

## Integrating Sustainability and Hawaiian Culture into the Tourism Experience of the Hawaiian Islands

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**Abstract:** The travel industry in Hawaii has been experiencing a trend towards more authentic tourism, which reintegrates Hawaiian culture into the visitors' experience. This study investigated the reintegration of Hawaiian culture into the tourism experience on the Hawaiian Islands by reviewing existing literature, and by analyzing primary data collected through visitor surveys. The purpose of the study was to determine whether there is a visitors' demand for a more authentic tourism experience in Hawaii through the reintegration of Hawaiian culture, and if so, which efforts should be made or continue to be made to achieve this authenticity. Important aspects that were taken into consideration in this research effort are the changes Hawaiian culture has experienced with the arrival of outsiders, and the authenticity of the Hawaiian tourism experience today. Further aspects that were examined include the visitors' image of Hawaii, their expectations, their experiences and satisfaction during their stay, their interest in and understanding of Hawaiian culture, as well as the type of Hawaiian cultural experiences they are interested in. According to the findings of this study, English speaking visitors are interested in Hawaiian culture and feel that Hawaiian culture is not represented enough in the tourism experience today. The conclusion is, therefore, that efforts to integrate Hawaiian culture into the tourism experience need to be increased beyond what is currently being done. Ideas for reintegrating Hawaiian culture are discussed and possible solutions are provided.

**Key words:** Visitors; Hawaiian culture; Reintegrating; Tourism

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**Resumen:** La industria del viaje en Hawaii ha estado experimentando una tendencia hacia un turismo más auténtico, que reintegra la cultura hawaiana en la experiencia de los visitantes. Este estudio se centra en la reintegración de la cultura hawaiana en la experiencia turística en las islas hawaianas repasando la literatura existente, y analizando los datos a partir de una encuesta a turistas. El propósito del estudio era determinar si existía una demanda de los visitantes para una experiencia más auténtica del turismo en Hawaii a través de la reintegración de la cultura hawaiana, y si era así cuales son los esfuerzos que se debían hacer o continuar haciendo para alcanzar esta autenticidad. Otros aspectos que fueron examinados incluyen la imagen que los visitantes tienen de Hawaii, sus expectativas, sus experiencias y la satisfacción durante su estancia, su interés y comprensión de la cultura hawaiana, además del tipo de experiencias culturales que les interesan. Según los resultados de este estudio, los visitantes de habla inglesa están interesados en la cultura hawaiana y sienten que la cultura hawaiana no está representada suficientemente en la experiencia turística que actualmente se oferta. La conclusión es, por lo tanto, que deben incrementarse los esfuerzos por integrar la cultura hawaiana en la experiencia turística.

**Palabras clave:** Visitantes; Cultura hawaiana; Reintegración; Turismo.

## Introduction

Hawaii is among the world's most famous tourist destinations and is comprised of a group of eight major Hawaiian Islands. Scenery varies among these eight islands where the landscapes consist of golden sand beaches, glorious mountains, great stretches of barren lava beds, magnificent cliffs and canyons, opaque rain forests, and more. Due to its spectacular scenery and year-round tropical climate, Hawaii is also known as the "Paradise of the Pacific". There are more ethnical and cultural groups located in Hawaii than any other U.S. state. It is the only state in the U.S. where Asians are the largest racial group with Japanese representing the leading population. Other cultural profiles include numerous Polynesians including Hawaiian, Filipino, Korean, Chinese, and Portuguese.

Marked by the diversification of its culture, Hawaii is one of the world's renowned travel destinations. Tourism is the most significant factor of economic activity in the state and the leading source of income. However, Hawaii, the United State's very own paradise, has been enduring the consequences of tourism for several decades. Before World War II, the islands were visited only by the few Americans who were willing to make the 12-day trip by boat, or those who could afford the airplane flight to Honolulu; at the time, Oahu received almost all of Hawaii's visitors. After World War II, all of the major islands became connected by airplane flights, more tourists began to arrive, and high-rise hotels sprung

up like weeds. In 1951, Hawaii hosted 3,500 visitors. By 1964 Hawaii was bombarded by 600,000 tourists, and by 1989 the number had soared to approximately 7 million. Today, the Hawaiian Islands are visited by over 7 million tourists per year and contribute to Hawaii's economy with approximately \$12 billion in total expenditure per year (Arakawa, 2006). Not surprisingly, tourism remains the main industry for the state, and leaves Hawaii heavily dependent on it (Schmitt, 2002).

Hawaii, in many people's mind, brings up images of soft sand beaches, warm breezes, grass skirts, and luaus (Agrusa, 1998). In the past, tourists to Hawaii were content with sitting on the beach drinking a Pina Colada or Mai Tai and getting a rich, dark tan. However, tourists are changing, and there are segments of today's tourists who are more interested in having a more authentic cultural experience while visiting Hawaii.

The recent trend in the tourism and travel related businesses in Hawaii are focusing on increasing efforts to reintegrate Hawaiian culture, both in the management style and the visitor experience. Efforts in this direction have been made for several years, in some cases decades; however, more recently these efforts have been gaining attention from the media and the public eye. There is a trend and a demand towards more sustainable tourism, a tourism that is true to the host culture, its values, and the sense of place in Hawaii (Agrusa, Maples, Kitterlin and Tanner, 2008; Butler and Hinch, 1996; Kim, Borges and Chon,

2006; Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998). This trend is manifested in visitors' interest and demand for a more authentic Hawaiian cultural experience, as well as the travel industry's shift in efforts to provide an experience that is unique and one that differentiates itself from other sea & sand destinations, such as Mexico and the Caribbean. Previous studies about visitors' as well as residents' sentiments on tourism in Hawaii have been conducted and general data about visitors exists (Lui and Var, 1986); however, these studies did not specifically focus on the variables, which were examined in this study.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a visitors' demand for a more authentic Hawaiian tourism experience in Hawaii through the reintegration of Hawaiian culture, and if so, which efforts should be made or continue to be made to achieve this authenticity. Visitors' expectations prior to visiting Hawaii, their experiences once they have arrived, their interest in Hawaiian culture, Hawaiian cultural experiences, and their position on the authenticity of the tourism experience in Hawaii were examined.

## Literature Review

### The cultural traveler

By examining studies and existing research, it becomes evident that a different type of traveler has emerged. There is a trend among travelers towards cultural tourism and historic sightseeing (Agrusa 2002; Fredline and Faulkner, 2000b; McDonnell, Allen and O'Toole, 1999). Travelers do not seem to be satisfied with destinations that are homogenous and that do not offer unique cultural experiences. According to a study conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), which focuses on cultural and historic travel in the U.S., more than half (56%) of adults in the U.S. participated in at least one activity related to culture, art, history or heritage (TIA, 2003). Furthermore, cultural tourists are interested in learning new things on their trip, and they are interested in going to places that are popular with the local residents (Agrusa, 2006; MacKay and Couldwell, 2004). In addition, it is important for a majority of tourists

that a leisure trip or a vacation includes cultural experiences.

For a majority of cultural travelers, a cultural or historic event, or a cultural activity was often the reason for choosing a particular destination; a majority also extended their trip specifically to participate in a cultural or historic activity (Gnoth, 1998; Gursoy and Chen, 2000; Oh, Kim and Shin, 2004). Therefore, it becomes evident that cultural or historic travel represents an important market in the travel industry with historic and cultural travelers spending millions of dollars on lodging, food, entertainment and shopping (Agrusa, 2000; Dwyer, Agrusa and Coats, 2001).

The trend of cultural and historic travel has been growing; from 1996 to 2002, and there has been an increase of 14% (from 192.5 to 216.8 million person trips), as opposed to only a 5.6% increase in travel overall (Goldener and Ritchie, 2009).

### Sustainability and Authenticity in Tourism

While the concept of sustainability can be interpreted and defined differently among various stakeholders, one of the more common themes concerns the most effective use or balance of resources. More specifically, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) conceptualizes sustainable tourism as preserving resources while enhancing a region's opportunities for the future and at the same time meeting present tourists needs (WTO, 1998). Furthermore, according to Croall (1995), preserving cultural heritage, maintaining traditional values and providing authentic experiences for tourists have often been highlighted as important elements of sustainable tourism.

Sustainable cultural tourism however, may be seen as a mutually beneficial partnership between tourism and the cultural heritage of the region (McKercher and Cros, 2002). While there can exist conflicting interests in preserving the authenticity of cultural assets there are also opportunities for complimentary relationships that can exist when effectively managed (Filipova, 2008). It is challenging but also important for decision makers to value the link between preserving the authentic culture of the region while offering the optimal products for sustainable tourism (McKercher,

1993). Previous cases have indicated that partnerships can help to develop a greater mutual understanding of stakeholder's interests among the preservation of cultural authenticity and tourism development that can ultimately lead to more sustainable tourism for a region (UNESCO, 2002; WTO, 1998).

### Evolution of Hawaii's Unique Culture

According to the *Los Angeles Times* (2007) Hawaii is currently experiencing a revival of its culture through performances of ancient chants and hula. The article describes the tradition of the Aloha Festivals throughout the Hawaiian Islands, which are made up of approximately 500 individual festivities that celebrate Hawaiian culture from August to October. The *Los Angeles Times* (2007) also mentions Gloriann Akau, the manager of the Big Island's Aloha Festivals, who indicates that the goal of the Aloha Festivals is to teach and share Hawaiian culture.

Since tourism depends on a place and its uniqueness, Kanahale (1991) found that preserving and maintaining the people's cultural identity should be a top priority for the tourism industry (Fredline and Faulkner, 2000a; Pearce, Moscardo and Ross, 1996). However, the greatest asset of Hawaii's tourism industry, the Hawaiian culture, has not been managed in a satisfactory manner over the years.

As Kanahale (1991) describes, Hawaiians are part of a larger Polynesian race but have developed their own social, economic and political system after they settled in the Hawaiian Islands. When Captain Cook arrived in Hawaii in 1778, the Hawaiian people had already achieved sophisticated levels in craftsmanship, navigation, agriculture, irrigation, fishing and medicine. When the first visitors arrived in the late 1800's, Hawaii's visitor industry benefited from the appeal of its unique people and culture (Fredline and Faulkner, 2000b; McDonnell, Allen and O'Toole, 1999). This "Hawaiianness" is what distinguishes the Hawaiian Islands from similar sun, sea, and sand tourism destinations, and is what attracted tourists to the Hawaiian Islands (Kanahale, 1991).

According to Hall (2005), after Ha-

waii became the 50<sup>th</sup> state in the United States in 1959, Hawaiian culture experienced an increasing commodification. The culture started to be portrayed in a distorted way, for example, by marketing "penny postcards" of Hawaiian women who appeared to be of "mixed-blood Asian/white" descent and demonstrations of hula in a hotel entertainment fashion (Hall, 2005). In addition, Hawaii and things associated with Hawaii were increasingly downgraded as "kitsch" with the increasing numbers of middle and lower-middle class visitors traveling to the Islands (Hall, 2005). Examples of this "kitsch" are colorful Aloha shirts, tiki bars and "Tin Pan Alley hapa-haole" songs. The marketing of these items leads to misinterpretations of Hawaiian culture and can be seen as the degradation of Hawaiian culture (Davis, Allen and Consenza, 1988; Derrett, 2000; Hall, 2005).

In the years between the 1930's and 1960's, most of Hawaii's hotels, tour agencies, restaurants, and other tourism related businesses were still under local management. Local managers were knowledgeable of and also connected to the spirit of the place which is Hawaii and the Hawaiian culture (Smith, 1994).

It can be said that after the 1960s Hawaiian culture further lost its substance and influence in the tourism industry. Hawaiian music, for example was increasingly being replaced by Rock'n'Roll music and people lost interest in the Hawaiian language, arts, and crafts. Even though the hula continued to be performed, it had been altered and lacked substance. Furthermore, hotels in Waikiki began to be owned and managed by U.S. mainlanders and Japanese nationals who were not as informed or connected to the Hawaiian culture or the spirit of the place. Resulting from this shift in management, Hawaiian shows were closed and Las-Vegas style entertainment took over. Hawaiian musicians were assigned to play at dinner-time and cocktail receptions (Kanahale, 1991).

Kanahale (1991) describes that in order to understand a place one needs to realize that all places are locations of experiences, which trigger feelings, images and memories. Therefore, it is important for managers and employees in the tourism industry

to have an understanding of the place, and to help the guests in their understanding the feel of the place (Dwyer, Mellor, Mistilis and Mules, 2000; Getz, 1987).

This lack of understanding of the place, history and culture of Hawaii poses the question of how managers can communicate “the feel of place” appropriately. In addition, it will be very difficult for managers in the hospitality industry to create an atmosphere and experience where the guests feel welcome and at home if the manager does not feel at home himself/herself (Stokes, 2008)

When it comes to the guest experience in Hawaii, it is important to realize that Hawaii’s attractiveness as a destination largely depends on its unique culture. Today, Hawaii is competing with various international tourism destinations, such as Mexico and Southeast Asia, which can offer beach vacations at much lower prices (Dignance 1997; Formica and Uysal 1996; Getz 1992; Martin and Uysal 1990; Newby 1981; Pretes 1995; Prideaux 2000). Therefore, Hawaii must concentrate on its uniqueness, which differentiates it from other destinations. Getting residents involved and gaining their support is crucial, as this helps in preserving the “Aloha spirit”, which attracts visitors to Hawaii (Radway, 2007).

Usually a first-time visitor to the Hawaiian Islands already has an image or an expectation of the destination. This image is usually pieced together by accounts of previous visitors, existing books (e.g. Twain), articles (National Geographic), movies, documentaries, art work (e.g. Gauguin) and other forms of media (Beeton, 2001a, 2001b, 2005; Busby and Klug, 2001; Connell 2005a, 2005b; Hsu, Agrusa and Park, 2006; Kim, Agrusa, Lee and Chon, 2007; Riley, Baker and Van Doren 1998; Riley and Van Doren, 1992; Tooke and Baker, 1996). The quality of the information differs; some sources may give accurate facts, whereas others place too much emphasis on color and ambiance (Butler, 1990; Fisher, 2004; Kim and Richardson, 2003; Mercille, 2005). Travel articles and stories usually have an advertising character, and place too much emphasis on sights, activities, and events in order to attract visitors to Hawaii. The information available often includes stereotypes and is usual-

ly not sufficient to educate visitors about Hawaiian culture, or to prepare them adequately for their stay (Agrusa, 2003; Farrell, 1982).

### **Today’s efforts in reintegration of Hawaiian culture**

When it comes to reintegrating the Hawaiian culture into the management style and the visitor experience, much is already being done to preserve Hawaiian culture and to present it in an authentic way. Many of these efforts are based on the teachings of Dr. George S. Kanahale who was a historian and expert in Hawaiian culture. Kanahale (1991) and the Waiaha Foundation started “Aloha Service 101” in 1989. They define Aloha as a genuine feeling which is shared by many people in Hawaii and which has been an important part of Hawaii’s history and culture. Generally speaking, being caring and loving, and hospitable overall is an integral part of the Hawaiian culture. Therefore, the hospitality industry in Hawaii is automatically linked with Aloha. Guests come to Hawaii and they expect to be treated with Aloha.

Incorporating these values and principles can give businesses of any kind guidance in reintegrating Hawaiian values into the management style and communicating these values to the customers or visitors. Several businesses in Hawaii have already taken these principles to heart and are applying most of them or parts of them in their businesses today.

In his report “Restoring Hawaiianness To Waikiki”, Kanahale (1994) describes efforts that can be made to make Waikiki more Hawaiian again. The difficulty is to define what is truly Hawaiian or part of Hawaiian culture, as the culture has not been static, and has changed over the years with the increasing influence of outsiders. Kanahale (1994) has created 15 major actions steps, 26 goals, and 143 specific ideas as to restore Hawaiianness to Waikiki. The use of Hawaiian language in an accurate way, for example, when it comes to the names of places, is a crucial part of Hawaiian culture and essential to the restoration of Hawaiianness to Waikiki (Kanahale, 1994). Various ideas are described as to how the travel industry can encourage the use of the Hawaiian language by their em-

ployees, and ultimately by the visitors. One example for hotels would be to hire a "Hawaiian Culture Specialist", or to offer Hawaiian language classes for hotel employees (Kanahele, 1994). Another emphasis is on honoring historical Hawaiian figures, events and themes and to teach about Hawaiian myths and legends to their employees as well as their guests. Hawaiian traditions should also be revived, such as lei-making and selling the leis on the streets in Waikiki. The idea of communicating and treating people with Aloha should also be exercised, for example, to establish "Aloha corners" where guests can communicate or interact with local residents (Gentile, 2002; Stokes, 2008; Telfer, 2000). Furthermore, some of Kanahele's ideas have already been realized, but there is still room for improvement to realize more and to create a more authentic Hawaiian experience in Waikiki (Plog, 2001; Wang and Fesenmaier, 2007).

The Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association (NHHA) plays a great part in making tourism in Hawaii sustainable and more authentic. This private nonprofit corporation was founded in 1997 by George Kanahele and Kenneth Brown in order to increase the respect for Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions in Hawaiian tourism. The organization's mission is "to promote Hawaiian culture, values, and traditions in the workplace through consultation and education and to provide opportunities for the Native Hawaiian community to shape the future of tourism" (NHHA, 2007).

Unfortunately, some travel articles and advertising featuring the Hawaiian Islands have portrayed Hawaiian sites, culture, and values in an inaccurate or insensitive way, which has led to some misconceptions about Hawaii. In order to work help solve this problem, the Hawaiian Tourism Authority (HTA) has published a "Style & Resource Guide", which can serve as a reference guide to promote Hawaii more accurately and to clarify facts about Hawaiian culture and Hawaiian sites for visitors (HTA, 2007). This "Style & Resource Guide" features an explanation of the Hawaiian language and alphabet, common Hawaiian words and their meaning, and explains Hawaiian sites. In addition, the guide provides a useful list of references for

books and other educational materials on Hawaiian culture and Hawaii as a destination in general (HTA, 2007).

### Methodology

The population for this study consisted of English-speaking tourists who were vacationing on the island of Oahu. Oahu was chosen as the island to conduct the research because the majority of tourists who visit the state of Hawaii stay on the island, and the majority of the population in the state of Hawaii (80%) resides on this island of Oahu. In an effort to learn more about the perceptions of the tourists and due to time and economic constraints, surveys were distributed randomly to 200 English-speaking tourists at various major tourist attractions on Oahu including Waikiki Beach and Ala Moana Shopping Mall. Of the 200 surveys distributed, 181 were returned and 21 questionnaires were deemed unusable because of multiple missing responses, which resulted in 160 usable surveys or an 80% usable return rate.

Data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire developed by the researcher, through a review of previous literature. The questions chosen for the survey concerned tourists' perceptions that are widely used in the international travel literature (Kim, Lee, and Klenosky, 2003; Kim and Prideaux, 2005; Jang and Cai, 2002; Kozak, 2002). To avoid ambiguity in the questions, and to ensure that all of the questions written on the survey instrument were clearly understood, a pilot test of 20 English-speaking tourists in Waikiki was completed prior to data collection. After completion of the pilot test, a few questions were modified for clarity.

The research questionnaire used for this study included questions pertaining to attitudinal and behavioral characteristics toward cultural tourism in Hawaii as well as demographic questions. The research instrument consisted of questions that asked the respondents to indicate their knowledge of Hawaiian culture as well as the importance of experiencing Hawaiian culture during their visit to Hawaii. A five-point Likert-type scale where 1 = very low/not at all, 4 = average/indifferent, and 5 = very high/highly was applied to quantify the

responses to the questions. Questions requiring answers of categorical and quantitative value included image of Hawaii prior to visit, primary information source, number of visits to Hawaii, number of nights staying in Hawaii for this trip, interest in experiencing Hawaiian culture, specific types of Hawaiian cultural experiences that would be of interest, as well as demographics such as gender, age group, marital status, country visiting from, and educational level.

Participation in this study was completely voluntary and assurance of absolute confidentiality of answers to all questionnaire items was given to respondents. It is believed that all respondents answered the survey instrument honestly as the survey was anonymous and self-administered. The data were computed and analyzed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) statistical program including frequencies, t-tests, and chi-squares. In order to determine if a correlation exists from the tourists' knowledge of Hawaiian culture and the importance of experiencing Hawaiian culture during their visit to Hawaii, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation test was used.

## Results

### Demographic Profile

Table 1 illustrates the visitor respondents' replies to the demographic and travel-related questions. The respondents were almost evenly divided with respect to gender, with slightly more females. The majority of the respondents (73.1%) were between the ages of 20 and 50 and were either married or in a relationship. The country that most respondents were visiting from was the U.S. mainland represented by 48.1% of the respondents, followed by 16.3% from Europe, 14.4% from Australia and 11.9% from Canada. More than 27 percent (27.5%) had taken some college courses, and more than 26 percent had either a bachelor's or master's degree. Finally, regarding the respondents' occupation, 15 percent were managers/administrators, almost twelve percent

(11.9%) were self-employed, and nearly another twelve percent (11.9%) were students.

### Hawaii Tourism-Related Responses

Table 2 demonstrates the responses of the visitors to questions concerning their trip to Hawaii, as well as their opinions about Hawaiian culture. As the table shows, more than 81 percent (81.2%) of the respondents had a particular image of Hawaii before they came to visit, and more than 82 percent (82.5%) of the respondents said that Hawaii met their expectations.

With respect to their trip to Hawaii, more than 11 percent (11.2%) of the respondents said that travel agencies were their main source of information, while the media (TV/Radio and/or Newspapers/Magazines) served as the source for only about 7 percent (6.8%) of the respondents. Previous experiences were the source of travel information for almost 34 percent (33.8%) (this makes sense, since more than 50 percent (50.6%) of the respondents had visited Hawaii at least one other time before this trip). Interestingly, the internet was the source of information for a little more than 14 percent (14.4%) of the respondents. Only 7.5 percent of the respondents were traveling alone, and more than 84 percent (84.4%) were traveling with family, relatives/friends, or significant others. Also, more than 53 percent (53.1%) booked the trip independently. More than 61 percent (61.8%) were staying from 4 to 9 nights.

With respect to Hawaiian culture, as indicated in Table 3, more than 85 percent (85.6%) stated that they were interested in one form or another of Hawaiian culture, and over 87 percent (87.9%) had experienced some Hawaiian culture during their visit. Also, more than 78 percent (78.8%) felt that the tourism experience should be more authentic, but only roughly 43 percent stated that they knew at least two words in the Hawaiian language.

Variable	%	Variable	%
Gender		Home Country	
Male	49.4	U.S. Mainland	48.1
Female	50.6	Canada	11.9
		Australia	14.4
		Russia	3.8
		Europe	16.3
		Middle/South America	1.9
		Other	3.6
Age Group		Education	
Under 20	5.0	Some high school	3.1
20 - 29	22.5	High school graduate	32.5
30 - 39	25.0	Some college	27.5
40 - 49	25.6	Associate's degree	6.9
50 - 64	16.3	Undergraduate degree	13.1
65 or older	5.6	Graduate degree	13.8
		Post-graduate work	3.1
Marital Status		Occupation	
Single	28.1	Manager/Administrator	15.0
In a relationship	22.5	Self-employed	11.9
Married	41.3	Engineer	3.1
Divorced	8.1	Farming/fishery	1.2
		Teacher/Public Servant	4.4
		Professional	9.4
		Military/Government	4.4
		Student	11.9
		Retired	6.2
		Other	32.5

Table .1Demographic Profile of Respondents.

With respect to Hawaiian culture, as indicated in Table 3, more than 85 percent (85.6%) stated that they were interested in one form or another of Hawaiian culture, and over 87 percent (87.9%) had experienced some Hawaiian culture during their visit. Also, more than 78 percent (78.8%) felt that the tourism experience should be more authentic, but only roughly 43 percent stated that they knew at least two words in the Hawaiian language.

When asked which Hawaiian cultural experiences were of particular interest to them, more than 30 percent (30.6%) stated that they were interested in authentic hula performances, with more than 23 percent (23.1%) stating an interest in authentic Hawaiian music as well as over 16% (16.3%) stating authentic luaus.

Since one or more main sources of information about Hawaii could be provided by the respondents, each possible answer had to be coded separately as "ticked" or

"not ticked" by the respondent. The individual results for each possible source of information about Hawaii are as follows. When it comes to the source "travel agency", 11.2% indicated that it was a source they use. "Word of mouth" was a source for 29.4% of respondents and "TV/radio" was considered to be a source for only 5.6%. "Newspaper/magazine" was a main source of information for only 1.2%. For 4.4% of respondents, "brochures" were a main information source, and for 14.4% the "internet" was a main source of information about Hawaii. The most important source was "previous experiences" with 33.8 % of respondents indicating that their main source of information is "previous experiences". Therefore, according to the analysis, the most important source of information was "previous experiences" with 33.8% followed by "word of mouth" (29.4%), the "travel agency" (11.2%), and the "internet" (14.4%).



Question	Percent of Respondents
Did you have a particular image of Hawaii before you came to visit?	
Yes	81.2
No	18.8
What is your main source of information about Hawaii?	
Travel Agency	11.2
Word of Mouth	29.4
TV/Radio	5.6
Newspaper/Magazine	1.2
Brochure	4.4
Internet	14.4
Previous Experiences	33.8
Including this trip, how many times have you visited Hawaii?	
1 time (this is my first visit)	49.4
2 – 4	25.0
4 – 6	11.8
More than 6 times	13.8
Who are you traveling with on this trip?	
Alone	7.5
Family/Relatives	28.1
Friends	26.9
Spouse/Significant Other	29.4
Tour Group	3.8
Colleagues	4.3
What is your travel mode?	
Independent Traveler	53.1
Full-Package Tour	15.6
Partial Package (Air + Hotel, etc.)	31.3
How many nights are you staying in Hawaii?	
1 – 3	4.4
4 – 6	18.7
7 – 9	43.1
10 – 12	19.4
More than 12	14.4
Would you say that Hawaii has met your expectations?	
Yes	82.5
No	17.5

Table 2. Specifications of the Respondents' Visit to Hawaii

Regarding the question as to how often visitors have been to Hawaii, including this trip, most of the respondents (49.4%) are first time visitors to Hawaii; thus, more than half of the respondents were repeat visitors. The second largest group (25%) of visitors has been there "2-4 times." There are a large number of repeat visitors who have been there "more than 6 times" (13.8%). The smallest number of respon-

dents has been to Hawaii "4-6 times" (11.8%).

By analyzing the results of the next question, it becomes clear that most respondents were traveling with "spouse/significant other" (29.4%), followed by "family/relatives" (28.1%) and "friends" (26.9%). Only 7.5% were traveling "alone", 3.8% with a "tour group", and 4.3% indicated that they were traveling with "col-

leagues. A great majority (82.5%) of visitors stated that “Hawaii met their expectations,” as opposed to 14.4% who say it did not. Also, a vast majority of visitors (85.6%) were “interested in Hawaiian culture,” as opposed to only 12.5% who were not. When asked if the ‘tourism experience in Hawaii should be more authentic,’ 78.8% said that it should be, as opposed to 21.2% who disagreed.

A majority of visitors (86.9%), indicated that they have “experienced Hawaiian culture during their stay,” as opposed to 13.1% who felt that they had not. When analyzing the knowledge of Hawaiian language, 43.1% of visitors stated that they know “more than two words in the Hawaiian language,” and 56.9% did not. When it comes to “Hawaiian cultural experiences” the visitors would be interested in, the most popular “authentic hula performance” with 30.6% of the visitors expressing interest; second was “authentic Hawaiian music,” with a response rate of 23.1%. An “authentic luau” was of interest to 16.3 % of respondents. “Lei making” was popular with 10.6% of respondents. A “Hawaiian

language introduction” would interest 8.1% as well as an “Authentic Hawaiian craft making” would interest 8.1% and “Hawaiian story telling” would interest 3.1% of visitors.

Table 4 demonstrates the responses of the visitors to questions concerning their knowledge about Hawaiian culture, as well as how important Hawaiian culture is to them. The table also demonstrates respondents’ level of satisfaction with their current vacation to Hawaii. As the table indicates, more than 37 percent (37.5%) of the respondents felt that their knowledge about Hawaiian culture was low, while only slightly more than 12 percent (12.5%) felt that they had a high knowledge about Hawaiian culture. However, more than 80 percent (80.7%) stated that it was of some degree of importance for them to experience Hawaiian culture during their visit, and more than 95 percent (96.4%) felt that it was important for them to understand and respect Hawaiian culture. Thus, while their knowledge level of Hawaiian culture was relatively low, they appeared to be interested in learning much more about it.

Question	Percent of Respondents
Are you interested in Hawaiian culture?	
Yes	85.6
No	14.4
Should the Hawaii tourism experience be more authentic?	
Yes	78.8
No	21.2
Have you experienced Hawaiian culture during your stay?	
Yes	86.9
No	13.1
Do you know more than 2 words in the Hawaiian language?	
Yes	43.1
No	56.9
Which Hawaiian cultural experiences would interest you?	
Authentic Hula Performance	30.6
Authentic Hawaiian Craft-making	8.1
Lei-making	10.6
Hawaiian Language Introduction	8.1
Authentic Luau	16.3
Authentic Hawaiian Music	23.2
Hawaiian Story-telling	3.1

Table 3. Hawaiian Culture as it Relates to the Respondents’ Visit to Hawaii

Question/Statement	Percent of Respondents								Means*	Std.Devs*
	Very Low/Not at All	Low/Very Little	Moderately Low/Slightly Indifferent	Average/Indifferent	Moderately High/Slightly Important	High/Very Important	Very High/Extremely Important			
1. How would you rate your knowledge about Hawaiian culture?	5.0	14.4	18.1	50.0	11.9	0.6	0.0	3.51	1.06	
2. How important is it for you to come into contact with Hawaiian residents?	1.2	4.4	1.9	28.1	43.7	16.3	4.4	4.75	1.11	
3. How important is it for you to experience native Hawaiian culture during your stay?	0.6	2.5	0.6	15.6	30.0	46.9	3.8	5.28	1.03	
4. How important is it for you to understand and respect Hawaiian culture?	0.6	0.6	8.1	15.6	58.8	16.3	21.3	5.80	0.88	
5. Overall, what is your level of satisfaction with this vacation to Hawaii?	0.0	0.6	0.0	5.6	22.5	60.0	11.3	5.76	0.75	

\*1=Very Low/Not at all; 2=Low/Very Little; 3=Moderately Low/Slightly Indifferent; 4=Average/Indifferent;

5=Moderately High/Slightly Important; 6=High/Very Important; 7=Very High/Extremely Important

Table 4. Respondents' Knowledge about Hawaiian Culture and Their Satisfaction Level with Their Current Visit to Hawaii.

More than 64 percent (64.4%) stated that it was important for them to come into contact with Hawaiian residents. Finally, more than 93 percent (93.8%) of these visitors had a high level of satisfaction with their vacation to Hawaii.

When it comes to rating their “knowledge about Hawaiian culture” on a scale from 1 (very low) to 7 (very high), most respondents (50%) stated that they have an average knowledge of Hawaiian culture, corresponding to “4” on the scale. A large amount rated their knowledge lower than average, 18.1% gave themselves a value of “3” and 14.4% gave themselves a “2” which is low or very little knowledge of Hawaiian culture. A value of “5” moderately high knowledge was chosen by 11.9% of respondents, whereas below 1% (.6%) of respondents rated their knowledge as “high” (6) with respect to Hawaiian Culture and no respondents rated their knowledge as “very high” (7). Five percent of the respondents answered “very low” (1) regarding their knowledge of Hawaiian culture.

When asked, “how important it is to come into contact with Hawaiian residents”, on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (highly), 43.7% of respondents chose “5” “moderately high/slight importance”. For 16.3 % it is “very important” (“6” on the scale) and for 4.4% it is “extremely important” (“7” on the scale) to come into contact with Hawaiian residents. While 28.1% of respondents chose indifferent, or “4”, and only 1.2% of visitors rate the importance as “1”, not at all important.

The importance of “experiencing native Hawaiian culture during their stay” was also rated on a scale from 1(not at all) to 7 (highly). Over 80% of the respondents answered that it was important to experience native Hawaiian culture during their stay. Most visitors (46.9%) state that this is very important (“6” on the scale) and 30% rate it as important, “5” on the scale. To 15.6%, the importance is “average”. Less than 1% of respondents would say that it is “not at all” important.

When asked to rate the importance of “understanding and respecting Hawaiian culture” on a scale from 1(not at all) to 7 (highly), a majority of respondents (21.3%) regarded this as “extremely important”,

16.3% as “very important”. For 58.8% of respondents the importance was rated with “5” on the scale which is moderately high in importance. Less than 1% of the respondents had the opinion that it is “not at all” important to “understand and respect” Hawaiian culture.

“The overall level of satisfaction of this particular vacation” was overwhelmingly positive with 60% of visitors rating their level of satisfaction “high” (“6” on the scale). The second largest number of visitors (22.5%) rated their level of satisfaction “5” on the scale and 11.3% of respondents’ level of satisfaction was “very high”. Less than 1% answered that they were not satisfied with their vacation to Hawaii.

### Correlation

Two sets of variables were tested for correlation. The first two variables tested were (1) “How would you rate your knowledge about Hawaiian culture?” and (2) “How important is it for you to come into contact with Hawaiian residents?” The correlation test used for this set of metric variables is the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation. When analyzing the results, it becomes evident that these two variables are significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), with a correlation coefficient of 0.313.

The second two variables analyzed were (3) “How would you rate your knowledge about Hawaiian culture?” and (4) “How important is it for you to experience native Hawaiian culture during your stay?” The correlation test used for this set is the same as for the previous set, since the variables are metric; the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation test is used. When analyzing the results, it becomes evident that these two variables are significantly correlated at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), with a correlation coefficient of 0.348.

### Conclusion

After examining the results of the visitor survey, it becomes evident that there are recognizable trends relating to visitors’ expectations, their experiences once they have arrived, and their opinion about Ha-

waiian culture and the reintegration thereof.

It can be said that the majority of visitors have a preconceived image of Hawaii and that this image is formed by the source of information the visitors indicated. Since a majority of visitors in the survey are repeat visitors, it is not surprising that the most important source of information was "previous experiences." Visitors also indicated "word of mouth", "travel agency," and the "internet" as important sources. Print materials and other media (TV/Radio, etc.) do not seem to play a significant role as a source of information for visitors; even though a great amount of travel literature and documentaries about the Hawaiian Islands exist.

It is also interesting to see that most travelers organize their trip independently and travel with family, their partner (spouse/ significant other), and friends. Package tours and traveling with tour groups does not seem to be a trend. Most visitors stay between 7-9 nights in Hawaii, and the vast majority states that "Hawaii meets their expectations."

The results also confirm that there is in fact a vast majority of visitors who are "interested in Hawaiian culture," and who state that the "tourism experience in Hawaii should be more authentic." Even though a great majority has indicated that they have "experienced Hawaiian culture during their stay," they still feel that more needs to be done to make the experience more authentic. The knowledge of the Hawaiian language is split in half with one-half knowing "more than two words in the Hawaiian language." This shows that the Hawaiian language is not present enough, or used enough in contacts with visitors, in order for the visitors to retain or to learn words during their stay. When offering "Hawaiian cultural experiences," the visitors' preferences should be taken into consideration. The most popular experience with visitors is Hawaiian music, followed by an "authentic hula performance." By speaking with visitors while conducting the survey, many visitors stated, that they miss the authentic Hawaiian music performances in Waikiki. Most notably, visitors who have been visiting the Islands for decades stated that they are disappointed

that the Hawaiian music has vanished from Waikiki. An "authentic luau" and "lei making" were also popular with the respondents and "Hawaiian language introduction" also seemed interesting to a large number of visitors. Most respondents also think that it is very important to "experience native Hawaiian culture during their stay" and to "understand and respect Hawaiian culture."

It is interesting to see that the "overall level of satisfaction of this particular vacation" was overwhelmingly positive with all visitors, despite the lack of authenticity that most visitors stated. This indicated that a lack of authenticity does not have a great impact on the satisfactory vacation experience for the visitors.

When it comes to the correlations, it becomes evident that visitors who rate themselves high on knowledge about Hawaiian culture also consider it important to meet Hawaiian residents and to experience native Hawaiian culture during their stay. This could be an indication that educating visitors about Hawaiian culture can bridge the gap between native Hawaiians and visitors through interaction, as well as stimulate the interest of visitors in Hawaiian culture overall.

Thus, the results would seem to indicate that visitors are in fact very interested in Hawaiian culture, and they feel that Hawaiian culture is not represented enough in the tourism experience in Hawaii today. According to the survey, a vast majority of visitors (85.6%) stated that they are interested in Hawaiian culture and a majority of respondents also think that it is very important to "experience native Hawaiian culture during their stay" and to "understand and respect Hawaiian culture." These findings show that there is a great demand for experiences related to Hawaiian culture. In addition, when asked if the "tourism experience in Hawaii should be more authentic," 78.8% stated that it should in fact be more authentic, even though a majority also indicated that they have experienced Hawaiian culture during their stay. This shows that the current efforts of reintegrating Hawaiian culture into tourism are not enough and that visitors are demanding a more unique and authentic experience.

It can be said that the findings of this study reaffirm the theory that there is a trend towards a more authentic traveler and cultural tourism. As discussed in the literature review portion of this study, according to TIA, there is a growing market for cultural tourism, which should receive more attention in the future. As this study has found, a majority of visitors to Hawaii belong to the group of cultural travelers who are interested in experiencing the host culture of their destination, and who are more sophisticated as to which experiences they are interested in.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, it would be prudent for Hawaii's tourism industry to increase efforts to integrate Hawaiian culture into the tourism experience beyond what is being done today.

### **Recommendations**

Since there is a trend towards a more authentic visitor experience, and visitors are interested in experiencing Hawaiian culture, the recommendation has to be to increase the efforts of reintegration and to offer tourists a more unique Hawaiian cultural experience. The tourism experience in Hawaii has to focus on its most important asset, the culture. The culture is the element that can differentiate Hawaii from all other beach destinations, which share the same commodities, such as sun, sand, and sea. Other destinations might be able to offer these commodities at a less expensive price, but they do not offer the cultural authenticity and they cannot offer Hawaiian culture.

The emphasis therefore needs to be to offer tourists what they are looking for, and therefore benefit from the trend of cultural tourism. Authentic cultural offerings need to be expanded, especially in Waikiki. As this study has found, tourists are most interested in authentic Hawaiian music. Repeat visitors articulated that they miss authentic Hawaiian music performances, which used to be an everyday experience some years ago. An effort could be to bring back authentic Hawaiian music to Waikiki. For example, instead of having street performers on Kalakaua Avenue in Waikiki, who do not portray Hawaiian culture in

any way, perhaps offering concerts by authentic Hawaiian musicians should be considered. In addition, a majority of visitors would like to see authentic hula performances. There are already authentic hula performances taking place on Kuhio Beach in Waikiki; however, authentic hula performances should be increased. Possibly even promoting an authentic hula show twice a week could be a beginning to this development. In addition, since many visitors are interested in an authentic Hawaiian luau, it would be a good idea to offer a traditional luau in Waikiki, which focuses more on the cultural aspect than on pure entertainment and cocktails.

In the literature review portion of this study, Kanahale's ideas of a more authentic Waikiki were presented. Some of these ideas have already been realized; however, there is room to realize many more. For example his idea of having an authentic Hawaiian village in Waikiki would be a great attraction for tourists seeking a more authentic experience. Some of the activities that visitors are interested in, such as Lei making or craft making could be incorporated in the form of work-shops in that village in Waikiki. This could be an alternative to the offerings of similar "work-shops" at the Polynesian Cultural Center. Native Hawaiians could interact with visitors by educating them about Hawaiian culture and values, teaching them Hawaiian language and engaging them in such activities as Hawaiian story-telling. This is especially important, since the study found that educating visitors about Hawaiian culture and interaction with Native Hawaiians could help to bridge the gap between Native Hawaiians and visitors, and stimulate the interest of visitors in Hawaiian culture overall.

It is therefore important, for visitors and residents to get a chance to interact and communicate. Much damage has been done to the visitor industry by the commodification of Hawaiian culture, and there are feelings of resentment toward visitors by the residents. Reintegration of Hawaiian culture is in its beginning stages at the moment and it is important to realize that it takes the combined effort of the community, Native Hawaiians, and the travel industry, in order to make it work.

It can be very difficult to bridge these various interests; however, this reintegration of Hawaiian culture into the visitor experience is a common goal, and it is one which can be achieved. Change starts with a common ground, and this study has shown that the majority of visitors do not want experiences tailored to them, or experiences that are interchangeable and similar from destination to destination. Hawaiian culture is what makes Hawaii unique, and an authentic experience is what visitors demand.

As the literature review portion of this study has shown, there are a number of travel industry related businesses that have already successfully integrated Hawaiian values into the management system and ultimately the visitors' experience. These efforts can be examples for all other travel industry-related businesses not currently engaging in these efforts. As we have seen with the retail industry, even businesses not directly related to tourism can make a difference and provide a more authentic experience to visitors. It is therefore important to communicate the possibilities of reintegration of Hawaiian culture to businesses. The Hawaii Tourism Authority is making a great effort to encourage businesses to participate and to award businesses and individuals for their achievements relating to the reintegration of Hawaiian culture. It is equally important for businesses to incorporate Hawaiian values in their management style and to communicate these values to the employees. Employees will then become hosts to the visitors, much in tune with traditional Hawaiian hospitality.

In addition, it is important to incorporate Hawaiian culture and values into new travel-related developments. Even though, one cannot reverse the structural mistakes that have been made in the past, new structures, hotels, resorts, etc, as well as new attractions, should be developed with a sense for the "place" Hawaii, its people, culture and values.

The final recommendation would be to conduct more research, in the form of extensive studies on residents' sentiments and visitors' expectations directly relating to cultural tourism here in the Islands, and to work more closely with Native Ha-

waiians in developing sensible efforts of reintegrating Hawaiian culture into the tourism experience. Furthermore, from a business standpoint, the effort should be to differentiate Hawaii from other similar beach destinations by focusing on marketing the culture, as resorts can be built anywhere in the world where they share the same commodities (sun, ocean, etc.); however, one cannot "build" Hawaiian culture someplace else. New structures that are being built should consider incorporating Hawaiian elements in the architecture and refrain from building structures that are not in harmony with the place Hawaii.

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