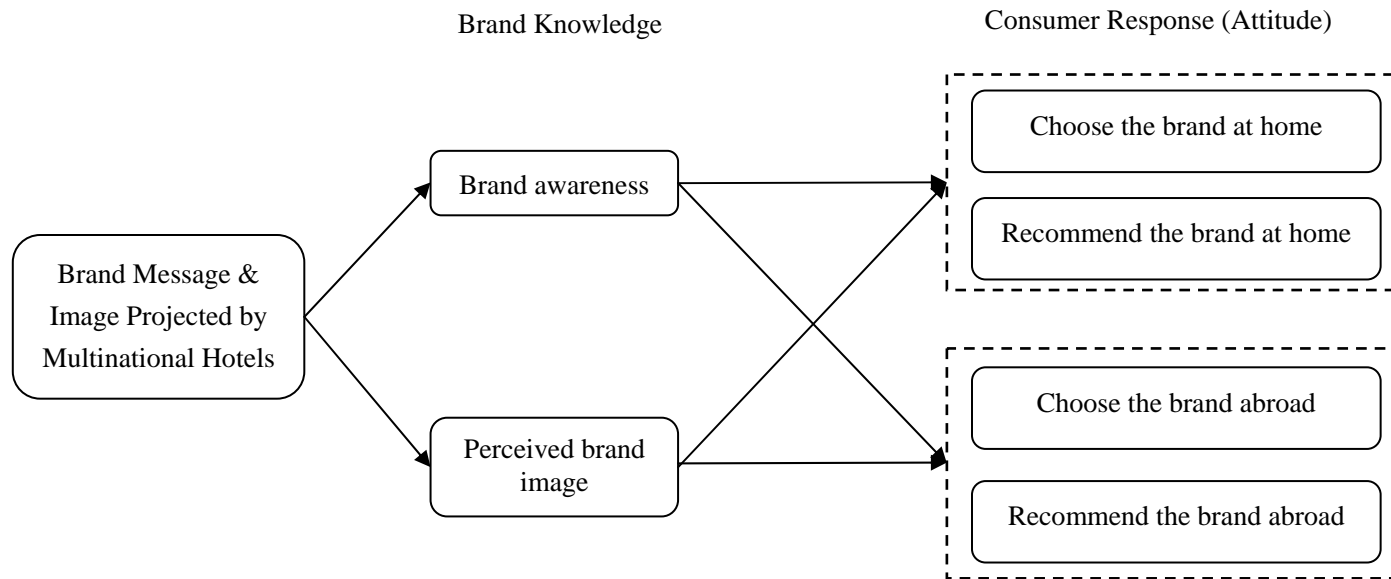


Figure 1. Consumer Brand Equity Model for Multinational Hotel Brands

LEISURE ACTIVITIES AND GRADUATE STUDENTS WORK AND LIFE

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ABSTRACT

Despite the substantial number of graduate students attending colleges and universities in the United States, limited efforts have been devoted to understanding their leisure behavior. Based upon Iwasaki (2003)'s Leisure Coping Mechanism, currently study aims at identifying stressors(concerns), expectations(personality), perceived leisure effects, and leiusre activities of graduate students and further identifying the dynamic relationship of these factors among graduate students. In-depth interview with graduate students studying in a United States university indicated that graduate students were generally not satisfied with their current leisure engagement. Moreover, different stressors and expectations from both work and life were associated with different leisure activities participation patterns and leisure effects. The results provide important practical implications for graduate school administrators. In addition, since graduate students is a unique student population who assume tremendous work and domestic functions while still in the learning and growing enrironment, their work and life concerns, personality and perception are in a transitional status. Therefore, graduate student population provides an important theoretical background for future study in the changes of Leisure Coping Mechanism along different stages of life cycle.

KEYWORDS: Graduate Students; Leisure Activities; Leisure Coping Mechanism; Life; Work

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Leisure's Relationship with Work and Life

The relationship between leisure and work has been an important topic for leisure researchers. Leisure has been acknowledged as either "compensatory" or "spillover" to work (Haworth & Veal, 2004). Through pursuing leisure activities, individuals replenish themselves

and freely develop their faculties and interests (Neal, Sirgy & Uysal, 1999). Recent empirical studies further identified the association between leisure behavior, leisure satisfaction, leisure attitude, and self-determination towards burnout (Stanton-Rich & Iso-Ahola, 1998), as well as specific contribution of different types of leisure activities towards work performance (Sonnentag, 2001).

Meanwhile, leisure as a means to cope with stress and protect health has received increased research attention (Iwasaki, 2003). For example, Coleman and Iso-Ahola (1993) suggest that leisure-generated self-determination and social support are two key dimensions of leisure coping that moderate the negative impact of stress on health. Iso-Ahola (1997) identified leisure's influence on health in two principle ways: first, via leisure activity itself and second, as a tool to achieve certain health outcomes. Leisure as an important means for "good life" and "life balance" has come down from Acient Greek and Asia to the modern society (Russell, 2005).

In understanding leisure's coping mechanism towards various work and life stresses, one of the widely applied model in leisure study was Iwasaki and Mannell (2000, 2003)'s leisure coping mechanism. They conceptualized leisure as both coping resources (i.e., leisure coping beliefs) and coping strategies (i.e., leisure coping strategies). This distinction is consistent with the difference between coping resources and coping strategies suggested in the coping literature—coping resources refer to dispositional coping styles (e.g., personality resources and social resources), whereas coping strategies refer to situation-specific behavioral and cognitive responses to deal with stressors (e.g., Endler, Parker, & Summerfeldt, 1993; Lazarus, 1993).

Effect of Leisure on Students

College student health and its relationship with stress and stress copying has become a focal discussion point (Sax, 1997). Stress affecting students can be categorized as academic, financial, time or health related, and self-imposed (Misra & McKean, 2000). Stressors from academic include the student's perception of the extensive knowledge base required and the perception of an inadequate time to develop it (Carveth, Gesse, & Moss, 1996). Students' experience of academic stress at predictable times each semester with the greatest sources of academic stress resulting from taking and studying for exams, grade competition, and the large amount of content to master in a small amount of time (Abouserie, 1994). When stress is perceived negatively or becomes excessive, students experience physical and psychological impairment (Murphy & Archer, 1996). Engagement in leisure pursuits as well as effective time management, social support, positive reappraisal are believed to be major methods to reduce student stress (Blake & Vandiver, 1988; Mattlin, Wethington, & Kessler, 1990).

Relationships between leisure and perceived stress have been studied in a variety of settings including school-related settings. For example, Misra and McKean (2000) investigated the interrelationship among academic stress, anxiety, time management, and leisure satisfaction among 249 university undergraduates by age and gender. Their study results showed that time management had a greater buffering effect on academic stress than leisure satisfaction activities. Significant gender differences existed among all the measures. Students in different year of study reacted different to stress. Li and Stodolska (2006)'s study identifies factors related to the

transnational status that affected leisure experiences of Chinese international graduate students based upon the theory of transnationalism, which posits that contemporary migrants maintain economic, political, social and cultural linkages to their countries of origin. Their findings revealed that the temporary residence in the U.S., coupled with a strong desire to focus on their studies abroad, were the most important factors affecting leisure of Chinese graduate students. Transnational circumstances influenced their emotional well-being, and certain legal barriers constrained their leisure. Based on Self-Determination Theory, Patry et al. (2007) proposed two distinct approaches to regulatory leisure coping: the Planned-Breather Leisure Coping Style and the Avoidant Leisure Coping Style. Their findings suggested that regulatory orientation in a particular context was distinctively associated with the two proposed leisure coping styles and to different affective consequences following the regulation of a difficult task.

Leisure Coping Model

In understanding causal models of stress process, the conceptual models developed by Ensel and Lin (1991) present potential leisure coping mechanisms in different angles (Iwasaki, 2003). Based on their models, Iwasaki (2003) tested four different models of leisure coping using the sample of police and emergency response service workers and explained theoretically different roles of leisure coping beliefs and strategies in the relationship between stressor (Figure 1). In these models, three components of leisure coping mechanism were presented: resources (leisure coping beliefs, leisure coping strategies), stressors and health.

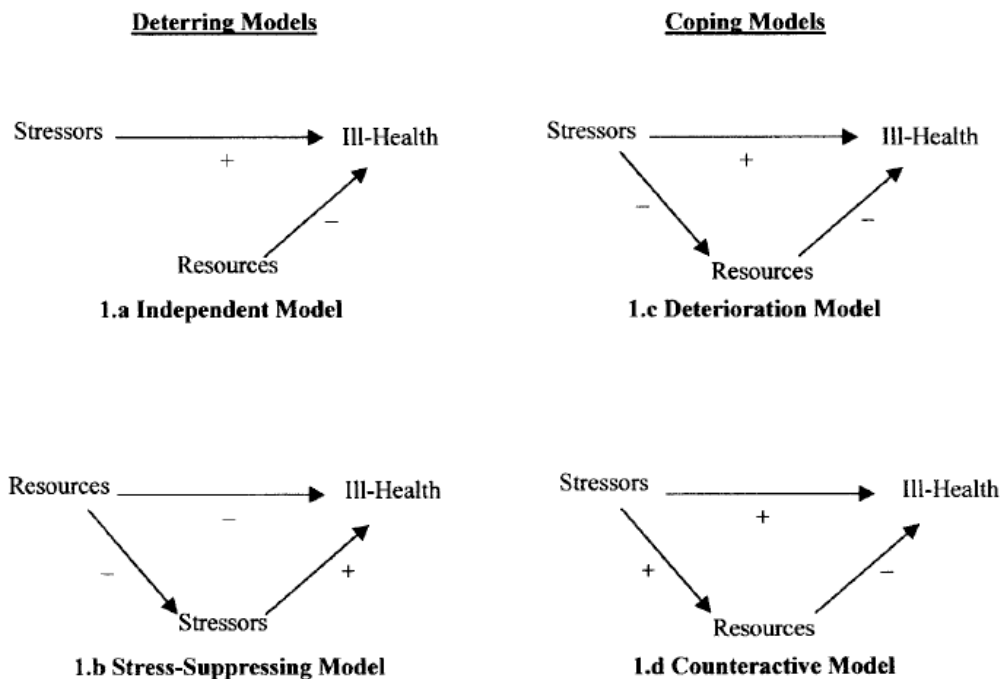


Figure 1. Causal models of life stress process (Ensel & Lin, 1991).

Leisure coping beliefs refer to people's generalized beliefs that their leisure helps them cope with stress. These beliefs gradually develop over time and are maintained through the

socialization process. They would seem to constitute relatively stable psychological dispositions (Iwasaki, 2000). The subdimensions of leisure coping beliefs include leisure autonomy and leisure friendships. Leisure autonomy refers to the belief that leisure develops personality characteristics that allow people to effectively cope with stress. Leisure friendships refer to the belief that people's friendships developed through leisure provide them with social support (Iso-Ahola & Park, 1996). In this study, leisure beliefs were represented by Expectations/Personality.

Leisure coping strategies, however, are actual stress-coping situation-grounded behaviors or cognitions available through involvements in leisure. In some cases, people may intentionally choose their leisure involvements to generate behaviors or cognitions that help them cope with stress. At other times, people may find that what they do in their leisure has helped them manage stress even though they chose to participate for other reasons. Leisure coping strategies are based on the idea that a coping action represents a process. When people encounter a stressful event, they may engage in a certain coping action in response to this event (Iwasaki, 2000). The three subdimensions or types of leisure coping strategies include leisure companionship, leisure palliative coping, and leisure mood enhancement. In this study, leisure coping strategies were specified as specific leisure activities.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Although existing literature on leisure's effect on students have investigated some specific aspects of leisure activities' effect or specific factors affecting students' leisure pursuit, it was noticed that there were limited efforts investigating the effect of leisure activities on the students' overall work and life. In addition, graduate students as a unique student population that contribution significantly to today's university's objectives have been largely ignored. Besides taking a rigorous course load, many graduate students often fill critical roles by teaching in the classroom or by conducting research with faculty (Hancock, 2002). They play an important role in helping to secure the long-range strategic objectives for the institution and the research community. Therefore, this current study aims at extending current research effort by examining leisure activities' effect on graduate students' work and life..

The study used a phenomenological framework. The development of questionnaire was based upon Iwasaki and Mannell (2000)'s leisure coping mechanism. Graduate students' leisure coping resources and coping strategies were examined.

METHODOLOGY

The study population is graduate students enrolled in U.S. universities. Data were collected from 10 semi-structured interviews with graduate students enrolled in one of the public universities in the Midwest in the academic year of 2007-2008. Interviews were conducted between November 2007 and December 2007. Samples were recruited through either recruitment flyers posted campus wide or through the existing connections of the researchers.

All of the participants were living independently and none of the participants were married to each other. Each face-to-face interview was conducted independently in a location of the interviewees choice on campus. The interviews lasted 20 minutes on average. Responses were recorded without any identifying informations. Tapes were transcribed for further analysis.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics about the participants. There were 5 male and 5 female students. Their year of study ranged from the first year master program to the sixth year of Ph.D program. Participants were enrolled in various disciplines: Chemical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Math, Physics, Mechanical Engineering, Comparative Literature, Spanish, Hospitality And Tourism Management, and Management. All of the ten graduate students were enrolled with assistantships. More specifically, five of them had research assistantships, four of them had teaching assistantship and one had both teaching and research responsibilities. Participants represented a wide variety of nationalities. They came from the United States, Denmark, India, Spain, Taiwan (China), Colombia, and China. Six of them were living off campus while four of them were living on campus. The sample was splitted equally by married students and unmarried students.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Gender	Year of study	Major	Marriage	RA/TA	Country	On/Off Campus
1	Male	2nd yr of PhD	ChE	Not	RA	U.S.	Off
2	Male	6th yr of PhD	EE	Not	RA	Denmark	Off
3	Male	3rd yr of PhD	Math	Yes	RA&TA	India	On
4	Female	2nd yr of Master	Physics	Not	TA	Spain	Off
5	Male	2nd yr of PhD	ME	Not	TA	India	Off
6	Female	5th yr of Phd	Comp. Literature	Yes	TA	Taiwan, (China)	Off
7	Female	1st yr of Master	Spanish	Yes	TA	Colombia	On
8	Female	1st yr of PhD	HTM	Not	RA	China	Off
9	Female	3rd yr of PhD	Mgmt	Yes	RA	China	On
10	Male	2nd yr of PhD	NE	Yea	RA	China	On

The interview questions composed of 14 questions which focused on four areas: graduate students' concerns/stressors, personality, leisure participation patterns and the leisure activities effect. The key questions of "how do you feel when you are having leisure activities?" were explained in five different aspects: negative / positive, satisfy / not satisfy, effective / non effective, stress reduced / increased, immediate / long-lasting, physical / mental, to help participants reflect more on this topic.

This study used a phenomenological framework which involved in these steps:

- To develop an understanding of the philosophical perspectives by reviewing any existing literature in leisure role and participation,
 - To develop questions to investigate the meaning of graduate students' leisure experiences,
 - To select participants based upon their having real experiences, and
 - To conduct data analysis to understand and derive repetitive themes of graduate students' leisure participation and their perceived role of leisure in life.
- (Creswell, 2003)

THEMES

Four themes emerged from this study were: concerns/stressors, expectation / personality, leisure activities participation patterns and leisure activities effects.

Concerns / Stressors

Graduate students' concern for their work and study mainly focused on deadlines, time management, as well as career and degree accomplishment. However, different from undergraduate students, class work was not considered as a major concern for them. In addition, as the year of study increases, finding a job became more important stressor for them.

A second year Ph.D. student said: "As a graduate student, there are a lot of deadlines from conferences and courses. Well, courses may be necessary. Advisors are fine. Perhaps a little more meetings...Not much stress. Post docs sometimes do. They are hands-on professors...they need results immediately. My advisor does not make decision for me...I do have some free time. And I wish that I could have a little bit more free time. I hope that I can better arrange my schedule so that I perhaps don't have to work on weekend and I can enjoy the life..."

A six year Ph.d. student said: "My concerns? Well, my only concern is to find a job." A first year Ph.D. student said: "I want to finish my degree...right now, finish the paper, and pass the exam..."

Graduate students were basically satisfied with their current life status as they were more matured, self-confident, and knowing what they were going to do in the near future as attested by a second year Ph.D. student: "I basically am happy with my life. I don't have too many large pictures to plan." Another second year Ph.D. student said: "Not really bad. It is manageable."

However, international students, especially those who just enter the graduate program, either master or Ph.D. program, had more concerns about adapting to the new life environment and language difficulties. While international students were approaching the end of a program, they had more concerns about jobs since it is closely related to their future life.

A first year M.S. student said: "Miss family and friends in different countries. Way of life here is different from I used to have...Really hard for my first year... I have to be more independent..." A six year Ph.d. student said: "Anything else are good. Finding a job is a big thing. It is related to where and which country I will stay"

Another concern for life came from their research and study. For graduate students, research and study are mingled with their life. A five year Ph.D student said: "my life is research, my research is life. That is graduate student..."

Expectations / Personality

Graduate students' personality with regard to expectation towards work and study performance, towards career and life can be divided into three groups. The first group includes

students with high expectations for themselves, and this group of students consider leisure activities as an important, although subsidiary component of their lives.

An unmarried second year Ph.D. student said: “I have high expectancy of myself ...finish PhD program more quickly than other people, in 3-4 years ... Sacrifices some time for leisure, I can make decision myself. My expectation is pretty demandingly high, but it is possible.”

The second group are those who intentionally do not want to set a high standard for themselves. They tend to consider leisure activities as a primary part of their lives and had a good plan for that.

An unmarried first year Ph.D. student said: “More productive... happy working with professors...Know more about professors in the department...I don’t want to set too high expectations for myself... I plan to travel during winter and go shopping in Christmas time”.

The last group are those who do not have high expectation for themselves but have more expectation for their social relationships. Most married graduate students or single graduate students who care very much about family and friends fell in this group.

A married third year Ph.D. student said: “Hope to get good research work. I have fulfilled advisors' satisfaction... look for industry job. Finally get a management job... kids, more than just work...” An unmarried first year Master student said: “Find a job.... Finish one year training...go back to my home country... Ph.D.? Too much... But maybe in the future, with scholarship....To be happy. ...Have friends, family, and an enjoyable professional life.”

Leisure Activities Participation Patterns

In general, due to the busy schedule of graduate study, graduate students usually have leisure activities during evening or when they have time. There is also a group of students who have developed regular exercise routine. Occasionally, emergent stresses triggered their motivations to do some leisure. Frequency could range from very frequent (about two to three times a week) to not frequent (once a month). They usually do leisure activities with friends, or family members (such as: spouse, kids), or alone.

During weekday, graduate students would choose some short-term activities, such as: go to gym, dancing, watching TV, cooking, chatting, checking email, reading news, and surfing the internet. During weekend, they would choose more outdoor activities and long-term leisure activities, such as: soccer, watching movie, camping, canoeing, dinning with friends, go to the parks, shopping in the mall. Weekend leisure activities also involved more social function and more accompanies.

The interview results also showed linkage between personality, stressors and leisure activities participation. For example, graduate students with strong personality or high expectation for themselves tend to adhere to a regular schedule of exercise although they considered exercise secondary for their current life. .

One graduate student who had high expectation for himself said: “Usually evening...I play soccer..usually three times a week and I will usually go to gym once a week...” In addition, immediate stressors had significant influence on graduate students’ leisure activities participation.

One graduate student who had a prelim exam approaching said: “Not much. Usually 5-7 pm...I am going to do my prelim. I used to do exercises three times a week. Sometimes watch a movie on Sunday. Now, I probably do it once a month...”

Leisure Activities Effects

Effect of leisure activities can be understood from four perspectives: physical and mental effect, life balance, social support and gaining knowledge.

Firstly, physical and mental effect includes leisure activities as a “stress reliever”, as an approach to feel “relaxing,” to “keep myself a good mood,” to be “more energetic,” to “sleep better.” For most of the respondents, “it is an enjoyable moment”, “it is so much fun”. The respondents emphasized that “physical and mental effect go together”.

Second, graduate students felt that leisure activities are “really important, life is very important, every thing should be balanced”. They can not imagine “keep work and study without any leisure activities”.

Third, participation in leisure activities is an important mean to gain social support and to show support to other people. During leisure activities, graduate students can “spend time with family members”. While leisure activities are “a lot of exercise”, it is also “a good time to make friends”.

Fourth, leisure activities help graduate students “stop thinking of other things,” give them “a break and clear my thoughts after a few hours’ work”. Through leisure activities, graduate students “know what is happening now”.

Although graduate students perceived positively and felt various leisure activities benefits, most students are not satisfied with it. They complaint that “it is quite a luxury”, and it is “not enough.” In addition, they had different feelings about how long the influence of leisure activities lasted.

One graduate student having frequent and regular exercise said: “It is an immediate effect that you have those activities, but the effect of not having those activities would be long lasting.”

Another graduate student having frequent and regular exercise said: “Lasting effect, at least till next day...I feel better right after...”

One graduate student who did not have frequent and regular exercise said: “Since I am not doing it quite often and basically short time activities. So I think it is immediate effect. After I go back to work, I will stress again. So I just get a little bit relax during that moment.”

Another graduate student who did not have frequent and regular exercise said: “Mental health is immediate...Physical health is kind of long-term. I am sitting too much...”

It seems that the type of research work they were involved and the type of leisure activities they participated in had an influence on how long the effectiveness lasts.

Finally, graduate students also reported leisure activities’ negative effects, three main aspects were covered. First, without good time management, it has negative effect on work, study and life.

One second year Ph.D. student said: “Time spent doing leisure can not be spent to do other things.” “Spend too much time with friends, get late going home.”

Second, it may have an unpleasant feeling “If you want to improve...sometimes it hurts.”

Third, graduate students feel negatively about some specific leisure activities, especially those passive leisure activities.

SUMMARIES AND IMPLICATIONS

This study qualitatively explored the effect of leisure activities on graduate students’ work and study. The results provided several implications for graduate school administrators and for future studies.

First of all, in general, graduate students were not satisfied with their current leisure engagement. University administrations should begin to pay more attention to this important student body and to create relevant leisure-related programs for them.

Efficient time management seemed to lower academic stress for graduate students. Hence, faculties, graduate student administrators and counselors should emphasize the importance of time management and encourage graduate students to participate seminars about time management. Considering graduate students have limited time, promotion of leisure activities should emphasize the time elements, e.g., programs offered during lunch time, during the hours after the school or in the evening may receive better participations than programs offered in other hours.

In addition, international students in their first year of graduate studies had higher reactions to stress than domestic students and international students in senior years. This may be due to the different culture environment, lack of social support net work, and having not yet developed the coping mechanisms to deal with stress, and language barrier. This implies that the programs and leisure activities provided for first-year international graduate students are not enough or not been efficiently advertized or utilized. Leisure activities provided to graduate students may not be limited within the institution setting. They can extend to broader geographic area, such as, town and cities where the institution located.

In addition to the above practical implications, theoretically, themes from this qualitative data can be developed into an instrument so that the hypotheses that relate to graduate students' wellbeing status with different levels and types of leisure activities can be tested.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISCOUNTING AND HOTEL FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between discounting hotel room rates and seasonal hotel financial performance for group and transient traveler market segments; to determine the impact of season and type of traveler on hotel financial performance; and to determine the mean differences between the market segments' hotel financial performance. The study was conducted on a convention hotel in the Orlando, Florida market and used fiscal data sets from 2005 – 2007. In addition, the study sought to address and clarify tenuous literature regarding how discounting room rates effects hotel financial performance. Analyses were accomplished through Pearson product moment correlation analyses, a two-way analysis of variance, and an independent t-test. Results revealed a negative relationship between discounting hotel room rates and hotel financial performance for the group market segment; but a positive relationship between the variables for the transient traveler market segment. The results also suggest that seasonal characteristics must be considered in conjunction with type of traveler when implementing discounting as a pricing strategy designed to increase hotel financial performance. Finally, the group market segment exhibited a higher mean in hotel financial performance when compared to the transient traveler market segment. The implication of the results confirms that there is a positive relationship between hotel financial performance and discounting as supported by theoretical framework.

INTRODUCTION

This study examines the significance of the relationship between hotel financial performance and discounting room rates for groups versus transient travelers. Group and transient travelers are two separate market segments with varied user-usage characteristics and spending patterns (Fenich, 2008; Choi, 2006; Bowen et al, 2003; Hanks et al, 2002). Previous

researchers have identified these two markets as the most significant contributors to hotel financial performance (Abbey & Astroff, 2002; Schwartz & Cohen, 2003; Dana, 1998).

Currently, there is debate in hospitality literature regarding how discounting of room rates relates to hotel financial performance. Enz, Canina and Lomanno (2004) reported decreased revenue per available room (RevPAR), and Chan and Wong (2006) reported increased competition and deterioration of hotel status when room rates were discounted.

Advocates of the discounting strategy support the microeconomic principle of supply and demand which infers that increased incremental revenue through increased consumer interaction and room sales could transpire (Enz, 2003; Hanks et al, 2002; Jeffrey et al, 2002; Donaghy et al, 1995). The “periodic discounting” strategy (Finch et al, 1998) and the expected value approach (Lawrence & Pasternack, 1998) support this premise. To sustain the basic economic theory of supply and demand and reflect market equilibrium through discounting room rates Schwartz and Cohen (2003) applied Coltman’s (1994) equivalent occupancy equation; which establishes the appropriate profitable discounted room rate.

Due to the cyclical behavior of the hotel industry hotel managers require an optimal room rate to maintain market equilibrium. Without equilibrium, demand is elastic rather than inelastic (Bowen et al, 2003), and hotel managers must forecast demand and modify pricing structures to maximize revenue (Hanks et al, 2002). This is difficult due to the lack of consistent agreement regarding how discounting room rates for market segments relates to hotel financial performance.

This study claims that hotel managers can forecast demand in low occupancy periods by discounting room rates with the expectation that the price decrease will lead to an increase in hotel financial performance, thus achieving market equilibrium. This occurs when managers have all available market information to forecast unbiased room demand from group and transient travelers. That information is revealed through application of the cobweb model and the rational expectations theory. The study asserts that occupancy reaches levels above or below normal when demand exceeds or is less than supply (Corgel, 2004). According to the cobweb model, managers respond to low occupancy by reducing the average daily rate (ADR) of rooms (Corgel, 2004; Cross, 1997); this discounting strategy is captured within the dimensions of the rational expectations theory (Muth, 1961).

Based on the claims of the study the following questions are investigated:

- Q1) Is there a relationship between discounting room rates and hotel financial performance for the group market segment?
- Q1a) If a relationship exists what is the strength of the relationship?
- Q2) Is there a relationship between discounting room rates and hotel financial performance for the transient traveler market segment?
- Q2a) If a relationship exists what is the strength of the relationship?
- Q3) Is there an interaction effect between type of traveler and season?
- Q4) Is there a significant difference in the statistical means of hotel financial performance as affected by discounting between the two market segments?

- Q5) Do the two market segments have opposing seasonal demand?
Q5a) If opposing seasonal demand exists, do the market segments' user-usage characteristics complement the financial performance of the hotel?

The study is expected to reveal a positive relationship between hotel financial performance and discounting for transient travelers, and a negative relationship between the variables for the group market segment. Studies that have identified a close positive relationship between profits and occupancy, as well as the frequent use of discounting strategies support the expectations (Jeffery et al, 2002). It is further projected that discounting room rates leads to a larger increase in financial performance for groups versus transient travelers. This is because groups contribute significantly more revenue to the additional operating departments within the hotel compared to the transient traveler market segment (Fenich, 2008; Enz et al, 2004; Bowen et al, 2003).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Industry Characteristics

The hotel industry is a dynamic industry comprised of perishable products. It can be characterized by a structural model which displays long lags between occupancy and room rental changes, as well as between room rental rates and new supply (Brown & Dev, 1999; Wheaton & Rossoff, 1998). This cyclic frequency, or seasonality, is characterized by fluctuating occupancy levels that significantly impact prices of services and perishable products within the hotel industry (Fenich, 2008).

The products (room nights) of the hotel industry have characteristics that make their supply relatively inflexible. When demand for rooms suddenly spikes or plummets during seasonal changes, the supply of rooms cannot correspondingly expand or contract within a short period to satisfy the new level of demand (Corgel, 2004). During times of decreased short-term demand, managers will sell a room as long as the customer is willing to pay more than the variable cost to service the room (Hanks et al, 2002).

To maximize revenues, hotels separate customers and charge them different rates based on differing needs and spending behaviors (Fenich, 2008; Bowen et al, 2003; Hanks et al, 2002). Without the use of such segmentation, hotels would offer one price to all market segments which in a dynamic industry (Finch et al, 1998; Wheaton & Rossoff, 1998), would leave a substantial amount of unrealized potential revenue (Hanks et al, 2002).

Key Market Segments

The most significant monetary contribution to hotel room revenue is derived from transient travelers and group market segments (Abbey & Astroff, 2002; Schwartz & Cohen, 2003; Dana, 1998). This study contends that because of their opposing seasonal user-usage characteristics and price sensitivity factors, a continuous synergistic flow of supply and demand is created. This flow then maximizes hotel financial performance. Typically, the financial

contribution generated from a group is greater than, or equal to, the financial contribution lost from the transient travelers who are turned away at group acceptance (Choi, 2006). Also, the group segment contributes more to additional hotel revenue resulting in greater ProfitPAR than the transient segment (Fenich, 2008; Enz et al, 2004; Bowen et al, 2003; Schwartz & Cohen, 2003, Feiertag, 1998).

However, it is important that while the group segment may produce greater revenue than the transient segment, the ability to capture the revenue immediately is nearly impossible due to long lead times associated with group travel (Feiertag, 1998). Therefore, hotels must also capture the transient segment to compensate for the delay in group lead times and actual contractual fulfillment of the group stay. These segments have varied response and routine purchasing behavior that can be predicted according to their user-usage characteristics and seasonal demand (Bowen et al, 2003; Abbey & Astroff, 2002; Schwartz & Cohen, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Opposition of the discounting strategy stems in part from studies that correspond to a static rather than a dynamic industry, such as that of the hotel industry. Within a dynamic industry, it is assumed that expected price equals actual price from the previous fiscal period; that supply is a function of expected price, and that actual price adjusts to demand so as to clear the market (Carlson, 1968). This formulation generates either convergent or divergent sequences resulting in the rise and fall of perishable product prices to regain market equilibrium (Carlson, 1968). In periods where the relative slopes of demand and supply are off-set, market equilibrium becomes discordant with supply and demand functions (Nelson, 1975). Such off-sets are captured in hotel seasonality levels of occupancy resulting in price fluctuations of room rates.

In examining room rates across fiscal periods, the dynamics of the hotel industry are revealed through the analysis of the seasonal price fluctuations of high, low, and shoulder seasons (Baurer, 2005). These fluctuations are representative of an industry that can be conceptualized via the cobweb model (Baum & Mudambi, 1995). Figures one and two are examples of changes in price over time for groups and transient travelers.

Figure 1

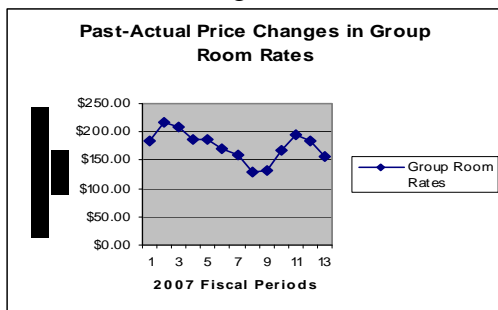
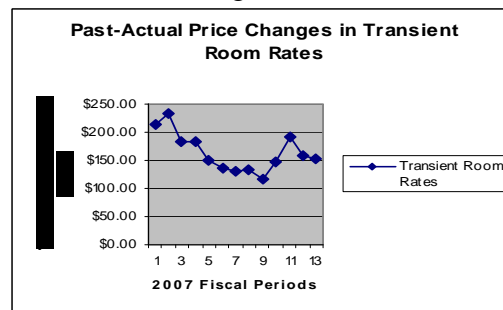


Figure 2



** Data obtained from a convention hotel in Orlando, FL **

The above figures conceptualize the cobweb model theory and illustrate that prices may be subject to periodic price fluctuations in certain types of markets, based on the lag time between supply and demand (Turnovsky, 1970). The theory illustrates a dynamic system that

succumbs to the seasonal demand of perishable products (Finch et al, 1998), such as the hotel industry.

According to the cobweb model if actual price is substituted for expected price in the supply equation, there is a positive excess demand when price is below equilibrium; and a negative excess demand when price is above equilibrium (Carlson, 1968). This is indicative of the economics of the hotel industry and suggests that ADR represents the relationship between supply and demand. Occupancy reaches levels above or below normal when demand exceeds, or is less than, supply (Corgel, 2004).

Hotels struggle during financial downturns due to decreased consumer demand and a room oversupply (Brown & Dev, 1999). Managers reduce ADR to raise occupancy (Corgel, 2004); the discounting of rooms to regain equilibrium is captured by the extrapolative expectations hypothesis of Goodwin (1947), and is the foundation of the rational expectations theory (Muth, 1961).

Through application of the rational expectations theory, managers can forecast unbiased room demand from group and transient travelers. The use of this theory is necessary to project future performance in the industry due to seasonal demand. The use of short-term room rate discounting compensates for the lag between supply and demand (Turnovsky, 1970).

A visual of the cobweb model (figures two and three) exposes periods of high and stable prices where demand is excessive; and periods of excess supply where prices become downwardly flexible (Baum & Mudambi, 1995). The lagged relationship between room rates and occupancy in a cobweb model demonstrate (Wheaton & Rossoff, 1998) specific periods of time where hotel managers respond to excessive supply of hotel rooms by discounting room rates. The practice of discounting room rates to achieve market equilibrium is accomplished by forecasting future demand through use of the rational expectations theory.

Literature reveals little about the use of the rational expectations theory as applied to discounting room rates for market segments. The theory describes economic situations in which the outcome of product sales depends partly upon what managers expect to happen (Muth, 1961) in a market. This theory plays a central role in the determination of business cycles according to future expectations of demand.

Discounting and Hotel Financial Performance

Discounting is a short-term strategy that aims to maximize hotel financial performance by bringing the market back to equilibrium. Discounting strategy advocates recognize that the goal of hotel management is to generate revenue with the hotel's room nights (Donaghy et al, 1995). Because room nights are perishable products, occupancy becomes a key factor in hotel financial performance. Occupancy data provides the one widely available, consistent and temporally disaggregated means of monitoring hotel performance; managers must consider that the value of the room night becomes zero if not sold by a specific point in time (Finch et al, 1998). Thus, short-term discounting can inflate a low occupancy percentage and increase hotel financial performance (Jeffrey et al, 2002).

There are several pricing strategies hotels can apply to maximize their financial performance. These strategies include: the periodic discounting strategy (Finch et al, 1998), used to compensate for any potential loss of revenue due to the discount; the expected profit approach (Sezen, 2004,) assists in selecting the discounted rate that will yield the highest profit from seasonal room rates; and the equivalent occupancy equation (Schwartz & Cohen, 2003), which addresses the occupancy level needed to hold total revenue, less marginal costs, constant when ADR is discounted.

The cobweb model and the rational expectations theory can be used in conjunction with the aforementioned pricing strategies to support the following claim: hotel managers are capable of forecasting demand in periods of low occupancy by discounting room rates with the expectation that the decrease in ADR will lead to an increase in hotel financial performance; thus achieving market equilibrium.

Opponents of the discounting strategy will contest this claim based on previous research findings. One major study disputing the use of room rate discounting was conducted by Enz, Canina and Lomanno in 2004. However, this study had severe limitations that include:

Limitation One: The study utilized RevPAR as a sole measure of hotel financial performance.

Limitation Two: Failure to address the dynamics of the economic conditions within the hotel industry.

Limitation Three: Failure to address the user-usage characteristics of different market segments.

Limitation Four: The use of discounting as a long-term pricing strategy.

Brown and Dev (1999) discredit the use of RevPAR as a sole form of measurement of hotel financial performance because it does not include significant additional revenue obtained from other operating departments. Additionally, Enz et al (2004) failed to recognize the hotel industry as a dynamic industry, stating that the dynamics between price and occupancy are stable from fiscal period to fiscal period. This statement fails to address the seasonality of the hotel industry as described by other researchers (Bauer, 2005; Corgel, 2004; Finch et al, 1998; Wheaton & Rossoff, 1998; Baum & Mudambi, 1995; Carlson, 1968). Furthermore, Enz et al (2004) neglected to distinguish market segments user-usage characteristics, which is imperative to increase hotel financial performance (Fenich, 2008; Choi, 2006; Bowen et al, 2003; Schwartz & Cohen, 2003; Hanks et al, 2002; Donaghy et al, 1995). Finally, Enz et al (2004) observed discounting as a long term strategy, which fails to adhere to the rational expectations theory and the cobweb model that this study utilizes as the theoretical framework.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

This study was based on secondary data provided by a convention hotel in the Orlando, Florida market. The data was compiled between the years 2005 – 2007, and contained the following data points: monthly demand, monthly available rooms, actual room rates, occupancy rates, and department profit. The data set consisted of thirty-six observations (twelve per season) accumulated during analysis of thirteen fiscal periods within each year. A convention hotel was selected because it serves both market segments, has multiple operating departments, and enables this study to utilize ProfitPAR as a unit of measurement.

Operational Definitions

Discounting is the offering of a rate that is below the average premium rate. It is a short-term strategy measured as the dollar difference between average premium rate available and actual market room rate. Formula 1 calculates periodic discounting rates for both market segments.

Formula 1:

<p><u><i>Discounted Rate Equation:</i></u> $D_{\text{rate}} = \text{APR} - \text{ADR}_a$<p><i>Where D_{rate} is the Discounted Rate; APR is the Average Premium Rate; and ADR_a is the Actual Average Daily Rate provided to each market segment.</i></p></p>
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Hotel financial performance is the total profit contributed by each market segment and is measured by profit per available room (ProfitPAR). Formula 2 calculates total profit of each market segment.

Formula 2:

<p><u><i>ProfitPAR:</i></u> $\text{ProfitPAR} = \text{DP}_a / \text{AR}_p$<p><i>Where ProfitPAR is the total profit per available room; DP_a is the additional department profit contributed by each market segment; and AR_p is the number of rooms available during each of the 13 fiscal periods in a year</i></p></p>
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Statistical Procedures

The data set presents potential spurious conditions resulting from non-stationarity of the data which could produce misleading correlations between variables. An Augmented Dickey Fuller unit root test (ADF) will determine if the data points are free from influence from each other. A Pearson product moment correlation analysis will reveal the strength and direction of the relationship between discounting (discrete variable) and hotel financial performance (continuous variable) according to the hotel's seasonality. A two-way analysis of variance (two-way ANOVA) will test the impact of the independent variables (season and type of traveler) on the dependent variable (seasonal hotel financial performance). The advantage of this test is that it will determine the effect of one independent variable as it is influenced by the other. It will

ascertain the interaction effect between traveler type and season. Finally, an independent t-test will determine if there is a statistically significant difference in the means of hotel financial performance between the two market segments. This test will assist in determining which market segment contributes more significantly to hotel financial performance. The independent variable is the market segments, and the dependent variable is hotel financial performance.

Analytical Framework

The variables are closely linked in two ways: through the mediating variable of the rational expectations theory, and the use of discounting as a strategy that aims to maximize hotel financial performance. By understanding the characteristics of the cobweb model and forecasting demand through the rational expectations theory, managers could increase hotel financial performance for both market segments by discounting room rates appropriately for each season.

Industry Application

The conceptual model in Appendix A illustrates the relationships between all variables. Application of this model demonstrates the strategic implications of this study to the hotel industry. Managers must consider both the type of traveler and the season of travel when making discounting decisions. The cobweb model is representative of the industry's seasonal demand for both market segments. During periods of decreased room demand, managers should discount room rates for both market segments in accordance with the rational expectations theory; thus creating an opportunity to increase seasonal hotel financial performance.

RESULTS

Augmented Dickey Fuller Test

The Augmented Dickey Fuller unit root test (ADF) determined if non-stationary conditions existed. Table 1 presents the results of the ADF unit root test. The data points were converted to natural logarithm format to standardize the data points into a consistent unit of measurement. When compared with the critical value at the 1% level significance, it was revealed that the ADF test statistic exceeded that value. The tests suggest that the series did not contain a unit root in log form, thereby indicating that the series of observations were stationary and free of influence from one another.

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient assessed the direction of the relationships between the variables, Cohen's scale of -1.00 to 1.00 was utilized; with the absolute value of one indicating a perfect correlation. The relationship between the variables was analyzed first by splitting the data into market segments and season. Table 2 presents the results of the correlation analysis for each market segment and hotel season.

Group Market Correlation Analysis Results

The group market correlation analysis did not produce statistically significant results. The negative relationship and the low shared variance between hotel room discounting and hotel financial performance for groups was in accordance with the expectations of the study based on the principles of accrual accounting. However, the results that are reported are of practical significance for industry application.

There was a medium, negative correlation between the two variables for the group market segment in high season, $r = -.390$, $n = 12$, $p = .21$. The shared variance for the group market segment between the variables in the high season indicated that the discount rate helped to explain approximately 15% of the variance in hotel financial performance. An analysis of the low season revealed that there was a small, negative correlation between the variables, $r = -.092$, $n = 12$, $p = .78$, with .8% shared variance between the variables. In the shoulder season for the group market segment, there was a medium, negative relationship between the variables, $r = -.456$, $n = 12$, $p = .14$ with a 21% shared variance.

Transient Traveler Correlation Analysis Results

There was a positive, medium relationship between discounted room rate and hotel financial performance in the high season for transient travelers, $r = .318$, $n = 12$, $p = .31$. The discounted rate helped to explain 10% of the shared variance in hotel financial performance. In the low season, there was a statistically significant strong, positive relationship between the variables, $r = .660$, $n = 12$, $p < .05$. The coefficient determined 44% shared variance between the variables. There was also a statistically significant, strong, positive relationship in the shoulder season for transient travelers, $r = .695$, $n = 12$, $p < .05$. The discounted room rate explained almost 48% of the shared variance in hotel financial performance.

The transient traveler market segment results were also consistent with the expectations of the study. The relationship between discounted room rates and hotel financial performance for transient travelers indicated opposite findings from the group market segment. The discounted room rate coincided directly with the movement in hotel financial performance over the three years for the transient traveler market segment.

Two-way Analysis of Variance

To conduct the two-way ANOVA, seasonality was divided into high, low and shoulder seasons according to the convention hotel's occupancy levels. An analysis of table 3 reveals that a statistically significant interaction effect ($F(2,66) = 12.17$, $p < .01$) between the independent variables, type of traveler and season, existed. Approximately 27% of the variance in hotel financial performance was explained by the interaction effect. The model (type of traveler, season, and the interaction of type of traveler and season) accounted for nearly 88% of the variance in hotel financial performance. There was a statistically significant main effect for type of traveler, $F(1,66) = 394.96$, $p < .01$ and for season, $F(2,66) = 20.88$, $p < .01$. Type of traveler explained 86% of the variance in hotel financial performance. Season explained approximately 39% of the variance in hotel financial performance.

Post-hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated that the mean difference for all seasons was statistically significant. The high season (M=110.83, SD=80.15) was significantly different from the low season (M=66.01, SD=44.15) and the shoulder season (M=85.77, SD=62.19). The low season (M=66.01, SD=44.15) was significantly different from the high season (M=110.83, SD=80.15) and from the shoulder season (M=85.77, SD=62.19). The shoulder season (M=85.77, SD=62.19) was significantly different from the low season (M=66.01, SD=44.15) and from the high season (M=110.83, SD=80.15).

The results of this test supports the previously reviewed literature which recommends the continued use of market segmentation based on seasonal demand in order to maximize hotel financial performance. The model suggests that the overall performance of the variables is significant contributors to the omnibus of the model.

Independent t-test

There was a statistically significant difference in hotel financial performance for groups (M = \$143.94, SD = \$45.44) and transient travelers, (M= \$31.12, SD = \$11.16); $t(39.21) = 14.47$, $p < .01$ (two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in means (mean difference = \$112.82, 95% CI: \$97.05 to \$128.59) was large (eta squared = .75). The group market segment exhibited a higher mean in hotel financial performance as compared to the transient traveler market segment, which was in accordance with the expectations of the study.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study analyzed the relationship between discounting room rates and hotel financial performance. The study found a positive relationship between discounting and hotel financial performance for the transient market segment, which confirms the expectation based on theory that the relationship between discounting and hotel financial performance is strong and positive.

The results yielded a negative relationship between discounting and hotel financial performance for the group market segment. This negative relationship may be explained by the equivalent occupancy equation and different price sensitivity factors between market segments; as well as the long lead times associated with the group market segment. A subset of the group market segment and primary target audience of a convention hotel is the association meeting market. Lead times for association meetings can range between five to ten years. Earnings from this subset market exceed the years of the data set. Thus, the lead time between group contract initiation and actual fulfillment may not influence the monthly hotel financial performance data until the actual fulfillment and execution of the contract is complete. Additionally, a group contract may contain predisposed negotiated market rates for hotel rooms determined by the season, size of the room block, and expected expenses accrued within additional operating departments according to the groups expected performance contract.

It was expected that discounting would explain a large percentage of the shared variance in hotel financial performance. The results of the two-way ANOVA support this expectation.

However, the results of the correlation analysis did not reach the same conclusion as previously explained by additional confounding factors of the group market's segment user-usage characteristics.

The results of the independent t-test found that the discounting of room rates leads to a larger increase in financial performance for groups versus transient travelers. This is primarily due to the fact that groups contribute significantly more to the additional operating departments within the hotel compared to that of the transient traveler market segment.

The study further acknowledged that the two market segments have opposing seasonal demand that complement the total hotel financial performance, as illustrated in figures three and four. As demand for the group segment increased, the demand for the transient traveler segment decreased, and vice versa. Therefore, it can be inferred that the market segments' user-usage characteristics complement the demand and the financial performance of the hotel.

Figure 3: Group Demand

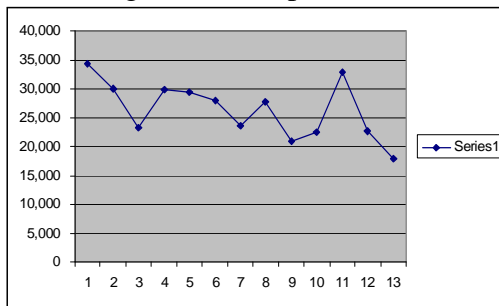
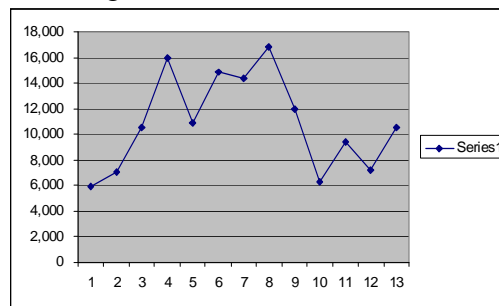


Figure 4: Transient Demand



This research offers alternative results from the Enz et al. article. There is a positive relationship between discounting of room rates and hotel financial performance for the transient traveler segment. Further, the two-way ANOVA indicated the importance of considering seasonal characteristics in conjunction with the type of traveler in the implementation of discounting as a pricing strategy to increase hotel financial performance.

Limitations

The data that was obtained for this study was from a single convention hotel in the Orlando, FL market and cannot be applied to the general population of hotels within the industry. An accurate comparison of the results from this study to another convention hotel would require considering additional factors such as; available hotel rooms, convention and meeting space, as well as the hotel's competitive set. Moreover, the cobweb model is representative of the hotel industry but the data set is supported by a single-unit hotel. These limitations indicate that the study has low external validity.

In order to augment the internal validity of the study it is necessary to increase the sample size, and to determine a unit of measurement that can properly assess the group market's anticipated earnings from discounting room rates that are contracted but not yet earned. This is difficult to accomplish when considering ProfitPAR as a unit of measurement for the group segment. Revenues that are associated with contracts greater than one year are not recognized

until earned, in accordance with the accrual based accounting principle. Therefore, current discounting for long-term group sales may not be evident from the data. Also, the implications of the study may only be applicable to cities that possess similar demographic, psychographic, and similar city infrastructure traits of Orlando, FL.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research requires further segmentation of both transient and group travelers. It would be beneficial for hotels to analyze market segments within the group traveler segment and to identify which subset markets capture the most revenue sales. This could then assist managers in developing appropriate yield management practices. Hotels may then tailor products, services and offer appropriate discounted room rates that could appeal to these identified lucrative market subsets, resulting in potential increased hotel financial performance.

The hotel industry is a highly competitive and interdependent environment. The correlation analysis that was utilized in this study is capable of assessing the relationship between variables but does not assume causality. Because of this, it is necessary to adapt a more complex methodology to advance the findings of this study.

The results of this study will assist in advancing a consistent method of discounting for groups and transient travelers within the hotel industry. It is anticipated that this study has high reliability as long as macro environment conditions do not fluctuate severely. Future convention hotel studies regarding how discounting of room rates effects hotel financial performance for group and transient traveler market segments should render similar results to this study. The results of the two-way ANOVA indicate that the model is significant and stable. As conceptualized in Appendix A, the cobweb model and the rational expectations theory can be used in conjunction with the aforementioned pricing strategies for perishable products to support the following claim: hotel managers are capable of forecasting demand in periods of low occupancy by discounting room rates with the expectation that the decrease in ADR (price) will lead to an increase in hotel financial performance.

Appendix A

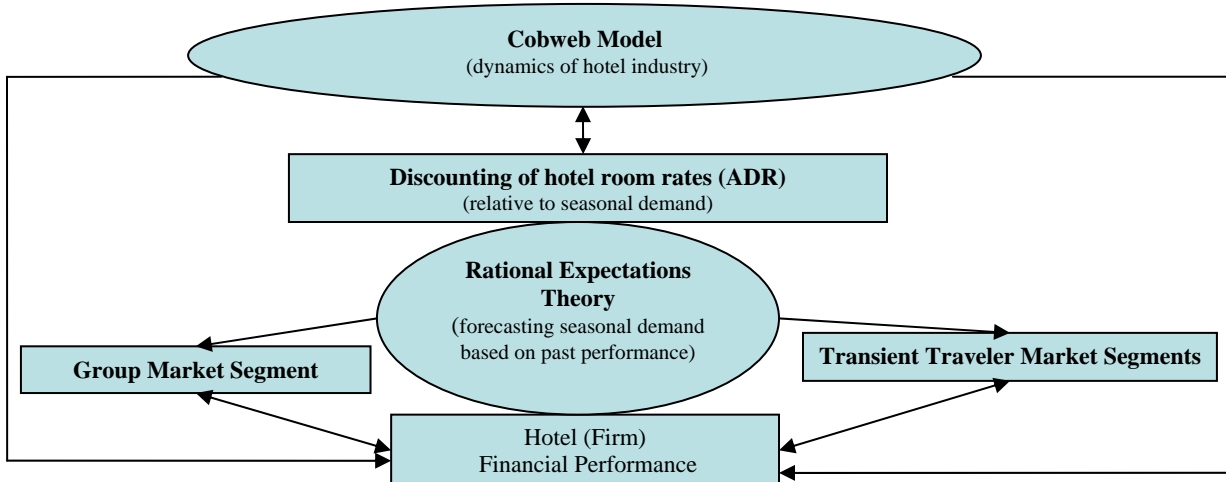


Table 1. ADF Unit Root Test Results

<i>Market Segment</i>	<i>Hotel Financial Performance</i>	<i>Discounting</i>	
Group	-4.253*	-4.406*	Log Form
Transient	-4.102*	-3.852*	Log Form

* Significant at the 1% level

Table 2. Correlation Results of Seasonal Discount Rate and Market Segment Hotel Financial Performance

<i>Discount Rate</i>	<i>Group Market Segment</i>	<i>Transient Traveler Market Segment</i>
Discount in High Season	-0.039	0.318
Discount in Low Season	-0.092	.660*
Discount in Shoulder Season	-0.456	.695*

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 3. Two-way ANOVA tests on hotel financial performance by type of traveler and season

	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Main effects				
Type of traveler (<i>T</i>)	1	229110.34	394.96	0.000
Season (<i>S</i>)	2	121090.32	20.88	0.000
Interaction effect (<i>T x S</i>)				
Error	66	580.05		0.000
Total	72			
Corrected Total	71			

*R Squared = .875

Note: Levene's test for equality of variances, equal variances not assumed. Sig. = .000

Table 4. Independent samples t – test: Hotel Financial Performance of Group Market Segment vs. Hotel Financial Performance of Transient Traveler Market Segment

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

95% Confidence Interval of the Difference

t – test for Equality of Means

		<i>F</i>	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig . 2tailed	Mean Difference	Std. error Difference	Lower	Upper
Hotel Financial Performance	Equal Variances Not Assumed	55.29	.000	14.47	39.21	.000*	112.82	7.80	97.05	128.59

* Significant at the .01 alpha level

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THE GROUNDED THEORY OF BEING-NESS AND CONNECTIVITY - INTERNATIONAL TOURISM STUDENTS AND THEIR TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

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ABSTRACT

In today's globalised world, studying abroad has become a priority for many students. Considering these students often spend up to four years in another country, insight into how they spend their leisure time, and in particular their travel behavior, can provide a holistic picture of what constitutes their life in their study country. This has implications both for their stay while studying, and for any future relationships with their study country. Despite this, little research (especially qualitative research) has been conducted on how and why international students travel, or conversely do not travel, while studying abroad. The lack of research is particularly noticeable in Australia. A number of authors (Weaver 2004; Min-En 2006) identify the need for more research on international student travel.

KEYWORDS: Grounded Theory; Being-Ness; Connectivity; International Tourism Students; Travel Experiences

INFORMING RESEARCH PARADIGM

As part of a larger study that seeks to provide a qualitative understanding of international students and their lived leisure and travel experiences, this research examines travel behavior of international students enrolled in tourism, hospitality and event management study programs at an Australian University. Founded upon an interpretive social sciences paradigm, where the researcher is able to enter the participant's social world (Blumer 1962; Jennings 2001), the primary purpose of this research has been to inductively generate an explanatory theory grounded in the data. Specifically, a constructivist grounded theory tradition was used. Why, because "*[g]rounded theory can offer a new level of understanding to studies of tourists and their interactions within the tourist milieu. Grounded theory can generate explanations of events*

and relationships reflecting lived experiences of individuals, groups and processes central to the tourist experience" (Jennings and Junek 2007, p.202). Subsequently, grounded theory methodology does not test an 'a priori' theory but tries to "explain and understand the data and to identify patterned relationships within it" (Charmaz 1995, p.8). Empirical materials were interpreted using grounded theory methods. The interpretive construction and reconstruction of the students' lived travel experiences led to the identification of conceptual categories which underpin the emergent grounded theory.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Surprisingly little research has been conducted on how and why international students travel, or conversely do not travel, while studying abroad. Despite a number of authors (Weaver 2004; Min-En 2006) calling for more research on international student travel, this has been particularly so in Australia. Considering that these students often spend up to four years in another country, an insight into how they spend their leisure time, and in particular their travel behavior, can provide a holistic picture of what constitutes their life in their study country. This has implications both for their stay while studying, and for any future relationships with their study country.

One of the largest studies into the international student travel market undertaken by Richards and Wilson (2004) revealed frequent travel consumption by students in eight different countries and the desire for the experiential component of travel. The students in that study were not studying outside their own country and hence their motivations, financial arrangements, mode of travel and other factors could well be quite different from those of international students. Shoham, Schrage & van Eeden (2004) replicated one of the first studies into international student behavior by Hsu & Sung (1996) and investigated student travel preferences in three different countries. Kim, Jogarantham and Noh (2006) investigated travel motivations amongst American University students. A small number of studies (Field 1999; Frost & Shanka 1999; Kim & Jogaratnam 2003) have explored the differences between domestic and international student travel in the same country of residence. In Field's study (1999) based on US college students, travel in the spring break revealed some major differences as well as some similarities between travel behavior of these two groups. Similarly, Frost & Shanka (1999) compared travel behavior of Asian and Australian students.

Research to date has tended to concentrate on some areas such as the economic benefits of student travel (see Michael, Armstrong and King 2003 for example), the educational experience (Carr, McKay & Rugimbana 1999) and predominantly quantitative studies of travel behaviour and patterns at the destination (Shanka, Ali-Knight & Pope 2002; Son 2003; Ritchie 2003; Richards & Wilson 2004). Within the broader research on international students having some relevance to travel, research on motivational decisions on place of study and adaptation of students to the Australian educational system as well as the cultural adaptation and international students' social needs (see Mitchell 1995; Townsend & Lee 2004 for example) has also been undertaken.

Weaver (2004) suggests further research (both qualitative and quantitative) on international students in Australia to identify a more detailed and holistic picture of their leisure

and travel patterns. Significantly, Min-En (2006) sees a direct correlation between an increase in international students and VFR tourism and thus highlights the importance of the international student market.

A major limitation found within research on travel experiences of international students has been the focus only upon those students who undertake travel. Research offers little insight into constraints and reasons for not travelling. My research addresses this gap by seeking to find not only what drives students to undertake leisure and travel activities but also to identify what constrains or inhibits them. It will add other dimensions of understanding in identifying the motivating and constraining forces underlying students' leisure and travel activities, choices and behaviours. Additionally, it also investigates the influences of culture and nationality on leisure and travel behaviours.

METHODOLOGY

Three semi-structured focus groups were held to understand what international students define as leisure. The focus group results were then used to inform one-to-one interviews. Thirty students took part in the interviews, which were recorded and transcribed until theoretical saturation was reached and no new material emerged (Strauss and Corbin 1998). Constant comparison amongst the data was used to refine conceptual categories. Subsequently and concurrently, member checking was used to ensure the grounding of emergent concepts in the empirical material

A GROUNDED THEORY OF BEINGNESS AND CONNECTIVITY REGARDING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

At this time, the emergent theory indicates that the travel behavior of international students is strongly influenced by their personal being-ness including their attitude, self agency, aspirations and self-actualisation. Their travel behavior is further mediated (mediate in this sense means acting as the medium of bringing about a result or change) by their connectivity with community, systems, organisational structures and various elements of the travel industry. Major mediators (higher order concepts) identified were being-ness, systems, communities and organisational structures.

Figure1 demonstrates the higher-order concepts (being-ness, communities, systems and organisational structures and travel experiences) which appear as bold capitalized text and lower-order concepts which appear as title case and non-emboldened text (respectively, for example, socio-demographic characteristics, culture, social networks and the university,) that emerged from the interpretation of the empirical material.

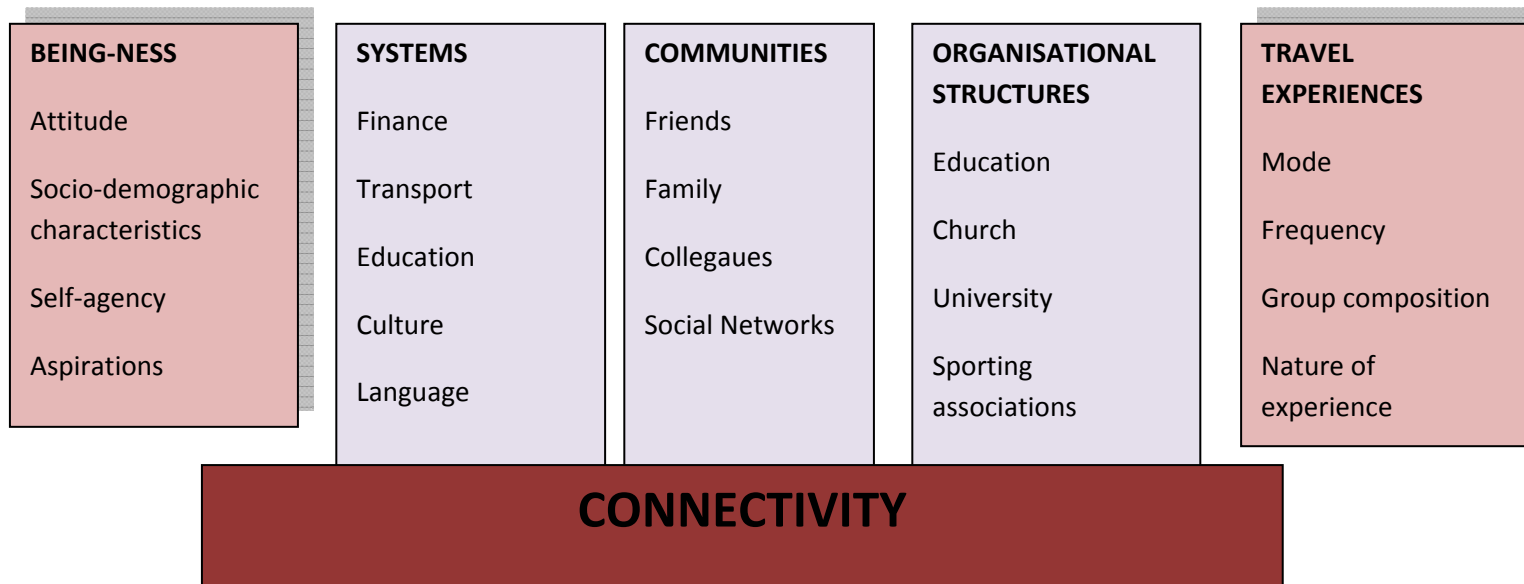


Figure1. The grounded theory of being-ness and connectivity.

DISCUSSION

The focus of this paper is on understanding the motivating and constraining factors of international student travel. While discussion of mode, frequency, group composition, information seeking, booking arrangements and type of travel were also part of the interviews, these are not discussed in this paper.

The emergent theory suggests that the students' being-ness - that is, the active part of their selves - plays an important part in travel behaviour. One prominent part of this being-ness seemed to be that of attitude, or approach to travel (as well as to other leisure activities).

Attitude

Many of the students desired to travel as widely as possible when in Australia. In fact, this seemed to influence their choice of Australia as a study destination. In particular, this attitude was expressed by the German and to some extent, other European students. Paul (24-year-old German student) commented

...in our opinion this [is] a once in a lifetime opportunity in Australia”

And, this was typical of such students when asked about travel in Australia. Some students had been to Australia previously, had travelled and came to Australia the second time to study but also to pursue further travel.

The non-European student group saw travel as desirable. However, they considered this as secondary to their primary goal of completing their degree and ensuring that they completed their university work as expected. The attitude of these students to travel was strongly influenced by family and friends living in other parts of Australia, who were often the catalyst for the students' travel. When asked whether he would like to travel to Tasmania, Nick (23-year-old Thai student) suggested that he does not like to take the initiative in making travel decisions

“I don't know anyone there [in Tasmania] and I don't have any friends who would be interested you know, to go on a trip with me”

Attitude was only one part of the students' being-ness that played a part in how they spent their leisure time in Australia. Other aspects of being-ness which affected travel behaviour were age and maturation, prior travel experiences, personal situatedness and future aspirations.

As suggested in the introduction, communities, systems, and organisational structures are mediating factors between the students and their participation in travel. Within those three factors, a number of motivators are significant in influencing and enabling international student travel.

Motivators

The mediating effect of communities on travel and other leisure activities emerged strongly in this research. In this instance, communities extended from family and friends to sporting clubs, church groups and ethnic groups.

International students regard friends and family who visit them in Australia as one of the main reasons for undertaking travel. Many students accompanied and showed tourist attractions to their friends and family, and in the case of popular local attractions, more than once. For instance, Ruth (a 22-year-old German student) commented,

“I want to travel through the outback once again, because my sister is going to come and I wanted to show her that and go with her”

Congruent with this finding is Min-En's (2006) study which points to the importance of VFR travel to Australia as stimulated by international students and further highlights the economic benefits of this travel.

Friends were also often the organizers of travel, either because they had travelled to that destination before, had a particular hobby (such as diving) associated with that destination, or had simply taken the initiative in organizing the travel. Friends and family living in Australia in a different location were also often a reason for the student's travel – sometimes for a special celebration, or simply just to visit as in the case of Abdul (a 33-year-old Tanzanian student)

“When my friend had a baby she moved to Adelaideand then me and my friend went to visit her family”

Travel organized by the University which they attend was utilized to a much smaller extent and often occurred in the early stages of the student's stay. Those students who took advantage of the University organized tours to mainly Victorian tourist destinations, appreciated the relative low cost of these tours, but did not necessarily continue to travel in this manner throughout their stay. Many students indicated they were not familiar with the University's organised tours, highlighting a need for more targeted communication of these, a point also noted by Hsu and Sung (1997) who made a number of recommendations regarding the design and communication of organised and packaged travel opportunities.

Many students found that despite their desire to travel, a number of constraints often hampered them.

Barriers to travel

Within the mediating effects of systems and organisational structures, the lack of finance and the lack of time were the main inhibiting factors in pursuing travel to the extent that the students would have liked. The majority of students had some financial support from their family during their stay in Australia. This ranged from covering the entire cost of tuition and living expenses to providing some financial help with either living or tuition costs. Most students

also worked part-time to supplement family financial assistance. Often the money earned from working was used to fund travel. This was more evident in the European group who, whilst appreciating their parents help, wanted to make the most of their time in Australia and see as much as possible of the country. They were intent on saving money earned from their jobs for this purpose. Conversely, a number of Asian students saw a need to concentrate more on their studies and not use their parents' money for travel, a point echoed in the comments of Tony (a 22 year old Chinese student),

“If I do more travelling by my own wish that means I am going to waste the monies (provided by his parents) and that is not a good deal for my overseas life”

The sense of obligation to complete their degree and focus mainly on their studies was more strongly expressed among the group of non-European students.

The second major inhibitor was insufficient time to pursue travel, be this due to study, work or in a number of cases, travelling back home during the long summer break. A number of students expressed regret at not being able to travel as much as they would have liked. However, it needs to be said that many students, both European and non-European, journeyed back to their home country during the long University break, especially for holidays such as Christmas and the Chinese New Year.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation into travel behaviour of international students is part of a wider snapshot of the overall leisure behaviour of these students whilst studying for a university degree in Australia. The emergent theory points to a number of mediating factors that enable student travel. These include communities, systems and organisational structures. As well, the students themselves and their being-ness (their dynamic, ever-changing selves) play a major role in how they view and undertake travel opportunities.

The insights emerging from this investigation have implications for universities and education providers as well as for travel and tour operators, not only for the students' duration of stay, but also for future business or leisure travel relationships with Australia. Education providers would benefit by ensuring students experience a holistic, balanced study sojourn which could then have positive word-of-mouth repercussions once those students return home. In the current competitive environment amongst educational institutions to attract and retain international students, there is a need to understand the complexity of these students' leisure activities and how they fit into their overall stay away from their home destination. The theory of being-ness and connectivity provides some insight into the lives of international students, and can guide educational institutions in helping them interact, integrate and gain optimal benefit from their study sojourn away from home.

Especially where students are constrained by time, planning and financial factors, the following recommendations would enable students to pursue more travel:

- Travel and holiday information should be targeted at students before they arrive in Australia. This would give students the opportunity to plan their travel activities early on and in consultation with family and friends, perhaps including them in their travel plans.
- In planning Orientation Day activities Universities should consider the involvement of tourism organisations and tour operators. Activities, which include the distribution of promotional literature, multi-media presentations and one-on-one consultations, preferably using speakers from the students' country, may provide an early stimulus to student interest in travel within their study destination. Presentations about travel experiences by international students already living in Australia could also be included as further marketing activities.
- Furthermore, continual marketing of travel products through Internet media used by students – for example Facebook, My Space and similar- in conjunction with the University's websites should be considered in order to extend marketing reach. Similarly, the use of University websites to market travel opportunities to potential and existing students and their families would ensure future interest in both the educational aspects as well as travel opportunities.
- Offering products with explicit benefits for family and friends, such as two-for-one deals, could further support the notion that as the international student market grows so too does the VFR market.
- Student trips organised by the university and subject-based field trips can often make students feel safer and more comfortable, especially in the initial stages of their stay when they may not have established friendship groups and can feel displaced. University staff, lecturers and student mentors should be key facilitators in promoting such trips.

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COMPUTER SIMULATED REALITIES FOR TRAINING TOMORROW'S ENTREPRENEURS – VIRBUS CASE

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ABSTRACT

Simulations are learning tools that provide the learner the possibility to practice real work life situations in a simulated, risk-free environment. There are few simulations available in the field of tourism and hospitality. We, as team members of a cross-disciplinary international team have, over the past two years, developed an open source coded virtual tourism and hospitality business management simulation learning environment, called VIRBUS (The Virtual International Business Management Learning Environment for Hospitality Industry and Destination Management). The development team members are specialists in the tourism and hospitality business, from universities of applied sciences and enterprises in four European countries (Finland, Slovenia, Germany and Estonia), and research experts in pedagogy, e-learning and ICT from academia. VIRBUS will be developed so that it can be used in both educational institutions and in company training in enterprises. It consists of three phases i.e. learning scenarios environments: 1) start up and stabilization of a hotel business, 2) growth of business (expanding hotel with a restaurant) and 3) destination management (competition and co-operation). This presentation outlines the content, pedagogy and technical structure of the VIRBUS learning environment. Pilot test results will be presented. During the pilot testing, VIRBUS learning outcomes and efficiency of simulation based learning were constantly evaluated. In general, students were motivated to study with VIRBUS as it enhances learning by active engagement instead of passively watching and listening to a presentation. Their opinion after using VIRBUS was that they had a better understanding of the cause-effect processes of tourism and hospitality business transactions on the business as a whole. Further, future research topics will be raised. Most important of these is the advanced use of VIRBUS for the training of employees in the tourism and hospitality work place environment.

SIMULATIONS – POWERFUL AND FLEXIBLE EDUCATIONAL DEVICES

Simulation-based learning approaches aim to imitate a system, entity, phenomenon or a process. They attempt to represent the issue being studied (Lean, Moizer, Towler & Abbey,2006). The main purpose of the simulation is to help students understand and solve

complex real-life situations. If the issue being studied is a complex one, or may involve some risks, the technique of simulation may be the only way to study the issue. (Fripp,1993)

Properly used, simulations can be powerful and flexible educational devices. Simulation allows experiments to be conducted within a risk-free situation (Lean, Moizer, Towler & Abbey 2006). There is scientific evidence that simulation type learning activities generate transferable knowledge as well as thinking and acting model. This helps the learner to cope with these processes in similar tasks encountered in real work situation. (Lehtonen, Page & Thorsteinsson,2006) Simulations are more dynamic than almost any other kind of learning method. They can provide powerful learning opportunities as they generate unforeseen sets of circumstances. Simulations provide insights into the totality of systems, particularly complex business ones. The learner will see the outcomes of different conditions. The learner can be encouraged to adopt a more global view and understanding of the whole business. There is also the opportunity to develop specific skills e.g. team-working, decision making, and analytic skills. (Fripp,1993)

Simulations represent shared virtual spaces and sociomental tools, tools for thinking, problem-solving, sharing ideas and thoughts on a symbolic level. They also provide tools for communication and shared attention toward the same objects. (Lehtonen, Page, Thorsteinsson & Miloseva,2007.)

REASONS FOR VIRBUS

Having had experience of several business simulations, the authors have realized that there are very few simulations available that address the specific needs of tourism and the hospitality industry. One reason for developing VIRBUS was that students, teachers and trainers had needs that needed to be met.

Enterprise partners have expressed an interest in developing teaching and in company training in a way that takes into account connections with real business life in order to guarantee qualified professionals. On the other hand, educational partners of VIRBUS are developing existing institutional curricula. In these processes the need for business-life based material and integration between different management courses has emerged.

Especially from the adult learners' point of view there is a need to develop alternative, flexible and multimode methods of studying and to create tools that are easily accessible. Higher education institutes will benefit from VIRBUS as it allows them to develop their curricula and at the same time to use virtual teaching methods. The diversified aspects of VIRBUS will give teachers in the different fields of study the opportunity to co-operate and integrate the teaching of business management in the fields of tourism and hospitality management. VIRBUS can be accessed anywhere and anytime and therefore allows learners to have international contacts without physically moving from their home institution (virtual mobility and home internationalization).

OVERVIEW OF VIRBUS

The main objectives of VIRBUS are

- to improve international business management skills and the competences of students and employees in the fields of tourism of hospitality as well as in general business
- to increase students' understanding of the tourism and hospitality business life cycle
- to develop a positive attitude towards tourism and hospitality entrepreneurship

VIRBUS consists of three phases i.e. learning scenarios environments: 1) start up and stabilization of a hotel business, 2) growth of business (expanding a hotel with a restaurant) and 3) destination management (competition and co-operation). VIRBUS is based on an open-source environment and can therefore be adapted and further modified by all users.

VIRBUS can be used under the guidance of a trainer All phases can, however, also be studied independently. There is a great deal of flexibility in use in each phase. The player can address the whole phase one time or she/he can choose one particular module and study only that. Teachers or trainers can use VIRBUS pedagogically in many different ways (e.g. independent learning, learning in small groups, learning in a classroom or virtually). VIRBUS can also be used in education for many different purposes e.g. creating a business idea, making a market strategy, making financial prognoses, developing written and verbal presentation skills. Manuals for players and trainers include the overview and objectives of VIRBUS and its phases, through instructions on how to use VIRBUS tools and instructions for different tasks. The trainer's manual also includes pedagogical instructions for simulation based-learning and how to use VIRBUS in different ways in teaching.

VIRBUS is intended for students, lectures, company trainees and trainers in tourism and the hospitality business, as well as in general business. University students do not usually have the opportunity to practice their management or entrepreneurship skills effectively during their studies. VIRBUS gives them the possibility to simulate concrete business transactions and decision making during their professional higher education. Tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs can use VIRBUS in company training but also in business planning e.g. in creating future business scenarios. Networking is very important, particularly for new tourism entrepreneurs. In the "VIRBUS forum community" VIRBUS users can exchange experiences about VIRBUS and develop new business ideas with other current or potential tourism and hospitality entrepreneurs.

HOW VIRBUS WORKS

VIRBUS simulation learning environment is gathered under general Wikimedia structure. Players and trainers have access to theory topics (e.g. Business Plan, Marketing Positioning, Pricing Management, Strategic Management, and Destination Management), specific market and country data and quizzes. After the theory steps and knowledge tests, the player begin to prepare his/her own business plan with the business planning tool (Microsoft Excel format). He/she makes a thorough financial analysis based on existing market data. After solving all planning-

related tasks (e.g. location and size of the business, price of services, number of personnel, personnel competence, revenue and cost calculations), the player has to sell his/her business idea to financiers and other stakeholders. After securing the financing the player starts to implement his/her business idea with the simulation module that is in Phases I and II Java based generic simulation application and in Phase III PHP application on the web. Based on his/her planned ideas he/she chooses the input variables for four business quarters and after each quarter he/she analyzes the performance of that quarter and at the end of the game, the performance of the whole business year.

There are three cooperation levels through which the player can learn, plan and simulate results of his/her decisions in several business quarters. In Phase I the player competes against virtual or dummy players with preset initial business variables. In Phase II the player competes with other players. In Phase III the player first chooses the tourism destination and following this, both destination and players in each destination compete with other players. In the first phase events are controlled, in the second the teacher allows more or less freedom and in the third, players alone define events and conditions together with occasional random system generated disturbances. In Phase II there is also a chat forum where players in each destination can communicate with each other.

PILOT TESTING RESULTS OF VIRBUS

During pilot testing, VIRBUS developers have constantly evaluated VIRBUS learning outcomes and the efficiency of simulation based learning. Students and teachers using VIRBUS were asked to complete an evaluation questionnaire. Pilot testers were also interviewed.

The game itself proved to be a good learning environment. In the opinion of users, the visual look of the game is well thought out and helps to see the idea of the simulation. Students' and trainers' instructions were overall found to be very good. The quizzes were considered to be an excellent idea in that they sum up the points necessary to be learned in each step and encourage a reappraisal of what has been done and help to bring parts together for the next part.

Students were motivated to study with VIRBUS as it encourages them to learn by active engagement, rather than by passively watching and listening to a presentation. For those who prefer working independently, VIRBUS allows the freedom of individual thinking. Students' opinion after using VIRBUS was that they had a better understanding of the cause-effect processes of tourism and hospitality business transactions on the business as a whole. They also felt that VIRBUS really involved them in real life activities.

Teachers felt that VIRBUS is easy to integrate in a course curriculum and is easily integrated into various teaching methods. Different subject teachers (tourism and hospitality experts, marketing experts, financial experts, language teachers) used VIRBUS in their joint courses and their feeling was that VIRBUS supported quite well the interdisciplinary course integration.

Enterprise partners have felt that VIRBUS is a good tool, especially for small and middle size tourism and hospitality companies who do not have ready-made instruments for business planning. They also think that one asset of VIRBUS is the fact that being an open source environment, it can be taken into use and modified by anyone according to individual needs. New business operations and other business fields can be added.

CONCLUSIONS

Simulation learning environments, such as VIRBUS, seem to motivate students to learn more actively. There are however some key issues that should be kept in mind when simulations are used. It is important to provide learners with adequate information about the simulation process before they begin to use it. It is as important is to train teachers to use simulations properly.

From the learning point of view, it is also desirable if the learner sets his/her own learning objectives and during the learning process, regularly monitors his/her learning against his/her set learning objectives. When starting to use simulation, teachers should be sure that the students have the knowledge they will need during the simulation learning process, otherwise the learning is not so effective. VIRBUS e.g. provides students with adequate theory and glossary, and pre-knowledge can be tested before students start to study. If the teacher is present, those that need guidance can be given necessary information by the teacher. As important as the pre-briefing, perhaps even the most important part of the whole simulation is the debriefing after the use of simulation. Proper observations on cause-effect results have to be made. Debriefing can be done in the classroom or via virtual discussion forum.

FUTURE RESEARCH TOPIC

Many new research topics have been raised during the developing and testing of VIRBUS. Most important of these is the advanced use of VIRBUS for the training of employees in the tourism and hospitality work place environment.

Students feel that after using VIRBUS they have better entrepreneurial skills. One interesting research topic would be whether students really succeed better in their work and business after studying with VIRBUS.

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COMPUTER SIMULATED REALITIES FOR TRAINING TOMORROW'S ENTREPRENEURS – VIRBUS CASE

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www.virbusproject.com

The screenshot shows the Virbus virtual learning environment interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the website address www.virbusproject.com. Below the header, the Virbus logo is displayed, featuring a stylized globe and the text "VIRBUS" in large, bold letters. Underneath the logo, it reads "A VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR HOSPITALITY AND MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES." To the right of the logo, there are two buttons: "JOIN GAME" and "LOG OUT". Below the buttons, there is a small image of three people (a woman in a black and white uniform, a man in a white chef's uniform, and a man in a dark suit) standing in a virtual environment. The main content area shows a virtual interior space with a large screen displaying "WELCOME to VIRBUS". Below the screen, there is a text box that reads "Holistic Learning Platform" and "A new way to learn and teach about international Hospitality Management". At the bottom right, there is a "CONTINUE" button with a right-pointing arrow.

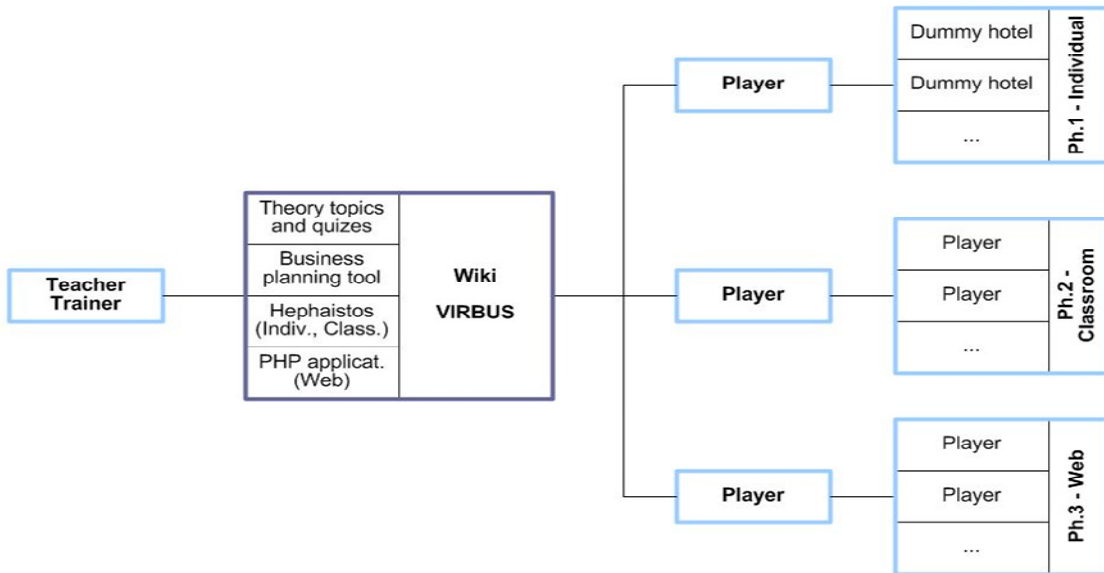
What VIRBUS learning platform is all about?

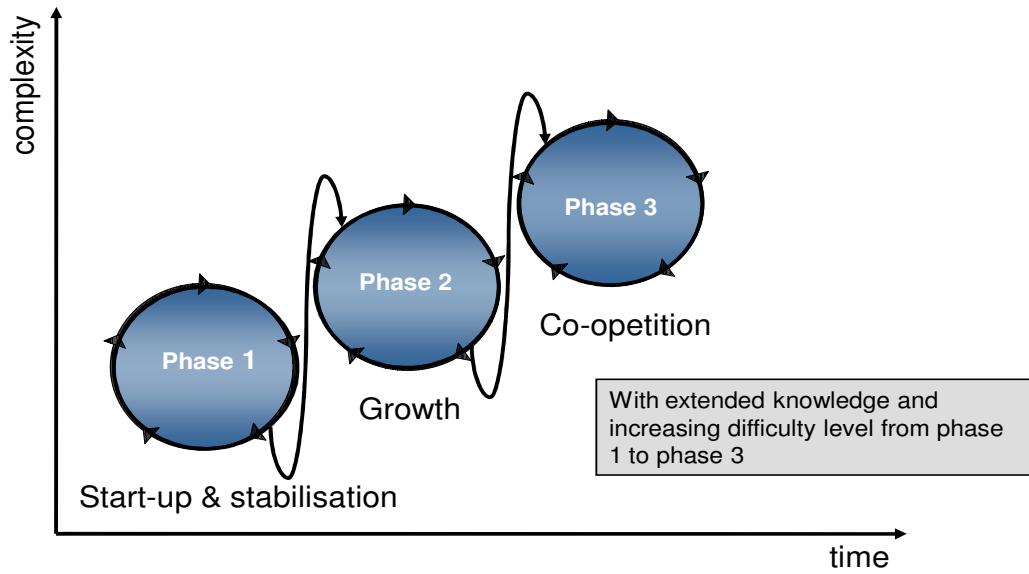
- Business decisions simulation
- Open-sourced code
- Summarized management theory
- Systematic analysis, planning and implementation tools focusing to hospitality & travel
- Direct links to market data and information
- Synthesized theory with practice and actions
- Business cause and effect way of thinking
- Memorable new type of adjustable learning experience
- New way of learning hospitality and tourism management to new breed of students with new needs

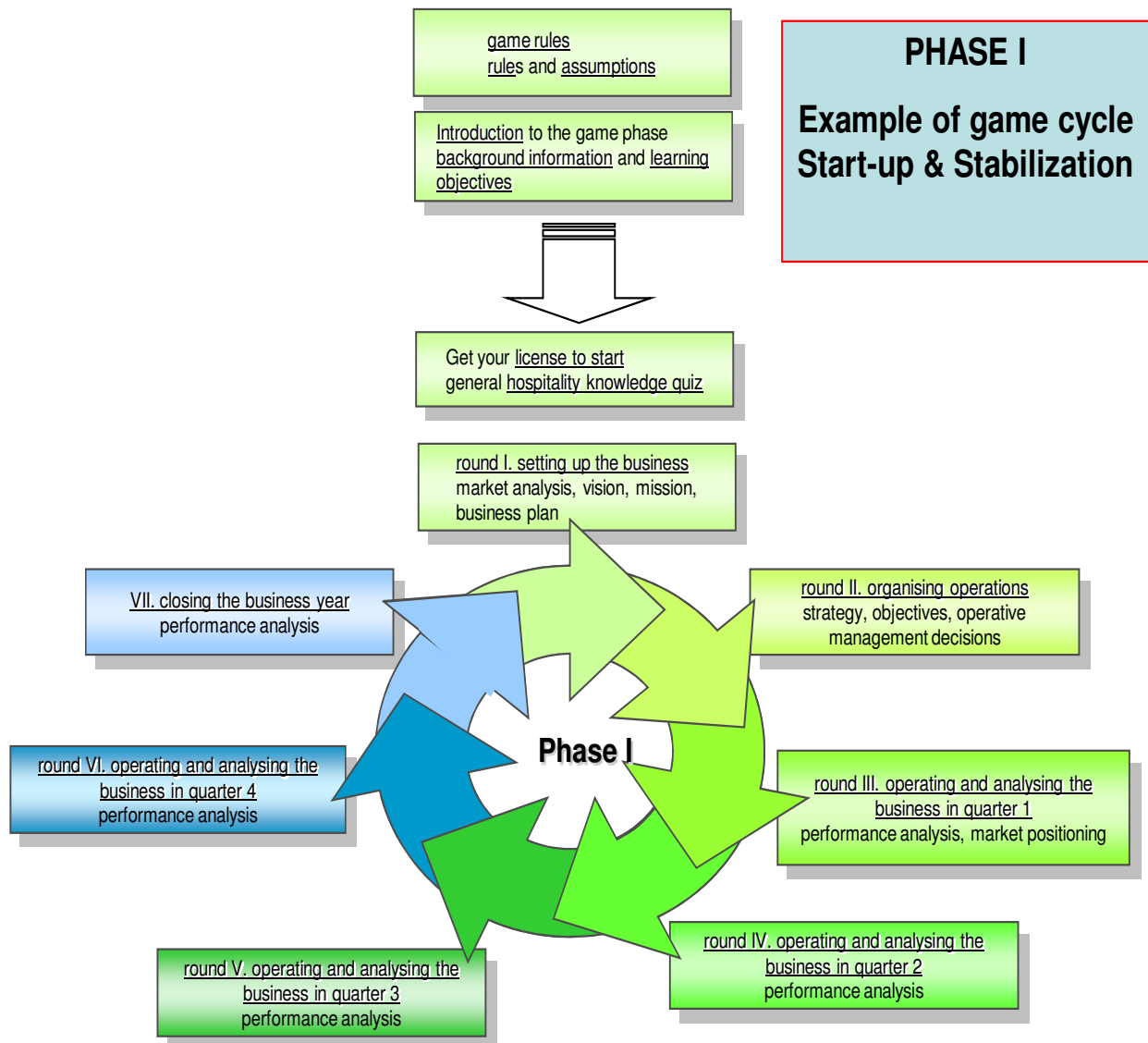
How can you apply VIRBUS in teaching?

- Three phases independently or combined
- Workshop or over a longer time period
- Learning platform or individual components only
- Self-study or in groups
- With different levels of moderation

- Mediawiki (Internet); informational base
- Business Planning Tool (MS Excel)
- Simulation Platform (Hephaistos)







VIRBUS PHASES

PHASE I: START UP & STABILISATION

Goal : Operate a city centre business hotel

- Learn about business principles and logic
- Understand decision making processes
- Create concept, sell idea and get funding
- Overcome challenges of a start-up
- Solve operational management issues
- Stabilize your business and make it profitable
- Know to use all Virbus tools and info sources

PHASE II: GROWTH

Goal : Grow and expand your business

- Increase understanding of financial management
- Expand to a restaurant operation
- Learn about advanced business management
- Manage hotel and restaurant operations

PHASE III: COMPETITION AND COOPERATION

Goal : Secure own competitiveness amongst set of competing and co-operating leisure destinations

- Understand destination management logic
- Learn about importance of joint-marketing
- Make right choices to optimize your business
- Add value to your service offering efficiently
- Operate a complex hospitality business venture

VIRBUS PROJECT

- EU-funded 2 years Leonardo- project
- Industry and educational development partners from 4 European countries (Finland, Estonia, Germany, Slovenia)
- 20 people in 3 substance working groups
- Future in-depth development suggested

VIRBUS

Educational Partners

Finland

HAAGA-HELIA,
University of Applied Sciences



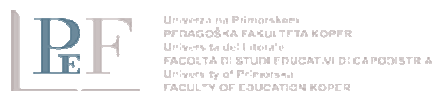
Germany

Hochschule Harz,
University of Applied Sciences



Slovenia

University of Primorska,
Faculty of Education, PEF



University of Primorska, UP Turistica



Estonia

Pärnu College of the University of Tartu



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- Modifiable for own specific needs
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- Supports your education
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Where I can get VIRBUS?

- Log in VIRBUS www.virbusproject.com

FINDING OUT WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE TO GO ON DOMESTIC AND
INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS: A RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN
AN UNDERGRADUATE HONORS STUDENT AND THEIR FACULTY MENTOR

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on the reasons students choose particular types of educational exchange programs and the research process that enabled the undergraduate researcher and faculty mentor to engage in primary research that is both enjoyable and appropriate for an undergraduate student. Surveys comprised of only open-ended questions were completed by 83 students who participated in exchange programs during 2006/2007. No coding scheme was developed prior to the collection of the data. Instead, the textual data were analyzed using text-mining software and the judgments of the researchers. The thematic word clusters that comprise the findings suggest that with the exception of cost, classes, and meeting new people; the reasons student choose to go on domestic exchange programs are markedly different than those of students who choose to go on international exchange programs.

KEYWORDS: CATPAC II™; Content Analysis; Educational Tourism; Student Exchange; Text mining; Undergraduate Student Research.

INTRODUCTION

This research paper is as much about the process of becoming a researcher as it is about the research itself. During the academic year 2007/2008, a senior Hospitality and Tourism Honors Student began the journey of developing research skills; utilizing knowledge gained from prior academic and work experiences; and discovering new knowledge. This quest is known as the “Capstone Experience Project” which is one of two options for students who are on track to graduate Magna or Summa Cum Laude and are formally enrolled in the Honors College at the University.

Students who are enrolled in this six credit hour “Capstone Experience Project” are expected to identify a topic for study; write a research proposal; solicit the year-long commitment from two sponsors (one must be a faculty sponsor who will chair the study and a

second qualified sponsor who can assist the student with the project); formally defend their proposal; conduct the research; analyze their data; write up their findings; and formally defend their final work.

From the perspective of the faculty member, one of the most difficult aspects of this process is the delicate balance between helping an undergraduate student think about how they can find out about their topic (through review of the literature and the gathering of data) and creating the research framework for the student to use. The authors of this study believe that it is more important for the undergraduate student to wrestle with the design aspects of the research than it is for the research framework to be crafted by the faculty member and implemented by the student. Doing is everything.

There are several key challenges for the student: narrowing the research topic to make it manageable; learning about the numerous ways to collect and analyze data along with their affordances and limitations; and actually being able to gain access to the types of respondents who could potentially provide the needed data. While these are typical research challenges, undergraduate students are rarely exposed to the whole process in any one class. In other words, they may have been asked to synthesize several journal articles in a mini literature review; develop questions that must be answered in order to solve a problem or learn new information; or find out the likelihood of a particular occurrence in one of their statistics' homework assignments.

Another obstacle is related to undergraduate students' perception of research in general. For many, it appears to be boring, useless, and difficult. The challenge then, is to engage these undergraduates in primary research that is both enjoyable and appropriate. Research can and should be a transformative activity. The academy will not have innovative new researchers, if we cannot make the process creative, fun, and personal. Undergraduates who develop a passion for learning new knowledge; a desire to create new knowledge; and a belief that their creative ability and analytical skills can make a difference will be valued by employers. They may also turn into future graduate students.

In this study, the research partnership between an undergraduate honors student and their faculty mentor produced a different research process and outcome than would have occurred with a research partnership between a graduate student and a faculty member. A discussion of this difference is a key component of this paper.

THE RESEARCH PARTNERSHIP

Finding a Research Topic and Developing Research Questions

Students who are engaged in "Capstone Experience Projects" are encouraged to select a topic that is of particular interest to them and that builds on their prior course work and life experiences. In this particular study, the honors student chose undergraduate exchange programs as going on a semester-long international exchange was the highlight of their undergraduate experience and had changed the student's life "in too many ways to even describe".

While the typical research framework would then proceed to a literature review prior to the development of research questions, the faculty mentor has found, through trial and error, that undergraduates in the field of business want to use a research process that more closely resembles the one they see used in “real life”. In other words, primary research that provides answers to questions and reports without literature reviews or extensive references. Instead, the research is focused on what type of and how much information needs to be collected from whom as well as how to get it, analyze it, and ultimately use it. If “school-type” research projects were more like the “real world”, then students believe that they will be more fun and worthwhile. This study was developed using a hybrid-type research model that bridges the gap between “academic” research and the perceived “real world” type research.

Developing a Research Framework

In order to narrow the topic into a manageable research project, the student used the technique of using questions to chart a course of inquiry. The four overarching research questions that emerged were:

- (1) Why do students choose to go on an exchange program?
- (2) Why do students choose a particular type of exchange (i.e. domestic or international)?
- (3) What factors influenced where they would go?
- (4) Do they travel to areas outside of their host city while on exchange?

These were reasonable questions to ask, but how would the student be able to answer the questions? Perhaps there were research papers or institutional reports that could be mined for data. This approach was viewed as “OK” but not very interesting or exciting. How, then, could answering these questions become fun and exciting? The answer was by doing (i.e. collecting primary data). While collecting primary data is both interesting and exciting and can be tailored to collect specific data, it can be challenging to identify and reach the desired respondents. It also has potential response rate problems and can be very time consuming. It was important for the faculty mentor to make sure that the student understood the risks and rewards inherent in primary research and that the student was willing and able to take the next steps in the research process.

Again, the technique of using questions was used to chart the course of inquiry. This time, it was the faculty mentor’s turn to ask the questions and the student to answer them. The following are some of the questions that were asked: Who will you ask these questions? How will you reach these people? What kind of survey will you create and how will you analyze it?

DATA COLLECTION

The student researcher wanted to ask students these questions using a very short survey instrument containing open-ended questions in order that students could give their answers in their own words. In order to gain access to students who had gone on either a domestic or international exchange, the student researcher convinced a member of the staff from the International Student Exchange Office at the University to be on the project committee. Both the

Domestic Exchange and International Exchange Offices on campus were willing to use their records to identify students who were on exchange during the academic year 2006/2007. These campus offices contacted the students directly through email, explained to the student why they were being contacted, encouraged them to participate in the study, and attached the appropriate survey designed by the honors student. Students who chose to participate in the study, returned their surveys via email and these text files became the data. Table 1 shows the list of questions that were asked in each of the surveys:

Table 1. Questions That Were Asked On The Two Survey Instruments That Were Used

<i>Set 1: Questions for Domestic Exchange Students</i>	<i>Set 2: Questions for Internal Exchange Students</i>
What is your Major? What year will you graduate? Where did you study? Why did you choose to do a domestic exchange? Why did you choose domestic exchange rather than international exchange? What factors went into choosing where you would study (cost, location, classes, etc.)? While you were on exchange, did you travel anywhere and if so, how far did you travel from your host city? Would you be interested in talking with me in person about your experience? If yes, please add your contact information.	What is your Major? What year will you graduate? Where did you study? Why did you choose to do an international exchange? Why did you choose international exchange rather than domestic exchange? What factors went into choosing where you would study (cost, location, classes, etc.)? While you were on exchange, did you travel anywhere and if so, how far did you travel from your host city? Would you be interested in talking with me in person about your experience? If yes, please add your contact information.

DEVELOPING A LITERATURE REVIEW

While the student researcher was waiting for respondents to complete their surveys and send the completed surveys via email, the student worked on the literature review. At this stage of the research, it was important for the faculty mentor to convince the student that it was necessary to know what others had found out about the topic. By framing this step as “knowing what the competition already knows”, the student found it to be more useful and worthwhile. Specific topic areas that the student identified for this review included content analysis, student exchanges, and educational travel. The *Hospitality & Tourism Complete* (EBSCO, 2008) was the primary reference data base that was used for searching the literature. This particular reference data base was selected as it covers both hospitality and tourism and includes scholarly journals as well as other publications dating from 1965 to the present. Access to this data base was through the University’s library.

Instead of starting with a literature review of student exchange and education travel, a conscious decision was made to start with the literature review of the analytical method that would be used to analyze the data. Learning about how to analyze textual data was viewed by the

student as a useful skill that would help them in their career. Prior to this study, the student had only been exposed to basic statistical analyses using data in the form of Likert-like questions. The following is the literature review that transpired for this project:

Content Analysis and Text Mining

Bush, DeMaret, Flynn, Kellum, Le, Meyers, Saunders, White, and Palmquist (2005) defined content analysis as a research tool that is used to analyze texts and said that these texts are coded into categories and then evaluated by either conceptual/thematic analysis or by relational analysis. They also said that content analysis can be both qualitative and quantitative. Carlson (2008) said that content analysis is a descriptive methodology and that it is a useful tool for researchers who want to find patterns, frequencies, or categories in their data. Bos and Tarnai (1999) also said that content analysis is a way to analyze texts and that it can be both qualitative and quantitative. They divided the practice of content analysis into two different types: hermeneutic-interpretative, which is interpretive, and empirical-explanatory, which is concerned with the frequency of predetermined themes or categories that are present in the data. In addition, they discussed hybrid types of content analysis that use both qualitative techniques to analyze the data. Bowen (2002) and Hayes and MacLeod (2007) employed hybrid methods which used content analysis with predetermined codes for text and semiotic analysis for images.

In recent research that involved only texts, a number of hospitality and tourism researchers (McKercher, Law, Weber, Song, & Hsu, 2007; Kozar, 2006; Xiao & Smith, 2006; Lee & Back, 2005; Yoo & Webber, 2005; Shea, Enghagen, & Khuller, 2004; Titz, Lanza-Abbott, & Cruz, 2004) conducted basic content analysis using pre-determined categories and coding schemes that were developed from relevant literature. The coded data were analyzed for frequency and then, in some cases, were subjected to statistical analysis. Okumus & Wong (2007) used a combination of content and semiological analysis for their study, however, they added an additional component to their coding scheme which allowed them some flexibility to code text that did not fit into one of their pre-determined categories.

Pritchard and Havitz (2005) built on the traditional content analysis model not only by counting how frequently their pre-determined categories appeared but also in what order they appeared. Several recent studies also combined the use of text mining software with the traditional forms of content analysis. Choi, Lehto, and Morrison (2007) as well as Singh, Hu, and Roehl (2007) used a software program called CATPAC™ (Galileo, 2008) and Pan, MacLaurin, and Crotts (2007) used a software program called TextAnalyst™ (Megaputer, 2008). These software programs allowed the researchers to work with text in numerous ways. Sing, et al. (2007) found text mining to be particularly useful for “learning and discovering information that was previously unknown” (p. 134).

Student Exchanges and Educational Travel

According to Gibb (2006, p. 1), “student and youth travel industry continues to be one of the fastest growing revenue producing segments in the travel industry”. Numerous recent studies (Kim, Oh, & Jogaratnam, 2007; Heung, & Leong, 2006; Gallarza & Saura, 2006; Kim, Noh, & Jogaratnam, 2006; Pike, 2006; Shoham, Schrage, & van Eeden, 2004) looked at student leisure

travel. Weaver (2004) also studied student leisure travel and focused on the travel activities of students who were on exchange programs in Australia as well as the economic benefits that accrued from their travels.

Smith and Jenner (1997, p. 60) found that studies on educational tourism are “rare and statistical data are sparse”. None the less, they said that it is both an expanding and important international travel market segment. From their observations, one of the key reasons people engage in educational tourism is to learn a language. Fordham (2005, p. 143) also considered exchange students as travelers and described students who are on foreign exchange programs as ‘embedded’ tourists who acquire a global perspective through immersion in a cultural that is different than their own. She reported that Rotary International believes that this transformative experience creates “cultural change agents” which are “potentially [a] key to world peace” (Fordham, 2005, p. 158).

Messer and Wolter (2007) considered student exchange programs as an important part of a well rounded education and noted that BBW (2002) found that Swiss students who went on exchange programs did so primarily for improving their foreign language skills and academic knowledge. Instead of focusing on these two key reasons for going on an exchange, their study focused on the advantages that students gain from going on an exchange program, more specifically the jobs and starting salaries that students were able to acquire as a direct result of their educational exchange experience.

Ritchie, Carr, and Cooper (2004) said that although traveling for educational purposes is not a new phenomenon, they found that little research had been conducted on educational tourism. The authors of this study could not find an empirical study that identified specific reasons why students chose to go on an exchange program or chose a particular exchange program. This study will help to fill the gap in student educational travel research.

METHODOLOGY

Review of the literature demonstrated to the student that it was indeed important. Having learned that other studies had not already found specific categories of motivators for student educational exchanges, the researchers then knew that this study could not use basic content analysis that used predetermined categories and coding schemes. Instead, this study would require a text mining methodology that would use a software program to extract patterns and relationships in the textual data.

CATPAC II™ (Galileo, 2008) was the text mining software that was used to analyze the textual data. Informed judgment by the researchers was also needed to effectively manage the data and interpret the results. First, the researchers needed to read the textual data from the 83 completed surveys from students who participated in exchange programs during academic year 2006/2007 to gain an understanding of what the respondents wrote. If they could not understand what the respondents said, they contacted them for clarification. The second step was selecting the number of key words to use in the dendograms (icicle like plots) which were the output from the hierarchical cluster analysis produced by the text mining software. By using a first run of 80

words, the researchers were able to identify the words such as “a”, “can”, “the” “is”, etc. that needed to be operationally excluded from the analysis and identify words in the text that needed to be recoded. For example, the researchers replaced plurals with singulars and past with present tense. They also selected a word such as “school” to stand for college, university, institution, etc. and replaced these words with the word “school” in a recoded textual data set.

The recoded data set were than reexamined with CATPAC II™. After various iterations using 30 to 40 key words, the researchers determined that 25 key words per question was the optimal number based on the size of the data set and the number of unique words that emerged from the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This paper discusses only six of the questions that were asked on the survey (three from the 43 domestic exchange respondents and the three corresponding questions from the 40 international exchange respondents). Figure 1 shows the dendograms produced from the hierarchical cluster analysis of research question 1 data from both groups of respondents (i.e. domestic and international exchange students). A comparison of these dendograms shows that domestic exchange students chose that option primarily to experience a new/different school, meet new/different people, in a new/different location, have a new/different experience, and in general, experience change. Each of these factors mapped on to the cluster and became tied together. As the cluster grew, it also mapped on to classes and culture. Another, lesser, cluster shows that cost and being “close” (which means being away from home but no too far way) were also key reasons students chose to do a domestic exchange. To a lesser extent, they were motivated by travel and scenery.

International exchange students chose that option based on their desire for different travel, world and cultural experiences. They also wanted to meet new people. As for language, one cluster indicates that academic factors associated with Spanish was a motivator and a different more loosely associated cluster indicates that students who spoke only English selected places where English was the language of instruction, was widely understood, or was the language of the country. The language students used to describe this “English” speaking importance varied greatly. Another clusters shows that these international exchange students also wanted to learn/see/gain more [knowledge] about [the world] outside [of the U.S.].

The hierarchical cluster analysis from research question 2 (Why did you choose one type of exchange over the other?) also produced different factors. Figure 2 shows that the clusters that were more important for domestic exchange students were cost; new friends/school/academics/place; easier; and [being near] friends and family.

Dendograms of the hierarchical cluster analysis showed that international exchange students wanted an experience that was more different from [home] and their own country/culture. They wanted to live with foreign people. Some wanted to learn from native speakers and others wanted to travel Europe. An additional cluster indicates that for some students, it was a “first time world opportunity [to] go/explore/learn outside [the U.S.].

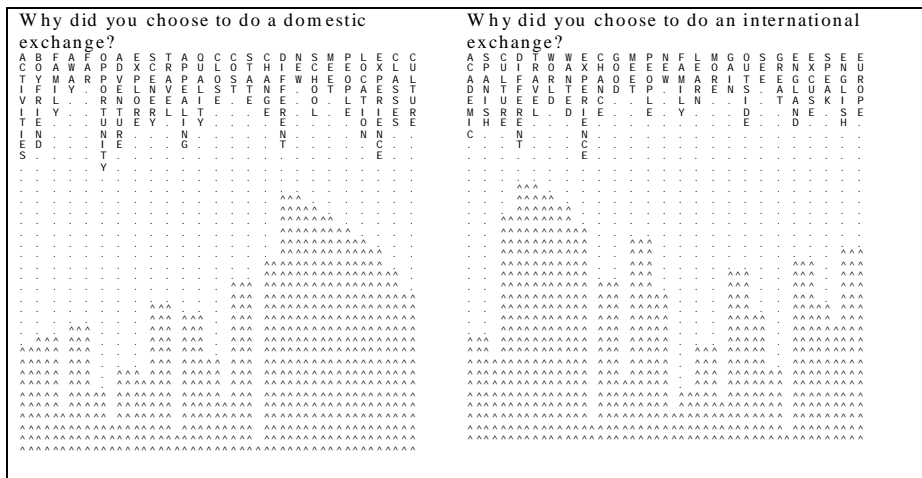


Figure 1. Comparison Of The Dendrograms Produced From The Hierarchical Cluster Analysis Of Why Students Chose A Particular Type Of Exchange Program

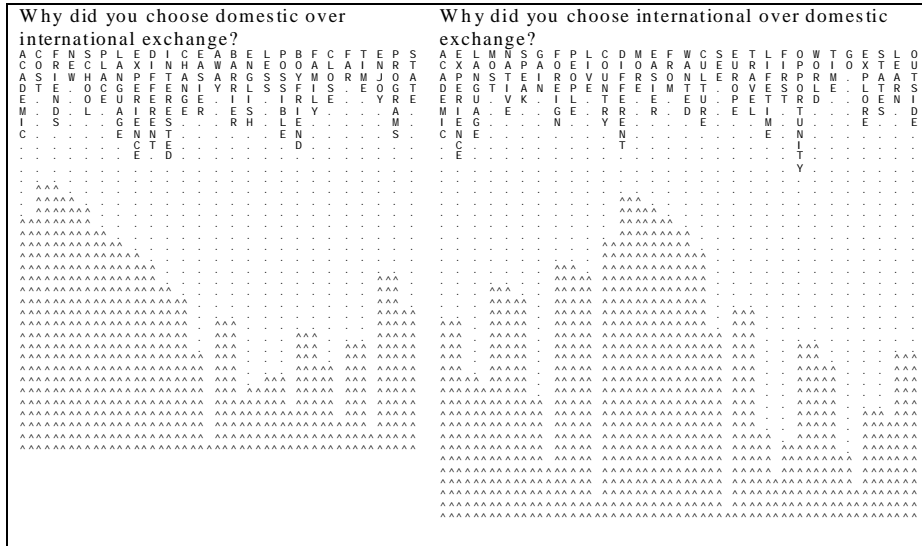


Figure 2. Comparison Of The Dendrograms Produced From The Hierarchical Cluster Analysis Of Why Students Chose One Type Of Exchange Program Over Another

Figure 3 shows a comparison of the dendrograms produced from the hierarchical cluster analysis of what factors went into choosing where students would go to study on their type of exchange program. Results show that both domestic and international exchange students primarily choose where they went based on factors such location, academics, and cost. Choosing a location that was close [to family and friends] was important to many of the domestic exchange students while choosing a location that afforded the student an opportunity to travel and go away from their own country/culture were more important to those going on an international exchange. The location that international exchange students selected was also based on their issues

regarding language. They either wanted to improve their Spanish or they wanted to stay in counties that were English speaking.

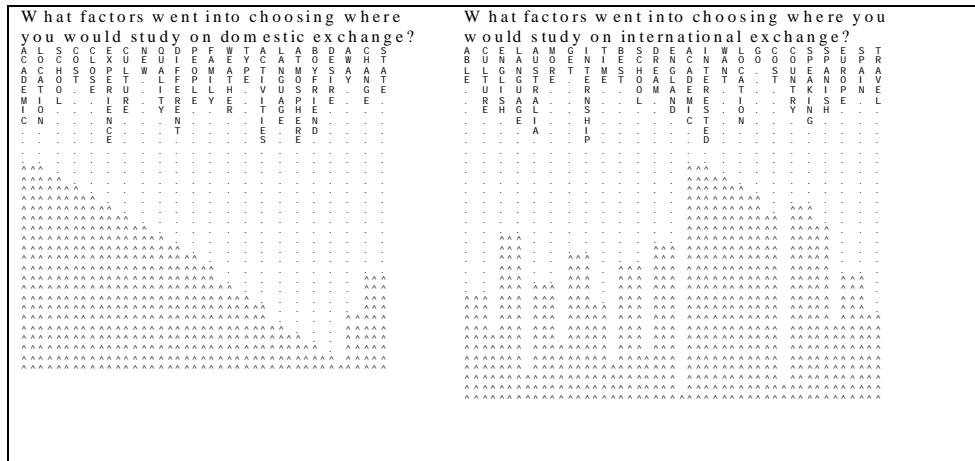


Figure 3: Comparison Of The Dendrograms Produced From The Hierarchical Cluster Analysis Of What Factors Went Into Choosing Where Students Would Go To Study On Their Type of Exchange Program

CONCLUSION

Students who chose to go on educational exchange programs did so for various reasons. Meeting new/different people, experiencing new/different cultures, and being in a different school environment were important factors for most of the students. All were concerned about the location of the school as well as the cost involved. Students who ventured internationally were more interested in travel as a learning opportunity and those who chose a domestic exchange wanted to go away, but not too far from family and friends. The role of “language” in their choices was also varied. Students who exchanged in the U.S. did not exchange for the purpose of learning a language, instead many said they didn’t speak other languages and as a result, didn’t want to travel to other countries. Some of the students who traveled on international exchanges outside of the U.S. chose a particular location to improve their foreign language skills (most notably Spanish) while others chose locations where either the classes were in English (e.g. Switzerland) or where English is the dominate language (most notably England/Ireland and Australia).

Although this study is limited in scope and size, it provides new knowledge about the reasons students choose to go on exchange programs. Future studies can use the key word clusters derived from this study to engage in basic content analysis of textual data or to develop informed questions for other types of surveys. In addition, the hybrid research method that was used for this study can be replicated by other academics who are looking for potential ways to more effectively engage undergraduate students in primary research that is enjoyable, empowering, and transformative.

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GLOBAL ISSUES IMPACTING THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IN THE DUTCH ANTILLES OF ARUBA

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INTRODUCTION

Global competition, global foreign policy, changing demographics and the global environment emerged as primary concerns by participants at the think tank forums on visioning the future of Aruba held in Palm Beach, Aruba. They also expressed major concerns over the lack of public-private cooperation to assist the Aruba tourism industry in addressing the challenges in these areas. The general goal of the forum is to identify and describe future trends and events that are likely to affect the Aruba tourism industry in the next five to ten years. The underlying premise of the Forum for the Future of Aruba Tourism is to develop foresight about the major forces driving change in the tourism/hospitality industry. The objectives of each are threefold: 1) to identify the major forces driving change in today's business environment of the hospitality and tourism industry, 2) to estimate the timing and evolution of these forces, and 3) to determine their impact upon the industry.

LITERATURE

Tourism, as a socio-economic activity, does not occur randomly. Some destinations appear to be more successful than others in offering tourism services and activities, and in attracting travelers. The pressure exerted by competition is compelling international, national, state, and local governments to re-evaluate the existing tourism resources and to capitalize on them in order to attract more visitors (Fayos and Sola, 1996). The numerous stakeholders involved in determining the role and development of an area define different interests and objectives, which ultimately must converge to support the marketed image of that area as a destination (King, McVey, and Simmons, 2000). In recent years, tourist destinations managers have been criticized because of their difficulty in reinventing themselves in the face of radical changes in the external environment. War, terrorism, political upheaval, the spread of infectious diseases, airline restructuring and the advancement and use of technology are just a few of the events that are having a profound impact on destinations' performance around the world. For example, political and environmental instability are forcing many tourism destinations to hire experts in disaster management planning to respond to increasing human tragedies and natural calamities according to Ritchie, Dorrell, Miller, and Miller (2004). The greatest agent for change in destination marketing is, however, technology. Recent studies (Yuan, Gretzel, & Fesenmaier, 2003) have demonstrated that tourist organizations have not fully embraced and incorporated technology in their operations and strategies.

Successful tourist destinations perform activities that are more strategic in nature and which quickly adjust to the continuous changes that are occurring in the external environment (Olsen, 1996). Poon (1993) urges tourism destinations to reframe their goals and actions because tourism is a volatile, highly competitive, and unforgiving industry. Also, Poon emphasizes that:

“the industry is undergoing rapid and radical transformation— the rules of the game are changing for everyone” (p. 291).

The think tanks occurred over a one year period from November 2006 through November 2007. Six research questions were posed to the groups:

1. What are the emerging patterns of change over the next five years?
2. What are the impacts of emerging patterns on the tourism industry?
3. What is the estimated timing of these emerging patterns of change?
4. What are the current competitive methods (products and services) of Aruba’s tourism industry?
5. What are the future competitive methods (products and services) of Aruba’s tourism industry that need to be developed?
6. What are the current core competencies (resources) of Aruba’s tourism industry that support the competitive methods?

METHOD

The general goal of the Aruba Timeshare Association (ATSA) sponsored think tank on *Visioning the Future of Aruba* was to identify and describe the forces driving change, competitive methods and core competencies that will impact the Aruba tourism industry in the next five to ten years. The underlying premise of the forum for the *Future of Tourism* was to build on the foresight about the major trends driving change in the tourism/hospitality industry from the use of first Think Tank session results. Previous studies have shown that those organizations that match their core competencies and competitive methods to the impacts generated by environmental forces are in alignment and thus perform better than those that are not in alignment.

To achieve these objectives, thirty-five leaders of the Aruba tourism industry gathered for a two day program in November 2006 and then again in November 2007 at the ATSA conference. Participants were from within and outside the tourism/hospitality industry and included representatives from transportation companies, suppliers, attractions, lodging, special events, cultural-historical organizations, government, and destination management organizations to provide opportunities for a cross-pollination of ideas and to stimulate creative (i.e., out-of-the-box) thinking. Participants were invited based upon their qualifications defining them as experts in their respective fields.

Participants first gathered for a plenary session, which consisted of a brief welcoming address, overview of the Think Tank process, research question and the workshop’s agenda. The large group was divided into five, predetermined groups of approximately seven participants each. Each group was moderated by a facilitator and conducted in a modified nominal group format. Sessions lasted approximately 45 minutes each, spread over the course of the day. Each facilitator was assisted by a public recorder for each of the groups, documenting all the discussion on flip charts for reference, on-going dialogue, and, later, consolidation of common themes and ranking.

At the conclusion of each session, participants were asked to rank the top three points s/he feel will have the biggest impact on the tourism industry in the next 5- 10 years. Upon completion of this exercise, the points were tallied. Participants were then reassembled so that the highlights of each group could be shared, discussed, synthesized, and validated. A final large group vote was conducted and the top three forces are recorded. As a result the forces are ranked and collapsed.

RESULTS

The findings of the November 2006 think tank on *Visioning the Future of Aruba* reveal the following:

- The tourism industry in the Aruba is facing major challenges in a rapidly changing environment.
- The global economy will offer more opportunities, new market segments, and generate more challenges, new competitors.
- A multicultural fragmentation of the tourism market, older travelers and more leisure time will have a significant impact on the travel industry.
- Technology will play a critical role in quicker response to the requests of clients and in the delivery of quality services.
- Travelers and governments alike are more aware of the importance of protecting the environment.

The findings of the November 2007 think tank on *Visioning the Future of Aruba* reveal:

- Aruba service industries currently offer a large number and variety of products and services creating many unique competitive methods: Aruba Brand, E-Marketing, Aruba Destination marketing, Global Orientation, Attractive & Friendly Investor Climate, Guest Experience Management and Cultural Diversity.
- The tourism industry in the Aruba is facing major challenges in a rapidly changing environment. Maintaining a competitive advantage in the tourism industry will require Aruba to develop creative new competitive methods as a investment in the future, such as: *Ecologically Friendly Environment, Sustainable Development, Safety & Security, and Sustainable Growth & Competitiveness*.
- The global economy will offer more opportunities and threats; new market segments and new competitors, and will generate more challenges. Looking for new sources of revenue will be paramount to survival and prosper in an increasingly challenging environment.
- Aruba's current core competencies were identified as: *Institutional Infrastructure, Human Capital, Technology & Knowledge, Absorptive Capacity, Financial Capital and Imagination*
- A multicultural fragmentation of the tourism market, older travelers and more leisure time will have a significant impact on the travel industry. More differentiated services at destinations will be offered to satisfy a more self-centered and diverse traveler.

The results of the Forum have demonstrated that there is a distinct link between environmental forces and the impact that those forces have on tourism businesses located in on Aruba. Previous studies have shown that those organizations that match their core competencies and competitive methods to the

impacts generated by environmental forces are in alignment and thus perform better than those that are not in alignment. This Forum has provided the requisite information to create sound future strategies based on the constructive feedback of many tourism leaders. The knowledge generated from the second forum is intended to stimulate your strategic thinking and guide your decision making process. This information provides answers, which will allow you to align your organization to future changes and thereby improve business performance.

CONCLUSION

The goal of the Aruba Timeshare Association (ATSA) sponsored think tank on *Visioning the Future of Aruba* is to generate awareness of Aruba's strength and weakness as well as the opportunities and threats and take proactive action based on their meaning and consequences. Hospitality and Tourism professionals in Aruba are encouraged to think through each of the key points presented in this report to better understand an increasingly turbulent business environment. After generating awareness of future forces, industry leaders must make business decisions today based on what will happen tomorrow.

Therefore, the participants of this study suggest that for Aruba to remain sustainable the related factors associated with destination, marketing, economic, social and environment impacts should be studied in depth (Hahm et al, 2007). Relative to destination impacts, a consistent set of metrics should be developed that can monitor the gross number of tourist visitations on an annual basis, growth in tourist visitations, capacity by accommodation type (hotel, timeshare, condominium, etc), visitor demographic, purpose of visit, visitor comments and local perception of tourism. One of the most critical and often controversial aspects of tourism development is that of economic impacts. In Aruba's case various detailed studies are required to outline present and projected employment impacts, gross product index, return on investment to the national and local economies, required investments, ancillary revenue generation, influence upon import / export ratios and inflation rates. It goes without saying that the growth of the tourist industry have yielded much research surrounding social impacts. Professionals will undoubtedly design studies focusing on types of tourists, relationship upon natives and native cultures, influence upon lifestyles, mores and value systems, changing family structure, and safety, security and local crime rates for Aruba (Hahm et al, 2007). Lastly, a whole assortment of environmental impacts is yet to be addressed concerning management of resources, conservation of Aruba's heritage, ecological disruptions, pollution impacts, infrastructure strain, and erosion of soil and flora.

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WELLNESS POSITIONING: RATIONALE FOR PROMOTING BRAND INDIA

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ABSTRACT

As travelers seek different experiences from different destinations, it is essential for destinations to create unique travel experiences, on an emotional, physical, intellectual, and even spiritual level. The purpose of this paper is to present a rationale for promoting Brand India as a provider of wellness services. The paper also discusses international literature on destination branding and wellness tourism. The success and shortcomings of India's current tourism campaign, and opportunities and challenges that come with branding India as a wellness destination are presented.

KEYWORDS: India, wellness tourism, destination brand.

INTRODUCTION

As travelers seek different experiences from different destinations, it is essential for destinations to create unique travel experiences, on an emotional, physical, intellectual, and even spiritual level. In an attempt to define destination branding for Destination Management Organizations, Blaine, Levy, and Ritchie (2005) stated that branding a destination comprised several marketing activities, the goal of which was to identify and differentiate a destination. The authors also stressed the importance of creating a destination image that influenced travelers to visit the destination in question as opposed to an alternative destination. Pechlaner and Fischer (2001) stated that every destination should offer unique, diversified products within the global marketplace.

Despite the success of the Incredible India campaign, according to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) report, India's share of international tourist arrivals are still quite low at 0.52% in 2006 ("India trails behind 41 countries," 2008). Brand India has been described as a cluster of heterogeneous brands (Ramesh, 2005). Sharma (2007) blamed such unfocused branding and positioning of Indian tourism for India's poor placement in the World Economic Forum's 2007 Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report. The purpose of this paper is to present a rationale for promoting Brand India as a provider of wellness services. The paper also

discusses international literature on destination branding and wellness tourism. The success and shortcomings of India's current tourism campaign, and opportunities and challenges that come with branding India as a wellness destination are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Destination branding

Brand advantage can be achieved by communicating specific benefits of a product or service. The image created by the product or service in the consumer's mind or how it is positioned, however, is more important for the ultimate success of the brand. Brand managers position their brands so that they are perceived by the consumers to occupy a niche in the market place occupied by no other brand (Morgan, Pritchard, & Piggott, 2002).

Although destination branding is a new concept, there is a general agreement amongst academics and practitioners that places can be branded in much the same way as consumer goods and services (Caldwell & Freire, 2004). Tasci and Kozan (2006) attempted to distinguish between destination image and destination brand. The authors stated that destination image contributed to formation of destination brand. Hence, as long as the destination image remained positive, so would the brand. Destination brand was posited to be more than just an image influencing consumer behavior (awareness, choice, use, satisfaction, recommendation, trust and loyalty) and ultimately lead to creation of brand equity of a destination.

The battle for customers in the tourism industry will be won not by fighting over price but by capturing the tourists' hearts and minds. Hence, branding will be the key to succeed (Morgan & Pritchard, 2000). Brand positioning gives a country a competitive advantage over other nations. The framework suggested by Gilmore (2002) explains how the core of a country's brand must capture the spirit of its people. Brand positioning should consider a country's macro trends, target group, competition, and core competence. Such positioning should make it easier to target diverse groups (Gilmore, 2002). Dolnicar and Huybers (2007) suggested adopting a perceptions-based market segmentation (PBMS) framework to explore differences in destination images between tourist groups. The authors recommended against creation of a single destination image by averaging over individuals with possibly very different perceptions.

The term country-equity was coined to refer to the emotional value resulting from consumer's association of a brand with a country (Kotler, 2002). Country branding seems to be all the rage. From "100% Pure New Zealand" to "Ecuador is You," almost every country has discovered that its reputation should no longer be restricted to chance (Lindstrom, 2006). Various governments and private consultants have created various destination positioning strategies to attract clients. Papadopoulos and Heslop (2002) point out the remarkable fact that 766 major publications by more than 780 authors have been published on branding and marketing of destinations since the 1950s. This has established place marketing a major field of study.

Baker and Cameron (2008) found that destination image and identity play an important role in differentiating among objectively similar destinations. The authors identified thirty-three

critical success factors for effective destination marketing and clustered them into 4 categories (strategic orientation, destination identity and image, stakeholder involvement, and implementation, monitoring and review) to assist with development of tourism strategies and plans. Martin and Rodriguez del Bosque (2008) suggested a structured methodology to check whether or not the perceived image of tourist destination coincides with the projected or promoted image. A gap between the promoted and perceived image indicates inadequate positioning creating a need for mass communication to improve the perceived destination image in the target markets.

Ekinci and Hosany (2006) stressed the importance of creating and managing an appropriate destination personality for effective positioning and differentiation. Their findings strongly suggest that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) should concern themselves with both destination personality and image to differentiate the destination from others in a competitive market because destination personality moderated the relationship between destination image and intention to recommend. Govers, Go, and Kumar (2007) found that covertly induced and autonomous agents (newspapers and televised news) had a dramatic effect on creation of pre-visit destination image. Vicarious experiences such as motion pictures, National Geographic Channel, and literature also played an important role in formation of pre-visit destination image. Roles played by solicited and unsolicited agents (word-of-mouth) were also vital for creation of a favorable destination image. Surprisingly, the authors found that the effect of overt agents such as tourism promotion agencies was limited in the creation of a destination image.

Ng, Lee, and Soutar (2007) examined the impact of cultural distance on Australian tourists' destination choices. The authors concluded that the greater the perceived cultural similarities of a foreign destination to Australia, the more likely Australians were to visit the destination. Tourism marketers, such as DMOs could highlight cultural similarities in the target market and include some elements of similarity in promotional campaigns. Yuksel and Akgul (2006) encouraged DMOs and other host community members to become involved in the creation of postcards showcasing a destination. The authors found a strong association between postcard induced emotions and desire to travel. The authors also warned that the success of a destination's postcard will depend on the development of a product positioning strategy; in other words, creation of a desired destination image in the minds of customers in the target markets.

Castro, Armario, and Ruiz (2007) studied the impact of tourists' need for variety on maintaining a loyal customer base at a destination. The authors concluded that tourists who had no need for variety (23.17% of sample), were more willing to revisit and recommend the destination to others. In contrast, tourists who had a high need for variety and new experiences were likely to provide positive word-of-mouth about the destination but not return.

While tourists consider factors such as cost, convenience, and quality of facilities important, the strongest motivator is destination image. Image is what puts a destination on the consumer's "shopping list" (Davies, 2003) and enhances the destination's chance of being chosen over others. Such an image can be created in the minds of the audience through well conceived positioning strategies.

INTERNATIONAL WELLNESS TOURISM

Defining wellness

More than 50 years ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as more than freedom from illness, disease, and debilitating conditions. Health also includes a positive component, i.e., wellness, which is associated with quality of life and positive well-being (Corbin & Pangrazi, 2001). The concept of wellness was developed by Dunn (1961). Mueller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001) developed and expanded wellness model that included elements such as self responsibility, physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition and diet, meditation, education and environmental sensitivity, and social contacts.

Wellness has been defined in many ways over the past several years. Ardell (2002) defined wellness as a mind set with a predisposition to adopt a series of key principles in varied life areas that lead to high levels of well-being and life satisfaction. According to the National Wellness Association, wellness is an active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a more successful existence. The key words are process, aware, choices and success. *Process* means that people never arrive at a point where there is no possibility of improving. *Aware* means that man, by nature, is continuously seeking more information about how we can improve. *Choices* reflect people's ability to consider a variety of options and select those that seem to be in our best interest. *Success* is determined by each individual to be their personal collection of accomplishments for their life. Wellness is first and foremost a choice to assume responsibility for the quality of one's life and begins with a conscious decision to shape a healthy lifestyle.

International destinations providing wellness services

Chen, Prebensen, and Huan (2008) found that relaxation and recreation, pursuing multiple activities, and enjoying nature were top motivators with relaxation as the leading motivator for wellness tourists. Of various specialty tourism segments, wellness and health tourism have become some of the most promising markets (Pechlaner & Fischer, 2006). The authors presented the concept of "Alpine Wellness" by bundling wellness services with special Alpine character. Participating countries were challenged to develop "Alpine Wellness" products based on their roots of their region that are not easy to imitate.

In Austria, wellness holidays account for €1 billion in revenues every year. More than 11 million people travel to Austria annually to take a health-oriented vacation (Hirzinger, 2002). Austria has also successfully attracted an increasing number of foreign investors in the health and wellness tourism sector. The country credits its reputation for quality of life and healthcare services for the increased popularity of health and wellness tourism (Hirzinger, 2002).

Supapol, Barrows, and Barrows (2007) stressed the need for a national marketing plan in Canada to promote various products such as Aboriginal "healing circles" and Ayurveda medicine offered by the health and wellness services that have been expanding in Canada for over a decade. Hawaii Tourism Authority invested in a marketing campaign in 2003 to promote its

health and wellness services with particular emphasis on disease prevention based on medical research and traditional healing practices (Nichols, 2003).

Yoga tourism has been positioned successfully as a niche within wellness tourism (Lehto, Brown, Chen, & Morrison, 2006). Yoga has become a tourism phenomenon because it is not only practices as part of daily routine but also during vacation. For some, yoga may also become the central vacation theme (Lehto, et al., 2006). The authors interviewed yoga retreat participants and found that an individual's involvement with yoga, physical and mental well-being, influenced their propensity to travel for yoga.

Devereux and Carnegie (2006) described pilgrimage as an alternate form of tourism that is consistent with social, natural and community values that allow travelers to enjoy meaningful experiences. The authors explored how pilgrimage can contribute to sustained transformation of an individual and community. The recommendation was that wellness tourism needed to allow individuals to become reacquainted with themselves (physically, spiritually, and mentally) and their community at all levels. This can be accomplished by creating "flow" and building social well-being (Devereux & Carnegie, 2006).

Several cruise companies are offering wellness-themed cruises that include workshops covering topics such as vegan and macrobiotic cooking, Shiatsu massage, tai chi and yoga, and heart disease prevention (Young, 2007). Destinations such as the Caribbean, Thailand, and Geneva also offer various wellness packages.

CURRENT DESTINATION BRANDING STRATEGIES USED BY INDIA: SUCCESSES & SHORTCOMINGS

In over five decades after independence, India launched the "Incredible India" campaign in 2002 in an attempt to establish a brand identity for India. Tourism officials hoped that the brand and associated marketing activities would help the country compete effectively with other South-east Asian countries for tourists (Nichani, 2002). The then joint secretary for the Ministry of Tourism acknowledged that India needed a brand identity for global recognition and to access and penetrate new markets.

Good brands are also purported to deliver financial rewards in the form of sustained profitability and increased asset value. India has been spending over \$47 million on publicity and marketing in domestic and overseas markets (Dhawan, 2007). This has led to consistent double digit growth in tourist arrivals since the start of the Incredible India campaign. After posting consistent increase in tourism growth rate since the start of the Incredible India campaign (13.3% in 2005; 13.5% in 2006), there was a decline in growth rate in 2007 (12.4%) ("India ranks 42nd in foreign tourists," 2008).

The Incredible India campaign attempted to capture everything about India without focus. Jairam Ramesh, member of Rajya Sabha, stated that Brand India was a cluster of heterogeneous brands (Ramesh, 2005). Such unfocused branding and positioning of Indian tourism resulted in India's ranking of 65 among 124 countries in the World Economic Forum's 2007 Travel &

Tourism Competitiveness Report (Sharma, 2007). There is an absence of sub-positioning strategies needed to target diverse markets as suggested by Gilmore (2002).

Despite the recent “Incredible India” campaign, international tourism remains, in terms of volume, relatively insignificant. Although India may like to think that it draws a lot of foreign tourists (4.44 million in 2006), the country gets far fewer visitors than many much smaller nations including Ukraine (15.62 million in 2006), Croatia (8.65 million in 2006), Tunisia (6.55 million in 2006), and Saudi Arabia (8.03 million in 2006), according to the WTO (“India trails behind 41 countries,” 2008). According to the WTO report, India’s share of international tourist arrivals is still quite low at 0.52% in 2006.

PROMOTING INDIA AS A PROVIDER OF WELLNESS SERVICES: A NATURAL EXTENSION OF PREVAILING DESTINATION PERCEPTION

In 2007, the Union Secretary for Tourism in India stated that the Incredible India campaign will launch a campaign to spread information about the health tourism potential of the country (Kumar, 2007). Health tourism is posited to generate \$1.86 billion by 2012 (India Brand Equity Foundation [IBEF], 2008). Demand is predicted to come from the retiring baby boomer population in regions such as North America, Europe, and Australia, with US being the main source where there are an estimated 43 million without health coverage (Kumar, 2007). India has some of the world’s best physicians, hospitals, and treatment centers that are equipped with infrastructure and technology on par with US, UK, and Europe but at a fraction of the cost (IBEF, 2008). While medical or health tourism emphasizes cure, wellness tourism emphasizes prevention. With the increased worldwide emphasis on disease prevention and maintaining a healthy lifestyle (Stellin, 2006), it would be logical to also promote India’s wellness services through sub-positioning strategies, as justified below. India has a long history that justifies provision of wellness services that address both the physical and mental domains.

Distinct branding has emerged for various Asian destinations. For example, in a survey in 1998 commissioned by the Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board, Singapore was seen by a broad selection of travelers and tourist agents from the US, Japan, India, Germany, Australia, UK and Sweden as clean, modern, and safe. China’s dominant image and attraction was identified as culture while Malaysia was seen as being multicultural with many beaches. Thailand’s brand image was defined as exotic and fun with friendly people (Davies, 2003).

Cohen (1979) suggested that every pleasure tourist has a different reason for travel. The five categories devised by Cohen (1979) include:

1. Recreational: Travel objectives are to relieve tensions and strain from work. This is the most common travel purpose
2. Diversionary: Travel purpose is to escape from boredom and daily routine.
3. Experiential: The traveler experiences another culture in an attempt to find meaning through the life of others.
4. Experimental: The traveler’s goals are to experience various cultures hoping to eventually find one that suits his/her needs

5. Existential: The traveler becomes fully committed to a new spiritual center, almost like a religious conversion.

The travelers to India seek experiential, experimental, or existential meaning to their travel. India, to the Westerns, is a land of old civilization, holistic knowledge, spirituality, enlightenment, mysticism, and poverty. This is the core and the crux even today. The basic ethos of the culture of the land can be well established in the concept of wellness.

Sharpley and Sundaram (2005) pointed out that since the 1960s, India has become popular among Western tourists seeking some form of spiritual experience. India's reputation as a spiritual destination received a significant boost from visits by celebrities:

Now it was the turn of the populists, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones to become the pacemakers for a faltering Western heart, and they achieved a more striking success . . . The first wave of disciples was really top drawer. They were the nobles of the meritocracy and they were looking good. The women were models, the men were stars, and the message was the message. When they came out of their spiritual retreats draped in homespun, they glowed with vegetarian good health (Mehta, 1990, p. 68).

The country continues to attract a large number of Western travelers seeking to strengthen their spiritual health, as evidenced by the large number of emerging specialist tour operators targeting such travelers (Sharpley & Sundaram, 2005).

Yoga has been known to be practiced by people of the Indus Valley civilization (Dhyansky, 1987). Documented to have its roots in India, yoga can be seen as a responsible engagement, in various ways, of spirit and matter, which includes mind, body, nature, resulting in a highly developed, transformed and participatory human nature and identity, an integrated and embodied state of liberated selfhood (Whicher, 1998).

Ayurveda, in a broader perspective, deals with quality of life. It is the oldest known form of health care in the world dating back to the Vedic period (1500 BC) in ancient India (Malayalam Resource Center, n.d.). Ayurveda, the longest unbroken health tradition, has not only a stream of practitioners but also a textual and theoretical background. Thus, Ayurveda can be appropriately called, India's monumental heritage and vibrant tradition.

Various ashrams like those of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar's "Art of Living" and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's "Transcendental Meditation" (TM) offer holistic wellness in all walks of life. The TM movement has referenced many medical and sociological studies in an attempt to gain scientific credibility for its claims. A number of these studies have been published in leading peer-reviewed international journals. Thus, the scientific authentication of Indian wellness services can also be highlighted in various marketing campaigns. Positioning India as a destination to seek wellness would give the country a distinct advantage and image compared to the other Asian countries. The concept of wellness is holistic and like total quality management concept, there is no point beyond which progression cannot be made. Hence any human residing in any corner of the world adopting any life style has a scope to improve and cherish from Indian wellness services.

Positioning Brand India as a provider of wellness services will not come without challenges. Jennifer Blanke, senior economist, World Economic Forum, stated that India certainly was an attractive destination; however, the measures taken by the Indian government to market its attractiveness was limited (Sharma, 2007). The World Tourism Organization (WTO) recommended that the wellness segment in India should get more support to market its already existing positive image (Radhakrishnan, 2001). Outlook Traveller Getaways (2008) created a travel guide targeted towards those seeking health and wellness services such as spas, Ayurveda, Naturopathy and Holistic Healing, yoga, and meditation. The travel guide has destinations around India does not seem to have been marketed aggressively towards international tourists. Diminished marketing efforts by governments are not uncommon. Stepchenkova and Morrison (2008) found through a web-based survey of American pleasure travelers that their perceptions of Russia were often negative and there was a lack of awareness about Russia's destination features.

Chandran (2002) stated that Western tourists today are still looking for spirituality and wellness but they don't wish to rough it out. Tourists want the experience alongside the comforts of a good hotel. Thus, India should formulate programs and policies to alleviate tourists' concerns including cheating, begging, unhygienic conditions, and lack of safety (Chaudhary, 2000).

Altering existing brand image or creating a new one is a Herculean task. The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI) in the lower Bahamian archipelago created a diverse heritage group to begin dialogs on shifting the image of TCI from a sea, sand, and sun destination to one where upscale visitors are attracted with goals of long-term investment in the islands (Cameron & Gatewood, 2008).

Currently, wellness service providers in India range from multinational five-star hotels who offer wellness services as an add-on to their existing services to small make shifts huts in states such as Kerala, India, where specialists offer massages and herbal remedies. Several religious spiritual organizations also have programs which promise overall harmony.

BRANDING INDIA AS A PROVIDER OF WELLNESS SERVICES: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The local *opportunities* of wellness sector in India are immense due to the macro-level environmental changes in structure of families and health care. The position and the status of the elderly and the care and protection they traditionally enjoyed have been undermined by several factors. These include urbanization, migration, break-up of the joint family system, growing individualism, change in the role of women from being full-time care-givers to earners, and increased dependency status of the elderly. There is also a generation gap in terms of education, aspirations and values, and the allocation of resources to different members of the family (Krishnakumar, 2004). Opening up the Indian economy has given opportunities to Indian scientists, computer professionals, teaching professionals, and others to seek jobs in other parts of the globe. Even small entrepreneurs have immense opportunities to expand their business to

other countries. These trends have resulted in frequent travel across continents and permanent residency in foreign countries. The elderly are often left on their own with not much assistance in the old age. They are major casualties of the break-up of the joint family system (Srikrishna, 2004).

In developed nations such as those in North America and Western Europe, the elderly are cared for through organized old age homes and community living. However, in India, there is a perception that enrollment in old age homes are for those who have been neglected rather than those who are willing to live independently. Geriatric medical care in these facilities and long-term medical care facilities in general, is very limited or non-existent because it is considered capital intensive and non-profitable (Krishnakumar, 2004). In such situations maintaining health and preventing ailment is crucial. Prevention and postponement of ailments is safe and the best option available rather than to ail and depend on dear ones who are miles apart.

Medically, early diagnosis is difficult in elderly people in India. They tend to mostly ignore the symptoms, considering them as part of the ageing process. Sometimes, they suffer in silence because they don't wish to impose on their family members' time and money (Krishnakumar, 2004). Hence, engaging in personal wellness is practical instead of giving into chronic illnesses with or without appropriate treatment.

Wellness services are not meant just for prevention of diseases in old age but also for maintenance of quality of life at youth. The National Association of Software and Services companies (NASSCOM) which is the voice of the information technology (IT) sector in India has reported that revenues from IT have grown ten times from \$4.8 billion in 1997-1998 to \$47.8 billion in 2006-07 ("IT exports to touch USD31b," 2007). Professionals employed in the IT industry in India endure heavy workload, prolonged working days, pressure to complete projects before deadlines, unhealthy food and irregular eating habits, having to travel at short notice, and being away from families for extended periods. Gentleman (2005) stated that India is facing an obesity crisis among its newly wealthy middle-class, alluding to IT professionals. The advent of the multi-national corporation (MNC) work culture characterized by increased work pressure and an increasing need for performance in the workplace has led to increased stress. This lifestyle increases the chances of developing heart disease 10-15 times ("Heart disease on rise," 2008). The average age a person may suffer from heart attack has gone down to 30 from 40. In addition, 1,246 cases of divorce cases pertaining to those in the IT sector were filed in 2006 in the matrimonial courts in Bangalore, India (Nanjappa, 2007). Financial freedom, lack of time at home, erratic working hours, work pressure, financial security, and stress are also seen as the main reason for this fiasco (Nanjappa, 2007). Companies are encouraged to take initiative and ensure that employees get more time at home (Nanjappa, 2007). Wellness programs targeted towards the youth can help them meet international quality standards without getting burned-out from high pressure jobs.

Though medical insurance is becoming popular in India, the benefits are only for those who have not yet been detected with chronic ailments. Once a person has under gone treatment for a chronic illness, the insurance company denies further insurance opportunities to the patient. This state of affairs makes another strong argument in favor of "prevention is better than cure." The landmark INTERHEART study of 30,000 men and women from 52 countries found that

nine lifestyle factors accounted for almost all the risk of heart attack. These include smoking, cholesterol, hypertension, diabetes, obesity, diet, levels of physical activity, alcohol consumption, and psychosocial issues like emotional stress and depression (Yusuf et al., 2004). In other words, the diseases that kill the most people each year are almost completely preventable just by changing diet and lifestyle.

The *challenges* posed by the wellness sector are also vast. Because the wellness sector is still in its nascent stages, it lacks a universally accepted definition. Wellness can be seen as an extension of the health industry because it helps in prevention of ailments; it can be seen as an extension of beauty and fitness. From a holistic point of view, wellness is multidimensional addressing physical, emotional, career, social, financial, spiritual, and personal, and family wellbeing (Health Women's Healthy Living Goals, 2006). The multidimensional definition of wellness makes the scope of services to be rendered too vast and no single provider can render the full range of services that wellness stands for.

Culture is an important form of capital and must be positively positioned as a part of any brand management. Malhotra (2003) argued that cultural branding has become a liability for India because services native to Indian culture have come under the control of foreign nations. Yoga and Ayurveda are two examples of services that are native to the Indian culture that should be brought back under the India brand.

Yoga is a multi-billion dollar industry in the U.S. with 18 million American practitioners. The industry generates \$27 billion/year revenue through classes, videos, books, conferences, retreats. It is interesting to note that over 98% of yoga teachers and students in USA are non-Indians. Clearly the economic potential here could be as big as India's software exports, especially if yoga were included in India's proposed initiative to export health services (Malhotra, 2003). Ayurveda is a \$2 billion/year industry and a part of the high growth international market for plant medicines. The popular consumer brand, Aveda, was started by an American devotee of an Indian guru, to bring Ayurveda to the West. The company was later sold to Estee Lauder (Malhotra, 2003). Thus, one of the challenges India faces is its own myopia and hence, inability to acknowledge lucrative cultural resources and package them into specialty wellness services.

CONCLUSION

Branding a destination comprises several marketing activities, the goal of which are to identify and differentiate a destination. If a tourist from the U.S. is planning to visit Asia, he/she needs to first appreciate the difference and aura that is unique with each destination. The experience that an American would take back after traveling to Singapore will be totally different from the experiences that he/she will have in India. Presenting the crux of the experience is the sole purpose of a creating a destination's brand. This is a Herculean task as a destination is a potpourri of many integrated aspects. One needs a thorough understanding of a particular destination, the aura of the other destinations under the same geographic considerations, an eye on the perceptions of the clientele, and ability to synchronize the whole and cull out a unique brand.

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SECTION III
WORKING PAPERS
(STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)

THE EFFECT OF THE LANGUAGE BARRIER ON INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL IN ITALY

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ABSTRACT

This case study analyzes the interplay of language barrier and intercultural communication within a study abroad experience. It serves as a model for the educational travel field and particularly for study abroad programs characterized by short time frames (for example, summer study abroad) and by the international inexperience of the students. The focus of the analysis is the examination of elements believed to be, together with their casual and yet perfect coordination and timing, the triggers of a highlighted intercultural experience. Although it was serendipity that promoted an unexpected and enhanced cross-cultural interaction in this educational travel program, it is argued here that the fortuitous mix of elements of this case could be harnessed and tailored to generate positive similar outcomes in other educational travel experiences where the lack of language proficiency is a typical feature. If a similar travel experience were to be repeated in other settings, the basic tenets of Group Cohesion, Simplicity of Environment and Interpreter, described in this case study, would have to maintain the same canons and requisites in order to yield similar positive results, even though people, places and activities would be different.

KEYWORDS: Educational Travel; Intercultural Communication; Language Constraints.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine intercultural communication through perceptions of tourist/visitors who lack language fluency (Yoo & Sohn, 2003). In this paper it is argued that the lack of language fluency, under particular, well identified conditions, does not create a barrier, and can, on the contrary, enhance visitors' satisfaction, and contribute to cross-

cultural interactions (Wang 1999). The ‘cultural shock’ most tourists experience when traveling abroad is likely to be changed into a positive, rewarding stimulus (Pearce 2005; Ting-Toomey, 1999).

The potential value of this research is threefold. First, the analysis of this study abroad program in Italy contributes to the modest existing body of literature that focuses on intercultural student tourist activity based on language (Jack & Phipps, 2005). Second, the particular analysis of the Pergola d’Oro ritual (Wang, 1999) can serve as a means to explore more closely host/tourist relationships that also lack extensive examination (Pearce, 2005). Third, this paper helps identify, in relation to the language barrier/story-telling/interpretation phenomenon (Jack & Phipps, 2005), the positive elements of these types of intercultural experiences for extension to other travel abroad scenarios, while recognizing and marginalizing the experience’s limits.

Issues related to travel abroad in general, and that have particular relevance for this study, are the ‘culture shock’ concept, which is no longer identifiable with the U curve alone (Hottola, 2004), the various definitions of authenticity (MacCannell, 1973; Pearce, 2005; Wang, 1999), the dimensions of tourism satisfaction (Turner, Reisinger, & McQuilken, 2001), the meaningfulness of guest/host interactions (Sumka, 2006; Yoo & Sohn, 2003), and the sojourners’ perceptions of their intercultural competence (Martin, 1986).

The literature that in particular addresses short term study abroad programs and their typical elements— in this case, the language inadequacy and intercultural inexperience of the students —does not investigate these characteristics as constructive ones (Yoo & Sohn, 2003). These findings are surprising since most study abroad programs are summer programs (the tourist season) and many of the students engaged in these programs are undergraduate students (Institute of International Education, 2003), who usually have little proficiency in the target language, little experience in the culture, or in international travel.

Furthermore, research on the language components of tourism is relatively recent (Jack and Phipps, 2005). Tourism literature and intercultural communication literature regard language as a constraining element for intercultural communication (e.g. Cohen, 2004; Edgell, & Haenisch, 1995; Gmelch, 1997). In particular, the language gap in overseas travel is studied as a barrier for intercultural communication between visitors and hosts (Cohen, 2004; Edgell & Haenisch, 1995), and it is also interpreted as an obstacle in the approach to the local culture (Gmelch, 1997).

Although the language gap between visitors and hosts acts as a barrier for intercultural communication in many travel abroad scenarios, there can be particular situations suggesting the opposite (Finn, Elliott-White, & Walton, 2000). This study presents one of such situations through the collection and analysis of observations, interviews, photos, logs, and memos on the summer study abroad program that took place in Italy in 2001.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology best suited to understand in depth this study abroad experience is an intrinsic case study, with the potential to be transferable to other similar cases (Stake, 1995). This research describes a ‘once-in-a-lifetime’ experience, and also suggests possible extensions to other travel scenarios. The methodology relies on the interpretive and co-constructive paradigm, more specifically participant observation.

A research case study structure is useful for analysis of all types of data relating to a case. The case needs to be a clearly bound system, in this instance the month long study abroad program (Stake, 1995). The data collection was holistic in nature. Artifacts such as photos and student logs, interviews, field notes, memory, and participant observation by the Italian instructor/director of the program (for simplicity addressed from now on as the Italian instructor) and also first author of this study, were collected.

In terms of limitations, the case study’s strengths are also its shortcomings: the uniqueness of the scenario, the specialty of the actors, the serendipity of occurrences, and even the distance in time and space between the study abroad program and its analysis characterize its merit, but also make it quasi-exclusive.

CASE STUDY: SUMMER STUDY ABROAD IN ITALY

The study abroad program in Italy was designed to provide the participating students with a direct and unique travel experience where content instruction in Engineering would effectively blend with exposure to and instruction in the Italian language and culture (Cushner & Karim, 2004). Italy was no casual choice for the program’s site since the Italians have been pioneers in Engineering, their tradition and prestige dating centuries in history.

In the summer 2001, ten undergraduate Engineering students from a Midwestern university spent the month of June in Tagliacozzo, a small Italian village nested in the mountains, sixty miles east of Rome. The first author of this research was the Italian instructor and director of the summer program. Two American professors in Engineering alternated their teaching in the program, spending respectively two weeks each in Italy. The students were looking forward to four weeks of intensive instruction in two courses: MEEM 2120: Statics-Strength of Materials and IS 3001: in Situ Italian Language and Culture.

Four major elements of the summer study abroad program in Italy and three dynamics that emerged among these elements contributed to the students’ enhanced intercultural communication and authentic experience. The first element was the site, the village of Tagliacozzo; the second factor was the group of students participating in the 2001 summer program; the third one was the Pergola d’Oro restaurant (The Golden Vine) and its hosts, the Di Filippo family; and the fourth one was the Italian instructor for the summer program. The three

dynamics that unfolded among these elements were the lunch ritual, story-telling, and intercultural communication.

The Site

Tagliacozzo is carved between two small mountains in the Apennine Range, at two thousand feet above sea level. Approximately seven thousand inhabitants live there year round. The village is a blend of local and cosmopolitan elements, mostly because of Tagliacozzo's centralized geographical location, at the heart of the Italian peninsula (Smith & Robinson, 2006), where winding country roads, often crowded with sheep, crisscross its landscape, and where a busy railroad and a modern highway system connects Tagliacozzo to Rome to the west, and to the busy port city of Pescara to the east.

On week-ends, special festivities and the summer months of July and August the village may swell with as many as five times more people. The metropolitan Romans, in search for an escape from the heat and the stress of the capital, are the biggest group of visitors. The month of June, then, was a perfect time to run the summer study abroad program, for Tagliacozzo starts to wake up in that period and to prepare for the 'high season'.

The participants in the study abroad program became familiarized and comfortable with the village situation in a few days, for its simple, rural lifestyle appealed to the inexperienced students. On the other hand, the villagers quickly became used to seeing the 'Americans' (gli Americani) around them, for they were used to the tourists, and also because their simple ways were counterbalanced by their long and impressive history, which includes significant foreign influences.

The Students-Participants

The students who participated in the summer study abroad program in Tagliacozzo were all involved in engineering studies. There were four female and six male students. The group was cohesive and got along well: many knew one another from previous classes. Some also knew the Italian instructor well as they took a different class with her during the preceding fall semester on campus. Other commonalities among the students were their beginners' level in the Italian language skills and their little if non-existent previous international travel experience (Cushner & Karim, 2004). The only exception was one international student who came originally from Brazil.

The students' homogeneity of interests, their enthusiasm for the trip and reciprocal friendship combined well with the instructors' positive attitude and expertise. A general sense of openness and a desire to gain the most from the program characterized everyone's participation. The upbeat atmosphere and the program's organization compensated - at least on the psychological level - the students' travel inexperience (Pearce, 2005).

The Hosts-Participants

The Pergola d'Oro restaurant – place and people –is described as the exclusive host of relevance for this case study (Wang, 1999). In particular, the focus is on the unique rapport that developed between Armando, the grandfather in the Di Filippo family, and the students.

The Place: the Pergola d'Oro is a modest and rustic restaurant located in the heart of the ancient village, near the river. It consists of an entrance, which opens immediately onto a large room with a fireplace, where the family usually eats in front of a small black and white television; to the left of this room, the long and narrow kitchen is visible since there is no door between the two areas, which exemplifies the concept of the authentic Italian eating experience (MacCannell, 1973). Past the fireplace room, the main dining room opens to the right, followed by another smaller room to the left. Simple rustic tables and chairs furnish these rooms, while the graveled courtyard is equipped with plastic tables and chairs to better resist the weather. Since its opening, almost nothing has changed at the Pergola d'Oro: the simple décor, the informal service, the authentic homemade foods, the menu, the staff, even the now old, rusty sign posted at the corner of the alley, everything about the Pergola d'Oro is still the same.

The People: Fausto and Anastasia Di Filippo, husband and wife, have owned and run the Pergola d'Oro for the past twenty five years. They started their restaurant after returning to Italy from Canada where they lived as emigrants for six years. Fausto and Anastasia do not speak English or French, except for a few colloquial expressions. Their three children – Barbara, Daniela and Emanuele – worked and helped in the restaurant after school and in the summer months as it is customary among family-run businesses in Italy. At the time of the study abroad program in 2001 Fausto's father, Armando, aged eighty-five, lived with Fausto and Anastasia's family and spent a great deal of time at the restaurant with them. Armando was kind and it was obvious that his family members loved him dearly.

The Italian Instructor-Participant

The Italian instructor knew the people and places of the study abroad program on both ends well. The familiarity of the surroundings, the knowledge of what the students needed and what could be offered by the village gave her a good sense of what to look for, whom to ask, and where to go when organizing the program.

The Italian instructor's personal and professional assumptions in implementing this study abroad program, within the educational travel spectrum, had a great influence in the program's organization. For example, one of these assumptions was that students, like anyone else, learn better when meaningful material is presented to them. Engineering in Italy was a good choice in this perspective.

Another assumption was that travelers with little language proficiency could not attain satisfactory levels of authentic interactions with the locals, and therefore it was also assumed that intercultural communication with them would be kept close to a low level, if not a minimum.

This belief, however, was shaken during the 2001 summer study abroad program in Italy. The Italian instructor could not help but notice that a counterintuitive experience was occurring in that particular travel program, and that it was worth investigating.

CASE STUDY: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis

From day one the students began the routine of eating lunch at the Pergola d'Oro on their own, in respect of the idea that intercultural skills improve through increased interaction with the hosting culture (Ward, 2004). The Italian instructor did not stay for the meals: she would meet with the group at the end of their Engineering class, approximately at noon, and accompany the students to the restaurant. She would leave the students at the Pergola d'Oro with the Di Filippo family for lunch, and return close to two o'clock to go together to the Italian class.

In time, the awkwardness of the conversations during lunch time began to be compensated by a sense of complicity between the students and the Di Filippos. Their reciprocal lack of language proficiency merged them in a feeling of frustrated and humorous commonality. Even though little was understood, the two groups liked each other and started knitting a relationship that brought them closer. Formal barriers broke down faster not only for the casual atmosphere of the restaurant and the people, for the superb meals the Di Filippos were proud to prepare especially for the 'kids' (i ragazzi), but also because the language barrier served as a common ground for practicing pseudo dialogues, accompanied by body language and other semiotic means (Kim, 2004).

The students were becoming especially fond of Armando, the grandfather of the family. He had time to spend with them. Armando displayed a kind and curious disposition in their regards and the students returned it. In particular, Armando seemed eager to tell the students his long-lived life stories. Soon it became natural to desire to incorporate Armando's and the students' communication efforts into a more systematic and effective exchange. Consequently, the Italian instructor sat with the students and Armando, at the end of their meals, to serve as the 'missing link' in this story-telling activity. Armando told the group stories about the village and its people, the local traditions, and, most of all, he talked about his favorite subject: World War II.

Story-telling time was almost always interactive and animated (Smith & Robinson, 2006). Often the students would ask questions and clarifications or would want to tell Armando some stories they had heard at home (Fowler, 2004). In addition to his unique narrative, Armando spoke of his life to the group through his own person. His looks, his voice, his movements and pauses, the roughness of his hands, his wrinkles, his gentle eyes and smile contributed to the communication (Pearce, 2005).

Data analysis revealed important elements that highlighted the success of this particular study abroad program. For example, it was evident that the visitors and the hosts cherished their interactions throughout the program, in particular story-telling at the Pergola d’Oro restaurant. The daily lunches at the Pergola d’Oro developed into a rewarding and authentic way to experience another culture. Lunch at the Pergola d’Oro, in fact, implied a far greater sense of place and far more meaningful encounters among different peoples, than the mere sitting at a restaurant for the consumption of meals or the mere sitting in a classroom, listening to lectures *about* the Italian language and culture. A few, important elements emerged from the ‘Pergola d’Oro experience’, which are shown in the figure below. The circles in the concept map (Figure 1) represent the elements of the analysis, and their overlapping areas describe their dynamics.

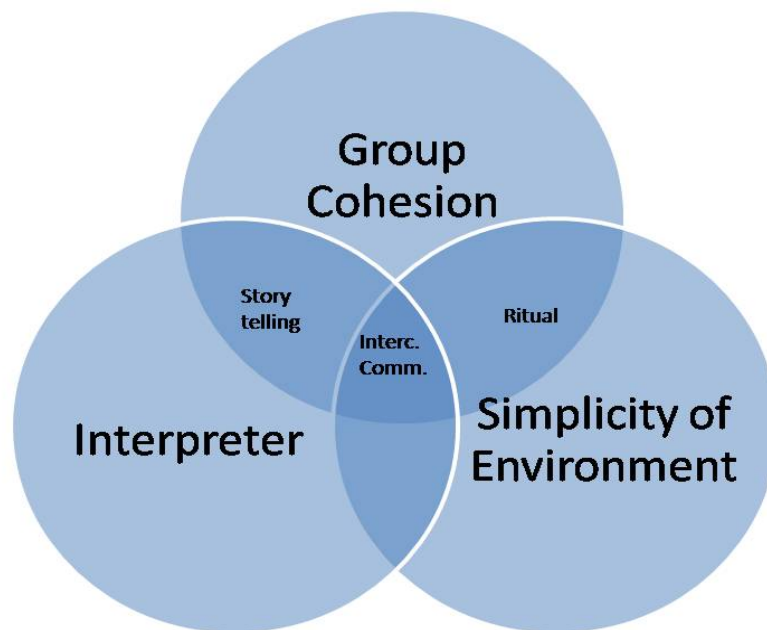


Figure 1. Conceptual Map of Intercultural Communication in Educational Travel

This representation shows intercultural communication interactions that occurred despite the visitors and the hosts low language proficiency. Also the figure helps understand the processes that induced such a positive exchange in terms of individual and collective satisfaction. These processes could possibly be endorsed in similar scenarios elsewhere.

The elements described interacted throughout the program and with one another in a variety of ways and degrees of intensity. Activities, that is: *Ritual*, *Story Telling* and *Intercultural Communication*, connected people and places: *Group Cohesion*, *Simplicity of Environment*, and *Interpreter*, in the following major dynamics:

Ritual: Everyday lunch at the Pergola d'Oro (*Simplicity of the Environment*) became a valuable and much anticipated experience for the enthusiastic students (*Group Cohesion*), who saw this routine turn into a meaningful ritual through their daily interaction with the family at the Pergola d'Oro (*Simplicity of Environment*).

Story-telling: The students (*Group Cohesion*) grew especially fond of Armando (*Simplicity of Environment*) and were exposed to his story-telling through the Italian instructor (*Interpreter*). The Story-telling was meaningful to the group of students especially because Armando's favorite topic was World War II, and the students strongly related to it, despite the generational gap. Story-telling was not just about...telling a story, it became a window opening on two world's cultures.

Intercultural Communication: at the heart of the diagram, at the heart of the relationship, *Intercultural Communication* emerged as the result of the other elements' combinations: the *Group Cohesion*, a well matched group of students, with the *Ritual* of their daily lunch at the Pergola d'Oro restaurant, *Simplicity of Environment*, and, finally with the *Interpreter*, the 'reliable' bridge across the two realities.

A possible model?

In assessing the viability of this case study for transfer to other touristic scenarios it is important to consider its shortcomings. The approach to touristic authenticity described in the Pergola d'Oro lunch ritual could be criticized in several ways. Referring to the elements described above, it could be argued against them as being negative, instead of positive.

For example, *Group Cohesion* could be seen as a passive factor that would hinder individual initiative, originality and self-actualization, especially when referring to the group's dependency from the Italian interpreter (Pearce, 2005). It could be argued that both the visitors and the hosts had very limited autonomy during their exchanges, being obliged to rely almost entirely on the Italian instructor's intervention. This is objectively true, but only to a certain extent. When considering scenarios that contemplate first time international travelers who have very little or no experience nor language proficiency, on one hand, and a local hosting environment in which the use of English is very unlikely, on the other hand, the assumption of the interpreter's 'intrusion' as being negative no longer holds. Besides, the students and the Di Filippis had plenty of occasions to interact autonomously during the lunch-breaks. The Italian instructor showed up for story-telling only towards the end of the lunches and towards the second half of the program. Spontaneous, emancipating situations (Newman, 1992) emerged between the hosts and the visitors during her absence daily.

A logistic difficulty regarding *Group Cohesion* is the assessment of what constitutes 'group cohesion' before departure, how to manage the recruiting, and where to draw the line when forming a group for a study abroad and/or educational travel program. The second year program's implementation, in 2002, for example, had a less ideal group composition which did not generate story-telling at the Pergola d'Oro, despite the fact that all the other elements

remained constant. Some strategies for the identification of group cohesion should be devised and implemented prior to similar educational travel experiences (Cushner & Karim, 2004).

The *Simplicity of the Environment* element, could be seen as limiting as well. The village's characteristics in general, and the Pergola d'Oro's in particular, appear rather restrictive and narrowly defined. It is difficult to imagine easy 'adoptability' by other types of surroundings. Nonetheless, Italy lends itself to a great number of similar settings and the identification of sites for study abroad programs or for other types of educational travel programs as satisfying as Tagliacozzo's is not so difficult to envision. Other countries could provide comparable scenarios also. Whether in Italy or elsewhere, though, each reality would have to be carefully observed and evaluated before selecting it so that its uniqueness would play a positive role for visitors and hosts.

The *Instructor/Interpreter* factor may be problematic too (Pearce, 2005). First, the same critique about the lack of autonomy for the hosts and the visitors, caused by the preponderance of the interpreter's role, applies here, but then, the same rebuttal may apply also. Second, the need to find an interpreter with an extensive experience and who is well integrated in both cultures may seem arduous. Yet, in study abroad, it is not uncommon to find faculty, mostly in foreign language departments, who promote programs that interest them and fit them well, because of personal and professional ties. The summer study abroad program in Tagliacozzo came into existence precisely under these circumstances. Moreover, different interpreters, such as qualified citizens (retired local professors, for instance, who would have the expertise, the time and the connection to the environment), could be considered for interpretation as well. Finally, additional possibilities should be explored to expand from the story-telling activity to other intercultural communication and authentic exposure ideas and initiatives.

A final critique could be the limiting implementation spectrum when considering exclusively summer study abroad programs (Cushner & Karim, 2004). In their defense, though, it may be argued that summer study abroad programs constitute the most popular and most attended overseas academic programs. With the exception of doctoral students all other categories of students amply surpass in numbers longer study abroad programs, with the associate students' category in the lead (Institute of International Education, 2003). Conceptually, though, there are no limits for these and other activities to be extended to more prolonged forms of study abroad or other forms of educational travel.

This case study involves the understanding of what appears to be a counterintuitive phenomenon and enables those interested in educational travel to draw new ideas from it. The analysis suggests that other study abroad programs already in place or future ones and other forms of educational travel could take advantage of the criteria discussed in this section. It provides the baseline for the implementation of similar scenarios or for the implementation of new scenarios where potential shallow and distracted encounters can be turned into meaningful and authentic experiences. Table 1 shows the requisites for enhanced intercultural experiences in study abroad travel.

Travel and tourism professionals could draw from this model when organizing educational travel experiences. Educators could use the model in their teaching and researching activities. Students, particularly those involved in travel and tourism, would enrich their educational background, intensify their experiences abroad, and increase their awareness and abilities to be productive and competitive in a global industry.

CONCLUSIONS

Did the lack of language proficiency contribute to a more authentic tourist experience for visitors and hosts in the summer study abroad program held in Tagliacozzo in 2001? Had the visitors been more proficient in the Italian language (or the hosts in the English language) would they have experienced a more authentic exposure to the Italian culture? Would the hosts, on their part, have achieved a better understanding and acceptance of the visitors, had they been able to communicate to a greater capacity in either English or in Italian with them? Without interpreter, how would the experience at the Pergola d'Oro have evolved? If the Pergola d'Oro were to be a different type of restaurant, for example a busy, urban, touristic rest point for masses of exhausted and rushed visitors, would they have stopped and talked with Armando the same way the students did in Tagliacozzo? Would Armando have even been there? What sense would have all brought back home; the Di Filippis, a few blocks away, and the students across the Atlantic Ocean?

Table 1. General Requisites for the Successful Implementation of Intercultural Enhanced Activities

On the university's side:	On the site's side:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer study abroad programs • Students with little or no international experience • Students with little or no prior knowledge of the country's language • Cohesion of students assessed before enrollment in the program • Selection of the interpreter (possible also on the site's side) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of the site, based on criteria compatible with those found for the village of Tagliacozzo • Selection of the activity and of its environment (for ex. story-telling at the Pergola d'Oro) • Selection of the interpreter (possible also on the university's side) • Selection of the logistics for the activity to take place

The supposition that the lack of language proficiency was beneficial to intercultural communication is presented in this study with the perception that unless the Italian family or the group of students would have been extremely proficient in either English or Italian, neither one could have achieved the same level of connection with one another as they did in such a short amount of time.

Overall, this research contributes to the material available in academia, specifically in settings related to education in travel and tourism, and as a resource for professionals, administrators, as well as staff and faculty, involved in the organization and implementation of study abroad programs.

Study abroad is a well established and successful practice. As Cushner and Karim put it, “Study abroad is nothing new to the university student experience. Long before the establishment of the first universities in Finland in 1640, students wishing to pursue higher education had to attend foreign universities in Sweden” (2004, p. 289). Because it takes place on overseas turf, study abroad defeats the temptation for Learning to be sealed into an isolated educational compartment where eventually intellectual advancement blossoms unaware of other intercultural components of the human experience.

Educational travel, as a broader version of this type of travel, follows right in the same tracks of study abroad. Academia, culture and tourism cannot ignore one another (Gore, 2005); they are expressions of the human natural attraction towards insight, revelation, the ‘sacred’ and ultimately happiness. This inclination distinguishes us from the other creatures, as we look for answers outside in the world, to pacify and sustain inner urges. The search can be in part satisfied when we consider study abroad, educational travel and tourism on the same continuum of human discovery (Cohen, 2004).

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ETHNIC CUISINES IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE: AN ANALYSIS OF ADOPTION
PROCESS OF KOREAN FOOD FROM CROSS CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

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ABSTRACT

The globalization of restaurant operations and management is a very complicated exercise when an ethnic cuisine is introduced to new market environments. This study attempts to investigate varying patterns of adoption process of Korean food, "spicy and adventurous," in the global marketplace. Applying diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 1962; 1976; 2003) to the consumer behavior construct, this study aims to identify distinctive group characteristics across different adopter categories and to reveal any meaningful association with various behavioral or psychographic factors for market segmentation purposes. A set of individual in-depth interviews have been conducted with selective Korean restaurant operators to identify managerial issues that need to be addressed and to suggest key factors that can be used for surveying their patrons. The survey instrument is designed to propose a behavioral analysis to classify how restaurant patrons might be associated with different factors such as demographic (D), socioeconomics (SE), and dining behavior (B) across different adopter categories (C) and stages of adoption process (S), where C or $P = f(D, SE, B, \text{ and the error term } \epsilon)$. Using self-administrated survey questionnaires, primary data are being collected among non-Korean patrons of six participating Korean restaurants in New York City between May and September, 2008. The results of this study will help restaurant operators and marketers gain a comprehensive understanding of their prospective patrons across different adaptation stages, providing valuable information for product development and formulating effective marketing strategies.

KEYWORDS: Adopter category; Adoption process; Diffusion of innovation theory; Ethnic cuisine; Global marketing; Korean food.

INTRODUCTION

Owing to the international expansion of Korean culture in recent years, a number of restaurants from Korea have been trying to tap into the global marketplace. However, their domestic success stories do not seem to have been exactly the case in new markets overseas,

signaling for effective strategies to maintain competitive advantages for expansion (Dev, Brown, & Zhou, 2007). The globalization of foodservice operations and management becomes a very complicated exercise particularly when the adoption of an ethnic cuisine calls for an introduction and understanding of its culture as a prerequisite (Cohen & Avieli, 2004). It is presumable that there might be significant issues specific to each ethnic cuisine and culture, which should be appropriately addressed in order to get across and successfully adopted to new markets with different cultures.

A past analysis of ethnic foods in the U. S. (National Restaurant Association, 2000) has classified Korean food into the “spicy and adventurous” category. Similar to Thai food, the spicy taste and exotic flavor of Korean food may seem to be perceived somewhat adventurous in the eyes of North American diners in general. Meanwhile, it is noticeable that Korean food has been increasingly recognized as healthy food for its natural ingredients and authentic cooking methods (Korea Tourism Organization, 2007). Today many Korean foodservice operators overseas enjoy a rapid growth in revenues generated by their non-Korean patrons from local markets. However, not much information is available for the management to understand and attract these customers: How does Korean food gain appeal to the prospective patrons from different cultural perspectives?

The purpose of this study is to explore how an ethnic cuisine is being adopted to global business environment across cultures. Employing the case of Korean cuisine, the study attempts to provide an analysis of the adoption process which is conceptually stemmed in the diffusion of innovation theory (Rogers, 1962). While past studies in this theory have primarily examined cultural and/or behavioral aspects through adoption of new product in industrial markets (Webster 1969), educational programs (Yates, 2001), instructional technology (Surry, 1997), or consumer goods (Takada & Jain, 1991), no relevant research has been reported in the tourism and hospitality sector to date.

This study, for the first time, attempts to examine how the diffusion of innovation theory applies to foodservice marketing and management. The results of this study will help global operators of ethnic restaurants identify key factors that might be significantly associated with different stages of adoption process and explain how prospective patrons can be classified across different adoption categories. A comprehensive understanding of the adoption process and adopter characteristics should provide hospitality and tourism operators with some meaningful, useful implications as to how their products and services could be effectively and successfully adopted to different cultures for global expansion.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The diffusion of innovation theory has evolved to examine how, why, and at which rate a new idea, product, or practice will be spread through cultures and adopted by members of such (Rogers, 1962; 1976; 2003). In this, innovation is a special type of information to transfer ideas by communication through certain channels over time among the members of a social system. Communication among adopters, therefore, is essential to the diffusion process, which may have

significant influence on the rate of diffusion (Peterson, 1973; Webster, 1971) – to accelerate or to retard. Coupled with communication, time is another key element in the innovation-diffusion process based upon its association with innovativeness and the rate of adoption, where adoption becomes an individual decision-making process (Midgley & Dowling, 1978).

Linking this to the consumer behavior theory, each member of the social system passes through individual decision making process to adopt innovation: (1) knowledge awareness; (2) interest persuasion; (3) decision evaluation; (4) trial and implementation; and (5) adoption confirmation. Decision-making units or members of a social system then can be classified into five categories based upon the time, degree of innovativeness and risk-taking, and the stage of adoption. These adopter categories include: (a) innovators; (b) early adapters; (c) early majority; (d) late majority; and (e) laggards (Peterson, 1973; Mahajan & Srivastava, 1990).

In the awareness stage, an important communication objective in global marketing is to create awareness of a new product through general exposure to advertising messages. Customers in the interest stage are interested enough to learn more and to seek out additional information on a new product then begin to assess the product's benefits in relation to present and anticipated future needs and evaluated such. It is noticeable that most customers in the trial stage do not tend to purchase expensive products without the "hands-on" experience or trial. Then individuals finally make an initial purchase or continue to purchase when they finally arrive at the confirmation-adoption stage.

RESEARCH RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

One general assumption in applying diffusion of innovation theory to the consumer behavior construct is that consumers at a particular category or stage of adoption are likely to be different from others who belong to a different category or stage. With this, classifying and understanding such group characteristics or behaviors in this study aims to identify distinctive group characteristics across different adopter categories and to reveal any meaningful association between the factors that might significantly influence on different stages in the diffusion-adoption process.

This study proposes a behavioral analysis to classify how patrons of Korean restaurants from different cultures associated with their demographic (D), socioeconomics (SE), and dining behavior (B) across different adopter categories (C) or adoption stages (S). Such factors could explain particular group characteristics, representing distinctive consumer subgroups for effective strategy formulation. The conceptual model for subgroup formation can be generally proposed as: subgroup characteristics in adoption stages (S) or adopter categories (C) = $f(D, SE, B, \text{ and the error term } \epsilon)$.

Once classified, restaurant patron subgroups can be further examined to determine any meaningful association with various behavioral or psychographic factors, linking the adopter subgroups in the diffusion of innovation theories to market segmentation constructs. The classification and understanding of Korean restaurant patrons in this study, for effective

segmentation purposes, has the following specific research objectives:

1. To identify pull (facilitators) and push factors (inhibitors) in the adoption process of Korean food in the global marketplace;
2. To classify and understand Korean restaurant patron subgroups based on the diffusion adopter categories – (a) innovators; (b) early adopters; (c) early majority; (d) late majority; and (e) laggards – in conjunction with their consumer characteristics and dining behavior;
3. To determine significant factors influencing five stages of adoption process: (1) awareness; (2) interest; (3) evaluation; (4) trial; and (5) adoption; and
4. To discuss how restaurant operators should develop and deliver Korean food products and services to effectively target patrons from different food cultures.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Similar to the focus group interview, the individual depth interview method is widely used in marketing research to gain an in-depth understanding of customer opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and behavior (Babbie, 2007; Burns & Bush, 2006). An analysis of the diffusion adoption theory in the restaurant market from a consumer behavior approach proposed in this study can be truly meaningful when it focuses a specific subject or set of questions that industry operators need to address. A total of six participants have been individually interviewed at scheduled meetings. Being owners or managers of major Korean restaurants with many non-Korean patrons in metro New York market, the interviewees were expected to have focused attention to identify the criteria that need to be further examined to serve the current study objectives. Employing a qualitative technique, these individual in-depth interviews have identified “pull” and “push” factors as well as major dimensions and issues relating to the adoption of Korean food across different cultures, which constructed key variables in the survey questionnaire for empirical examination. The first research objective has been accomplished as such.

Classifying and understanding Korean restaurant patron subgroups in this study is based upon the diffusion adopter categories suggested by Rogers (1962; 1976; 2003) as innovators, early adopters, the early majority, the late majority, and laggards. Employing a logistic regression technique, the estimated coefficients will provide a structural model for each adopter category by means of the significance level as well as the direction of the likelihood. The predictors of the likelihood of being associated with specific adopter category will provide meaningful information to profile each segment and associated factors. The goodness-of-fit of these classification models will be evaluated based on $-2 \log$ likelihood, Chi-square statistics, and classification results. This will suggest empirical evidence to support the significance of adopter category models to accomplish the second research objective of developing classification models.

It is expected that results of MANOVA might initially reveal significant differences in the hypothesized variables across five stages of adoption process – awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. Results of logistic regression analysis will determine varying effects of

significant factors across adoption stages. Significant differences of the hypothesized factors can be further revealed by the estimated parameters for each level of each variable to classify five adoption stages. The third research objective, to determine if restaurant patron characteristics and dining behavior might vary with adoption stages, can be accomplished based upon such evidence.

The primary data are being collected using self-administered survey questionnaires between May and September, 2008. Since the study emphasis is on applying the innovation adoption theory to ethnic cuisines across different cultures in the global marketplace, the survey subjects are non-Korean patrons of Korean restaurants. New York metro area is chosen as the venue to conduct the survey, where a quota sampling method (expected N=600) is used to collect the survey questionnaires at six participating Korean restaurants.

This study aims to examine diffusion adopter categories (see Table 1) and the stage of adoption process of Korean food culture (see Table 2) in conjunction with restaurant patron characteristics and dining behavior. Findings from this study are expected to explain how the adopter category and/or the stage of adoption can be used as an effective tool for understanding patrons of an ethnic cuisine. It is also expected that patron characteristics and dining behavior may significantly vary with adopter category and/or stage of adoption, which can reveal systematic relationships between those significant factors. Based upon the estimated models of adopter category and adoption stage, the profile of each category will be predicted in conjunction with patron characteristics and dining behavior, which can possibly provide operators and marketers of ethnic restaurants with meaningful, reliable information on their prospective patrons for effective marketing and management purposes.

Table 1. Description of Dependent Variable Adopter Category (C)

Adopter category	Survey question: <i>“When you try new food, which category do you fall into?”</i>
Innovators	“I can’t wait to try new food.”
Early adopters	“I rather wait until I feel certain about the new food. I usually make good choices, and my opinion is well respected.”
Early majority	“I am not crazy about new food but do not mind going with someone to have a try.”
Late majority	“I am cautious and rather skeptical. I only follow someone who likes it.”
Laggards	“I am suspicious of new food. It usually takes long time for me to try it.”

Table 2. Description of Dependent Variable Adoption Process Stage (S)

Adoption stage	Survey question: “Which of the following <i>BEST</i> describes your experience in Korean food?”
Knowledge awareness	“I am aware of Korean food but do not have much information.”
Interest persuasion	“I become interested in Korean food and want to know more about it.”
Decision evaluation	“I like to eat Korean and order my own food.”
Trial and implementation	“I enjoy Korean food and want to have it more often.”
Adoption confirmation	“I eat Korean food on a regular basis and will continue to do it.”

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A LODGING INDUSTRY ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PLAN
(INCORPORATING ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES INTO
HOSPITALITY LODGING CORPORATIONS)

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ABSTRACT

This working paper presents a summary of research in progress that aims to identify current initiatives being used in the lodging industry that address environmental issues. The goal of the research is to develop a plan that incorporates cost effective activities that positively impact a hotel's profitability as well as contribute positively to the environment.

KEYWORDS: Environment, Lodging, Sustainability

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry as a whole has a large negative impact on the environment. Airlines contribute greatly to carbon emissions, cruise ships have major solid waste challenges and resorts can impact the natural environment if they are not designed carefully.

The lodging industry, in particular, impacts the environment in many ways. Hotels are large users of natural resources such as water and energy and big contributors to solid waste. As early as 1996 Weaver & Gustin (1996) noted the importance of environmental awareness for the hotel industry. However, there has been little theoretical application to sustainability since then (Tzschentke, Kirk & Lynch, 2008.)

While there is an emphasis worldwide on recycling and conservation (Tzschentke, Kirk & Lynch, 2004), the lodging industry, particularly in the U.S., lags behind in many ways. This is partially due to a lack of understanding of what can be done to make hotels "greener," a lack of commitment to engage in environmentally sound activities, and the lack of a clear understanding of how to implement "green" policies.

One of the top priorities for lodging operations needs to be to build an environmental attitude into hotel managers resulting in a commitment to reduce the negative environmental footprint of the industry. Government can impact environmental activities through regulation (Kasim, 2007) and the Environmental Protection Act has had some impact in the U.S. However, this act has had minimal impact on the lodging industry.

If the industry wants to be seen as a good citizen and have some control over what and how environmental policies are to be implemented, it needs to be proactive. There are some very good reasons for being seen as environmentally responsible. Organizations such as the Professional Convention and Meeting Association have suggested environmental guidelines for the selection of hotel properties for booking meetings by its members. If meeting planners seriously consider these guidelines, environmentally responsible hotels can have a major competitive edge in attracting group business. In some cases it is a necessity to have a green certification to be considered for government group business. For example, the state of Florida requires that state agencies hold meetings and conferences only at hotels certified by the Florida Green Lodging Program (State programs help define green hotel, 2008).

Some industry leaders are sensitive to the issue of environmental impact and are working to implement sustainability strategies. This is exhibited by activities such as the International Hotels Environmental Initiative (Tzschentke, Kirk & Lynch, 2004). The understanding of the need for hotel programs at universities to also get involved is illustrated by the recent conference sponsored by the Cornell School of Hotel Administration held in Washington, D.C. (Knowles, 2008).

Individual U.S. states have developed certification programs such as Virginia Green Lodging Certification and Florida Green Lodging Certification. Other non-governmental certifications are available as well, such as the Green Hotels Associations Certification and Best Green Hotels Certification. While these are good starts to environmental activism, there needs to be more comprehensive efforts implemented by hotels than what is needed for these certifications.

This research begins with the development of a typology of sustainable actions that the lodging industry can implement. Actions are classified according to impact, ease of implementation and cost. The research is a joint project between a major hotel organization representing over 600 mid to upscale properties and will include several universities. The goal is to develop a mega-community to contribute ideas and support for implementing environmentally sound policies and conservation programs.

DEVELOPING THE PLAN

The specific steps to be taken to develop an environmental plan are as follows:

Step 1

Identify the range of environmental activities available to the industry that can be implemented to lessen each hotel's environmental footprint. This step includes a review of environmental laws/regulations as well as state and lodging association guidelines/programs for sustainability relating to the lodging industry.

This step also includes a comprehensive review of the literature on sustainability and interviews with hotel managers and executives. Based on this information a mail survey will be

conducted to determine the current degree of implementation to benchmark the success of an environmental program.

Step 2

Classify potential activities according to cost/benefit and ease of implementation.

This step involves assessing the cost of implementing environmental activities and identifying barriers to implementation that must be overcome. It also is critical to identify benefits to implementing activities from a cost savings standpoint as well as benefits to image, marketing and public relations.

Step 3

Develop environmental standards that a hotel can use to measure its progress toward neutralizing environmental impact.

Step 4

Develop a training program to build environmental awareness, understanding and commitment to implementation of plans. The focus will be on how to implement environmental friendly practices and to explain how to identify suppliers that meet green standards.

Step 5

Develop a monitoring system to measure success.

Figure 1 presents an overview of a preliminary corporate environmental implementation plan. The key to success lies with developing a corporate policy that is comprehensive in its approach to environmental actions. Sincere commitment from the top is essential in ensuring cooperation from hotel managers and staff. Communication between hotels and other constituents also needs to be on-going as illustrated in the interfaces proposed in Figure 1.

SUMMARY

The research being conducted will clarify the elements of the proposed model in Figure 1. Emphasis is not only on what activities need to be implemented, but also on how to incorporate a sound environmental policy into the corporate strategic planning process. It is important that the success of environmental programs and specific activities be monitored and fed back into corporate strategic planning. If the benefits of pursuing environmental activities can be shown to be greater than the costs, it is more likely that hotels will allocate resources toward environmental sustainability.

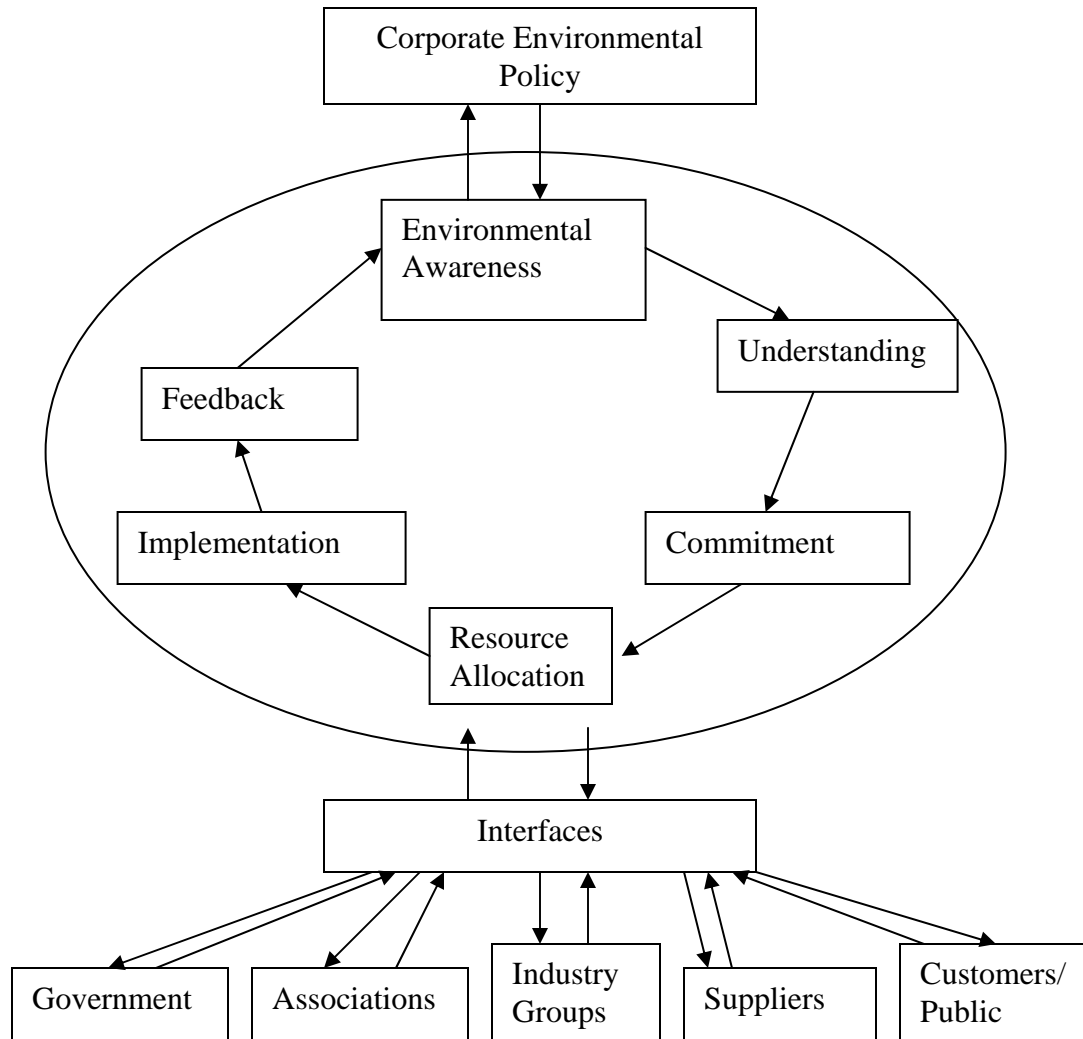


Figure 1. A Model for an Environmental Sustainability Plan

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ENVIRONMENTALLY-FRIENDLY PRACTICES IN THE U.S. LODGING INDUSTRY: HOTELS' PROFILING AND SEGMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the recent increase interest toward “green” lodging, little is known about what affects successful implementation of environmentally friendly programs by hotels and what are the relationships between different hotel characteristics and applied environmental practices. This study addresses this gap and attempts to examine factors that affect development and implementation of environmentally friendly lodging practices by profiling and segmenting of the U.S. lodging operators in terms of environmental management based on hotel size, chain affiliation, hotel type, location, and major clientele. The study of will explore current status of the lodging operators’ “greenness” and possible modifications that could be made to improve hotels’ environmental performance.

KEYWORDS: Environmentally–Friendly Programs; “Green” Lodging; Profiling and Segmentation

INTRODUCTION

Environmentalism is a strong force that current lodging practitioners and researchers have been facing. (D’Souza, Taghian, Lamb, & Peretiatko, 2007). The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) reports that in the U.S. more than three quarters of travelers consider

environmental factors when making travel arrangements and choosing lodging companies to patronize (TIES, 2004). Additionally, recent government initiatives and regulations have been encouraging the lodging industry to address this trend and to operate and promote environmental strategies (AHLA, 2008). As a result of these current developments, lodging operators began investing into environmentally conscious practices such as conservation and recycling programs and positioning themselves as being environmentally-friendly (Revilla, Dodd, & Hoover, 2001). To illustrate, such significant constituencies as EPA and AHLA have been strongly promoting several progressive initiatives that certify lodging entities in terms of “greenness” (i.e., Energy Star, Green Seal, LEED, etc.)

Eco-friendliness transformed from an opportunity into a necessity for lodging operators who want to succeed in the market. Bohdanowicz (2005) stated that being environmentally friendly is the main concern and one of the most important issues on the lodging operators’ business agenda. The positive effects of “green” initiatives are two-fold. First, eco-friendly or so called “green” operations allow significant decrease in costs of running business achieved by reducing such expenses as energy, water, solid waste, etc. Second, environmental stewardship improves corporate image of lodging operators portraying them as good social citizens in the public eyes and, thus, strengthening their market position and attracting larger number of customers (Bohdanowicz, 2006).

Renewed interest toward environmental consciousness and “green” lodging practices gave a boost to a number of research initiatives resulting in many publications in the area (Bohdanowicz, 2005; Butler, 2007; Gil, Jimenez, & Lorente, 2001; Manaktoala & Jauhari, 2007; Stipanuk & Ninemeier, 1996). Four major streams of research have emerged: sustainable development and industrial ecology, strategy and corporate social performance, environmental technology and innovation, and total quality environmental management (Angell & Klassen, 1999).

In spite of the considerable body of literature on “green” lodging, little is known about what affects successful implementation of environmentally friendly programs by hotels in the U.S. (Bohdanowicz, 2005). In particular, there is minimal knowledge about the relationships between different hotel characteristics and applied environmental practices. This study addresses this issue and attempts to examine factors that affect development and implementation of environmentally friendly lodging practices. A unique contribution of this study will be profiling and segmenting of the U.S. lodging operators in terms of environmental management based on characteristics such as hotel size, chain affiliation, hotel type, location, and major clientele.

This study will also shed light on environmentally-friendly practices that are being currently applied by lodging operators. Such examination of existing systems and operational procedures, especially in the areas of waste management, water conservation, and energy management, will reveal current status of the lodging operators’ “greenness” and possible modifications that could be made to improve hotels’ environmental performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Environmentalism in the lodging industry

Rada (1996) suggested that the lodging industry, due to its specific functions, operating characteristics, and services provided has a significant impact on the environment. Under the pressure of emerging global standards and increasing customer demands for “green” operations, hotels have started altering equipment, practices, and policies to minimize damage on the environment. The International Hotels Environment Initiative (IHEI), an alliance among eleven international hotels chains, launched a comprehensive campaign to advance environmental performance in the hotel industry and examine “green” hotel practices in a systematic manner (IHEI, 2007). According to this constituency, environmental practices employed by lodging operators include recycling and waste management, energy and water conservation, maintenance of permits such as building permits and compliance with legislation, purchasing policy, and environmental education.

Hotel Environmental Management Practices

Environmental practices have been classified into two groups. The first group, *technical* (“hardware”) practices, includes activities designed to reduce firms’ pollution output. The second group, *organizational* (“software”) practices, consists of activities related to firm’s formal systems such as environmental training, environmental reporting, and top management support. (Cramer, 1998; Klassen & Whybark, 1999).

Most environmental practices are based on the premise of the three R’s of environmental management: reduce, reuse, and recycle (Hart, 1993). Chan (2005) suggested that in the lodging context, environmental management practices are focused on the areas of energy usage, water consumption, and solid waste disposal. Trung and Kumar (2005) attributed this trend to increasing costs of resources and tarnished public image of the hotel sector.

Factors affecting application of environmental practices

Gil et al. (2001) found that factors such as size and age of facilities, chain affiliation, stakeholder environmental pressure, and use of operational management techniques exerted significant influence on a hotel’s environmental management practices. Though noteworthy, this study has some limitations. The research involved hotels from a single geographical scope and was tailored to fit some hotel characteristics typical only in the context of Spain (i.e. legal category, dominant tourism, etc.). Nevertheless, with some adjustments, these factors can be used in the context of the U.S. lodging market. Mensah (2006) found in a study involving hotels in Ghana that larger hotels were at the forefront of adopting environmental management practices. Characteristics such as hotel type (budget, midscale, and upscale) and clientele also appear to have some effect on the energy use and applied environmental practices (Trung & Kumar, 2003).

Zurburg et al. (1995) predicted that franchise/chain lodging organizations might have advantages in creating and implementing environmental management programs along with government organizations and professional associations, thus being the pioneers in reducing the

lodging industry's negative effects on the environment. Chains tend to be more prone to environmental protection-related matters due to enhanced information management, available resources, and quick dissemination of successful practices of individual units (Darr, Argote, & Epple, 1995).

Based on the discussion above, the following hypotheses represent theorized relationships among the constructs that will be tested and analyzed in this study:

- H1. *Hotels that were recently built employ more environmental practices.*
- H2. *Large-size hotels apply more environmental practices than small-size hotels.*
- H3. *Hotels with chain affiliation utilize more environmental practices than non-chain affiliated hotels.*
- H4. *Hotel type (budget, midscale, or upscale) affects application of environmental practices.*
- H5. *Hotel's main clientele affects application of environmental practices.*

METHODOLOGY

General Managers of hotels who are members of the American Hotel and Lodging Association will be approached to participate in this research via regular and electronic mail. Participation will be voluntary. Incentives will be used to encourage participation. A structured questionnaire will be designed to collect the data. The questionnaire will be pre-tested with lodging industry professionals and hospitality faculty to examine validity and reliability of the used measurements. Modifications will be applied based on the pre-test results.

The questionnaire will be divided into three sections. The first section will provide information required to determine the degree to which hotels engage in technical environmental practices. Energy usage, water consumption, solid waste disposal and recycling practices will be used to assess the technical side of the hotel environmental management. The second section of the questionnaire will determine the hotel's level of involvement in organizational practices such as environmental training programs, top management support for environmental initiatives, and environmental reporting procedures.

Each item will be evaluated by hotel managers on a scale ranging from 0 to 10 as a function of the hotel's degree of involvement in each practice (Gil et al., 2001). Past studies and lodging industry practitioners will be consulted to create a comprehensive list of technical and organizational environmental practices applicable to lodging establishments in the U.S. A combined score for technical and organizational environmental practices will be used as a dependant variable.

Section three of the questionnaire will include items that would reflect the hotel's size, type, location, chain affiliation, age of the facilities, main clientele, and other relevant demographic questions.

Reliability tests and factor analyses will be performed to evaluate the ability of the items to represent each construct (Laroche, Bergeron, & Barbaro-Forleo, 2001). Basic correlations and regression analysis will be used to determine the direction and significance of the relationships among variables. Hotel characteristics will be used as independent variables and environmental management practices will be used as a dependent variable (Gil et al., 2001). Cluster analysis will be used to segment and profile hotels in terms of their environmental practices based on similarities in their characteristics. Discriminant analysis will be done to evaluate the accuracy of the segment classification completed using cluster analysis. Chi-square tests will be employed to delineate the uniqueness of each cluster based on various hotel characteristics.

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SECTION IV
WORKSHOP PAPERS
(STAND-UP PRESENTATIONS)

Workshop Proposal for 2008 ISTTE Conference

**Leveraging Communities of Practice to Meet the
Learning and Innovation Needs of SMEs in
Ireland's Tourism Sector**



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WORKSHOP THEORETICAL BASIS¹

In recent times, organizations have utilised a “communities of practice” approach to promote learning and innovation within and across firms (Swan et al. 2002). This approach has its basis in network theory. In a small firm context, the literature indicates that the development of networks offers the business owner-manager an opportunity to broaden the scope of their knowledge and learn from other firms; a small firm’s resource poverty can be overcome through the harnessing of relational capital achieved through networking (Julien 2007). Tinsley and Lynch (2007) define a network as “a set of relationships between individuals and groups to achieve a particular purpose” (p.15) and the seminal work by Hanssen-Bauer & Snow (1996) on the establishment of Nordvest Forum, a network which focalizes learning, legitimised the concept of learning through networks. Bessant et al. (2003) describe learning as a ‘by-product’ of network activities and they argue that shared learning is a primary feature of practitioner learning networks.

Networks involve much more than creating mutually beneficial business relationships. From a capability perspective, Henderson (1998) argues that the principal expectation from learning networks is the realisation of “new forms of innovative business behaviour” (p. 786), ultimately resulting in extra value-added; this outcome is achieved by the development and enhancement of new and existing enterprise capabilities through the process of shared learning (McGovern 2006; Bessant et al. 2003). McGovern (2006) contends that collaboration between enterprises “enables networks to develop solutions to common problems, gain knowledge to achieve economies of scale, acquire technologies/resources, and extend their market to research those that would otherwise be beyond their reach” (p. 303). Further, Tell (2000) argues that in certain contexts, such as the use of the network concept to create growth in rural regions, a major role of the learning network is to provide a sharing of experiential knowledge thereby enhancing managerial decision making in situations that are complex and not well-defined; he also argues that the creation of new knowledge evolves from a dialogue between explicit and tacit knowledge. Yet this dialogue pivots on the strength of tie between participants (Szulanski 1996; Hansen 1999; Inkpen and Tsang 2005). The attractiveness of building communities of practice is due to the eventuality that “people in communities of practice share their experiences and knowledge in free-flowing, creative ways that foster new approaches to problems” (Wenger and Snyder 2000, p. 140). Knowledge sharing is the basis of learning and innovation, yet the creation of learning or innovation networks is complex and challenging as the outcomes of a community of practice is based substantially on the trust, commitment, and reciprocity of community participants (cf. Matthews et al. 2008; parallels exist in relationship marketing and relational exchange literature).

Small firms are regularly offered generic training solutions originally designed for larger organisations, resulting in a training approach that often fails to address the needs of the small firm (Sullivan, 2000; Wyer et al., 2000). Criticism has also been levied at government initiatives in this regard (for example: Lange et al., 2000; Matlay, 1999; among others), while educational institutions have historically been chastised for their narrow class-based approach to small firm education (Taylor & Thorpe, 2004). Notably, learner ownership requires a wider trainee involvement at each point in the learning process to ensure the sought after change in ability and

¹ The introduction and background information is drawn, in part, from Hussey et al. (2007).

behaviour, thus learning is not an activity limited to training programmes, no matter how specific and timely these training programmes might be (Taylor & Thorpe, 2004; Sahay & Robey, 1996). Therefore, pertinent training plans and schedules should include a continuous learning ethos, incorporating further individual development to facilitate learning at all inter- and intra-organisational levels following initial training (Gomez et al., 2004). Fáilte Ireland's² Tourism Learning Networks' (TLN) initiative is based on: (1) an action learning ethos (Foley et al. 2006), (2) the recognition that participant interaction enhances learning, and (3) the contention that an organization has a major role to perform in the construction, support, and management of 'communities of practice' (cf. Brown and Duguid, 2001; Wenger and Snyder 2000).³ The TLN programme represents a marked departure from traditional training delivery in this sector, and has resulted in active and substantial involvement in the network among participating tourism enterprises.

BACKGROUND TO TOURISM LEARNING NETWORKS' (TLN) INITIATIVE

This initiative is a response to recommendations made in feedback from the industry and research conducted on behalf of Fáilte Ireland.⁴ The TLNs were established by Fáilte Ireland in order to meet the learning needs of small to medium tourism enterprises, most especially micro businesses. Indeed, feedback from the SMEs indicated that they wanted training that was "short, snappy, relevant and local."⁵ The TLN initiative which was first proposed and then developed by Fáilte Ireland is a key component of the tourism board's current five year strategy.⁶ The success of this initiative has been recognised and endorsed at national level via the recently received Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Award and the Irish Institute of Training and Development (IITD) Outstanding Achievement Award. The networks are now in their third year of operation.

At the time TLNs were established, 'learning networks' was not a concept people were familiar with nor was it in common usage in the Irish tourism industry. Utilising general guidelines, thirty-three TLNs have been established in Ireland by varying types of providers (academics and/or consultants); further, providers were free to customise the learning to suit the TLN's individual participant requirements. The foregoing has resulted in a cross-standardisation of some TLN components as well as a variation between TLNs on delivery methods and other initiative components. The standard components nationwide are as follows: (1) group meetings facilitated by professional facilitators, (2) residential learning events, (3) workshops on information technology (IT), marketing and public relations (PR), (4) mentoring support from industry experts, and (5) both regional and national conference participation. The differences

² Semi-state, Irish Tourism Development Agency.

³ However, as noted by Swan et al. (2002), a tension exists in the literature concerning the impact of formal structuration on the nature of the communities of practice as their nature is considered their strength, that is, they should be "organic, spontaneous, and informal" (Wenger and Synder 2000, p. 140).

⁴ Based on research conducted by Price Waterhouse Cooper on their behalf; further, Fáilte Ireland's strategy document, *Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007-2013*, recognised that SME managers were reluctant to take part in off-the-job training and development due to time pressures and the lack of management cover in the business.

⁵ Fáilte Ireland's policy document, *Competing Through People: A Human Resource Development Strategy for Irish Tourism 2005-2010*.

⁶ *Human Resource Development Strategy 2005:2010*.

identified between the providers range from variations in emphasis on a particular delivery method, for example the extensive use of mentoring used by particular providers, to the use of an accreditation scheme in some of the academically backed TLNs. There are also variations between TLNs facilitated by the same provider as the course content is adapted to suit the participants in the group, which are identified through the completion of a Development Needs Analysis⁷ (DNA) upon enrolment.

THE NEXT STEP: INNOVATION NETWORK INITIATIVE

In collaboration with Fáilte Ireland, WIT's School of Business were the originators of the TLN learning framework⁸ and has, since the TLN roll-out (December, 2005), facilitated and managed the TLNs located in the South and South-east regions of Ireland. To-date, WIT's programme has been very successful.⁹ Based on this success, the School of Business has recently submitted a proposal to Fáilte Ireland for an evolution of the TLN programme, representing an initiative that can meet a well- recognised strategic need of tourism SMEs,¹⁰ that is, drawing on past TLN participants and specialisms of business faculty, the School will establish, manage, and study a destination innovation network for the purpose of generating substantive product/service innovation through the creation and transfer of knowledge¹¹ and ultimately provide a 'best practice' model to Fáilte Ireland for a national roll-out. The strategic expansion of the TLN concept reflects an evolution of the TLN that is inherent and logical in that learning is the basis of innovation, and represents a progression in the learning process of participants from know-how to know-what.

OBJECTIVES AND FORMAT OF WORKSHOP

The overarching purpose of this workshop is to demonstrate the potential efficacy of tourism networks in the development of superior competitive advantage for participating enterprises through learning and innovation. This will be completed in two stages and the workshop will involve presenters from academia; past participants and agency stakeholders

⁷ Development Needs Analysis is a generic term used in this context as in some TLNs this document is termed learning needs analysis and in other TLNs it is labelled training needs analysis.

⁸ Foley et al. (2006). This framework is the underlying basis for the process and content of the South and South-east TLNs which are managed by WIT's School of Business.

⁹ This consideration is based on the School's assessment of its TLN programme which was derived from the feedback of TLN stakeholders (participants, Fáilte Ireland, and course providers). Additionally, in the first iteration of the South and South-east TLNs (2006), formal accreditation, leading to a Certificate in Tourism Business Practice, was introduced and was availed of by 41 participants (30%). In the second iteration (2007), formal accreditation was availed of by 75 participants (54%).

¹⁰ As per Fáilte Ireland's *Tourism Product Development Strategy 2007-2010*. Fáilte Ireland's determination reflects a dominant theme in the academic literature that current and future competition must be based on knowledge and that knowledge is the basis of innovation. The literature indicates that little research exists on how to develop new services in the tourism/hospitality sector (Ottenbacher and Gnoth 2005) despite the importance of innovation to the industry (Carlsen and Edwards 2008; Enz and Siguaw 2003).

¹¹ This proposal was prepared in collaboration with Fáilte Ireland South-east and, at the time of writing, the School of Business' proposal has been short-listed for participation in Fáilte Ireland's final award process for its thematic call.

involved in the TLN will be asked to attend as part of the ‘audience’ (see discussion below). Based on the foregoing this workshop will:

- ❖ Promote an awareness of an alternative and more pertinent learning methodology for SMEs, with particular relevance to micro and small tourism enterprises.
 - Challenge traditional training methods in the small firm environment.
 - Offer an applied learning approach – the TLN ethos.
 - Participant learning loops: from problem solving to strategic thinking.
 - Learner tools: organisational/managerial capability analysis and development.
 - Academic partnership: Certificate in Tourism Business Practice.
 - Justification for TLN approach.
- ❖ Stimulate discussion on the application of management systems for delivering effective learning interventions within a tourism context.
- ❖ Draw attention to the capacity of tourism networks for realising substantive innovation.
 - Provide insights into the key drivers and major barriers to establishing and managing innovation networks in the tourism context.
 - Moving from strategic thinking to strategic action.
 - Provide a platform for tourism stakeholders’ dialogue on innovation networks.

The first stage of the workshop represents most of the workshop content and centralises the learning framework developed by the School’s senior staff at the Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies (Foley et al. 2006) which is applied in the TLNs under the management of WIT’s School of Business. In this stage, presenters, Mr. Anthony Foley, Ms. Anne-Marie Frampton, and Dr. Felicity Kelliher, who are involved in the operationalisation and management of the TLN for over two years, will outline the multiple TLN model components, activity, assessment and learning value, while also providing insights into the relationship between theory and practice. Stage two involves a short presentation by Dr. Patrick Lynch and Dr. Mary T. Holden on the proposed strategic evolution of the TLN, representing an expansion of the network concept to a strategic platform centralised on considerably enhancing tourism product/service innovation.

The role of the invited ‘audience’ participants is to stimulate dialogue within the workshop; the invited attendees will include Fáilte Ireland representatives who are involved in the learning and innovation initiatives as well as several past WIT TLN participants (representing accommodation, activities, and heritage). Further, it is the intent of this workshop to ensure that learning ownership resides with attendees through an interspersed presentation, discussion, and question and answers involving short case scenarios based on actual TLN participants’ experiences on the role the TLN initiative has played in the development of their tourism enterprises.

CONCLUSION

Based on over two years of experience in the organisation, delivery and management of the South and South-east regions’ TLNs, the major purpose of this workshop is to demonstrate how a ‘communities of practice’ approach can be successfully leveraged to meet the learning and

innovation needs of tourism enterprises. It is envisaged that this will be achieved through the delivery of content in a highly interactive way.

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS:

- Mr. Anthony Foley, Senior Researcher, Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies, WIT, and co-originator of WIT's TLN learning framework; specialism is managerial capabilities.
- Ms. Anne-Marie Frampton, Manager, TLN Initiative South and South-East Regions.
- Dr. Mary T. Holden, Senior Researcher, Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies & Centre for Entrepreneurship, WIT; specialism is the socio-psychological dynamics of business-to-business relationships.
- Dr. Felicity Kelliher, Senior Researcher, Centre for Entrepreneurship, WIT; specialism is learning in micro/small enterprises.
- Dr. Patrick Lynch, Senior Researcher, Waterford Crystal Centre for Marketing Studies & Centre for Entrepreneurship, WIT; specialism is innovation.

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POSITIONING TOURISM AND FOOD EDUCATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

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ABSTRACT

The Faculty of Tourism and Food provides education and training for the Tourism, Hospitality, Food and Pharma areas across the continuum from the skills based area to postdoctoral research. Towards that end the Faculty engages in teaching, programme development and research in rural, cultural and activity tourism, sustainable development, consumer behaviour, strategic planning, work practices, human resource development, culinary arts, environmental health, food technology, nutraceuticals and pharmaceutical technology. The Faculty has contributed significantly to the professionalisation of Tourism and Food and fostered scholarship therein. The present work draws on the strategic experience which has led the Faculty to question the visibility of and support for Tourism and Food especially in the Knowledge Economy. Observations are given on the profile of Tourism and Food and the extent to which the education infrastructure facilitates sustainable development in the area.

INTRODUCTION

The DIT Faculty of Tourism and Food has played a significant role in advancing the Tourism and Food sectors which are major components of the Irish economy. Whilst tourism development is a comparatively recent phenomenon, food has almost iconic status in the social and cultural landscape as well as being an area of economic significance. It is government policy to advance up the value chain and a related policy is to increase the level of participation in higher education for undergraduate programmes for those in fulltime education and significant infrastructural support for research. Given the above it is reasonable to ask how the national objectives in Tourism and Food map onto the higher education landscape and to ask if the present deployment of resources reflects the importance of these areas.

The present work draws upon the strategic experience which has led the Faculty to consider the extent to which and how effectively these sectors are located in the knowledge economy education and research landscape. This is considered with reference to:

Organisational presence: Departments in Universities, DIT and the Institutes of Technology

Infrastructural presence: Visibility in Government reporting mechanisms/classifications; prominence as a priority destination/claimant for competitive research and other funding

External profile: Output of knowledge and innovation as measured by publications, ideas generated by academics, standards enhancement, general performance linked to education.

CONTEXT

Tourism

Tourism is a key driver for infrastructural development; it is a net contributor to the economy; and it offers significant synergistic potential in the context of changing agricultural policies. The importance of the Tourism sector to the economy is well recognised nationally and globally. The National Development Plan 2007-2013 and the Programme for Government affirm the role of Tourism in Ireland's economic, social and cultural progress. This period coincides with the EC plans (EC 2006) to put in place a renewed tourism policy the main aim of which is to increase competitiveness and to create more and better jobs in this largely SME and micro-enterprise sector. One might expect given the recognised importance of Tourism that the tourism disciplines underpinning the sector would feature prominently not only in the academic literature but also in government reports and publications. This is not the case.

Food

The Agri-Food industry is a key component of the Irish economy. It accounts for 8% of GDP and over 160,000 jobs. It accounts for a major proportion of exports of Irish-owned enterprises and its products are sold in over 170 markets around the world. The importance of this sector to the national economy is recognised in the planned provision in the National Development Plan 2007-2013 in line with the strategy set out in the Agri-Vision 2015 Action Plan. Relative to Tourism, provision for Agri-Food features prominently in investment plans under Enterprise, Science and Innovation.

Tourism and Food

The Tourism sector comprises the transport, accommodation, information and attraction segments with the backbone of the industry being the micro and small to medium sized enterprise. The sector operates at national, regional and local levels in a cross cutting environment. The Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism website notes that among the key cross-cutting issues are *maintenance of competitively priced, regular access to and from our main markets; provision of identified access roads and sanitary services infrastructure to support use of visitor attractions and tourist areas; the development, and appropriate management, of a range of cultural and heritage activities capable of being marketed overseas; pursuit of an environmental policy which accommodates the sensitive development and expansion of tourism with opportunities for the development of rural tourism and the enjoyment of natural resources for tourism, sport and recreation.*

The Food chain comprises production, processing, hospitality and end consumer sectors all of which operate in a regulated framework and are supported by knowledge generation to a greater or lesser extent. For example the processing parts of the chain have a strong research based orientation as evident in major food enterprises. However cuisine, artisan and speciality food areas are less well supported by the research base. Food is an integral part of the Tourism experience and food culture features prominently in some destinations. Promoting Irish food products to foreign visitors and indeed to domestic travellers is an essential channel supporting the marketing efforts of producers from artisan through to the major Irish food companies. This was exemplified by an Bord Bia in its the highly successful Food Island initiative during Irelands hosting of the Ryder Cup in 2006.

The linkages between Tourism and Food transcend the recognised individual importance of each individual sector. The concepts of Ireland the Food Island and Ireland People and Place are powerful. *The success of our Tourism impacts on our Food industry and vice versa. Both industries are depending on the same perceptions of Ireland internationally in particular our reputation for quality food and wholesomeness of our natural environment* (ref speech by Minister Brendan Smith TD on the occasion of a National Food Competition hosted by the Faculty of Tourism and Food in 2006).

Education landscape

What are our expectations for educational attainment of the human capital required to sustain growth and propel these sectors forward? To enable such industries to reach their potential and be competitive in a high cost country such as Ireland arguably every employee should be a graduate with an absolute minimum of a one year higher education certificate and preferably an ordinary degree. What is our target? What will we be satisfied with or are we currently simply accepting the existing situation?

Ireland's appeal through people and place is far removed from that of a simple commodity base. Ireland appeals to ideas and imagination rather than more mass market attractions such as sand or snow, the lure of gaming, or the appeal of must see places which require no explanation such as Paris, London or New York. This appeal generates the baseline 6-8 million visitors annually which are heretofore guaranteed by virtue of tourist curiosity and perception of difference. Achieving ever higher levels requires the move up the value chain with concomitant product development and innovation. The extent of and the manner in which this idea is animated and sustainable development is achieved depends in part on the embeddedness of Tourism and Food in the national education landscape.

OBSERVATIONS

The Tourism and Food sectors

Tourism and Food have long faced the challenges which arise from their inherently interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary natures. The interface between management and technology and management and professional activity is an ongoing subject of debate. These

academic identity issues are reflected in the International Standard Classification of Education as used by the OECD and Eurostat.

The notion of lifelong learning in Tourism and Food and in education more broadly has become established in recognition of the need for continuous professional development. The need for lifelong learning is also manifest as the traditional barriers between disciplines are eroded and new disciplines emerge based on research output. The developing confluence of Tourism Sustainability and Environmental Sustainability as articulated in the Davos Declaration 2007 (UNWTO and UNEP 2008), which recognises that Tourism is impacted by climate change while simultaneously contributing to the phenomenon, is a case in point.

A brief review of the literature on Tourism Research in Ireland shows that the predominance of recent publication is in the Human Resource Management and Human Resource Development domains followed by publications in the Information Technology and Communications area, education and training, entrepreneurship and innovation and specialised niche areas. There are few papers on SMEs, competition, co-operative networks and consumer behaviour. There is a challenge for Tourism and Food here which can be accommodated within the Knowledge Triangle formed by the higher education, research and business sectors.

The Knowledge Economy

The Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (DETE 2006) is designed to bring Ireland in line with Research and Development performance in leading countries and to enhance the development of a knowledge based economy. The strategy makes only two references to Tourism - both in an environmental context. One refers to the need for research to anticipate the resultant environmental impact from changing conditions in Tourism while the second refers to existing programmes in water based Tourism and Leisure. A recent overview of innovation in Ireland (DETE, 2008) recognises that the quality of the public research infrastructure and its links to industry are an important asset in Ireland's innovation system and points to the need to address the capacity of small and medium sized enterprises to absorb and apply research and new knowledge. The focus which is overtly on the implementation of the strategy with respect to science and technology aims to increase the output of economically relevant knowledge from academia; to transform the quality and quantity of research undertaken by enterprise; and to enhance the contribution of research to economic and social development across all relevant areas of public policy. There are parallels here for Tourism and Food. The Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General of the European Commission recognises that Tourism is an innovative sector fostered by innovation (EC 2007). For example new products, such as nature-based tourism, wellness and cultural tourism which have been developed to meet evolving demand, together with product quality and improved competitiveness are important in the sustainability of destinations.

EMERGING ISSUES

The extensive capital investment in Tourism and Food during the past decade of high economic growth enabled the sector to provide a quality product for the baseline visitor numbers

already mentioned. The challenge for education is to provide the graduates who will ensure sustainability of resources, destinations and enterprises, maximise the potential of this investment and ensure growth in numbers.

The authors would argue that implementation of a knowledge based innovation strategy is required to optimise the Tourism and Food sectors within the challenges of information technology and emerging economic, environmental, cultural and social issues. These challenges are manifest in issues as fundamental and diverse as climate change; food availability and security; water availability, quality, competitiveness and the need for sustainable development and innovation.

Research in Tourism and Food is a developing area covering the spectrum from basic to applied and is reported in the academic literature and in commissioned reports. However the research profile is not high as shown by the publication numbers, the low level of funding and some lack of inclusivity. The research needs of Tourism and Food readily map onto the issues addressed by the enterprise development agencies namely the capacity of small and medium and micro-sized enterprises to absorb and apply research and new knowledge and the increasing demand from enterprise for readily accessible applied research capabilities.

Parameters and Drivers for Success

The debate on the Knowledge Economy is inevitably linked to the issue of establishing world class education capacity. This issue and of course that of associated world rankings is often reduced to an argument about which Institution or University should be funded to world class standards. The positioning of Tourism and Food needs to be considered in this debate. In the context of reflecting Government Policy objectives, it may be more relevant to provide for world class capability across many providers on a thematic basis one of which is Tourism and Food.

The emergence of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology which is the first European initiative to integrate the three sides of the Knowledge Triangle (Higher Education, Research, and Business-Innovation) may be fortuitous with regard to stimulating strengthened links between industrialists, researchers and educators. This Institute seeks to be a world-class innovation-orientated reference model, inspiring and driving change in existing education and research institutions. Such an approach for Tourism and Food would contribute to repositioning Education for these sectors in the Knowledge Economy.

DESIRED POSITION

The debate in relation to Human Capital development in the Tourism and Food sector often seems to revolve around training needs. It is our view that education for Tourism and Food will be appropriately positioned when the following have been achieved:

- the integration of teaching, learning and research

- a substantial increase in the general level of graduate formation within the workforce
- the development of a critical mass of experts at principal investigator level and a complementary increase in research activity
- the development of a number of centres of international standing attractive to international scholars
- a greater level of certainty about the capability of the sectors to deliver on sustainable ambitious growth
- a high degree of reliance and interdependence between industry and academia for research informed policy making and initiatives.

The time appears appropriate for a step change in the approach to Education in Tourism and Food with a higher level of funding which would see it overtly positioned within the Knowledge Economy.

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MINDING THE ROOTS: INCORPORATING VALUES-BASED LEARNING IN DISTANCE TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT MASTERS CURRICULA

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to provide educators, educational designers and researchers with a foundational set of ethical values for incorporation into tourism and hospitality management (T&HM) graduate education curricula by distance modes, and suggestions for assessing these learning outcomes.

Distance education (DE) programs both support and extend the roles of higher education (MSCHE, 2002). Distance graduate management education is evolving within a challenging environment and is intrinsically linked to change. Among the complex issues affecting the current management education environment is a growing concern for corporate responsibility and organizational values (Giacalone, 2004; N. C. Smith, 2008) As one component of graduate management education, tourism and hospitality management education shares this concern.

CHANGE FACTORS: TECHNOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL CHANGE

Converging with economic and cultural changes are changing demographic patterns, new education policies and a deluge of information and knowledge via the Internet. Educators are aware that the demand for flexible distance learning is increasing (Taylor, 2001), but are faced with the task of aligning meaningful curricula with dynamic industry and student needs.

For the past seven years the present authors have developed and facilitated DE courses for the T&HM masters program at The George Washington University (GWU). This experience plus educators' ongoing discussions about values within T&HM education stimulated a curiosity: Would it be possible to develop a practical assessment of effectively integrated values in the learning outcomes of distance courses for T&HM?

The project requires three basic steps. The first is to suggest an appropriate set of values for T&HM graduate education. The second is to select a specific ethical value for pilot testing in a specific T&HM graduate course, and, finally, to suggest a means for identifying and quantitatively measuring students' demonstrated ability to apply the value.

The results of this evaluation can guide the design of a valid method for assessing the strength of student application of ethical values in a values-based curriculum for T&HM.

FOUNDATIONS: THREE DEFINITIONS

1. Distance Education

Distance education is defined herein, as “a formal educational process in which the majority of the instruction occurs when student and instructor are not in the same place. Instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous. DE may employ correspondence study, or audio, video, or computer technologies. (Gearhart, 1999)” Distance learning can incorporate many forms of delivery options that fall in the spectrum between 100% online eLearning and a blended teaching and learning format. Program delivery may involve interactive online technologies or be combined with face-to-face activities, residencies or formal classes. Current T&HM distance masters programs represent a variety of format combinations. In this study we assess learning within GWU’s T&HM master of tourism administration degree (termed the Accelerated Master of Tourism Administration, or AMTA) program, which is a blended format model.

Twice each year, the Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management enrolls 15 to 25 students in the AMTA program. The AMTA students meet for an inaugural residency of 5 days of training, program orientation and team building. They then return home for the remainder of their coursework, taking thirteen 10-12 week courses via streaming audio and video lectures through the Blackboard course management system. Weekly coursework can include reading assignments, quizzes and exams, essays, case studies and practicum experience. Assessment also includes group projects, and a final exam. After course completion, students reconvene on the GWU campus in May to compete as teams in a capstone case competition that involves recommending solutions for a hands-on local issue.

2. Curriculum framework

Curriculum can have a variety of meanings (Cooper, Shepherd, & Westlake, 1994). In this case, a curriculum or curriculum framework refers to the entire program plan for student academic development. It incorporates factors such as purpose, student experience, resources, courses, course and program evaluation, and adjustments. An effective curriculum framework promotes clarity about the influences on curriculum development. It encourages explicit attention to student learning and links adjustment mechanisms closely with the planning process. (Stark & Lattuca, 1997).

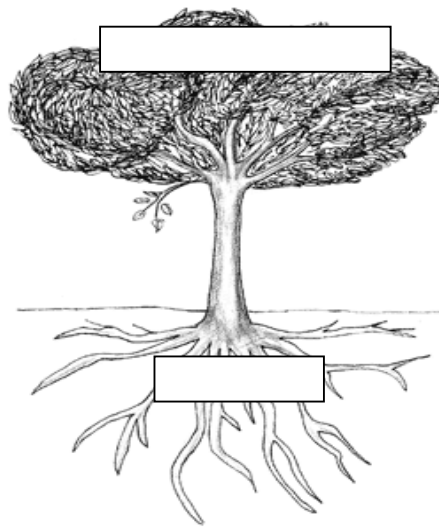
3. Values

This study begins with the view that ethical values are “enduring belief[s] that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence.” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 4) To this is added the management orientation that the values category includes business ethics but expanded to embrace the “reasons for and consequences of all forms of managerial action”. (Grey 2004, p. 182) Moreover, values taught in management education should be

transcendent, that is, should reflect the aspirations of humankind, rather than just the material goals of business organizations (Giacalone, 2004)

Values: The Invisible Roots for Sustainable Growth

A brief allegory is helpful here: the Tree of Knowledge is a fitting metaphor for the growing body of curriculum, graduate management education and T&HM and DE literature (Nichols, 2003). Imagine a tree (Figure 1) whose branches are the socio-economic and technical environment and whose leaves are the mass of popular practice-based research in higher education. Values form the unseen roots and provide neither fruit nor flower, but support and provide the means for the growing tree to thrive in a changing environment. Strong roots nurture healthy growth; thus deliberate attention to this invisible support system is both practical and necessary for the healthy growth of new programs and curricula.



The Role of Values in Curriculum Design

For many reasons ethical values and moral reasoning play an important role for multi-dimensional curriculum design theories. A coherent set of values should link the attitudes and the relationships of a collegiate career field to society, the student, ethical issues and decision-making, and hopes for the future of the field itself (Stark & Lattuca, 1997; Stark, Lowther, Hagerty, & Orczyk, 1986). The tourism and hospitality industry is resilient and dynamic and its rising leaders need the same qualities gained through strengthened graduate education curricula (Collins, 2006; G. Smith & Cooper, 2000). Values-based T&HM education can prepare graduates for responsible leadership and stewardship by providing a foundation for ethical decision-making in the absence of environmental stability (Sheldon, 2008).

As this study focuses on T&HM higher education, which is information and communication technology (ICT) intensive, instruction in ethical values and decision-making should comprise a relevant and necessary part of the curriculum. ICT provides educators with new tools that can reshape the way basic learning structure is conceived (Salmon, 2000).

The pressure of ICT on the workplace and education acts as a stimulus to the growth of DE and promotes re-visioning of teaching and learning (Garrison, Cleveland-Innes, & Fung, 2004). An increase in distance education via ICT means that degree programs will require new mission statements that Faculties must rework for new learning environments and methods of instruction, and, perhaps most significantly, administrators must adopt new standards for measuring success in achieving learning objectives in T&HM graduate education. (Stallings, 2002).

Ethical values are especially important to curriculum design theory. They play an important role in “deciding what *goals* to pursue (Reigeluth, 1999).” Traditionally, curriculum models relied solely on a data-based, needs analysis approach to decide what to teach. A comprehensive curriculum model offers guidance to help stakeholders reach consensus on learning goals.

In other words, a set of ethical values should serve as a touchstone for curricular change and guide didactic decision-making. In the context of DE, all too often curriculum design choices are technology-led rather than theory- or values-led, a case of “putting the cart before the horse” (Nichols, 2003; Ravenscroft, 2001). Ethical values can form the socially relevant core that gives cohesion to a comprehensive T&HM curriculum and a focus on desirable learning goals, such as sustainable tourism development.

Ethical values additionally help people “step outside their disciplinary silos” (Fogarty, 2005, p. 160) and see the larger picture, which improves their insight, critical thinking and adaptivity, which are important qualities in times of rapid change (Hetherington, 2008). A curriculum grounded in a reflective, stabilizing values system may be the best strategy against the disorienting effects of environmental change and for achieving desired futures.

PROCEDURE

To address these purposes, this study:

1. examines the rationale for distance masters programs and the current programs
2. briefly reviews relevant literature
3. considers a set of ethical values suited to the T&HM curriculum,
4. chooses an ethical value to be assessed in a graduate course in tourism management,
5. proposes a method – a rubric- for assessing student achievement of learning relevant to this value,
6. applies the rubric to a DE course, and
7. reflects on the assessment results and their implications.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

There has been a great deal of research dedicated to understanding distance higher education e.g. (Holmberg, 1989; Keegan, 1983; Moule, 2007; Rovai, Ponton, & Baker, 2008; Salmon, 2000). The following summarizes the rationale supporting distance methods of education at the graduate degree level:

1. Provides convenience in a time-deficient world (Access, geographically borderless, flexible delivery format and schedule, expanded learning opportunities for those tied to their residences or workplaces, etc)
2. Enhances opportunities (collaboration among institutions, grants, entrepreneurial, etc.)
3. Accommodates demographic shifts (working adults and lifelong learners)
4. Improves pedagogy:
 - Student-centered learning/community of learners rather than faculty-centered instruction.
 - Interactive discussions involving all students rather than just extraverts
 - A more intimate community of learners
 - Rapid feedback to questions and submitted assignments
 - Innovative ICT to engage different learning styles
5. Addresses the interests of lifelong learners
6. Potentially increases educational efficiency
(Kassop, 2003; Ohler, 1991; Tattersall, Waterink, Hoppener, & Koper, 2006)

These are motivating factors in the development of distance programs. They also force educators to focus on the characteristics of learners and their priorities to inform and guide curriculum design.

Distance T&HM Education: The Masters Programs

Pertinent to this study is an environmental scan of the scope of existing distance T&HM masters programs currently offered in English at accredited institutions. Out of about 130 institutions offering masters programs in T&HM worldwide, approximately 15% offer degree programs by distance. These twenty programs are, in many ways, representative of the greater population of masters program in T&HM in that they are characterized by a diversity of degrees offered, program sizes, academic perspectives and methods of teaching and learning. Forty per cent of the distance masters programs focus on Hospitality Management, but there are also related Tourism, Leisure, Cultural and Hotel and Restaurant management and administration degree programs. Distance delivery modes are diverse, with some programs essentially being classroom courses taught at distance campuses, while others are online with blended online plus face-to-face experience or 100% online. With no two programs the same, the use of technology varies from program to program and often from instructor to instructor. In all programs where coursework is required, ethical values and decision-making are more likely sprinkled across courses, rather than offered as a single, dedicated, standalone subject (Rodriguez, 2008).

Ethics education

Ethics is a seriously important topic for business (Forte, 2004; Herington & Weaven, 2008; Izzo, 2000) and for management education (Allen, Bacdayan, Kowalski, & Roy, 2005; Collins, 2006; Fogarty, 2005; Giacalone, 2004). Progress has been slow, but awareness of the positive impact of informed ethical judgement in business is gaining momentum (Fogarty, 2005). Effective ethics education now goes beyond the teaching of static virtues or codes of ethics and focuses on the development of judgement for dealing with ethical conflicts and uncertainties (Langenderfer & Rockness, 1989; Loeb, 1988; Pincus, 2000). There is widespread consensus among external stakeholders of the importance of underpinning

management curricula with ethical values to develop moral sensitivity, however, assessment of the success of ethics education and ethical decision making is, at best, inconclusive (Cohen & Pant, 1991; Haas, 2005; Herington & Weaven, 2008). Although acquiring moral reasoning skills and ethical sensitivity and behavior may seem an elusive teaching goal compared to other management subjects, assessing the quality of 'transcendent' education with rigorous and absolute standards is deemed a surmountable challenge (Fogarty, 2005; Giacalone, 2004; Weber & Glyptis, 2000; Zoellers & Fort, 1996).

VALUES FOR MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

TEFI Core Values for Tourism and Hospitality Higher Education

Tourism and hospitality educators have taken a leadership position on identifying values as critical factors in the curriculum framework. At the second Tourism Education Futures Initiative (TEFI) summit held in April 2008 at the University of Hawaii's Travel Industry Management School, the debate among thirty-five tourism educators and industry leaders centered on how to establish a values-based framework for tourism curricula. Visioning tourism higher education in 2030, they reached agreement on what they considered the most formative factors and influences for tourism leaders of the future and established a set of core values to guide tourism and hospitality education curriculum design. The purpose of the core values is to "to promote global citizenship and optimism for a better world (Sheldon, 2008)." The following five sets of values were considered key for future tourism and hospitality higher education curricula:

1. Stewardship: sustainability, responsibility and service to the community
2. Knowledge: critical thinking, innovation, creativity, networking
3. Professionalism: leadership, practicality, services, relevance, timeliness, reflexivity, teamwork and partnerships
4. Ethics: honesty, transparency, authenticity, authentic self
5. Mutual respect: diversity, inclusion, equity, humility, collaboration (Sheldon, 2008)

Giacalone: Transcendent Business Values

A second relevant set of values was proposed by Giacalone (2004). Observing a lack of attention to teaching values evident in U.S. business schools and a number of deleterious consequences, Giacalone (2004) proposed a set of five values comprising "transcendent, aspirational goals of business education" (p. 416):

1. Empathy: empathetic understanding, appreciation for the feelings of the disadvantaged
2. Generativity: non-financial contributions to society, appreciation for giving, concern for social welfare, stewardship, acting with hope, compassion, altruism and gratitude.
3. Mutuality: embracing a common victory, mutualism
4. Civil aspiration: ethical sensitivity, desire more for world, expanded moral consciousness
5. Intolerance of ineffective humanity: affirm essential human competence, acknowledge decisions impact others, professional competence

We can contrast these with the TEFI core values. Giacalone's ethical values are designed

to inform business and management curricula, while the TEFI values are specifically recommended for tourism and hospitality higher education programs in management and other contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Table 1 applies a simple mutual mapping procedure for the Giacalone transcendent, aspirational goals of business education and the TEFI core values for tourism and hospitality higher education. It is based on a content analysis to derive key words and phrases characterizing each value and then placing them in the appropriate intersection of the two values sets. The intersection of Giacalone’s Mutuality and TEFI Mutual Respect shows the greatest degree of commonality among the 25 possible combinations, with four items in common. The authors selected this Mutuality/Mutual Respect element for assessment of student mastery of the concept because of its apparent importance to distance T&HM curricula.

Table 1: Mapping TEFI Tourism Education Values into Giacalone Business Education Values and Vice Versa

TEFI CORE VALUES ->	STEWARDSHIP	KNOWLEDGE	PROFESSIONALISM	ETHICS	MUTUAL RESPECT
Giacalone Transcendent Aspirational Goals					
Empathy					DIVERSITY, EQUITY, HUMILITY; empathetic understanding, appreciation for feelings of the disadvantaged
Generativity	SUSTAINABILITY; stewardship		SERVICE		acting with compassion and altruism
Mutuality					INCLUSION, COLLABORATION; embracing a common victory, mutualism
Civil aspiration				HONESTY, TRANSPARENCY; ethical sensitivity, expanded moral consciousness	
Intolerance of ineffective humanity	COMMUNITY SERVICE; desire more for the world		LEADERSHIP; professional competence		acknowledge decisions impact others

Source: see text.
Note: TEFI values are in BOLD ALL CAPS, while Giacalone values are in upper and lower case

VALUE: INFORMED CONSENT

One expression of Mutuality/Mutual Respect in a T&HM curriculum is the concept of “informed consent” in human subject research when a person consents to participate in research and his/her consent is fully informed and is freely given (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003, p. 133). In more formal terms, informed consent may be defined as “the desired pattern of behavior where research subjects base their voluntary participation in research projects on a full understanding of the possible risks involved (Babbie, 2004, p. 64). In T&HM education, this often arises in the context of surveys, where informed consent includes apprising the potential subject of any risks, e.g. to privacy, to time required to administer the survey, the purpose of the research and the nature of the sponsor or beneficiary (Veal, 2006, p. 73).

One component of TSTD270DE Tourism Research, a two credit core course for the AMTA program at GWU, deals with ethical issues in the management research process with special applications to probability sample surveys of visitor populations. Students are apprised of the ethical issues in this context, the formal definition of “informed consent”, and the elements required in the invitation read or presented to potential respondents that fully respects the principles of informed consent. Examples of their application are also presented in readings and the lecture.

In inviting a respondent to participate in such a survey, the interviewer must inform the individual about five elements or categories of informed consent (after Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003):

1. Nature of the research: Purpose, sponsors, researchers present, designated participants;
2. Requirements of taking part: Type of data, how data will be collected from the respondent, how much time, target date(s) for participation;
3. Implications of taking part and participant’s rights: Voluntary participation, right to withdraw, risks and benefits of participating, assurances of confidentiality and/or anonymity;
4. Use and reporting of the data: Access, dissemination, disposition of records.
5. Then the interviewer must ask for consent to begin the survey, commencing only when the respondent has given this consent.

In order to determine whether this value has been learned by students in the DE mode of TSTD270, a formal assessment of learning outcomes is applied.

Accreditation Assessment Criteria

Since The George Washington University is accredited by the Association for the Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), its academic programs are subject to its Assurance of Learning standards promulgated in 2003 (Martell, 2005). The “overarching goal” of these standards “is to improve the quality of student learning (Martell, 2005, p. 8)”.

A formal tool is required for this assessment, called a “rubric” (Martell, 2005). This is a focused, documented set of criteria, usually in matrix form, that the instructor develops and applies to a specific learning objective (Wallcott, 2005). It is then applied to a student activity, such as a final exam or term paper, the results are summarized and the Instructor interprets them and considers ways to improve student learning achievement in future courses.

Informed Consent Learning Outcomes

The learning goal for this study is to understand and apply the ethical value of mutual respect, and the learning objective for this distance course is to apply the elements of informed consent to a sample survey of individuals. The definition of informed consent, the elements of informed consent listed above and examples of their use in oral and written invitations to prospective respondents were presented to 35 distance students in TSTD270.DE in the summer of 2008 through readings and lectures. The assessment task was a question on the final exam administered online to these students. The question presented a description of an upcoming parade event and required the student to imagine that s/he has been engaged by the parade’s major sponsor to conduct a survey among spectators. The student then must draft an

invitation to be stated to a potential respondent, informing the respondent of certain rights and other elements related to informed consent and then request the respondent's participation.

Table 2 shows part of the rubric developed to test students' ability to apply individual elements in five categories in their survey participation invitation and whether it satisfies the requirements of informed consent for sample surveys of individuals. The rubric defines the criteria and score for each of three levels of learning achievement: below expectations, meets expectations, exceeds expectations. The complete rubric addresses all five categories that must be covered in securing informed consent of respondents in a survey research invitation. The following standards were established in advance to indicate successful achievement of the learning goal:

1. Class Standard: overall class average is 80 percent or better.
2. Student Standard: 80 percent of the students achieve scores 20 points or more overall (out of a maximum 25 points)
3. Item Standard: 80 percent of students score in the "Meets Expectations" or better range for each of the five categories

Table 2: Abbreviated Informed Consent Survey Rubric

Category (points) for Question on Informed Consent	Below Expectations (0 points): no important items included or included insufficiently	Meets Expectations (3 points): some important elements included	Exceeds Expectations (5 points): most or all elements included
1. Nature of the research	Did not address or excluded purpose or sponsor	Included purpose and sponsors	Included purpose and sponsors, identified researchers and/or participants

Source: George Washington University, TSTD270.DE Summer 2008

The following are the results of applying the rubric:

1. Class Standard: overall class average was somewhat below the 80 percent threshold indicating that the class as a whole did not achieve the informed consent learning objective
2. Student Standard: about half of the students achieved 20 points or more, indicating that more students failed to achieve the objective than is acceptable.
3. Item Standard: While students indicated achievement of applying three categories of informed consent in the survey setting, they indicated little mastery of one category and posted 78 percent mastery of a fifth category, just missing the 80 percent threshold. This indicates improved teaching should focus on the two weaker categories to gain mastery.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper reviews the interest in and bright future for DE programs in tourism and hospitality management. After describing the population of distance masters programs in

T&HM, the research focuses on the George Washington University's blended online and face-to-face masters degree program, AMTA. The authors highlight the importance of incorporating ethical values into the curriculum framework. Two systems of ethical values are presented: one for tourism and hospitality higher education degree programs and the other for business and management education at the graduate level.

The intersection of these two sets produced one category with significant substantial commonality: mutual respect. This value, identified within an AMTA course as a learning goal, is applied as the principle of informed consent. Used in a survey research context, the principle and applications of informed consent were presented to students through readings and lecture, and mastery of this learning outcome was chosen for formal assessment.

This formal assessment was applied to a question in the course's final exam using a rubric derived from two published management value sets. The summarized results indicated that students mastered much, but not all of the subject, with clear indicators where misunderstanding or lack of knowledge lay.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MINDING THE ROOTS: VALUES EDUCATION METHODS

At this point, the Instructor should consider how to address these learning gaps in the next course presentation. The key to stimulating the learning of ethical values and developing judgement at the graduate level appears to be giving students the opportunity to work on complex issues or within complex environments. The lack of hard "facts" makes intellectual engagement with values a requirement and presupposes highly interactive teaching and learning methods (Fogarty, 2005). Active student-driven learning is the cornerstones of ethical education that seeks to "convert ethical ideas into sound action choices" (Fogarty, 2005, p. 160).

The case model and other experiential, action-oriented exercises are recommended as educators' first choice for application of values (Ferrell & Fraedrich, 1997; Petrick & Quinn, 1997; Sanyal, 2000). Adult distance learners appreciate the direct connection between personal choices, sophisticated analysis and decision-making and the complexity of real life situations (Sims, 2002). Relevancy is important to learners and creates an awareness of ethical components theoretically and experientially (Knowles, 1978; Sims, 2002). Multi-disciplinary solution construction teaches both broad perspectives and personal integration of values on issues. This approach might include asking students to review survey invitations from the health services and human resources fields for clues to how informed consent might more effectively be incorporated in tourism surveys. Another approach is to set students the task of obtaining invitations to participate in surveys conducted by tourism and hospitality organizations and critique these from the informed consent perspective.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE VALUE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment using a rubric reveals the effectiveness of distance pedagogy, or androgogy, for the masters level distance students. Assessment of learning is applied to justify a course or program's existence by showing how it contributes to the institution's and stakeholders' objectives and shared goals (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Sims, 2002). Additionally

evaluation is done to gain information on how to improve future programs (Kirkpatrick, 1998). Each course requires a well-designed rubric that is adjustable and sensitive to assessing ethical competencies in different contexts since educational methods are never sufficiently effective without monitoring learning outcomes. (Fogarty, 2005).

The authors of this paper hope that this effort will stir T&HM educators to reflect upon and discuss what set of ethical values is most appropriate to tourism and hospitality higher education and seek ways to formally incorporate ethical values and their applications into curricula. This should be accompanied by formal methods of assessing the effectiveness of student application of these values through the rubric approach or other formal assessment mechanism. It is the present authors' hope that experiences in T&HM values-based curricula will be shared by educators in future for published research.

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