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UTILIZING THE GOODRICH ATTRIBUTES TO PROFILE UTAH TRAVELER'S MOTIVATIONS

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ABSTRACT

Numerous attempts have been made to profile tourist motivations and link them to attraction choice. This study attempted to utilize the Goodrich attributes to determine traveler's motivations and perceptions regarding attractions in Utah. The information derived from this study was helpful in directing future marketing efforts.

INTRODUCTION

The ever-increasing number of tourists to the more popular Utah destinations often result in negative impacts (i.e., congestion, trash, trampled vegetation) which subsequently causes a decrease in the area's popularity. Davis and Sternquist (3) remind us that one method of effective management is "to determine which features attract people to the area, segment on the basis of these features, and then use this information in the development of promotional strategies." While the overriding intent of any tourist-directed promotional campaign is to increase the total number of visitors to an area and thus increase the market share, this is not the only result of such campaigns. Promotional campaigns assist in sensitizing people favorable to the idea of taking a vacation and provide a justification for a particular vacation decision, increase consumer appreciation for and selection of a particular vacation destination, and reduce potential cognitive dissonance. Marketing literature indicates that it is easier to take advantage of existing market segments than to create new ones (7). Furthermore, it is recommended that promotional material place emphasis on each market cluster and the attributes identified as being most important by the isolated market cluster (3). This same method might be useful in developing new travel products or alternate travel products to relieve the pressure on popular destinations.

The State of Utah's tourism product is highly fluctuating according to the season and very few methods of controlling its flow have been implemented. Southern Utah, especially areas located near several major National Parks (Arches, Canyonlands, Zion, Bryce, Capital Reef and the Grand Canyon) are overflowing and suffering permanent negative environmental and social impacts from the surge of the overwhelming summer tourist crowds. Frechtling's (5) doctrine of sustainability stressed the importance of preserving a quality of life for local residents, the wise and efficient use of natural resources and the protection of

quality environments. In this spirit, the state wanted to attract visitors away from these congested areas by developing new travel products. The Utah Travel Council required information regarding the potential features of central and northern Utah to design marketing messages to promote a new tourism product for this region. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine what motivates tourists to come to northern and central Utah on the basis of tourist-attracting features. A better understanding of tourists' perceptions and attitudes has two important consequences: it allows for marketers to effectively segment tourists and increase revenues while it helps tourism professionals to better manage and market fluctuating, seasonal travel patterns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Robbie, Bateson, Ellison, and Figler's (11) findings were that the desire to seek a more meaningful existence and to feel as if one belongs to a community group was an important motivation to travel for pleasure. The author recommended further research to investigate the existence and relative importance of the motives that underlie pleasure travel. Specifically, future research should be directed towards developing a tourism motivation instrument that incorporates both the unique and the redundant areas of measurement identified in the independently developed instrument designed by Tourism Canada (1985).

Mansfeld (10) conducted an analysis of the motivational stage of travel which he observed can reveal the way in which people set goals for their destination-choice and how these goals are reflected in both their choice and travel behavior. Moreover, it can provide tour operators, tourism planners, and other tourist-related institutions with a better understanding of the real expectations, needs, and goals of tourists.

Dunn Ross and Iso-Ahola (2) explored motivation and satisfaction dimensions of sightseeing tourists. The results indicated a considerable similarity between motivation and satisfaction dimensions, with knowledge seeking, social interaction, and escape emerging as important factors. Additionally, perceptions of social and personal benefits to be derived from national park travel and the experiential interests of travelers mediate the influence of socioeconomic status on park visits.

Kale and Weir (9) studied international traveler's destination choices and the factors influencing those choices. Specifically, they found that the major factors influencing overseas vacation choices were things to see and do (75%), cost factors (74%), climate (40%), accommodations (33%), and convenient transportation (28%). It was observed that culture, scenery, historical significance and food were major factors influencing respondents choice of a specific destination.

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATION

This study utilized ten attributes representing five manmade and five environmental tourist attracting elements. These elements were based on a set of generic, inclusive attributes proposed by Goodrich (6) as applicable to all tourism destinations. The "Goodrich Attributes" include:

> Facilities for Water Sports
> Facilities for Golfing, Tennis, etc.
> Historical and Cultural interest
> Scenic Beauty and Sightseeing

Pleasant Attitudes of the Residents
Opportunity for Rest and Relaxation
Shopping Facilities
Cuisine
Entertainment and Nightlife
Suitable Accommodations

According to the Fishbein Model (4), an attitudinal representative variable may be derived through the multiplication of beliefs and evaluations. In this study, respondent beliefs and evaluations were recorded in their relation to the Goodrich Attributes. Next, these attributes were processed through the Fishbein Model.

METHODS

A stratified random sample of visitors at four travel information centers in the Greater Salt Lake area was completed during May 1994 and 1995. The self-administered questionnaires were distributed by the visitor center staff. Visitors completed the one page questionnaire at the center. There were less than twenty total refusals from among all sites. To ensure that a sufficient number of questionnaires were obtained during the low visitation days, the sampling procedure was stratified by day of the week. Monday through Thursday every fifteenth visitor was randomly selected to receive the questionnaire. Friday through Sunday every twenty-fifth visitor was randomly sampled. There was a total of 308 questionnaires completed.

This questionnaire included three sections: (1) ten established Goodrich Attributes, (2) activity related variables, (3) demographic questions (gender, education, marital status, and residence) and open-ended opinion questions. The Goodrich attribute section required the respondent to rate ten travel facilities/components based upon their belief of the perceived quality of each attribute in Northern and Central Utah. The rating utilized a Likert type seven point scale with one representing "Strongly Disagree" and seven representing "Strongly Agree." Typical questions in this section included: "Utah has quality water sports" and "Utah offers a wide variety of evening entertainment." Utilizing the same scale, the respondent was asked to rate the travel facilities/components based upon its importance to making a travel decision. Typical questions in this section included: "In making my decision to visit Utah, the availability of historic and cultural activities were important" and "In my decision to visit Utah, the availability of a variety of shopping opportunities was important." The open-ended opinion questions permitted the respondent to express their views regarding what Utah possesses and what the state needed.

Calculated means of the Goodrich Attributes were abstracted for analysis according to the Fishbein Model in order to achieve the mean tourist attitude (A) toward each attribute. In order to find the mean attitude, the mean of tourist perception (X) was multiplied by the mean of the decisive factor (Y) [X x Y = A]. If an attribute were perceived as having the lowest level of quality (rating "1" on the tourist perception) and having an extremely unimportant role in making their travel choice (rating "1" on the decisive factor), the resulting attitude would be one. If the attribute were perceived as having an extremely high level of quality (rating "7" on the tourist perception) and having an extremely important role in making their travel choice (rating "7" on the decisive factor), the resulting attitude would be a 49.0. The resulting mean tourist attitude for each attribute could range between one and 49; forty-nine indicated the highest positive

attitude score and one indicated the lowest attitude score.

RESULTS

Gender and marital status of respondents were evenly split (50% each). Utah residents represented 33% of the respondents, 56% were out-of-state visitors, and 10% did not answer this question. There were no significant differences between the attitudes held by Utah residents and out-of-state visitors.

Responses to open ended questions revealed the main attractions for the respondents were The Latter-day Saints Temple Square (43%), skiing (31%) and the Great Salt Lake (24%). Elements listed as lacking in Utah was nightlife (16%) and culture (12%).

The respondents indicated that the region's attributes of the highest perceived quality were scenic beauty and sightseeing, rest and relaxation, historical and cultural interest, and the pleasant attitudes of the residents. The attributes that were the most important in their decision making were the region's scenic beauty and sightseeing, rest and relaxation, suitable accommodations, pleasant attitudes of the residents, and the historical and cultural interest.

Results regarding the Goodrich Attributes are presented in Figure 1. Scenic beauty and sightseeing were the highest positive attitudes (36.0). Other highly ranked variables on the attitude chart were suitable accommodations (31.3), pleasant attitude of the people (30.2), and the opportunity for rest and relaxation (33.0). The variables of entertainment/night life (20.4) and water sports (21.6) received the lowest scores. This compares to the results of a similar study conducted in Michigan by Davis and Sternquist who found scenic beauty, suitable accommodations, the availability of rest and relaxation, and pleasant people in the top five attitudes (3).

IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine what motivates tourists to come to northern and central Utah on the basis of tourist-attracting features. The study was successful in identifying scenic beauty, sightseeing, suitable accommodations, pleasant attitude of the people, and the opportunity for rest and relaxation as attributes that could be stressed in future marketing messages. Entertainment and night life were perceived by respondents as lacking in quality while they were important to their selection of a travel destination. An actual inventory of entertainment and night life related attractions suggest that although the area has a sufficient number of these attractions, the tourists were not knowledgeable regarding their existence. Therefore, the Utah Travel Council and the Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau should include additional information regarding the entertainment and night life activities. Furthermore, the study revealed the potential attractiveness of historical and cultural resources. Northern and Central Utah is rich in a variety of mining, railroad, western expansion, ethnic diversity and pioneer related resources. Unfortunately, these resources have not been developed, promoted or managed as travel-related products. Research and current leisure trends indicate that there is a growing demand for art, culture and historical activities and attractions (8). Following this study, the Utah Travel Council has initiated a project to develop a Heritage and Cultural Tourism Product to develop an evaluative/selection process for the

development, marketing and management of these historical and cultural resources.

This study has implications for destinations and resort communities experiencing problems with congested attractions. Travel managers and resort directors could use a similar methodology and questionnaire to detect what other existing attractions or resources might be useful in attracting travelers away from congested areas while retaining their business in the same geographic area. Marketers could decide if the existing visitor perceptions regarding the destination or community accurately reflect the existing opportunities. Furthermore, marketers could probably measure which facilities or qualities are perceived as most important or determinants in the decision process to select their destination. This would enable the marketers to prepare marketing messages that reflect those determinant qualities.

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Figure 1

FISHBEIN MODEL RESULTS

Variables	Perceived Quality Mean		Decisive Factor Mean		Attitude
Scenic beauty and Sight Seeing	5.9	x	6.1	=	36.0
Rest and Relaxation	5.5	x	6.0	=	33.0
Suitable Accommodations	5.3	x	5.9	=	31.3
Pleasant Attitudes of the Residents	5.4	x	5.6	=	30.2
Historical and Cultural Interest	5.5	x	5.4	=	29.7
Cuisine	5.0	x	5.3	=	26.5
Shopping Facilities	5.0	x	4.9	=	24.5
Golfing, Tennis, Etc.	5.3	x	4.4	=	23.3
Water Sports	4.6	x	4.7	=	21.6
Entertainment and Nightlife	4.0	x	5.1	=	20.4