

**EXAMINING THE POTENTIAL RELATIONSHIP BENEFITS OF LEISURE
TRAVEL TAKEN WITH AND WITHOUT ONE'S SIGNIFICANT OTHER AND
CHILDREN**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

As adults continue to work longer and take less vacation days, relationship dynamics are changing to accommodate individuals' responsibilities to career, family life and self. The amount of time couples spend together and the way time spent together is utilized is in turn changing. These issues have resulted in a recent surge in research related to relationship satisfaction and the variables that can enhance relationships, including leisure activities.

Tourism practitioners have started to examine the increasing trend of couples traveling without their significant other as means to increase vacation and relationship satisfaction. Industry coined "girlfriend's getaways" and "mancations" are noted by some as a means to potentially increase satisfaction with an individual's leisure choices as well as potentially leading to increases in the couple's relationships satisfaction. While academic research has yet to examine the effects of travel without one's significant other, it is possible that traveling without your significant other could make one value their relationship and time spent together that much more. It is also possible that the non-traveling partner forms resentment and/or mistrust in the relationship for not being included. Thus, this study sought to understand if travel with different companions contributed to perceived relationship commitment and satisfaction levels.

As a new contribution the field, the current research compared satisfaction levels between three groups. It was found that traveling with a significant other had a positive and significant affect on relationship satisfaction, while traveling with people other than one's significant other had a negative, although not significant. Travel with one's significant other and kids was found to have a positive, yet not significant effect.

A conceptual modeling proposed vacation satisfaction would have a positive correlation with satisfaction with life, when mediated by relationship satisfaction. The results suggested that those who had higher levels of vacation satisfaction also had higher levels of relationship satisfaction ($\beta=.467$). It was also found that as perceived relationship satisfaction levels increased, so too did satisfaction with life levels ($\beta=.702$).

A second model utilized the Investment Model of relationships to determine relationship commitment. The current findings were consistent with existing research and showed satisfaction was the strongest indicator of relationship commitment ($r^2=.642$) followed by quality of alternatives which contributed a negative and direct correlation ($r^2=-.278$). Contrary to existing literature, investment size was not found a significant predictor of relationship commitment ($p=.104$).

Theoretical implications of the study include a better understanding of the effects travel without one's significant other has on a relationship, and that satisfaction with vacations taken with one's significant other assists the investment model in explaining couples' relationship commitment. From a practical standpoint, results revealed that tourism suppliers who foster relationship satisfaction for couples traveling together can assist the couples in becoming more committed.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As many adults continue to work longer hours and take on multiple jobs, relationship dynamics are likely changing to accommodate individuals' responsibilities to career, family life and self. Ultimately this is modifying the amount of time couples spend together and the ways time spent together is utilized (Hellerstein and Morill, 2011; Bianchi, 2011; Amato, Booth, Johnson, and Rogers, 2009). Thus, resources which foster positive relationships, provide a break from routine obligations and daily stressors, help increase relationships and overall life satisfaction levels, and help explain relationship dissatisfaction, are likely to become increasingly more important. These issues have resulted in a recent surge in research related to marital satisfaction and the variables that can enhance relationships, including leisure activities (Sirgy, Kruger, Lee and Yu, 2011).

Existing research has cited leisure as a contributing factor for increased well-being and satisfaction in adults, a factor which has been found to reduce stress and increase relationship satisfaction (Sirgy, et al., 2011; de Bloom, Geurts, Taris, Sonnentag, de Weerth, and Kompier, 2010; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Strauss-Blasche, Ekmekcioglu, Markt 2002; Neal, Sirgy and Uysal, 1999). Research in this domain has typically considered these effects for married couples, while little research has considered the role joint leisure activities play for other relationship types, over varying relationship stages and differing lengths of relationships. Thus, the present study will examine the effects leisure (specifically travel) has on relationship commitment and satisfaction with life, over the course of the relationship lifecycle and will include couples of varying stages of relationships based on time in relationship.

Several studies have found that shared leisure leads to increases in relationship satisfaction (Johnson, Zabriskie, and Hill, 2006; Strauss-Blasche et al, 2000; Baldwin, Ellis and Baldwin, 1999; Canary, Stafford, Hause and Wallace, 1993). However, this research has typically considered only the effect of joint leisure from the standpoint of one person of the dyad, therefore the effects of joint leisure were extrapolated to the couple via the responses of only one person's feedback. These studies have not investigated the motives for joint leisure related to the appeasement of others (i.e., beyond personal motives) and how appeasement of others' motives affects overall leisure and relationship satisfaction. It is possible that sacrifices made in leisure choices negatively affect both relationship and leisure satisfaction. Traveling for appeasement of a spouse to a sporting event, or accompanying one's significant other on a hypothetical spa or shopping weekend, may actually be detrimental to, rather than supportive of, the current relationship.

Practitioners in the field of travel have begun to build on this notion that joint travel may lead to satisfaction for only one individual of the dyad, and have recently started to examine the trend of couples traveling (as a means of leisure) without their significant other as means to increase vacation and relationship satisfaction (Bond, 2012, Cavallari, 2008). Industry coined "girlfriend's getaways" and "mancations," defined as travel with all female or all male friends respectively, are noted by some as a means to potentially increase satisfaction with an individual's leisure choices as well as potentially leading to increases in the couple's relationships satisfaction (Bond, 2012, Cavallari, 2008). While academic research has yet to examine the effects of travel without one's significant other, it is possible that traveling without your significant other could make one value their relationship and time spent together that much more. It is also possible that the non-traveling partner forms

resentment and/or mistrust in the relationship for not being included. This study seeks to understand how travel without one's significant other contributes to perceived relationship commitment levels and overall life satisfaction.

JUSTIFICATION

With an increase in divorce rates (Copen, Daniels, Vespa, and Mosher, 2012) and the working adult population reluctant to use vacation days (Expedia, 2012), an understanding of whether travel (with and without one's significant other) provides physical and/or mental benefits leading to increases in relationship commitment and overall satisfaction with life, may be the motivation people need to travel more often. It is believed that the present research may provide a new understanding of the role travel plays in relationship commitment, as well as how this affects overall satisfaction with life. Findings from the present study could provide further explanation of Existing research which claims individualism (for the current study expressed through travel without one's significant other) in a relationship assists in achieving higher levels of relationship satisfaction and commitment (Amato, et al., 2007).

Travel with Significant Other

Recently, travel has been introduced as a resource to combat domestic unrest and unhappiness, and has been used to deter couples from divorce (Bernama Media, 2010; Kuno, 2010; Schwartz, 2009). With over 33,000 divorces in 2010, the Malaysian government looked to travel to help reduce or eliminate divorce amongst Malaysian adult couples. The Terengganu Family Development Foundation introduced the "Second Honeymoon Program" in 2010 (Bernama Media, 2010). This government funded program, open to troubled couples

on the brink of divorce, provided a second honeymoon vacation to an island resort where couples were provided family and home management counseling, as well as time spent privately to rekindle marriages. As of 2012, the 278 couples who have participated in the program remain married after completion of the program (Chen, 2012). The government of Malaysia cited communication issues as the cause of a majority of marriages ending in divorce, and believed vacation time spent away from routine stress helped increase the quality of communication between couples, and in turn, increased relationship satisfaction.

Further studies have also found support for the benefits of travel on relationships. A survey of 2,100 British adults, aged 25-65 revealed holidays (vacations) were thought by 51 percent of respondents to be an ideal time to discuss important life decisions. Seventy-four percent of respondents said “a romantic getaway can make or break their relationship” (Kunoi, 2010 p. 4). This was especially true for over 25 percent of the female respondents who revealed that a holiday helped “re-ignite the flames of love” (p. 4). Fifty-four percent of respondents, who had a conversation with their significant other during vacation about work, family, or relationships, took action in regard to the conversation, when they returned home. Vacation conversations thus became an inspiration for change. The majority (54%) of those surveyed who had discussed getting married or engaged while on vacation, revealed that it led to actions and or changes in their lives when they returned home. “Thirty-six percent of respondents said they had talked about their love life during vacation, and 34% actually carried out the decisions they discussed when they returned home” (p. 20).

The previously documented studies have focused heavily on married adults and relationship satisfaction mediated by leisure (travel) activities as perceived by one individual of the couple unit. The current research extends these finds to include the effects of

relationship commitment and satisfaction with life to dating, cohabitating, legal partnerships and married couples. Considering the previous research has focused on one individual of the dyad, the current research will pose questions to attempt to understand the effect travel has for both partners of the dyad. Specifically, the current study will ask the respondent to infer the effect that they perceived their travel without their significant other, has had on their relationship.

All Female and All Male Vacations

This study will also attempt to understand if travel with or without a significant other, may improve or harm relationship satisfaction. This study examines the effect vacation satisfaction has on overall satisfaction with life and relationship satisfaction levels. The findings have the potential to add to the existing research which states leisure can increase quality of life, (Sirgy, et al., 2011, Strauss et al., 2002) while also investigating if travel without one's significant other could supplement the gap of unmet needs traveling together may cause.

A longitudinal study of marriages in America conducted in 1980 and again in 2000, found a significant decrease in the amount of time couples spent together over the course of the 20 year study (Amato, Johnson, Booth and Rogers, 2003). This was attributed to demanding career responsibilities for both partners and an increasing need for independence over the course of a relationship. Couples, who claimed they were satisfied in their relationship, also cited the importance of time apart as a contributing factor to the satisfaction of their relationship.

In line with this finding, recent research on the all female and all male getaway market (travel with friends, and without one's significant other) has revealed this emerging

trend has developed into a \$20 billion dollar segment, which represents 4 percent of US travel industry sales (Cavallari, 2008). This trend has been attributed to women and men needing time to partake in the leisure activities they enjoy, which may be activities their significant other does not enjoy (Bond, 2009).

Another study revealed nearly a quarter of respondents were planning to take at least one vacation with all female or all male friends in 2012, up 22 percent from 2011 (Long, 2012). The present research will attempt to build on these findings to investigate if maintaining a level of individualism in a relationship leads to more or less positive relationship satisfaction and overall satisfaction with life. The study will do so by comparing the relationship, vacation and life satisfaction levels of those who travel with and without their significant other. Since travel without one's significant other is an emerging trend, and one in two marriages continue to fail (Copen et al., 2012), it is believed to be important to garner a better understanding of whether travel affects relationship commitment and satisfaction with life differently than travel with one's significant other.

Travel with Significant Other and Children

During a vacation, couples and families spend considerably more time together than in their daily lives, with the likely hopes of bonding and sharing experiences with one another. However, too much time together has the potential to lead to negative outcomes and lackluster memories of said vacation.

To combat negative perceptions of family travel, research focusing on the differences between what children and parents seek most from a family vacation, and how this affects vacation satisfaction, is becoming more prevalent (Kozak and Duman, 2012; Kozak, 2010; Lehto et al, and Agate et al, 2009; Blichfeldt, 2008; Gram, 2005; Decrop and Snelders, 2004;

Raaij and Francken, 1984). Kozak (2010) studied 445 families in the UK, and found that families depended on one another's evaluations of a vacation to assess their own satisfaction levels. This indicates that a happy and successful vacation was more likely to be achieved if all parties were satisfied once they returned home. Research by Lehto et al (2009) included an overall focus on family functioning during vacation to "understand family vacation as one consumption unit," (p 475). "Activities and programs [at the vacation site] that can provide ample opportunities for [parents and children] to interact yet remain at times separate, can be appreciated by family travelers" (Lehto et al, 2009, p 475).

Research by Gram (2005) included differences in children's and parent's overall motives for travel. Children were more likely to want fun and activities from a holiday, while parents were more likely to hope for a relaxing vacation for all. Parents indicated a need for vacations to provide "togetherness," while still leaving room for rest. This previous research eluded to parents planning and taking family vacations for the benefit of the child(ren). These studies did not evaluate the parent's relationship satisfaction or overall satisfaction after vacation to reveal if the vacation had served the purpose to reduce stress and create stronger, healthier family relationships. The research did state that parents plan vacations for the benefit of children, thus the benefit for the adult individual or the dyad was not researched. The present research will consider this final third group, those who travel with their significant other and children, when researching the potential benefits travel may bring to an adult relationship and to an individual's satisfaction with life.

POTENTIAL FINDINGS

If evidence is found to show individuals who travel without their significant other have increased satisfaction levels, practitioners in the fields of psychology, relationship therapy and tourism could use these findings to generate and promote interest in all female and all male vacations. Conversely, if this study reveals those who travel without their significant other have decreased commitment and life satisfaction levels, or their significant other's satisfaction levels are diminished due to exclusion from a vacation, a strong case for promoting the benefits of traveling together could be made. Findings either indicating travel without one's significant other as a positive or negative factor in a relationship may thus be used to "sell" an additional travel motive to increase travel frequency, thus providing a potential boost to the tourism industry as a whole.

Finally, measures of relationship commitment and satisfaction with life for those who travel with their significant other and children may reveal a direction to market future vacations. If it is found adults have lowered satisfaction levels upon return from a family vacation, researchers may further investigate the cause of the dissatisfaction and implement new or differing vacation strategies to combat negative satisfaction levels. If the research reveals travel with a significant other and children correlates with increased levels of relationship commitment and satisfaction with life results, the industry may use the results to increase promotion of family vacations, to include the benefit they provide not only for the child, but for the adult couple's relationship and life satisfaction.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this dissertation is to better understand the role that vacationing has on relationships. This research intends to examine the differences in relationship satisfaction and commitment as well as overall satisfaction with life for adults who have traveled with and without their significant other, as well as those who have traveled with their children. Thus, the main objectives of this research are to develop an initial understanding of the potential benefits travel may contribute to relationship satisfaction and overall satisfaction with life, and to determine the impact vacation satisfaction may have on variables related to relationship commitment.

OBJECTIVES

This study proposes use of the Investment Model as a foundation of the theoretical basis to examining the correlations between satisfaction and commitment to relationships. This model has been found to be beneficial in examining commitment to romantic relationships (Rusbult, Martz, and Agnew, 1980) as well as commitment to customer loyalty in a tourism context (Li and Petrick, 2008). The Investment Model posits that relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives and relationship investment size are predictors of one's relationship commitment level and the probability of relationship persistence. The model has been used extensively in past research (Le and Agnew, 2003) and will serve as the theoretical underpinning of this research.

Using existing studies (Sirgy et al., 2011; Wang, Chen, Lin, Wang, 2008; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Neal et al. 1999) as a guiding model for the current research, a model suggesting vacation satisfaction directly impacts relationship commitment, which in turn

impacts satisfaction with life, will also be conceptualized and tested. Finally, the role vacationing with and without one's significant other plays on relationship satisfaction and commitment will be investigated. The study may also reveal links between relationship commitment levels across relationship life stages, (from dating couples through couples cohabitating and married) with travel as a moderating variable. The study is intended to examine the benefits of travel from a relationship standpoint to understand how travel may benefit a couple's commitment to their relationship and affect their overall quality of life.

The current study is guided by the following objectives:

Objective 1 stems from previous research (Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff, 2012; de Bloom, et al., 2010; Fritz and Sonnentag, 2006; Strauss-Blasche and Marktl, 2000), to test a conceptual model that suggests vacation satisfaction directly impacts relationship commitment, which in turn impacts satisfaction with life. Specifically,

Hypothesis 1a: Vacation Satisfaction will have a direct and positive correlation with Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1b: Relationship Satisfaction will have a direct and positive correlation with Satisfaction with Life.

Hypothesis 1c: Vacation Satisfaction will have a positive correlation with Satisfaction with Life as mediated by Relationship Satisfaction

The hypothesized relationships are visualized in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STRUCTURE AND ANTECEDENTS OF SATISFACTION WITH LIFE



Objective 2 will serve as the primary objective of this dissertation, and will seek to reveal constructs influencing commitment to relationship, by utilizing the Investment Model. The main focus of this objective is to determine if commitment to relationship, as measured through vacation satisfaction, perceived investment, alternatives and satisfaction differs between the three groups of interest to this study. Specifically the hypotheses are:

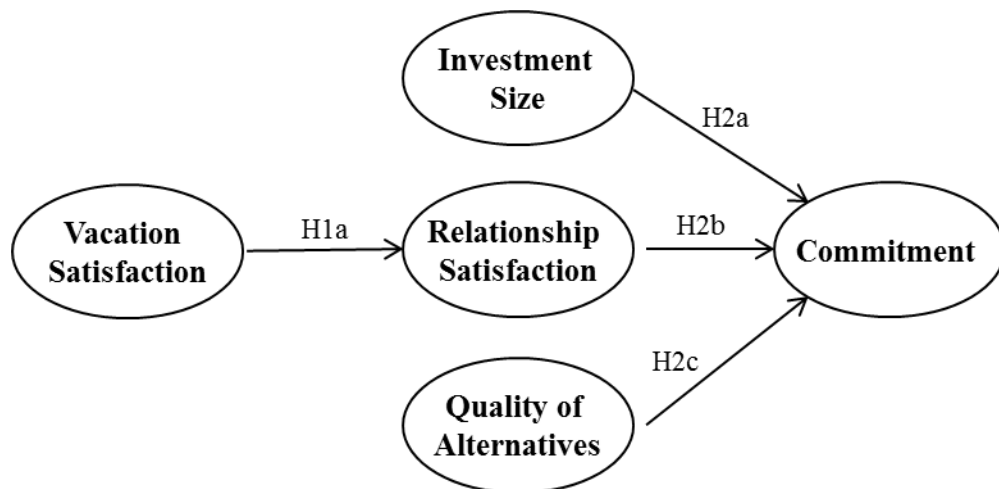
Hypothesis 2a: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and positively influenced by Investment Size.

Hypothesis 2b: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and positively influenced by Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2c: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and negatively influenced by Quality of Alternatives.

The hypothesized relationships are visualized in Figure 2

FIGURE 2: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STRUCTURE AND ANTECEDENTS OF COMMITMENT TO RELATIONSHIP



Objective 3: A third objective is to understand the role vacationing has on all three groups of interest in this research, to include travel with and without one's significant other and travel with children.

H3a: Perceived Relationship Satisfaction will be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken; a) with a significant other, b) without a significant other, and c) with significant other and kids.

H3b: Perceived Commitment to Relationship will be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken; a) with a significant other, b) without a significant other, and c) with significant other and kids.

Objective 4 is designed to quantitatively examine and identify specific target markets participating in all female and all male getaways. To do so, several demographic factors will be examined. Specifically:

Hypothesis 4a1: Relationship length will not be related to Commitment to Relationship.

Hypothesis 4a2: Relationship length will not be related to Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4b1: Age will not be related to Commitment to Relationship.

Hypothesis 4b2: Age will not be related to Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4c1: Commitment to Relationship will not be different for males than it will for females.

Hypothesis 4c2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different for males than it will for females.

Hypothesis 4d1: Commitment to Relationship will not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations

Hypothesis 4d2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations.

DELIMITATIONS

This study is subject to the following delimitations:

1. This research will only focus on the effect of perceived relationship benefits from travel based on the Investment Model, other plausible explanations of the effect (theories or models) will not be included in the scope of the study.
2. This research focuses on understanding a phenomenon from the view of men and women in current relationships.
3. Responses will be gathered in the context of persons most recent travel experiences, and will not include the cumulative effects that multiple vacations might have.
4. Situational variables, such as socioeconomic standards, which may influence travel behavior will not be considered.
5. Study respondents will be limited to those with a current significant other.
6. This study will only consider the effect of travel on relationships and satisfaction with life for three groups; travel with significant other, travel as part of a getaway without one's significant other, and travel with significant other and children.
7. This study will only include persons age 25 or older, to hopefully better capture couples who are in serious relationships, and those who have a higher likelihood of having children.

LIMITATIONS

1. The initial survey will only be administered through one panel company during one set timeframe.

2. An online panel survey approach may preclude respondents who do not have Internet access or skills to complete an online survey.
3. The effect that travel without a significant other has on the non-traveling individual will be examined from the standpoint of the person who took part in the travel, but will not include the actual perceptions of the non-traveling significant other.
4. This research will utilize a self-reported measure of travel behavior by asking satisfaction levels. It is arguably an acceptable way of measuring behavior, but it may involve some measurement errors.

DEFINITIONS

For this research, the term *relationship satisfaction* is defined as favorability that individuals report with their significant other (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1981).

Relationship satisfaction is a self-reported interpretation of the quality of the respondent's relationships or the person's happiness with the marriage, or current relationship status.

Vacation with significant other will be operationalized for this study as partners in exclusive relationships participating in leisure activities, specifically travel. Orthner, Barnett and Mancini (1993, p. 177) stated "the defining conditions of leisure to be the individual's perception of freedom of choice, activities chosen for reasons intrinsic to the anticipated experience, and the accompanying and/or resulting sensations of positive affect."

The term, *vacation satisfaction*, will be used to indicate satisfaction levels with a leisure activity (specifically travel for this study) as perceived by an individual. Vacation satisfaction will be measured using two scales, the first a 17 item terrible to delighted scale by Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) and the second, a 4-item, 7 point semantic differential

scale. Both have been used in similar previous studies and shown to be reliable and valid measures (Cole and Crompton 2003; Childress and Crompton, 1997; Lounsbury and Hoopes, 1985).

Vacation for purpose of this research, will be defined using constructs from the World Tourism Organization's definition of tourists. Vacations will be defined as travel taken outside of one's usual environment (at least 50 miles from home) inclusive of at least one overnight stay, for purpose of leisure (Understanding Tourism Basic Glossary, 2013).

Significant other will be used to denote a person in a relationship with one other person, whom they consider their significant other. This study will consider a variety of relationship types, to include couples dating, cohabitating, and married or domestic partners in a relationship for an unspecified amount of time.

The terms *all female and all male getaways*, as well as *girlfriend getaways and mancations*, will be used to describe leisure vacations taken with friends, in which significant others were not present.

Pertaining to the Investment Model, used as the guiding theory for this research, *relationship satisfaction* refers to the positive and negative attributes of a relationship. It is a measure of how well a partner fulfills a variety of an individual's needs (Rusbult, et al., 1998).

Quality of alternatives refers to perceived desirability of alternatives to the current relationship (Rusbult, et al., 1998). It is a measure of how, and if, an individual's needs could be met without the current partner, whether by friends, other romantic partners or others.

Investment size refers to the importance of resources that are attached to the current relationship (Rusbult et al., 1998). It is any resource considered part of the relationship that would be lost if the relationship were terminated, and assumes the resources would decrease if the relationship were to end.

Commitment to relationship is assumed to be the intent to continue a relationship based on internal and external factors (Rusbult et al., 1998). It includes the long-term intention of involvement, and can influence everyday behavior in the relationship.

Travel together with children will be used to indicate leisure travel trips taken with children, 18 years and younger, who are the legal responsibilities of at least one person of the dyad.

ORGANIZATION OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is intended to examine the potential benefits travel has on satisfaction with life and relationship commitment, and if traveling with different partners (significant other, friends or children) increases or decreases these satisfaction levels. Chapter I presented an introduction to the research and provided a brief overview of the state of the industry in relation to this research. It also introduced the Investment Model as a guiding theoretical framework, and detailed the purpose, objectives, hypotheses, operational definitions used within the research, delimitations and limitations.

Chapter II provides a review of the Existing literature related to this research. Chapter III provides an in depth discussion of the theory and conceptual connections used to guide this research, as well as an explanation of the conceptual model developed for this research. Chapter IV introduces the methods employed to examine the objectives of this

research. Chapter V details the descriptive results of this research and Chapter VI reveals the results of model fit and hypotheses testing. Concluding, Chapter VII summarizes the findings and provides practical implications to the field while suggesting areas for future research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research has previously investigated the phenomena of relationship commitment (Rusbult, 1980), satisfaction with life (Diener, Eommons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985) and vacation satisfaction (Nawijn, 2011) as separate constructs. The following discussion reviews each of these variables, along with antecedents to each from relevant and Existing tourism, marketing, psychology and sociology literature. It is the purpose of this section to review the current literature and synthesize the most pertinent findings. The first section reviews the variables of the conceptual model for Satisfaction with Life, as used in this research. The second section focuses on the constructs associated with the guiding theory used in this research, the Investment Model. Concluding sections detail the relevance of the survey participant parameters and demographics used to develop the data for this study.

SATISFACTION WITH LIFE

Stemming from psychology, research has concurred that subjective well-being, a measure of one's holistic interpretation of their life, includes aspects of cognitive and affective (positive and negative) measures. When evaluated, negative and positive affective states, along with a person's cognitive evaluation of their present life situation, have been found to be reliable indicators of one's subjective well-being (Diener, 2000; Pavot and Diener, 1993).

As Diener states, The English word "happiness" means several different things (e.g., joy, satisfaction), and therefore many scientists prefer the term "subjective well-being." However, subjective well-being is an umbrella term that includes the various types of

evaluation of one's life one might make- it can include self-esteem, joy, feelings of fulfillment, and so forth. The key is that the person himself/herself is making the evaluation of life- not experts, philosophers, or others. Thus, the person herself or himself is the expert here: Is my life going well, according to the standards that I choose to use? (2009).

Subjective well-being has been measured as a tripartite construct which considers one's affective responses (positive responses such as happiness and negative such as sadness), domain specifics (satisfaction with health, career and relationships) and a global measure of life satisfaction as a whole (Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith, 1999). Often considered an indicator of happiness, satisfaction with life is a measure of perceived or subjective quality of life, considering both internal and external circumstances contributing to the individual's current state of satisfaction. While not a direct synonym for happiness, satisfaction with life has been used as a measure of well-being and overall happiness in the United States based program, Healthy People 2020, a 10-year initiative aimed at improving lifestyles and health for Americans (Erdogan, Bauer, Truxillo, Mansfield, 2012).

Satisfaction with life (SwL) research dates to the 1960s with a strong focus on life satisfaction and mental health (Cantril, 1965; Gurnin, Veroff and Feld, 1960). In the 1970's, satisfaction with life was a key element of American Social Indicator studies (Veenhoven, 1996). Shin and Johnson (1978, p. 477) defined the construct as "a global assessment of a person's quality of life according to his chosen criteria," (Shin and Johnson, 1978). Research has built upon this definition to suggest satisfaction with life is a self-determined measure defined when drawing comparisons between an individual's current circumstances and what one perceives to be ideal circumstances (Pavot and Diener, 1993; Diener, Emmons, Larsen,

Griffin, 1985). Satisfaction with life, its antecedents, and importance have been examined through a variety of research studies in vastly differing fields.

The health and medical fields have sought to understand the impact medical ailments and injuries have on SwL (Sanda et al 2008; Dijkers, 1997; Stein and Test, 1980), management studies have focused on SwL as an indicator of job satisfaction (Kossek and Ozeki, 1998; Spector 1997), and education studies have sought to understand how academic and social domains effect a student's SwL (Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe, 2007; Sam 2001). In the tourism and leisure literature, several researchers have examined the worth vacations and leisure activities attribute to SwL (Durko and Petrick, 2013; Sirgy, Kruger, Leeand Grace 2011; Ragheb and Griffith 1982).

Ragheb and Griffith's (1982) study of 565 adults aged 55 and older found six distinct variables accounted for 30 percent of the variance of the respondent's perceived life satisfaction. The variables they measured were leisure satisfaction, satisfaction with standard of living, satisfaction with family relations and activities, and satisfaction with health, leisure participation, and marital status. Amongst those variables, leisure satisfaction attributed 20 percent of the variance to an older adult's satisfaction with life, which was more than 50 percent of the total variance explained. They further found evidence to show the greater the leisure satisfaction, the greater the life satisfaction ($r = 0.43$), and that all six leisure satisfaction variables correlated positively with satisfaction with life. This study provides one of the first building blocks of research that established a connection between leisure and life satisfaction, of which the present study sought to build upon.

Arguably the most commonly used and widely accepted measure of satisfaction with life is Diener's (1985) Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Diener's Satisfaction with Life

Scale was developed to encompass a more general measure, as opposed to the previously existing one-item measures (Diener, 1985). Furthermore, existing scales before the SwL scale were developed for use primarily with the geriatric population and were not generalizable to a larger more inclusive population (Diener, 1984; Lawton 1975). Diener's initial scale began with 48 self-reported items, factor analyzed to three factors: positive affect, negative affect and satisfaction. Once low factor loadings and items with semantic similarity were eliminated, the five-item scale still used today was developed. The initial scale development showed the item correlations for the five items to all be above .61, thus suggesting strong factor loadings and a reliable measure of satisfaction (Diener, et al. 1985). Diener (et al. 1985) also reported an internal consistency coefficient of .87, and the test–rest correlation coefficient of .82 after two months, with a decrease to .54 over time.

Pavot and Diener (1993) advanced Diener's results, and showed that life satisfaction is a judgmental process interpreted by individuals differently. They explained that persons may have a varying set of criteria in which they call upon to determine their current satisfaction level; they therefore argued that measures of SwL should be left to interpretation by the individual. When questioned about one's current SwL level, respondents may refer to varying domains for analysis, to include evaluation of their current relationship, career, income, health or leisure activities before determining a response. Pivot and Diener (1993) used this rationale to lend credence to their decision for implementing global measures of satisfaction in their scale, rather than domain specific measures.

The present research will utilize the Satisfaction with Life Scale as it has been found to be a reliable and valid measure of the concept through numerous studies across a multitude of fields and languages (Bai, Wu, Zheng and Ren, 2011; Pavot and Diener, 2008; Vassar,

2008; Arridnell, Heesink, and Feij, 1999; Neto, 1993;). Bai (et al. 2011) applied the Satisfaction with Life Scale to a nationally representative sample of Chinese residents (n=4,795) to measure the scale's reliability, validity and invariance across gender, age, income, education and geographic location. The study was conducted to test the psychometric properties when applied to a different culture, and was found a reliable ($\alpha=.88$) measure of satisfaction amongst Chinese residents. It was also found that the Satisfaction with Life Scale had strict invariance across gender and education, and partial strong invariance across age, income and residential region. Vassar employed reliability generalization to investigate score reliability for the SwLS and verified the measures had internal consistency of ($\alpha=.78$). He explained the moderate Cronbach score was not surprising as Cronbach's alpha includes the number of scale items into the final calculation to determine an overall coefficient number. As previously stated, the SwLS is only a five item measure; therefore the alpha would not be as high as a scale with significantly higher measurement items (Vassar, 2008). To test convergent, construct and discriminate validity of the SwLS, a study was conducted measuring response to the scale by 1,775 Dutch residents (Arridnell, Heesink, and Feij, 1999). Their study verified internal consistency of $\alpha=.82$ and explained 60.1% of the variance in satisfaction with life measures. Females reported higher SwLS score ($\mu=5.33$) than males ($\mu =5.14$) and, married respondents had the highest satisfaction with life scores compared to couples cohabitating, dating, and those not in a relationship. The results were consistent with previous research and added support for the scale's discriminate validity (Arrindell, et al. 1999).

The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a five question subjective measure, based on a seven point Likert-type response scale, with anchor points (1) strongly disagree to (7) strongly agree. The scale is comprised of the following questions:

- 1- In most ways my life is close to ideal
- 2- The conditions of my life are excellent
- 3- I am satisfied with my life
- 4- So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life
- 5- If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing

RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION

Satisfaction, in general, is a measure of expectations across a variety of situations. As individuals, we contrive our own acceptable experience outcome level, and base our satisfaction on whether a product, service or person meets or exceeds such acceptable standards. These acceptable outcomes are noted as a comparison level of which we base our experiences (Le and Agnew, 2003). When outcomes surpass our comparison level, we are typically satisfied. When outcomes are less than our self-contrived comparison level, satisfaction is generally negative or unmet.

Bui, Peplau and Hill (1996) have stated that satisfaction is one of the most essential components to remaining committed to a relationship. Additionally, a meta-analysis conducted by Le and Agnew (2003) found satisfaction was the strongest indicator of commitment to a relationship. Thus, when a relationship exceeds expectations, relationship satisfaction is assumed and expected. However, when a relationship does not meet a self-determined satisfaction level, relationship satisfaction is not achieved, and likely the commitment level is not strong.

Relationship satisfaction has also been defined as favorability that individuals report with their significant other (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1981), and is often a self-report

interpretation of the quality of the respondent's relationship, and their overall happiness with the relationship. Relationship satisfaction includes the positive and negative affects an individual experiences in a relationship, and is an indicator of how well a partner fulfills a variety of an individual's needs. Yet, while a predictor of commitment, satisfaction alone has been argued to not fully determine commitment level (Rusbult, 1998).

Several scales have been developed and used to assess relationship satisfaction. With almost 5,000 citations, the most widely cited measure of relationship satisfaction is likely the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS). The 32-item scale was originally designed to measure likelihood of divorce of married respondents, and has been a reliable measure of relationship quality throughout marriage and family literature (Graham, Liu, and Jeziorski, 2006).

However, as Graham (et al. 2006) warned, the DAS is a measure of relationship quality and examines specific domains of a relationship, such as measurements of family finance, recreation, intimacy and careers, rather than overall relationship satisfaction indicators.

Therefore, they cautioned researchers to consider the goals of their study before relying solely on the DAS as the relationship assessment measure. They also argued that utilizing the DAS to measure relationship satisfaction does not allow for subjective measures of satisfaction, which is a goal of the current research. Therefore, for these reasons and the scales length, it was not included as the measurement scale for this construct.

Other popular relationship assessment scales include the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test, a 15-item scale initially used to differentiate well-adjusted couples from distressed (unsatisfied) couples. The 15 items are answered on a variety of response scales (Locke and Wallace, 1959). The Spouse Observation Checklist (Wills, Weiss and Patterson, 1974) contains 400 items measuring the pleasing and displeasing behaviors of daily marital

events. It utilizes the method of behavior assessment by having couples record behaviors that occur on a day-to-day basis. Events include those defined as instrumental and affectional (Wills et al. 1974). Finally, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (Hendrick, 1988), assesses the nature and extent of conflict within a marriage. It is believed to help couples express feelings that are difficult to communicate using a self-report form consisting of 150 True-False items. While the original measure was focused on understanding marital satisfaction only, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory Revised (MSI-R), was created to make the questions more relatable to both traditional and nontraditional partners, and includes “partner” and “relationship” rather than “spouse” and “marriage (Snyder, Heyman and Haynes, 2005). However, while popular measures of relationship satisfaction; these scales are seemingly lengthy for inclusion in a survey without causing respondent fatigue. Several items also have a strong focus on the “marital” aspect of a relationship and are not easily generalizable to a population of couples in other relationship lifecycle stages.

For the present study, relationship satisfaction will be measured using the Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS). The RAS was developed to measure a single construct, specifically one's subjective evaluation of his or her relationship. The original scale was tested for validity (n=125) through a factor analysis which showed the items loaded on a single factor which explained 46 percent of the variance in the data (Hendrick, 1998). The RAS items were also found to have an inter-item correlation of .49 and $\alpha=.86$ (Hendrick, Dicke, Hendrick, 1998).

The original scale was revised to substitute the word “partner” for “spouse” and “relationship for “marriage,” and is now more generalizable to a non-traditional population (Vaighn and Baier, 1999). Unlike several other relationship measurement scales, the RAS

allows romantic-specific language to be easily reworded and is therefore likely appropriate for other types of close relationships, allowing the use of the RAS to assess satisfaction across many intimate relationship types, such as parent–child, close friend, or significant other (Renshaw et al, 2011).

Norman, Aron, McKenna and Heyman (2000) used the Relationship Assessment Scale throughout several studies to show couples (of varying relationship types) who participated in shared leisure activities had higher levels of expressed relationship quality than those with little shared leisure activities. In three different experiments, the researchers found respondents reported higher levels of relationship quality from the pre to post survey, after they had participated in a 7 minute activity (such as sport or reading) together.

A 2009 study once again tested the validity and reliability of the scale by comparing the results from 149 respondents to Hendrick's results (Washburn, 2009). The 2009 study showed reasonably similar means and standard deviations for both tests among all seven items, along with inter-item correlation of .53 and $\alpha=.89$, quite similar to the findings by Hendrick in 1998.

The RAS measures how well the significant other meets needs, has regrets and the expectations of a relationship. The RAS is a seven item Likert-type scale which measures global relationship satisfaction, measured by five possible responses. The questions focus on an individual's perception of their relationship by asking questions that include ranking how the current relationship compares to others, if there are problems in the relationship, if needs are met, and how satisfied one feels with their relationship. RAS was chosen as the measurement scale for the current study based on its brevity, reliability and validity, as well as its applicability to a variety of relationships, (thus it is not limited to measures of only

marital satisfaction) (Renshaw, McKnight, Caska, and Blais, 2011; Norman, et al, 2000; Vaughn, and Baier, 1999; and Hendrick, 1988).

Internal consistency of the RAS has been noted ($\alpha=.87$) and is argued to best be represented by a one factor model (Hendrick, 1988). Responses to the RAS use a 5-point scale with anchors (1) low satisfaction to (5) high satisfaction. Items four and seven are reversed scored. Questions inclusive of Hendrick's (1988) Relationship Assessment Scale are:

1. How well does your partner meet your needs?
2. In general, how satisfied are you with your relationship?
3. How good is your relationship compared to most?
4. How often do you wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship?
5. To what extent has your relationship met your original expectations?
6. How much do you love your partner?
7. How many problems are there in your relationship?

VACATION SATISFACTION

While satisfaction is arguably a subjectively defined construct, several components have been offered and shown valid as measurement items to determine satisfaction with a product, service or relationship. Research from a variety of disciplines have acknowledged the importance of consumer satisfaction on repurchase intentions (Mittal and Kamakura, 2001; Cronin, Brady, and Hult, 2000), word of mouth (Ranaweera and Prabhu, 2003, Richins, 1983), revisit intentions (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Petrick, Morais, Norman, 2001) and loyalty (Li and Petrick, 2008; Chi and Qu, 2008, Hallowell, 1996). The findings in each of these studies revealed that satisfaction had a strong and positive relationship with the respondent's respective outcome behaviors.

Pizam (1978) suggested that tourist satisfaction with a leisure vacation should be operationalized as, "the result of the interaction between a tourist's experience at the

destination area and the expectations he had about that destination,” (pg. 315). Conversely, subsequent research has suggested satisfaction with a vacation or leisure activity is a combination of expectations coupled with the actual experience, and can be measured after the conclusion of the activity (Petrick and Backman, 2002; Baker and Crompton, 2000; Oliver, 1980). Along this line, Oliver (1980) simply stated that customers are satisfied when an individual’s judgment of the service they received is equal to or surpasses what they had expected.

While satisfaction is considered one possible outcome of an activity, it could be argued that tourists do not travel with the sole intention to achieve satisfaction, rather, that their experience fulfills a desire or want (Quinlan, Cutler and Carmichael, 2010). As it typically is viewed as a subjective construct, Pizam (1978) suggested satisfaction may be measured as a totality of core and secondary attributes, to include satisfaction measurements of items ranging from customer service interactions, to accommodations, food, and activities.

As explained by Huang and Sarigo (2007), core attributes are activities or benefits sought by the visitor, or the main purpose of the vacation. On the contrary, secondary attributes are necessary for the vacation, but not a determinant for overall satisfaction. Core attributes could include relaxation, escapism, sightseeing, accommodations and gastronomy, while secondary attributes could encompass elements such as telecommunication availability, drinking water quality, and the condition of roadways and transportation systems. Tourism literature suggests core services determine satisfaction, (Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Neal, Sirgy, and Uysal, 1999) and while secondary services may impact satisfaction; they are not the direct determinant (Maunier and Camelis (2013).

Research has also categorized vacation satisfaction as an affective (emotional post purchase evaluation) and cognitive response (inclusive of expectations) to an experience (Oliver, 1993; Lounsbury and Hoopes, 1985). Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) were among the first researchers in the field of tourism to acknowledge a need for measuring vacation satisfaction to determine the psychological and individual benefits a vacation might provide. Their work included the notion that vacation satisfaction was a result of the actual experience, to include where the vacation was and how long it lasted. However, they furthered expanded on this to also consider an individual's satisfaction with job, family and spouse as causal factors or antecedents of vacation satisfaction, thus considering affective and cognitive factors be included to determine overall satisfaction. Based on their study, a vacation satisfaction scale was developed to include measurements on five main constructs: relaxation and leisure, natural environment, escape, marriage and family, and food and lodging. Their Vacation Satisfaction Scale (VSS) includes 17 items that measure satisfaction with various facets of the vacation, such as engaging in preferred activities and pleasure derived from the vacation. The scale has been found to have internal reliability consistency ($\alpha=.95$) (Westman and Eden, 1997).

Lounsbury and Hoopes (1985) tested the scale for reliability to conclude the scale explained 92 percent of the variance attributed to vacation satisfaction, and each item had a factor loading above .44. The questions are anchored on a seven point delighted/terrible scale ranging from (1) Terrible; (2) Unhappy; (3) Mostly Dissatisfied; (4) Neutral; (5) Mostly Satisfied; (6) Pleased; and (7) Delighted. Questions included in the VSS and applied to the current research are as follows:

Relaxation and Leisure

The way your plans worked out

- The way you felt emotionally
- The way you felt physically
- The pace-of-life you experienced
- Your opportunities for engaging in your favorite leisure activities
- The amount of fun you had
- The amount of relaxation you had
- Your opportunities for engaging in new leisure activities
- Natural Environment
 - The opportunities you had for be “close to nature”
 - The weather
 - The amount of pretty scenery you saw
- Escape
 - Your opportunities for getting away from it all
 - Your opportunities for being alone
- Marriage and Family
 - How your children behaved
 - Your relationship with your significant other
- Food and Lodging
 - The food you ate
 - The accommodations

In addition to the VSS, a global measurement of vacation satisfaction without domain specific factors will also be utilized to measure vacation satisfaction in the current study.

The unifactorial four item seven point semantic differential scale, which solely seeks an overall vacation satisfaction response, has been used in previous similar studies and has been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of vacation satisfaction (Huang and Hsu, 2010; Cole and Crompton 2002; Childress and Crompton, 1997).

Huang and Hsu (2010) studied the effects customer to customer interaction had on vacation satisfaction for cruisers. Their study of 613 cruise passengers found the four global vacation satisfaction items to all have factor loadings above .84, with an overall scale construct reliability of $\alpha=.94$. Cole and Crompton (2002) studied 282 wildlife refuge visitors to gauge the relationship between satisfaction, service quality and intentions to visit. Their

study used the four item semantic differential scale for satisfaction, and found all items with factor loadings above .92 with $\alpha=.97$.

This study will use both vacation satisfaction scales to explain an in-depth understanding of the determinants of vacation satisfaction as well as an overall global measure of each vacation. The four item seven point semantic differential scale includes the following: Rate your vacation satisfaction with the vacation in question as:

Dissatisfied to Satisfied
Displeased to Pleased
Frustrated to Content
Terrible to Delighted

ROLE OF TRAVEL COMPANIONS

Past research has shown that travel party companions (Newman and Newman, 2008; Presser, 2000) and traveling with children (Nickerson and Jurowski, 2001) can have an effect on the evaluations people make regarding their satisfaction with a vacation. These studies have specifically found that adults traveling with children have been less satisfied than the child(ren) with the overall vacation. Nickerson and Jurowski (2001) surveyed 600 adults and 142 children aged 10-17 to determine overall vacation satisfaction measured on 12 items ranging from satisfaction with food and beverage, accommodations, entertainment and others. Both children and adults were satisfied with all items, yet children scored a higher mean satisfaction on all but two of the conditions (quality of historical information and cleanliness of area). A part of their future recommendations for research, they suggested studying why parents were less satisfied with the vacation aspects than children and how to address those issues in marketing of destinations.

A study of 85 families and 58 adult couples traveling revealed significant differences in the way vacation time was utilized to achieve vacation satisfaction (Thorton, Shaw and

Williams, 1997). Time use surveys showed adults traveling with children spent significantly more time nearby their accommodations, using hotel pools, and playing sports, all activities the children wanted to participate in. They further found that adult only vacations accounted for a significantly larger amount of leisure and relaxation. Those parties traveling with children revealed vacation satisfaction of their children was more important than their own (Thorton, Shaw and Williams,1997).

It has further been revealed that fewer adults are traveling with children. In 2012, 26 percent of leisure vacation included children under the age of 18 compared with 2008, when 31 percent of adults traveled with kids. (US Travel, 2013). This accounted for a difference of 58 million vacations. Thus, a need for further research to understand the affects traveling with children has on the vacation satisfaction of adults is likely needed, to better understand how to equalize satisfaction for all travel parties and potentially increase the numbers of family travelers.

It is postulated in the current study that vacation and relationship satisfaction could be altered based on travel party companion(s). Thus questions for the current study will be asked in three separate sections of the survey to capture vacation satisfaction of trips with a significant other, satisfaction of trips without one's significant other, and vacation satisfaction for trips taken with the couple's children. As aforementioned, a scale used by Huang and Hsu (2010), and Cole and Crompton (2002) will be used to determine the vacation satisfaction for the three groups. Questions will be modified to reflect each section of the survey (i.e., travel with/without significant other or with/without children) to gauge vacation satisfaction with and without a significant other, and with or without children. The four item seven point semantic differential scale includes the following questions:

- 1- Rate your vacation satisfaction when traveling with(without) your significant other (and with and without children) from unfavorable to favorable
- 2- Rate your experience with your last 2 years of vacations taken with(without) your significant other (and with and without children) as unsatisfied to satisfied
- 3- Overall your last 2 years of vacations taken with(without) your significant other (and with and without children)have left you displeased to pleased
- 4- Rate your last vacation experience taken with(without) your significant other (and with and without children)as negative to positive

COMMITMENT TO RELATIONSHIP

Substantial agreement among researchers has found that the level of commitment to a relationship is directly correlated with the chances of a relationship continuing in the future (Etcheverry and Le, 2005; Gustafsson, Johnson and Roos, 2005; Arriaga and Agnew, 2001; Kelley, 1983). While conceptualization of commitment appears to have its beginning in the fields of sociology and psychology (Rhoades, Stanley and Markman, 2012), defining commitment in one holistic definition has been difficult as researchers are not in agreement on its antecedents. A review of literature reveals the concept of commitment has been coupled with ideals from a variety of disciplines to explain its influence on varying phenomena. Several researchers from the marketing discipline have suggested commitment is an antecedent of loyalty (Yuksel, Yuksel, and Bilim, 2010; Li, 2008; Chen 2001; and Day, 1969) and a requirement for relationship marketing (Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Recreation researchers have used commitment when evaluating place attachment and dependence (Kyle 2004; Chen and Gursoy, 2001) and behavior studies have cited commitment as an antecedent to the success of an activity, such as career (Meyer and Allen, 1991; Mowday, Steers, and Porter, 1979), and sport (Raedeke, 1997; Movsessian, 1993).

Commitment has typically been used to describe the likelihood that a relationship will continue and is assumed to be the intent to continue based on internal and external factors (Arriga and Agnew, 2001). Arriaga and Agnew (2001) attributed commitment as consisting of factors that cause individuals to persist in a relationship with a focus on three components: a psychological attachment to that involvement, a long-term orientation, and an intention to persist in the relationship. Other researchers have suggested commitment to a relationship (whether the relationship is with a person, service, or organization) is the degree to which positive factors attracting one to the commitment overpower negative forces drawing one away from the commitment (Etcheverry and Le, 2005, Adams and Jones, 1997).

A review of the concept of commitment from the psychology, marketing, tourism, management and sociology literature revealed several competing definitions of commitment, each with varying antecedents. One explanation of commitment suggested it is a psychological state that binds the individual to a relationship (Allen and Meyer, 1990). Based on this view, commitment was operationalized through three dimensions: the affective, calculative, and normative. Affective commitment is explained as one's desire to remain in a committed relationship, while calculative commitment considers the costs of leaving a relationship, ranging from monetary to emotional considerations. Normative commitment encompasses those standards set forth by the individual based on obligations to remain in the relationship. Thus, normative commitment obligations can be explained as intrinsic motivations, such as remaining in the relationship due to one's own moral beliefs, or motivating external factors, such as obligations to friends and family members. Past research has found that affective, calculative, and normative commitments can be distinct ways

individuals justify commitment to a relationship, organization, product or service (Bergman, 2006).

Building on Allen and Meyer's (1990) conceptualization of commitment, Johnson's Tripartite Model of Commitment (Johnson 1991a, 1999) further defined and simplified the three dimensions of commitment from the standpoint of personal, moral, and structural behaviors while adding considerations of constraints to remaining in or leaving a relationship. Personal commitment can be explained as the extent to which an individual wants to maintain a relationship, and considers the affective dimensions of commitment. Moral commitments encompass one's personal moral structure when deciding if he or she should remain in a relationship, and are considered part of the normative constraints dimension. Personal and moral commitments have been argued to be intrinsic experiences, and a result of an individual's relationship-specific values and attitudes (Johnson, 1999). Lastly, structural commitment is the degree to which an individual feels he or she must remain in the current relationship and is part of the calculative constraints dimension. Structural commitment is a consideration of cost attributed to terminating the relationship (Johnson et al., 1999; Adams and Jones, 1997; Johnson, 1991a).

Both models suggest commitment is a force that jointly pulls an individual toward a relationship, while also entertaining the notion of constraints that prevent leaving the relationship. Therefore, to evaluate commitment to a romantic relationship, the current research will utilize scales which measure the concept through variables that pull individuals toward a relationship as well as those perceived as constraints to remain in or leave the relationship. As this research seeks to understand a relatively new phenomenon in the field, with little current research to guide it, the notion of commitment will be examined through

two separate measures, to understand which scale will be the better measure and fit for the parameters within the Investment Model, the guiding theory to this research.

As a measure of items that pull an individual to a relationship, Rusbult's Commitment to Relationship Scale will be utilized. According to Rusbult (1998), commitment level is arguably an excellent single indicator for determining a couple's likelihood of remaining together, and is relatively easy to assess. To examine scale reliability and validity, Rusbult (1998) performed three studies on modified Investment Model scales to determine the best fit items for each scale. Each study consisted of a survey administered to undergraduate students currently involved in a relationship. Study one included a 12 item measure of commitment ($\alpha=.91$) which was reduced to 11 items for study two ($\alpha=.91$). The final study included a refined commitment measure of nine items ($\alpha=.95$). The final commitment scale, still used today, resulted in seven items, all with factor loadings $>.87$ and $\alpha=.95$.

To test the generalizability of the commitment scale, Rusbult, Johnson and Morrow (1986) applied all Investment Model scales (relationship satisfaction, investment, quality of alternatives and commitment) in a cross-sectional survey of ongoing, adult romantic relationships. Previously, the Investment Model scales had been limited to college-age dating respondents (Rusbult, 1980a). The 1986 study tested the Commitment Scale over 130 married and single respondents of varying relationship lengths, age and income, as well as comparisons between males and females. Reliability of the commitment items was confirmed, $\alpha=.82$. As with previous research on the Investment Model scales, higher levels of commitment were found to be indicated by higher satisfaction and investment levels and decreased availability of alternatives. Significant differences were not noted between male and female respondents, or between varying income and education levels. The study did

show the investment-commitment relationship was not significant for single persons or the youngest respondents. Thus, the cross-sectional study gave further validation for the validity of the commitment scale (and subsequent scales) while also showing its generalizability.

To further demonstrate the generalizability and validity of the scale, Finkel, Rusbult, Kumashiro, and Hannon (2002), applied the scale to explain how differing commitment levels affect forgiveness in a relationship. The three part study revealed the commitment scale was a valid and reliable measure ($\alpha=.86$) when used to measure support for the claim that higher commitment levels promote increased forgiveness after a relationship discretion.

As the present research examines antecedents of commitment explained through the Investment Model which stems from social psychology, commitment will be defined in terms of the aforementioned dimensions. Consistent with current research and Rusbult's Investment Model, commitment will be operationalized as the persistence to continue the present relationship, mediated by the antecedents of perceived investment, alternatives and satisfaction. Commitment will thus be determined by responses to scales consisting of affective, cognitive and conative questions in line with previous research by Johnson (1999) and Allen and Meyer (1990).

The present research will utilize the Commitment to Relationship Scale measures as proposed by Rusbult (1998). The scale utilizes a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored by (1) strongly disagree and (5) strongly agree, using the following statements:

- 1- I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.
- 2- I want our relationship to last for a very long time.
- 3- I feel very attached to my partner.
- 4- It is likely that I will date someone other than my partner within the next year.
- 5- I would not feel very upset if my relationship were to end in the near future.
- 6- I want my relationship to last forever.
- 7- I am oriented toward the long-term future of my relationship.

INVESTMENT SIZE

Similar to quality of alternatives and commitment to relationship, investment size has also been found to play a key role in determining commitment to a romantic relationship or development of a relationship (often shown in marketing and tourism research as loyalty) with a product or service. Investment size refers to the importance of resources that are attached to the current relationship, and includes all tangible and intangible resources that would be lost if the relationship were terminated (Rusbult, 1980). Said resources typically range from material goods to mutual friendships, time, emotions, memories, and personal identity (Rusbult, Drigotas, and Verette, 1994).

Rusbult (1980) was among the first to classify investments in a romantic relationship as either extrinsic (tangible) resources or intrinsic (intangible) resources. She argued that extrinsic investments are those shared resources brought together by the relationship, which may be lost if the relationship were terminated. These could include social circles of friends and coworkers, material possessions, finances, children and pets. Intrinsically, resources also considered when evaluating relationship investment may include time contributed to the relationship, shared memories and experiences and feelings of safety and security. These investments could be lost and not transferable to other relationships and thus may discourage individuals from leaving the relationship regardless of the other impacts affecting the satisfaction and quality of the relationship. Thus, it has been shown that investments increase commitment to a relationship and play an important part in evaluating commitment levels to romantic relationships as well as commitment to products or services (Madlock and Dillow, 2012; Nusair, 2011). While investment size is more prevalent in romantic relationship

studies, it has been applied outside this area to understand why individuals remain in other forms of relationships even when unsatisfied.

Madlock and Dillow (2012) applied the concepts of the investment model as a whole to understand why dissatisfied workers would remain employed by an organization. In a survey of 244 full time adult employees, those who felt verbally abused at work and were dissatisfied with their current employer, admitted they remained with the organization in large because of their investment to the company. Investment in this realm was revealed to include years in service, contributions to retirement funds, and coworker relations.

As applied to the tourism industry, a study of 234 undergraduate students revealed perceived investment was a more important contributor to explaining commitment to a travel website than the quality of possible alternatives (Nusair, 2011). The respondents reported they valued their intrinsic investments, such as time spent to learn the website and familiarity with the site's offerings more when evaluating the cost to switch to another travel provider.

Similar to quality of alternatives, investment size is typically considered an antecedent of commitment, and measured as a construct of the investment model. While literature from the psychology and counseling fields has used investment size in terms of emotional and material losses and gains to determine commitment to a romantic partner, marketing literature has used investment size in terms of rewards gained and lost to determine an individual's commitment to a service or product (Li and Petrick, 2009; Le and Agnew, 2003). Regardless of investment resources, previous studies have overwhelmingly relied on the Investment Scale devised by Rusbult to measure investment size (Lennon, Stewart, Ledermann, 2013; Madlock and Dillow, 2012; Li and Petrick, 2009).

Rusbult's original investment scale was a 12-item measure developed to assess the degree to which resources are valued and the perceived loss each resource would generate if a relationship were to be terminated (Rusbult, 1988). Rusbult performed three studies on modified Investment Model scales to determine the best fit items for each scale (1998). Each study consisted of a survey administered to undergraduate students currently involved in a relationship. Of nine items tested over the three studies, five investment items were retained based on reliability, $\alpha=.84$ and all had factor loadings of .44 and higher.

The present research will utilize the Investment Scale as proposed by Rusbult (1998) to measure investment as an antecedent to commitment. The scale includes the following five items measured on a five point Likert-type scale anchored by (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. Questions of the investment scale include:

- 1- I have invested a great deal of time into my relationship that I would lose if my relationship ended.
- 2- My relationship with friends and family members would be complicated if my partner and I were to break up (partner is friends with people I care about).
- 3- Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner and I would lose all of this if we broke up.
- 4- My sense of who I am is linked to my partner and our relationship.
- 5- Compared to others I know, I have invested a great deal of resources into my relationship.

QUALITY OF ALTERNATIVES

Quality of alternatives refers to perceived desirability of the best available alternative to the current relationship (Rusbult, 1998). It is a measure of how and if an individual's needs could be met without the current partner, either by relationships with friends, other romantic partners or an absence of any partners. One of the most noted threats to the success of a relationship is attractiveness to another factor outside of the relationship (Lydon, 2010;

Amato, Booth, Johnson and Rogers, 2007). In the absence of alternatives to a current relationship, individuals may remain committed, despite dissatisfaction with their present relationship. With increased availability of potential alternatives to a current relationship, decreases in relationship satisfaction, commitment and interest have been noted (Linardatos and Lydon, 2011; Lydon, 2010). As quality of alternatives increases for one partner, the potential for infidelity in relationships increases, and is attributed as the most common cause for divorce (Amato et al., 2007; Amato and Previti, 2003).

Studies focused on understanding the impacts and effects of quality of alternatives have traditionally been coupled as part of research utilizing the investment model. Quality of alternatives as a single concept has been studied extensively in relationship studies; however, few studies exist outside the field that have focused solely on this concept. Studies tend to couple quality of alternatives as part of an explanation, rather than the single contributor to a phenomenon.

Shi and Lee (2011) applied the concept to understand the importance of alternatives to consumer's perceptions of and preference for brick and mortar banking versus online banking alternatives. Of the 156 surveyed individuals utilizing internet banking services, it was found that alternatives to internet banking decreased the perception of service quality, satisfaction and ultimately customer's commitment to using internet banking.

In the field of education, a study of 1,166 first-year college students revealed that as quality and availability of alternative university choices increased, current institutional commitment decreased (Okun, Goegan, and Mitric, 2009). The authors suggested that first-year college students who did not rank their university as one of their top three choices and had a high number of alternatives would be classified at high risk for transferring to

differing universities throughout their college career (Okun, Goegan, and Mitric, 2009).

While quality of alternatives was an important component to these studies, it was part of a larger number of concepts used to explain the research focus.

Existing research aimed to understand the effect of alternatives, be it to a relationship with a person, product or service, has applied the investment model concepts to explain the effect of alternatives on the relationship. Studies have generally found commitment to the relationship is directly affected by high or low levels of alternatives. Given that it is virtually impossible to not be faced with alternatives on a daily basis, researchers have consistently focused on what influences a person's consideration or disinterest in alternatives, to conclude quality of alternatives is one of the most reliable predictors used to determine levels of commitment to a relationship (Linardatos and Lydon, 2011; Li and Petrick, 2009; Lydon, Fitzsimons and Naidoo, 2003).

Measurements of quality of alternatives are limited in the realm of tourism and marketing research. The majority of studies focused on this concept, present research included, have tended to follow Rusbult's five item measurement scale for quality of alternatives, as it has continually been shown to be a reliable and valid measure of interpersonal relationships (Rusbult et. al 1986; Li and Petrick, 2009). As previously noted, an elevated perception of alternatives to a relationship is often a leading cause of infidelity. Marriage and family studies have used this connection to measure quality of alternatives by utilizing the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECRS) and the Infidelity Scale. Both measurement scales have been noted as useful in determining precursors of emotional and physical infidelity in a sensitive manner (DeWall, Lambert, Slotter, Pond, Deckman, Finkel, Luchies, and Fincham, 2011; Drigotas et al, 1999). However, due to the lengthy 36 scale

items of the ECRS and sensitive questions addressed in the Infidelity Scale, Rusbult's five item global measure has been consistently more popular and more widely accepted in marketing and tourism research (Nusair et al, 2011; Li and Petrick, 2008), and will be the measurement scale utilized for the present research.

The original investment scale was a 12-item investment measure developed to assess the degree to which resources are valued and the perceived loss each resource would generate if a relationship were to be terminated (Rusbult, 1988). Rusbult performed three studies on modified Investment Model scales to determine the best fit items for each scale. Each study consisted of a survey administered to undergraduate students currently involved in a relationship. Of six items tested over the three studies, five quality of alternatives items were retained based on reliability, $\alpha=.88$ and factor loadings of .64 and higher. The present research will utilize the quality of alternative measures as proposed by Rusbult (1998) to measure alternatives as an antecedent to commitment. The five items will be measured using a five point Likert-type scale, anchored by (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree. The questions included in the Quality of Alternatives scale include:

- 1- Alternatives to my relationship are attractive to me, such as dating another, spending time with friends or on my own.
- 2- Alternatives to my current relationship are close to ideal.
- 3- If I weren't in a relationship with my partner, I would do fine- I would find another appealing relationship.
- 4- The people other than my partner with whom I might become involved are very appealing.
- 5- My needs for companionship and intimacy could easily be fulfilled by other relationships.

SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter reviewed Existing research on relationship and vacation satisfaction, as well as the antecedents of satisfaction with life and relationship commitment. The purpose

was to present the variables that will be utilized to understand the hypotheses presented in the following chapter. It also presented the scales that will be implemented to understand the research as well as justification for each scale. The subsequent chapter will provide a detailed overview of the theoretical underpinning used to explain the connection of constructs presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to present findings of Existing literature used to explain the development of the suggested conceptual model, and provide a detailed explanation of the Investment Model, which serves as the theoretical basis for this research. First, a conceptual model will be discussed and variables encompassed in the model will be overviewed. A link between vacation and relationship satisfaction and satisfaction with life, as hypothesized in the conceptual model, will be discussed. Next, an overview of the Investment Model, the theoretical basis for the present research, will be discussed. Variables comprising the Investment Model will be illustrated to show their role in predicting commitment to a relationship. Alternative competing models used for predicating commitment will also be included in this section. Lastly, a recap of the hypothesized relationships for the current study will be presented.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Vacation and Relationship Satisfaction

Empirical studies have investigated relationships between leisure activities and marital satisfaction and have found increases in shared leisure activities contribute to increases in relationship satisfaction (Newman and Newman, 2008; Presser, 2000; Holman and Jacquart, 1988; Hill, 1988). Hill (1988) analyzed 280 married couples interviewed in the 1975-1981 Time Use Longitudinal Panel Study, and concluded that increased amounts of shared leisure were correlated with a strong reduction in the probability of divorce or separation. The findings of his study showed that of all given leisure activities, the category

most strongly associated with increased marital commitment was recreation (Hill 1988). These studies did not operationalize the term “leisure,” therefore it cannot be determined to what extent travel was included as a tenant of the leisure component. However, early empirical studies have produced evidence for a direct relationship between shared leisure and marital satisfaction; and from this evidence, researchers have reasoned that this was a causal relationship moving from the shared leisure activities to increased levels of marital satisfaction or quality (Baldwin, Ellis, and Baldwin, 1999).

Similarly, Hoopes and Lounsbury (1989) conducted a study of 129 working adults and measured satisfaction with family and marriage pre and post-vacation. A vacation together was cited as a significant variable that attributed to increases in post-vacation satisfaction in the domain of family and marriage. Their study supported previous research by concluding that satisfaction with tourism leads to satisfaction with leisure life, and in turn, contributes to overall well-being and life satisfaction.

Empirical research has been found to further the claim that vacations could increase marital satisfaction. A 2012 survey of 1,000 married or dating US adults, conducted by Royal Caribbean International, cited sex as the top activity on a couple’s cruise itinerary. Eighty percent of respondents said they left a cruise feeling more connected to their spouse or partner, while 67 percent reported being more in love with their significant other after the vacation. Additionally, 75 percent of those surveyed said spending time together during the cruise improved their relationship when they returned home (Sierra, 2012). Similarly, Brown (2010) surveyed 1,927 UK adults engaged in a relationship who had traveled together in the previous 2 years. They found that 67 percent of respondents didn’t argue at all during their vacation, yet 54 percent admitted they had argued with their partner at least once a day

before the vacation. The study also found that couples are intimate on vacation eight times more than while they are at home (Brown, 2010).

An Expedia Vacation Survey of 2,076 adults revealed several indications that satisfaction with a vacation led to increased relationship satisfaction (2013). The survey findings showed that vacations correlate to a happy love life even after the vacation is over. Those respondents, who had taken a vacation within the past year, or even within the past four years, were more likely to be satisfied with their love life than those who had not gone on a vacation in five years or more (Expedia 2013). The survey also showed that seventy nine percent of people who vacation at least three times per year have happy marriages (2013).

The previously documented studies have focused heavily on married adults and relationship satisfaction mediated by leisure (travel) activities. Thus, there appears to be a gap in research of the effects travel and relationship satisfaction for dating, cohabitating, and those married for varying lengths of time. The current research will include these relationship types when considering the effect of vacation satisfaction's influence on relationship satisfaction. Thus, building on previous research, the current study postulates:

Hypothesis 1a: Vacation Satisfaction will have a direct and positive correlation with Relationship Satisfaction.

Relationship Satisfaction and Its Link to Satisfaction with Life

Happiness has long been viewed as a measure to evaluate one's quality of and satisfaction with life, through a variety of highly cited studies (Veenhoven, 1994a; Diener, Sandvik, Pavot, 1991; Shin and Johnson, 1978). The attainment of happiness has also been viewed as man's ultimate goal, with origins from the Greek philosopher Aristotle who noted:

“for both the general run of men and people of superior refinement say that it is happiness, and identify living well and doing well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise. For the former think it is some plain and obvious thing, like pleasure, wealth or honour; they differ, however, from one another- and often even the same man identifies it with different things, with health when he is ill, with wealth when he is poor, but conscious of their ignorance, they admire those who proclaim some great ideal that is about their comprehension,” (Aristotle, 350BC, as translated by Ross, 1980)

As suggested by Aristotle, happiness is a subjective construct; often a measure of emotion, in which individuals consider varying domains when determining happiness levels (Diener, Lucas, and Scollon, 2006). Happiness has been conceptualized as being composed of varying empirically separable constructs, which include four basic measurements; overall life satisfaction, domain-specific satisfaction, positive beliefs, and positive versus negative emotions (Diener, et al 2006; Lucas, Diener, and Suh, 1996).

Satisfaction has been defined as a state of mind, one of which considers an all-encompassing comparison of life achievements and future goals (Veenhoven 1994a). Researchers interested in measuring life satisfaction typically combine these facets to obtain an all-encompassing report of overall well-being. Existing research has used a multitude of domains to measure life satisfaction, from financial security (Diener and Biswas-Diener, 2002; Kasser and Ryan 1993), to relationship assessment (Mastekaasa, 1994), to perceived health, physical activity and education levels (Melin, Fugl-Mayer, K., and Fugl-Mayer, A., 2003). A study of over 2,500 Swedish residents reviewed 10 domains (education, employment, health, finances, performance ability, physical activity, gender, age, partner status, and immigrant status) to reveal education level and perceived health were the most prominent positive predictors of satisfaction with life (Merlin, et al 2003).

Maslow's Hierarchy suggests a need for belonging and love must be met before self-fulfillment (satisfaction) and enlightenment can be achieved. It could then be surmised the need for relationship satisfaction is imperative to achieving overall life satisfaction. As such, romantic relationships have been shown through a multitude of fields of study as an important contributor to well-being and life satisfaction (Schoenborn, 2004; Williams, 2003; Sirgy; Kiecolt-Glaser and Newton, 2001, Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999).

Positive associations between satisfaction with life and the success of relationships has also have been shown through a variety of studies (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985; Pavot and Diener, 1993; Lucas, Diener, and Suh, 1996). As previously reported, Merlin (2003) found that respondents with a partner were likely to have significantly increased satisfaction with life levels in comparison to those without a partner, on the whole. These findings were attributed in particular to self-reported higher satisfaction with the subdomains of sexual life and family life.

Contrary to the Merlin 2003 study, through a series of 300 questions about quality of life domains and overall satisfaction, asked of 10,000 individuals, the Danish Quality of Life Population Survey showed money, power and education were not the ultimate goals to life, and did not necessarily lead to the happiest respondents (Ventegodt, Andersen, Merrick, 2003). In a sense, the researchers concluded rich executives did not have higher levels of well-being than those less wealthy, and those professionals with years of education did not have significantly different levels of quality of life and satisfaction than those of the unskilled workers. Similar to previous research, their study showed the most important indicators of life satisfaction were how individuals relate to others (relationships) and the extent of how often individuals do things they enjoy. Thus, earning more and being more educated did not

necessarily constitute higher levels of satisfaction. Relationships with self and others revealed a high correlation to satisfaction and thus the need to measure satisfaction with life beyond specific concrete domains is likely justified in this study.

Existing research supports the notion that satisfaction with marital relationship is the strongest correlate of happiness, thus leading to higher levels of perceived satisfaction with life. As an example, one study utilized interviews of respondents from 19 countries to conclude married persons internationally were happier than all of the other groups, to include single, divorced, and widowed (Mastekaasa 1994). The positive correlation between satisfaction with life and relationships has been consistently represented in literature even when controlling for variables such as sex, age and income (Arrindell et al, 2001).

Heady, Veenhoven, and Wearing used longitudinal data from the Australian Quality of Life Panel Study over six years to determine which of six subdomains had the strongest correlation to satisfaction with life and well-being (1991). Of the subdomains, satisfaction with marriage was found to have the strongest link to well-being compared to the domains of work, material standards of living, leisure, friendship and health. The study revealed happy marriages and individual life satisfaction were indicative of two-way causation. Increases in life satisfaction were directly correlated to being happily married and happy people were more likely to remain committed to their partners. Conversely, less happy people revealed less satisfaction with their marriage. Additionally, the study showed those in low status careers or routine jobs reported high levels of job and standard of living satisfaction thus showing elite job status was not a needed factor for overall life satisfaction.

A study of 196 men and women (34% divorced, 34% married, 32% widowed) showed married adults had the highest self-reported life satisfaction as measured through

quality of life constructs. Divorced individuals reported lower levels of life satisfaction than married and widowed, and showed the lowest levels of well-being, optimism and life satisfaction (Ben-Zur, 2012). Note, this study did not take into consideration divorced, but remarried individuals.

Similarly, Williams (1988) concluded that the interpersonal intimacy and emotional support provided by a spouse leads to well-being. While the majority of these studies have focused solely on legally married couples, research has shown many of the benefits of a legal state recognized marriage (such as increased life satisfaction) may also be met by alternatives to marriage, such as cohabitation (Glenn and Weaver, 1988; Mastekaasa, 1994).

Veenhoven commented that low satisfaction was indicative of a serious shortcoming to a relationship (1984). His research found singles expressed less pleasure with life than married persons, and divorced and widowed individuals were more likely to express low levels of satisfaction with life. In his study, the difference in life-satisfaction between singles and people in a relationship was greater than that expressed between rich and poor, as can be explained through deprivation (Veenhoven, 1984). He further attributed this deprivation and decreased satisfaction with life to loneliness and lack of a supportive partner, thus furthering the notion that relationship satisfaction and satisfaction with life are highly correlated.

Several medical and health related studies have concluded that mortality rates amongst those married (or another bonded relationship between partners) are significantly lower across several health conditions, to include heart attacks and cancer (Gordon and Rosenthal 1995). Many other studies have also shown that among married couples, relationship quality is positively related to their mental and physical health (Robles and Kiecolt-Glaser, 2003; Williams, 2003). Overall, concluding from Existing research, happily

married adults appear to have higher levels of life satisfaction than do their unhappily married or single counterparts. Stemming from previous findings, this research will seek to determine if relationship satisfaction (regardless of legal relationship status) can be increased through travel, with and without one's significant other, and improve overall life satisfaction.

Vacation Satisfaction and its Relation to Satisfaction with Life

Several of the first studies to investigate the relationship between vacation and life satisfaction levels have shown leisure satisfaction correlates as highly, if not more highly, with life satisfaction than any other domain (Andrews and Withey, 1976; Campbell et al, 1976; Headey et al, 1985). Subsequent research has further expanded these claims to show "travel" as a leisure activity that provides a break from the mundane, fast-paced routine way of life, which can lead to increases in quality of life and relationship satisfaction (Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff, 2012; de Bloom, Geurts, Taris, Sonnentag, de Weerth, and Kompier, 2010; Fritz and Sonnentag, 2006; Strauss-Blasche and Marktl, 2000; Crompton, 1979).

Current research has also cited leisure as a contributing factor in increased well-being in adults, a factor which can reduce stress and increases relationship satisfaction, thus contributing to higher levels of satisfaction with life (Sirgy, Kruger, Lee and Yu, 2011; de Bloom et al, 2010; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Strauss-Blasche et al, 2002; Neal, Sirgy and Uysal, 1999). According to Wang, Chen, Lin, and Wang (2008), leisure satisfaction is a significant predictor of life satisfaction, and that satisfaction with leisure experiences changes during all life stages. Their study of 2,700 undergraduate students and faculty found life satisfaction was significantly predicted by one's leisure satisfaction ($p < .05$). They additionally found life satisfaction to significantly be predicted by leisure experiences at

home ($p < .01$) and satisfaction with travel experiences ($p < .01$), which accounted for 47 percent of the variance in life satisfaction scores (Neal, Sirgy, and Uysal 1999). Similarly, the 2013 Expedia Vacation Happiness Survey, found 61 percent of people who vacationed at least three times a year reported they are satisfied with life in general (Expedia, 2013).

A qualitative study by Dolnicar, Yanamandram, and Cliff (2012) showed 40 percent of respondents listed vacations or holidays, without being prompted, when asked to list factors that contribute to quality of life. Outside the tourism field, a qualitative medical study of 47 cancer patients, family members and medical advisors found travel by cancer patients following treatment increased perceived personal health and identity, self-image, independence, and personal behavior (Hunter-Jones, 2006). They found that vacations were a way to reduce burnout and stress for those caring for patients with an illness, thus likely increasing the overall life satisfaction level for the patient and caregivers.

A German study of 29 married females tasked as caregivers to their male spouses who had been diagnosed with dementia, sought to understand the effects of assisted vacations (Wilz and Fink-Heitz; 2008). Using an experimental approach with pre and post measurement, the study showed female caregivers who participated in an assisted vacation (one with an additional caregiver for the dementia patient) with their spouse showed significant improvements in emotional and physical states after the vacation. The results were measured immediately upon return and three months after the vacation. Each response showed a significant reduction in depression of the caregivers and a reduction in physical complaints, thus leading to increases in satisfaction with life. Recently, a comprehensive tourism literature review of 98 articles related to the health benefits of travel revealed that

travel may contribute to increases in mental and physical health for adults, which in turn can contribute to increases in satisfaction with life (Chen and Petrick, 2013).

Also within the field of tourism, Nawijn (2011) studied 3,650 adult travelers in the Netherlands over a two-year period to track the effect of vacation satisfaction on well-being and satisfaction with life. He offered the implication that “if one wants to boost their happiness by means of vacationing, one has to take many holidays in order to enjoy many short-lived periods of increased happiness. This is not necessarily bad news for the tourism industry; in fact, it is good news, as this means that people are best off by booking many trips,” (Nawijn 2011, p. 661). Nawijn further concluded that when travelers returned home, happiness was only significantly higher for those who had a very relaxed holiday experience indicative of a satisfactory vacation experience. (2010).

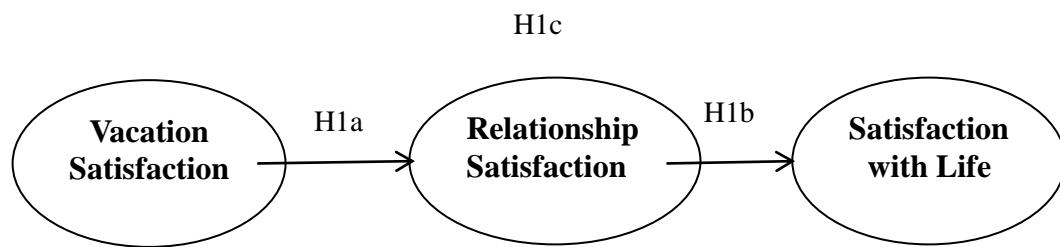
Similar to previous results, Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) surveyed 6,004 holiday and non-holiday taking UK couples and found empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that those participating in a holiday (of at least 4 consecutive days) each year, compared to those who did not, increased their sense of well-being and enhanced their happiness. A 2009 meta-analysis, revealed a positive post trip effect on life satisfaction, as tourists experience less stress and are in generally better health when they return, although these positive effects may be short lived (De Bloom, et al., 2009).

Thus, building on previous research to understand the new phenomena in this study, the current study seeks to find if vacation satisfaction has an effect on satisfaction with life, as mediated by relationship satisfaction:

Hypothesis 1b: Vacation Satisfaction will have a direct and positive correlation with Satisfaction with Life as mediated by Relationship Satisfaction

Based on the aforementioned research, a conceptual model (Figure 3) is developed to investigate the correlations between relationship, vacation and life satisfaction. The model seeks to reaffirm that satisfaction with vacations will have a positive and direct effect on relationship satisfaction which in turn will lead to an increase in satisfaction with life. Research has cited vacations effect on relationships and life satisfaction (Strauss et al, 2000; Hoopes and Lounsbury, 1989; Nawijin and Peters, 2010). However, previous research has not sought to understand how, or if, differing travel partner(s) effect these three constructs. Therefore, the conceptual model will be tested over three situations (1) travel with significant other; (2) travel without significant other, and (3) travel with significant other and children, to understand if travel partner affects overall vacation, relationship and life satisfaction levels for an individual or his or her partner.

FIGURE 3: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STRUCTURE AND ANTECEDENTS OF SATISFACTION WITH LIFE



THE INVESTMENT MODEL

Interdependence Theory (Thibaut and Kelley 1959), as its name suggests, considers relationship continuance to be a function of the level of dependence an individual fosters within the dyad. Kelly and Thibaut (1978) found that interdependence occurs when one

partner's behavior affects (positively or negatively) the behaviors of the other partner. The degree of dependence, as explained by Rusbult (1998) is the extent to which a partner feels they "need" the relationship, or the degree to which they rely on the relationship, to achieve certain outcomes. Dependence level, the central component of Interdependence Theory, has been further explained as a measure of rewards generated versus costs incurred by the relationship (Le and Agnew 2003). Thus, Interdependence Theory may serve as an extension of Social Exchange Theory or Resource Theory, both of which consider rewards versus gains to understand relationships.

Interdependence Theory postulates an ideal relationship is characterized with high levels of rewards and low levels of costs. Rewards are noted as "exchanged resources that are pleasurable and gratifying," while costs are "exchanged resources that result in a loss or punishment" (Specher, 1998). Interactions with others, products or services are experienced as rewards to the extent that they fulfill one or more important needs, and are regarded as unpleasant (costs), to the extent that they fail to meet other important needs. As explained by Bartsch (2005), an individual within a dyad may choose one of several outlets when deciding the reward expected from a choice. The individual may decide to choose the outcome that (1) maximizes the other's outcome, (2) benefits his/her self, (3) equally benefits both partners, or (4) provides for the minimum difference between partners, i.e. a compromise.

The theory considers four types of rewards and costs; emotional, social, instrumental, and opportunity. It assumes that humans have diverse social-emotional needs, some biologically based, and others learned. It implies that needs range throughout Maslow's Hierarchy of survival to spirituality, and that some needs are pervasive while others are specific to certain situations and partners. Many needs are inherently interpersonal and can

be satisfied only in the company of others, such as belonging, sexuality and security (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Hazan and Shaver 1994).

Similarly, the major premise of Social Exchange Theory is that “humans avoid costly behavior and seek rewarding statuses, relationships, interactions, and feeling states to the end that their profits are maximized or their losses are minimized” (Nye, 1979, p. 2). An assumption of Social Exchange Theory is that individuals are motivated by self-interest. Klein and White (1996) indicated that “individuals are unilaterally motivated by self-interest and that individuals seek things and relationships they regard as beneficial for themselves” (p. 63).

Closely related to Social Exchange Theory, Resource Theory broadly refers to any conceptual model or approach that focuses on the exchange of resources between people. Under this approach, relationships provide the means by which people can obtain needed resources from others and, in return, gain the needed satisfactions they crave (Rettig and Bubolz, 1983). Resources are defined as “any item, concrete or symbolic, which can become the object of exchange among people” (Foa and Foa 1980, p. 78), and individuals satisfy personal needs through resource exchanges with others.

Further extending these theories, the Investment Model postulates that as one’s dependence on a relationship strengthens, commitment to the relationship is increased and also strengthened. According to Rusbult (1993), high levels of commitment deter threatening alternatives, promote healthy relationship maintenance, and represent the long-term stability of a relationship. Commitment is the intention of the individual to remain in a relationship, and can be characterized by a psychological attachment to a romantic partner (Rusbult 1980a, Arriaga and Agnew 2001). Le and Agnew (2003) further explained, whereas dependence is

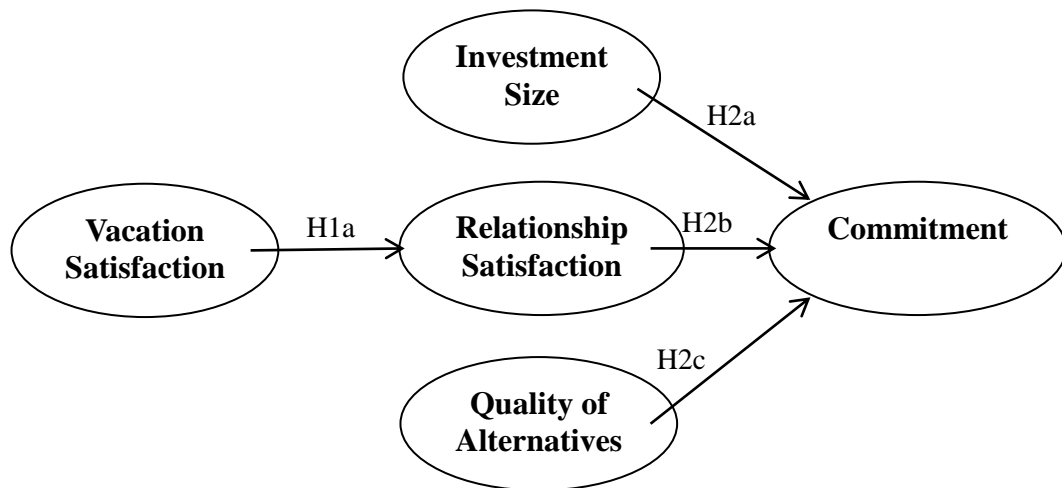
the “structural state” of a romantic relationship, commitment is the “psychological” experience of being in said state.

Extending Interdependence Theory, the Investment Model (Figure 4) suggests commitment to a relationship is a function of satisfaction and consideration of alternatives. However, it also adds consideration to how much an individual perceives they have invested in the relationship as a determinant of commitment level (Rusbult, 1998). Investments have been viewed as tangible and intangible resources attached to the relationship that would be lost if the partnership were terminated. Time, money, memories, and emotions are considered key intrinsic investments, while shared social circles and material possessions are noted extrinsic investments that can impact commitment levels (Rusbult, Drigotas and Verette, 1994).

The Investment Model stems from relationship theory and is an extension of Interdependence theory, with a more specific focus on commitment being a determining factor to the success of one’s relationship (Rusbult 1980b). This model postulates romantic relationship commitment is influenced by relationship satisfaction, quality of alternatives and investment size. “Dependence” has been defined as a degree to which one relies on a partner to fill important relationship needs (Rusbult and Van Lange, 1996). The theory applies two constructs to determine said dependence level of a romantic relationship; an internal consideration of satisfaction and an external possibility of alternatives to the relationship. The first, satisfaction level, refers to the partner’s ability to meet the individual’s most important needs (Rusbult, 1989). In the most basic sense, as satisfaction level increases, it should hold true that dependence to the relationship would be assured. However, in addition to satisfaction level, alternatives to the current relationship are considered as a factor in

determining relationship dependence level. Quality of alternatives considers the degree to which the individual's needs might be met outside of the current dyad; by another romantic partner, family, friends, or by remaining single (Rusbult 1989).

FIGURE 4: THE INVESTMENT MODEL



To verify the significance of the constructs, Le and Agnew (2003) performed a meta-analysis of the Investment Model over the course of 52 studies. Their results, inclusive of over 11,500 participants, indicated that the variables (satisfaction, alternatives, and investments) accounted for almost two-thirds of the variance in commitment. Le and Agnew concluded overall that satisfaction was more predictive of commitment ($r=+.68$) than investment ($r=+.42$) and quality of alternatives ($r+=-.44$). However, quality of alternatives

and investments still both explained a considerable amount of variance, and were shown to be essential to the model when determining and explaining commitment.

Applying these constructs to commitment, it would seem a simple equation of (1) increased satisfaction = increased commitment, (2) increased alternatives to the relationship = decreased commitment, and (3) increased investment size= increased commitment. However, contrary to this, dissatisfied individuals may remain in relationships when they perceive the alternatives to the current relationship are low or their investments are high. As an example, if Paul were unsatisfied in his romantic relationship, yet had invested many years and had never sought alternatives, he may remain committed, despite satisfaction. Whereas Mae, while seemingly satisfied but less invested in her relationship, may find alternatives to the relationship worth considering, and therefore may not be as committed as the simple equation would suggest. Therefore, as research by Le and Agnew (2003) has suggested, while satisfaction is the highest indicator of commitment, all constructs must be considered to evaluate and understand the degree of commitment.

While the Investment Model began as a psychological understanding of romantic relationships, it has been used extensively in the fields of marketing, health care, and consumer and organizational behavior to understand how best to increase or stabilize commitment to a product, service, company or person. Applying the Investment Model to the field of tourism, Li and Petrick (2008) evaluated 727 panel respondents' cruise line loyalty based on the constructs of the investment model. They found that satisfaction was the strongest predictor of attitudinal loyalty. Their study concluded that quality of alternative options had a negative influence on loyalty while investment size was a positive predictor of

loyalty, thus consistent with the basic understanding of the Investment Model. Their model additionally explained 74% of the variance in commitment as expressed through loyalty.

The health and wellness field has also recognized the potential implications the Investment Model may provide for explaining commitment to a medical regimen. Putnam, Finney, Barkley and Bonner (1994) used the model to predict 60 patients' commitment to a medical regimen, and found that by enhancing rewards (satisfaction), and increasing investment to a 10 day antibiotic, patients' commitment to the medical treatment increased.

In the field of organizational management, Fu (2011) used the model to explain commitment to career through a study of 255 IT professionals throughout Taiwan. His study showed that satisfaction was the most important factor to predict career commitment. Investment to the career was not shown significant for senior IT professionals; however it was shown to be a significant predictor of commitment to an IT career for junior IT staff. Alternative career options were not found to be a valid predictor of commitment (Fu, 2011).

In contrast to satisfaction being the key construct to determine commitment, Bardi and Eckhardt (2012) conducted research in the marketing field to understand the Zipcar (a car share program) consumer market. Throughout 40 semi-structured interviews, Zipcar users responded overwhelmingly that they were satisfied with the program, yet had low commitment to the brand. The consideration of alternative modes of travel through other car share programs, and little investment to the company did not lead to commitment to the service (Bardi and Eckhardt, 2012).

Similarly, a study of 234 Generation Y university students found investment (time and effort) to be the most influential factor determining commitment to an online travel website (Nusair, Parsa, and Cobanoglu, 2011). As explained in their research, alternatives did

not offer great unique distinctions, and while satisfaction was a positive indicator of commitment, the time and effort the student had exhausted to learn the travel website was the best indicator of commitment to that site when considering switching costs. This study was consistent with others that have shown the original Investment Model premise is accurate, however added this was only the case when alternatives to the current offering are more attractive. Thus, simply having alternatives was not motivation enough to change commitment levels. When alternatives were not significantly different (as was the case of the tested websites), then the costs of switching to a new service (as determined through investment size), did not justify a switch from the current preferred site to a differing alternative travel website (Nusair et al. 2011).

Amato (2008) showed changes in American marriage and family structure, specifically the effects of divorce since the 1960s, have decreased child well-being, led to a lower sense of well-being amongst adults, increased child poverty, and become a financial burden on society. Conversely, commitment has consistently been shown as the central most important construct predicting relationship persistence (Johnson, 1999; Wieselquist, 1999; Rusbult, 1983). Thus, research that attempts to find factors that both weaken and strengthen relationship commitment seems to be imperative to explain and reverse this trend, and potentially lead to increases in healthy and happy relationships.

Investment Size and its Relation to Commitment to Relationship

Rusbult's addition to Interdependence Theory was the inclusion of consideration of investment size as a determinant of relationship commitment. Investments, as explained by Rusbult (1988), are intrinsic or extrinsic "costs" associated with maintaining or leaving the relationship. Time, monetary resources, and emotions were given as examples of invested

intrinsic investments, while extrinsic investments were those considerations that had outside links to the relationship, such as mutual friendships, shared activities, and material possessions. Rusbult concluded that higher investments would lead to increased commitment levels, as leaving a relationship in which one is highly invested would “require abandoning all that had been invested over time,” (Rusbult, 1988, pg 149.)

To demonstrate the value of investments in a relationship, Rusbult, Zembrodt and Gunn (1982) conducted a study of 128 dating undergraduate students, randomly assigned to several experimental sessions. Their results showed that highly invested respondents (time, money, emotion) were more likely to respond constructively to relationship issues through discussion of problems, compromises, or allowing time to improve the situation versus those with low investments. This demonstrated that higher investment levels led to increased commitment levels within the relationship. Those respondents with lower levels of investment in the relationship displayed more reactive behaviors resulting in ending the relationship, thus significantly decreasing or altogether terminating the commitment to the relationship (Rusbult, et al., 1982).

Several fields of study have built on this notion of investment size as a predictor of relationship commitment, and sought to understand how investment level to a product, service or business affects commitment (loyalty) to said product, service or business. Ping (1993) introduced the term “structural commitment” as an indication of how likely consumers were to remain committed (loyal) to a product when consideration was given to the investment made to the relationship, and the cost of switching.

In the fields of marketing, consumer behavior and retailing, investment size is closely related to the marketing concepts of switching costs and the risks and rewards associated

with changing brands, companies or service providers. Switching costs have been shown as barriers that a consumer will consider when deciding to remain loyal (committed) to a relationship with a product or business (Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan, 2003). Burnham, Frels, and Mahajan (2003) found switching costs directly affected commitment to a service provider, in this case 158 credit card and 144 phone company users. Switching costs in their study, (i.e., financial investments, satisfaction with the current company, relationship satisfaction with employees, and difficulty in identifying alternatives to the current company), explained 30 percent of the variance in the consumers' intention to remain committed to the current provider. Similarly, Fornell (1992) outlined the cost of relearning a new product or service, search costs, risk (financial and social), and earned discounts as possible considerations to switching costs.

In the field of organizational behavior, research on employee retention has revealed that employees are less likely to switch careers as the costs of doing so increases (Becker 1960, Farrell and Rusbult, 1981). Their survey of 107 industrial workers showed commitment to the respondent's current job was best predicted by the perceived direct and indirect investments to the job, as measured through 16 variables including: length of service, retirement plans, training, and community ties (Farrell and Rusbult, 1981).

In the services marketing literature, Berry and Parasuraman (1991) explained that relationships (with a service provider) rely on sound mutual commitment. Thus, not only must the consumer be committed to the service, the provider must demonstrate an investment to the consumer. Research from this discipline has conceptualized investment as the consumer's perception of the company's investment of resources utilized to attract and retain relationships with customers (De Wulf, Odekerken-Schroder, and Iacobucci, 2001).

Literature has shown investments extended by the service provider which increase investments on behalf of the consumer, may include the training and retention of dedicated employees, increased personalized communication with the consumer, and continual enhancements to service (Palmatier, 2008).

In line with this research, the tourism field has noted that consumers prefer reciprocated acts of investments to increase commitment to a tourism provider. A study of 279 whitewater rafters by Morais, Dorsch and Backman (2004) found a significant amount of respondents were more committed to a rafting company that invested time, love and status in consumers over those who invested more money. They found that consumers reported they were more committed (loyal) to a rafting company if the company reciprocated what the consumer had invested, such as time, status, and an emotional attachment. Interestingly, a correlation between higher amounts of money invested in a company did not significantly predict commitment (loyalty) to the company. This suggests intrinsic investments may be more valued than extrinsic investments in a committed relationship.

The current study seeks to determine if investment size influences commitment to a romantic relationship. In agreement with the Investment Model, this study hypothesizes that investment size (as determined through a measure of five items) will have a positive correlation with relationship commitment. Thus:

Hypothesis 2a: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and positively influenced by Investment Size.

Relationship Satisfaction and its Relation to Relationship Commitment

Relationship literature has overwhelmingly found that satisfaction with, and commitment to, a romantic relationship are not one in the same. Rusbult (1988) noted that

people may feel committed to continue a relationship even though they are not satisfied, be it for the sake of children, investments, social status or a number of other factors. Commitment is noted to be strengthened by the amount of satisfaction one perceives in a relationship (Rusbult and Buunk 1993). Satisfaction, a construct within the Interdependence Theory, is a combination of the rewards and costs associated with a romantic relationship, along with a perceived comparison level to previous and known relationships, to determine the overall relationship outcome.

As an example, if a person shares many travel interests with a romantic partner (high rewards), with little conflict and misunderstanding (low costs), and has determined the current relationship is better than the previous one held by the individual (comparison level), satisfaction would likely be high and contribute to an increased level of commitment to the relationship. Conversely, if individuals differ greatly on professional career aspirations (low rewards), participate in heated discussions due to these differences (high costs) and continually compare the relationship to other's they feel are superior to their own relationships (comparison level), commitment to the romantic partner would likely be lowered attributed to lower levels of satisfaction derived from the relationship.

To show satisfaction as an indicator of commitment, and an overall contribution to persistence of a relationship, a survey of 418 individuals was administered to understand how individuals foresee future time orientation in romantic relationship (Sakalli-Ugurlu, 2003). She found that those who self-defined their relationship as satisfactory, through adjectives such as loving, happy, enjoyable, and passionate, (all synonymous with satisfaction) had more thoughts and increased consideration for the future of their current relationship (2003).

Outside of the psychology and relationship literature, numerous studies have shown customer satisfaction is directly related to loyalty as shown through repurchase and revisit actions (Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012; Petrick, 2004; Cronin, Brady and Hult, 2000; Fornell, 1992; Boulding, Kalra, Staelin and Zeithaml, 1993; Zeithamel, Berry, and Parasuraman, 1996). Heskett's (1994) service profit chain hypothesized that positive customer satisfaction leads to increased customer loyalty which directly increases profitability for the service provider. This runs parallel with the satisfaction construct in the Investment Model which suggests relationship satisfaction leads to increased commitment which in turn increases relationship continuance.

A study of 12,000 bank patrons designed to find which factors greatly influenced loyalty (commitment) to a particular bank, found that customer satisfaction accounted for 37 percent of the variance attributed to loyalty (Hallowell, 1996). Other factors such as competitor activities and non-banking items were included as measurement items, however satisfaction was shown as the greatest influence on remaining loyal to one service provider.

In the tourism field, tourist satisfaction is often linked to repeat purchase or revisit intentions. Kozak and Rimmington's (2000) survey of vacationers to Mallorca, Spain concluded overall satisfaction with a vacation was the greatest influencing factor on the individual's revisit intentions, which in turn would likely increase loyalty to the location. Similarly, a study of golf traveler's intentions to revisit a location found that while satisfaction, value and loyalty were direct correlates of intention to revisit, satisfaction of the experience was the strongest predictor of future revisit intentions (Petrick and Backman, 2001).

A review of the purchase habits of travelers revealed those who made travel related purchases online (hotels, airline tickets etc.) were more satisfied with the service and became more loyal to the provider than those who made their purchases offline (Shankar, Smith and Rangaswamy, 2003). They attributed these findings to the increase in information available online versus offline, and the amount of time an individual had invested in researching their own travel plans online versus less time spent using off line measures. These findings correspond to that of the Investment Model by showing more investment and more satisfaction lead to increases in commitment (loyalty) to a certain provider.

The current study seeks to determine the effect of satisfaction on commitment to a romantic relationship. In agreement with the Investment Model and the studies outlined above, this study hypothesizes that satisfaction will have a positive correlation with relationship commitment. Thus:

Hypothesis 2b: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and positively influenced by Relationship Satisfaction.

Quality of Alternatives and its Relation to Relationship Commitment

Leik and Leik's (1977) definition of commitment specifically states that commitment is achieved when "members are no longer attending to alternatives." Following the logic of Interdependence Theory, the Investment Model suggests persons who only have lesser alternatives to their current relationship are likely to be more committed than those who have more attractive alternatives. Quality of alternatives considers all possible alternate situations to the current relationship, ranging from other romantic partners, to spending time with family and friends, or remaining single (Rusbult 1988). Commitment is thereby weakened by external sources considered positive alternatives to the current relationship. Drigotas and

Rusbult suggested individuals who perceived their current relationship was better than the possibility of alternatives to the relationship were most likely to remain committed to their current partner (1992). Contrarily, several studies have reported infidelity (resulting in action taken to seek alternatives to the current relationship) is one of the most common reasons for relationship termination and divorce (Lydon, 2010; Amato and Previti, 2003).

As previously referenced, Ping (1997) studied how “structural” constraints are related to constructive and destructive consumer relationship outcomes. When considering attractiveness of alternatives, investments, and switching costs, quality of alternatives was more significantly correlated with satisfaction than with switching costs and investments. Satisfaction was viewed as the factor most indicative of commitment (loyalty) and therefore consideration of alternatives was shown to be an important construct to consider when developing loyalty programs.

As one’s attention to individuals is said to be limited, attention allocated to a romantic partner should likely reduce attention paid to others, and those in relationships should give more attention to their partner than to others (Arriaga and Agnew, 2001). Along this line of reasoning, Berscheid, Graziano, Monson and Dermer (1976) conducted an experimental study with 18-22 year old students (n=54) in relationships, to understand the depth of attention paid to alternative attraction(s) and its impact on relationship commitment. The researchers asked participants their preference in viewing material regarding their dating partner or viewing material about potential other partners, and concluded that more participants chose material about their current partner than others. The study concluded that those participants in more committed relationships were more likely inattentive to alternative partners than those in non-committed relationships (Berscheid et al., 1976).

A longitudinal study of 215 participants in self-reported committed relationships, found attentiveness to alternatives, thus those who had considered and were aware of alternatives to the current relationship, was the single largest factor in predicting relationship termination (Arriaga and Agnew, 2001). Participants in the study who were in self-reported exclusive relationships showed less responsiveness to alternative opposite-sex targets than those whose commitment scores were lower. Those who were more aware of alternatives in the study were also less likely to be in the same relationship when asked 2 months later (2001). Thus, this study was in line with previous research which has suggested consideration of alternatives is a significant predictor of relationship commitment.

Conversely, one recent study confined to the results of a lab setting, suggested sheltering one too extensively from alternatives can lead to the “forbidden fruit” syndrome (DeWall, Maner, Deckman, and Rouby, 2011). “Forbidden Fruit” hypothesis, as stated by the authors, is the desirability of those things which are forbidden or off-limits to an individual, and can be made less desirable by allowing a significant other access to others without significant limits (DeWall et al, 2011). This is contrary to extensive research which shows inattentiveness to alternatives is the best way to thwart a person from lowering their commitment and considering the possibility of relationship alternatives (Plant, Kunstman, Maner, 2010; Lydon, Menzies-Toman, Burton, and Bell, 2008; Rusbult, 1983). While the current research investigates the relationship effects of traveling without one’s significant other, whereby participants may likely have increased access to “forbidden fruit,” it is hypothesized, based on extensive Existing research, that increased alternatives to the current relationship will have a negative and direct correlation to relationship commitment. Thus:

Hypothesis 2c: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and negatively influenced by Quality of Alternatives.

TRAVEL WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Only recently have practitioners begun to examine the trend of couples traveling (as a means of leisure) without their significant other on (industry coined) girlfriend getaways or vacations as means to potentially increase satisfaction with leisure choices and relationship satisfaction (Bond, 2012, Cavallari, 2008). Recently, a comprehensive tourism literature review of 64 articles revealed travel may contribute to positive increases in adult and family relationships, which in turn can contribute to increases in satisfaction with life (Durko and Petrick, 2013). The authors also revealed that previous research had favored investigating travel benefits for couples who participated in leisure activities together. Thus, the current research extends this to also hopefully understand the potential benefits travel without one's significant other may provide for relationship and life satisfaction.

Studies of marriages in America conducted in 1980 and again in 2000, found that couples reported consistent levels of happiness over the course of the 20 year study, however a significant decrease in the amount of time spent together was reported. This was attributed to demanding career responsibilities for the male and female, and an increasing need for independence over the course of a relationship (Amato, Johnson, Booth and Rogers, 2003).

Research on the girlfriend getaway market has revealed that this emerging trend has developed into a \$20 billion dollar segment, which represents 4 percent of the US travel industry sales (Cavallari, 2008). Of the 1,529 women interviewed, 73 percent were married, and 88 percent had children less than 18 years old (Cavallari, 2008). This trend has been attributed to women and men needing time to partake in the leisure activities they enjoy which may be activities their significant other may not enjoy (Bond, 2009).

According to a recent survey, nearly a quarter of respondents were planning to take a trip in the next year without their significant other, up 22 percent from 2011 (Long, 2012). As this trend is quickly gaining momentum, research to examine the effects travel without a significant other may have on the couple's relationship and vacation satisfaction, are proposed throughout this study.

A recent study of 466 international leisure travelers in the Netherlands concluded that attitudes toward the travel party and stress associated with the actual act of travel were the most important determinants of a tourist's happiness and satisfaction on any given day of travel (Nawijn, 2011). As a suggested implication of his findings, Nawijn (2011) recommended finding the right travel party to enhance a tourist experience and lead to vacation happiness and satisfaction. The current research follows this recommendation by investigating the potential benefits and consequences of travel with differing individuals (with/without significant other and with/without children), and the effect this has on not only vacation satisfaction, but also the long term affects this may reveal for relationship satisfaction and satisfaction with life.

TRAVEL WITH SIGNIFICANT OTHER

Empirical studies have found increases in shared leisure activities can contribute to increases in relationship satisfaction (Newman and Newman, 2008; Presser, 2000; Holman and Jacquart, 1988; Hill, 1988). Hill (1988) analyzed 280 married couples interviewed for the 1975-1981 Time Use Longitudinal Panel Study, and concluded that increased amounts of shared leisure were correlated with a strong reduction in the probability of divorce or separation.

Further studies have also found support for the benefits of travel on relationships. A survey of 2,100 British adults, aged 25-65 revealed holidays (vacations) were thought by 51 percent of respondents to be an ideal time to discuss important life decisions Kunoï (2010, p. 4). Seventy-four percent of the respondents said “a romantic getaway can make or break their relationship” (Kunoï, 2010). This was especially true for over 25 percent of the female respondents who revealed that a holiday helped “re-ignite the flames of love” (p. 4). Fifty-four percent of respondents who had a conversation with their loved ones about work, family, or relationships during their vacation, took action in regard to the discussion when they returned home. Vacation conversations thus became an inspiration for change. The majority (54%) of those surveyed who had discussed getting married or engaged while on vacation, revealed that it led to actions and or changes in their lives when they returned home. “Thirty-six percent of respondents said they had talked about their love life during vacation, and 34% actually carried out the decisions they discussed when they returned home” (p. 20).

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN

Numerous works have revealed positive effects recreation and leisure activities can have on family cohesion (Durko and Petrick, 2013; Hornberger, Zabriskie and Freeman, 2010; Poff, 2010; Zabriskie, 2003; Zabriskie and McCormick, 2001; Holman and Jacquart, 1988; and Smith, Snyder and Monsama, 1988). As leisure activities are a major component of family travel and a leading reason for travel, research from the field of family studies and leisure is likely relevant to the benefits of travel for families.

Participation in leisure activities by parents and children has been found to enhance family relationships and perpetuate family cohesion between parent and child (Agate,

Zabriskie, Agate and Poff, 2009; Zabriskie and McCormick, 2001). These shared activities by family members can create a unique experience that leads to an increase in bonding and attachment. This can lead to children learning to share and get along better with others, and can create loyalty within the family (Smith, 1997).

In a further examination of the role children play in leisure, Lee, Graefe and Burns (2008) interviewed 1,283 subjects recreating at a state park to find motives for leisure and family recreation. Subjects with children (versus those without), revealed a greater expressed interest in family recreation and noted time spent together as the motive for their travel, rather than exercise and relaxation. Gilbert and Adbullah (2004) researched the benefits of “holidaytaking,” and found that even the anticipation of a family vacation can increase positive feelings about life, family, and health.

Specifically focusing on the family benefits of leisure applied to the realm of vacationing, Shaw et al (2008) researched the impact that family vacations have on intensifying family bonds by providing an escape from the routine of daily life. They concluded that family cohesion was strengthened through vacationing as it “created memories that would last, that would provide meaning into the future, and that would become a basis for future life decisions,” (Shaw et al, 2008, p. 20). One surveyed participant commented, “I decided to invest in my kids’ memories, because they’re not going to remember a new couch, but, they will remember a vacation,” (Shaw et al, 2008, p. 22).

Adding to this research focus, Lehto, Choi, Lin and MacDermid (2009) surveyed 265 leisure travelers, and concluded that family vacations contributed to family bonding, and an increase in positive family communications. They stated that, “traveling with family

appeared to be perceived as quality time well spent, strengthening family ties and contributing to connectedness of family members,” (Lehto et al, 2009, p. 470).

Kozak (2010) studied 445 families in the UK, and found that families depended on one another’s evaluations of a vacation to assess their own satisfaction levels. This seemed to indicate that a happy and successful vacation was more likely to be achieved if all parties were satisfied once they returned home. Similarly, research by Lehto et al (2009) included an overall focus on family functioning during vacation. They found a need to “understand family vacation as one consumption unit,” (p 475). “Activities and programs [at the vacation site] that can provide ample opportunities for [parents and children] to interact can be appreciated by family travelers,” (Lehto et al, 2009, p 475). They concluded that future research should focus on how to create experiences during travel where children and parents are immersed in activities together, yet fulfill the vacation needs of parents and children alike.

Research by Gram (2005) included differences in children’s and parent’s overall motives for travel. Children were more likely to want fun and activities from a holiday, while parents were more inclined to hope for a relaxing vacation for all. Parents indicated a need for vacations to provide “togetherness,” while still leaving room for rest. These findings could lead to research that focuses on vacation activities that promote togetherness, while also offering a chance for children to participate in activities at times separate from parents. In theory, this could potentially increase both parties’ vacation satisfaction levels.

Based on the existing research and the objectives of the current research, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 3a: Perceived vacation satisfaction will be the same for those traveling with and without one's significant other as well as those traveling together with children.

Hypothesis 3b: Perceived commitment to relationship will be the same for persons traveling with and without one's significant other as well as those traveling together with children.

RELATIONSHIP LIFECYCLE STAGE, GENDER AND AGE

Research into marital satisfaction and commitment levels has suggested satisfaction for married couples is highest immediately following a wedding and declines thereafter (Valliant and Valliant, 1993). Valliant and Valliant's (1993) forty year longitudinal study of 268 men, which included their wives in subsequent years of follow-up, revealed both men and women found years one through five and 26-30 to be the most enjoyable of their marriage. Additionally women found years 16-30 of marriage the most difficult, while men revealed years six through ten were their least enjoyable years of marriage. Additionally, marital happiness, a mediator of satisfaction, has also been shown to decline over the course of a marriage, with the decline steepest in the early years often slowing but never recovering from the early years of happiness, (VanLaningham, Johnson, Amato, 2001; Bramlett and Mosher, 2002).

Similarly, research has consistently found that the first years of marriage often have the least chance of divorce, with marital satisfaction reflecting a U-shaped curve indicating the highest levels of happiness at the early and later stages of marriage (Papalia et al., 2002). Findings have further indicated that typically only seven percent of marriages end in divorce within the first two years, compared to 20 percent in years three through five, 30 percent in years six through ten, and increasing to 50 percent for those married 20 years or more (Copen, Daniels, Vespa, and Mosher, 2012).

Existing research has further found that a positive shift in marital satisfaction occurs during the empty nest stage of a relationship, as couples have more time to focus on each other and their personal preferences (Gorchoff, John, and Helson, 2008). The current research seeks to understand relationship commitment, a result of several constructs including marital satisfaction, and will therefore examine the trend across varying relationship life cycles to determine differences in satisfaction for relationships of varying lengths.

When examining determinants for satisfaction with life, research has noted the difference in perceived SwL amongst men and women, thus suggesting a need to analyze perceived SwL for both genders (Lavy and Littman-Ovadia, 2011). Sacher and Fine (1996) studied responses from both partners in 42 dating couples to understand gender differences in perceived commitment and satisfaction levels. They found higher levels of perceived commitment and satisfaction as reported by females may indicate females are more invested in their relationship than are their male partners. These results are parallel to previous research findings that have suggested commitment to dating relationships is more related to how females view the relationship than to how males do (Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994; Rubin et al., 1981). Sacher and Fine (1996) also found a significant gender difference on commitment measures where females ($M = 7.95$, $SD = 1.15$) had significantly higher commitment scores than males ($M = 7.52$, $SD = 1.48$). They also noted a trend toward a difference on quality of alternatives, with females ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.80$) having lower scores than males ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.79$). When evaluated six months later, women revealed higher relationship satisfaction scores ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .60$), than their male partners ($M = 4.06$, $SD = .89$). Subsequently, Le and Agnew (2003) also found the association between

investments and commitment was more significant for relationships of less than 18 months than for those of more than 18 months.

One study that sought to understand the factors that contribute to happiness and life satisfaction, revealed the only significant demographic variation amongst 845 respondents was relationship life cycle. Specifically the lone significant difference was noted between respondents who were single and those who were married, with married individuals responding with higher levels of perceived happiness (Peterson, Park, and Seligman 2005). As found by Clench-Aas, Nes, Dalgard and Aaro (2011) in a survey of over 5,000 residents of Norway, satisfaction with life was found to vary across genders and age groups,. Thus it is believed to be imperative to explore invariance amongst a population that represents the entire adult life span and both genders as sufficiently as possible.

Given these previous findings, gender, age and relationship lifecycle stage will be investigated to determine the influence these variables have on satisfaction with life and commitment to relationships as mediated by vacation satisfaction. It is therefore hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4a1: Relationship length will not be related to Commitment to Relationship.

Hypothesis 4a2: Relationship length will not be related to Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4b1: Age will not be related to Commitment to Relationship.

Hypothesis 4b2: Age will not be related to Relationship Satisfaction.

Hypothesis 4c1: Commitment to Relationship will not be different for males than it will be females.

Hypothesis 4c2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different for males than it will be for females.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The 2010 US census showed an increase of 52 percent of same-sex married households since 2000, and an increase of 62 percent of same-sex unmarried households in the US (Census 2010). In the year 2000, the number of states recognizing same-sex partnerships and marriages was nonexistent, and had since increased to 37 states by the time of the 2010 Census. Therefore, the number of respondents in 2000 would likely have included self-declared domestic partnerships and civil union relationships, as legal marriages may not have been recognized at that time. Recognizing the growing number of same-sex partnerships, research investigating relationship issues, such as the present research, should now be more inclusive of various romantic relationship types to understand phenomena amongst a diverse and representative population.

While the majority of relationship research has favored understanding the construct from the standpoint of heterosexual couples, several studies have sought to reveal differences in commitment and satisfaction between hetero and homosexual couples. Duffy and Rusbult (1986) utilized Rusbult's investment model to study relationship satisfaction and commitment among heterosexuals and homosexuals. Women, both heterosexual and homosexual, reported greater relationship commitment and higher investment levels than males. Of the four groups analyzed, gay males were found to have the lowest levels of perceived commitment and investment.

Balsam, Beauchaine, Rothblum and Solomon (2008) conducted a three year longitudinal study to research the effect of civil union legality on relationship commitment and satisfaction. The study included 684 respondents in three categories; those in same sex relationships with a civil union, same-sex without the legality of civil union and those in a

heterosexual relationship. Their research showed same-sex couples had self-report scores indicating more positive relationship quality and less conflict than heterosexual married couples across almost all measures included in the study.

Their findings followed that of previous research by Kurdek (2004), who analyzed a variety of relationship measures between same-sex couples in cohabiting relationships and heterosexual married couples. Kurdek's research concluded that same-sex couples scored more positively on 76 percent of the variables tested, including that of social, psychological, personality and conflict resolution assessments, than heterosexual married couples. Previous research appears to have primarily investigated relationship quality amongst heterosexual partners. As the current research seeks to understand a new trend and its target, respondents will be inclusive of varying relationship types to evaluate variables indicative of relationship commitment and satisfaction.

Roisman, Clausell, Holland, Fortuna, and Elieff (2008) compared 30 committed gay male couples and 30 committed lesbian couples to that of 50 engaged and 40 older married heterosexual couples, as well as to dating heterosexual couples. They revealed that same-sex couples were just as committed in their romantic relationships as heterosexual couples. In line with previous research, the current study hypothesizes that:

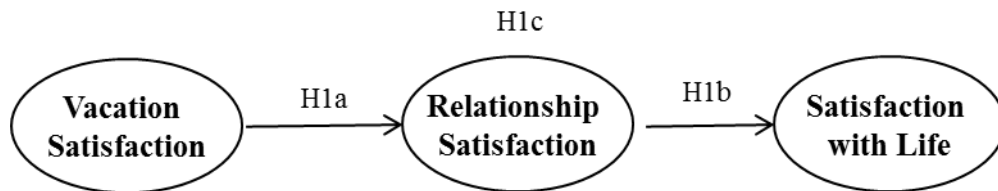
Hypothesis 4d1: Commitment to Relationship will not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations.

Hypothesis 4d2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations.

COMPETING MODELS AND THEORIES

The present research goals are twofold: (1) to understand the influence of vacation and relationship satisfaction on satisfaction with life, as noted in Figure 5 and (2) to apply concepts from the Investment Model to understand how vacation can influence commitment, as noted in Figure 6. In recognizing there are an abundance of theories, models and hypotheses that have attempted to explain relationship commitment, several of those that have had significant contributions to advancing the understanding of commitment will be further discussed to better illuminate how relationships have been theoretically explained.

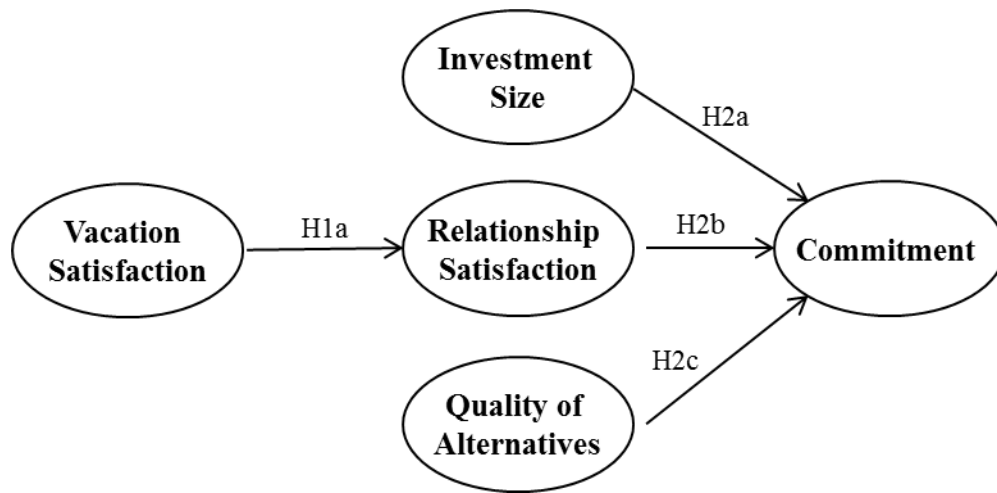
FIGURE 5: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF THE STRUCTURE AND ANTECEDENTS OF SATISFACTION WITH LIFE



Johnson's Tripartite Model of Commitment

Johnson's (1991a, 1999) Tripartite Model of Commitment posits that relationship longevity is understood through personal, moral or structural components, of which personal and moral encompass internal beliefs while structural includes external constraints to leaving the relationship (Johnson, Caughlin, Huston, 1999). In simple terms, Johnson explained individuals continue a relationship for one of three reasons, (1) they want to (personal), (2) they ought to (moral), or (3) need to (structural) (Johnson 1991a).

FIGURE 6: VACATION SATISFACTION APPLIED TO THE INVESTMENT MODEL



Johnson's Model further explains that each type of commitment is further influenced by several components. Personal commitment, the "wanting" to remain in a relationship, was attributed to the degree in which one is attracted to a partner, attracted to the relationship, and the degree of self-identity gained from the relationship. As previously reviewed, the Investment Model also considers each of these factors through questioning relationship satisfaction (attraction to partner and relationship) and investment size, which includes the notion of how much a person attributes their identity would be lost if they were to terminate the relationship. Johnson's concepts of moral commitment, the "ought" to remain in the relationship aspect, is explained through values and obligations one ties to a relationship. The moral commitment could be the reason people remain together if they do not believe in divorce for moral reasons or remain together out of obligation to the couple's

children, careers or social networks. Again, this concept of moral commitment is closely linked to the investment size construct of the Investment Model.

Finally, Johnson's structural commitment considers the barriers to leaving a relationship or "entrapments" forcing one to remain in the relationship. The four components of structural commitment, as shown by Johnson, are alternatives, social pressure, termination procedures and irretrievable investments (Johnson et al 1999). Alternatives are explained as alternative circumstances to the current relationship but also include alternative housing, economic and employment options as a consideration to the relationship commitment level. Social pressure considers the loss of shared friends and social network contacts if the relationship were terminated as well as the pressure from friends, family members or close confidants to dissolve or continue the relationship. Termination procedures include the consideration of actions required to terminate the relationship, to include divorce costs, material good separation, and time and energy costs. Finally, irretrievable investments are those intrinsic attachments made throughout the relationship to include time invested and emotional resources. While all plausible measures to determine relationship commitment, it appears these components could likely be attributed to one of the three Investment Model constructs. Alternatives could be measured through quality of alternatives; while termination procedures, irretrievable investments and social pressure could all be considered part of determining investment size within the Investment Model.

While Johnson's Model has been utilized through related research to understand commitment, the necessity of including moral commitment as a separate measurement construct has been debated (Ramirez, 2008; Rusbult, 1991). The necessity of the addition of this construct remains inconclusive as to whether moral commitment is a distinct construct

which significantly influences relationship commitment and if the model significantly differs from the more widely accepted Investment Model. Additionally, Johnson's Model includes the addition of multiple more items to measure which would likely prove taxing to respondents.

Social Exchange Theory

The major premise of Social Exchange Theory (SET) is that “humans avoid costly behavior and seek rewarding statuses, relationships, interactions, and feelings to the end that their profits are maximized or their losses are minimized” (Nye, 1979, p. 2). Exchange Theory, stemming from the economics discipline, is based on the principle that we enter into relationships in which we can maximize the benefits to us and minimize our costs. Specific to romantic relationships, the theory suggests commitment is a product of satisfaction (as indicated by a desire to remain in the relationship) and dependence (shown through the inability to leave the relationship).

One of the basic tenets of Social Exchange is that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments. To do so, parties must abide by certain “rules” of exchange. While it has been applied to the study relationships, the theory seems to imply that individuals have only extrinsic motivations for a behavior by suggesting individuals must maximize “rewards” to remain in a relationship. The current research seeks to understand commitment from both intrinsic (satisfaction) as well as extrinsic (investments and alternatives) motivators.

Rusbult's (1983) seven month study of couples in relationships revealed exchange was largely ignored during the “honeymoon” phase of a relationship as little costs were attributed and noted during early relationship periods. When questioned about relationship

satisfaction, it was revealed that “costs” were evaluated only at later stages of a relationship, thus implying those in the “honeymoon” phase ignored costs and were more focused on rewards. A major objective of the current research is to understand relationship commitment from varying relationship stages, to include the “honeymoon” period.

Social Exchange Theory also draws on a comparison level to determine commitment, as people use alternatives to the current product, service or situation to determine commitment level. While this is parallel to the basics of the Investment Model, Social Exchange Theory does not address investment level as a determining factor attributes to commitment level. While Social Exchange Theory is applicable to the current research, utilizing the Investment Model, which offers the added component of investments to further explain commitment, appears a better fit as the guiding theory.

Self-Expansion Theory

Crompton (1979) documented several push factors as motivations for travel, and was possibly the first look into the “benefits” of travel. Among his identified push factors were escape from the mundane, novelty, enhancement of relationships, social interaction, and education (1979). The current research takes an in-depth look at varying travel types as relationship enhancing resources, with a specific focus on the influence of travel partner(s). Tying Crompton’s push factors to self-expansion theory may provide further insight into need for travel and its relationship benefits, specifically on increased commitment levels. Self-expansion theory suggests one way to maintain a more satisfying and long lasting relationship (aka committed relationship) is to engage in novel and exciting activities with your partner (Aron and Aron 1986).

The theory further states that individuals are more fulfilled in relationships when the partner provides access to opportunities for growth, or self-expanding opportunities. When relationships are new, the theory suggests there are many opportunities for self-expansion, such as learning about a new partner, and participating in new activities together. High levels of relationship satisfaction usually experienced at the beginning of a relationship are explained (through self-expansion theory) by the positive feelings resulting from self-expansion. However, as the relationship lengthens, opportunities for self-expansion may decrease, leading to less satisfaction and lower levels of commitment. Self-expansion theory offers the implication that couples who participate in activities that both partners consider exciting (self-expanding), experience increases in relationship satisfaction (1986). Importantly, the model specifies why relationship satisfaction declines over time and offers insight in how to increase relationship satisfaction.

Applying this theory to the current research, it could be shown that if partners vacation either together or separately, for a variety of self-expanding reasons (education, novelty or adventure), they may learn new things about each other or themselves, and, as a result, experience increased relationship satisfaction leading to higher levels of commitment.

Aron, Norman, Aron, McKenna and Heyman (2000) conducted several experiments to determine shared participation in novel and arousing activities was consistently and significantly associated with increased levels of relationship quality. One experiment from their study found that increased participation in novel and arousing activities was significantly correlated with high levels of perceived relationship quality. To test the causal direction of participation in activity and enhanced relationship quality, married couples participated in several experiments ranging from high impact novel activity to low impact

mundane tasks. Overall, in each experiment, couples who participated in the novel and arousing activities reported increased relationship quality scores after the task than before the task, versus those in the mundane activity groups. The researchers concluded that the more self-expanding the activity couples participated in, the more relationship quality was increased.

While this theory is applicable to the current research, it does not consider individual participation in the activity and the effect it would have on a relationship. While it also shows that couples who have recently completed a joint activity had increased levels of perceived relationship quality, it does not offer an explanation for why the levels of relationship quality were low to begin with.

HYPOTHESES

The objectives to this research are guided by the following hypotheses:

H1a: Vacation Satisfaction will have a direct correlation with Relationship Satisfaction.

H1b: Relationship Satisfaction will have a direct correlation with Satisfaction with Life.

H1c: Vacation Satisfaction will have a positive correlation with Satisfaction with Life as mediated by Relationship Satisfaction.

H2a: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and positively influenced by Investment Size.

H2b: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and positively influenced by Relationship Satisfaction.

H2c: Relationship Commitment will be significantly and negatively influenced by Quality of Alternatives.

H3a: Perceived Relationship Satisfaction will be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken; a) with a significant other, b) without a significant other, and c) with significant other and kids.

H3b: Perceived Commitment to Relationship will be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken; a) with a significant other, b) without a significant other, and c) with significant other and kids.

H4a1: Relationship length will not be related to Commitment to Relationship.

H4a2: Relationship length will not be related to Relationship Satisfaction.

H4b1: Age will not be related to Commitment to Relationship.

H4b2: Age will not be related to Relationship Satisfaction.

H4c1: Commitment to Relationship will not be different for males than it will be for females.

H4c2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different for males than it will be for females.

H4d1: Commitment to Relationship will not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations.

H4d2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations.

SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented justification for use of the Investment Model as the theoretical framework in understanding the determinants of relationship commitment. A conceptual model suggesting vacation and relationship satisfaction as antecedents to satisfaction with life was also introduced. Existing literature was presented as justification in the development of the conceptual model, as well as to support the use of the Investment Model to determine relationship commitment with the added construct of vacation satisfaction.

Having reviewed the Existing research, it is apparent gaps exist in which the current research seeks to provide understanding. Specifically, it was found research has shown vacation benefits for romantic relationships; however the focus has overwhelmingly been for married couples participating in joint leisure activities. The current research seeks to

understand the effect traveling with and without one's significant other may have on relationship satisfaction and commitment for varying relationship types.

CHAPTER IV

METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the methods used to conduct the online panel survey that was used to examine the hypotheses of the study including the role that vacation satisfaction plays in the formation of relationship commitment. The first section outlines the design of the study and is followed by an in-depth overview of the survey development as well as data collection methods. The statistical methods used for data analysis are discussed in the final chapter of this section.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study applies quantitative research methods to understand the proposed hypotheses and conceptual models. The study primarily incorporates latent variables of the Investment Model (satisfaction, investment, alternatives and commitment), which have been shown as reliable measures when asked in a self-report manner (Li and Petrick, 2008; Rusbult, 1998). Thus, a self-administered survey was selected as the primary data collection method which has been deemed an appropriate method by previous research (Groves, Fowler, Couper, Lepkowski, Singer and Tourangeau, 2013; Fink, 2003).

Specifically, this study employed the use of an online panel survey utilizing criterion sampling to collect data. The criterion used to select the sample included: only those in a relationship, those who have taken a leisure vacation in the past two years, those with a household income greater than \$25,000 and those aged 25 or older. The study was delimited by the above criteria to help ensure the likelihood that respondents were in relationships,

have taken recent vacations, have enough income to travel sufficiently, and are old enough to be on their own financially respectively.

Online panel studies are distributed through professional companies that have retained a distribution list of respondents paid to complete surveys. By utilizing a panel survey for research data collection, the researcher is able to impose limitations on survey respondents, declare length of survey, request specific demographics be represented in the respondent pool, and require all surveys to be completed in full. The panel company will then contact those who meet the research set criterion, and invite them to participate in the research survey when convenient for them.

Online respondents are paid for their participation as an incentive, which has been shown to increase participation and response rates (Göriz, 2004). Benefits to panel surveys have been noted as ease in identifying and recruiting samples, absence of interviewer bias, increased completion and response rates, better quality responses, as well as ethical advantages, such as anonymous responses and confidentiality (Van Selm and Jankowski, 2006; Göriz, 2004). Additionally, in contrast to ad hoc recruitment, online panels reduce the cost associated with searching for appropriate respondents. A further large advantage of online surveys in comparison to mail surveys or face-to-face interviews is the speed of response. A considerably large response can be generated in a relatively short time span, thus allowing quick access to data for interpretation, and likely faster times to disseminate the findings to the field.

While the advantages to online panel research appear plentiful, research has noted disadvantages to the method. Duffy, Smith, Terhanian and Bremer (2005) stated three biases that may be present in online survey techniques: (1) they reach only those who are online,

(2) only those who are part of the panel participate, and (3) not all who are part of the panel are invited to participate based on the researcher's predetermined respondent criterion. However, as noted by Scholl, Mulders and Drent (2002), when most of a society has access to internet access, the basic drawback for the use of online survey research, the lack of representativeness disappears. This allows for a more targeted sample representative of the population.

A study by Lonsdale, Hodge and Rose compared the results of a psychology survey of attitudes taken via two methods; (1) 117 online respondents and (2) 97 mail respondents. Their findings showed better response rates for the online survey, yet no significant group difference in the factor or means structures of the results, nor in the age or gender of respondents. Multiple other studies have shown similar results (Evans and Mathur, 2005; Kaplowitz, Hadlock, and Levine, 2004)

Similarly, McCabe (2006) assigned 7000 students to two groups, those who took a survey online and those who completed the survey via mail method. His findings showed no differences in findings or in the demographics of the respondents.

In the field of tourism, a comparison of survey results between online and paper based methods indicated paper respondents took fewer vacations, with 27 percent indicating they had not taken a single vacation in the specified timeframe, compared to only 8 percent of the online respondents (Dolnicar, Laesser, and Matus, 2008). If the paper respondents had taken a vacation, it was shorter than those taken by the online respondents, with 10 percent of paper respondents staying one night compared to 7 percent for online respondents. In terms of transportation, for those who had traveled outside the country, only 9 percent of paper respondents had flown for a trip, compared to 16 percent of online respondents. As the

current study seeks to understand the effects of travel on relationship and life satisfaction, the findings from Dolnicar (et al., 2008) lend credence to the chosen method for data collection to assist in properly targeting those who are more likely to have traveled. While no data collection method is free from limitations, previous research has shown panel survey results to be valid and reliable, (Li and Petrick, 2008; Dolnicar, 2008; Dennis, 2001).

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT AND PILOT TEST

Data collection was obtained via an online self-administered survey, hosted through a professional panel company. The questionnaire was developed based on existing research comprised of valid and reliable methods. Two types of scales were used in the survey, Likert-type and semantic differential. Generally, Likert-type scales contain 3-9 response points, anchored by strongly disagree to strongly agree. Semantic differential scales allow respondents to choose between two opposite adjectives using qualifiers to bridge the gap between them. As an example, the survey asked respondents to rate their relationship satisfaction from displeased to pleased.

The initial questionnaire was pilot tested on seven graduate students, all specializing in tourism studies, with previous research experience. Additionally, the majority of respondents were in a current relationship and all had traveled in the past two years. Feedback regarding the survey ranged from comments on the wording of specific questions to the scales used to measure different constructs. Several comments suggested the addition of a “not applicable” category to established scales used to measure relationship satisfaction and travel with children. Additionally, clarification of wording was requested for some questions. For example, when asked to refer to a vacation taken recently, “recently” was not

operationalized in the pilot test. Changes were made to the survey based on the pilot test feedback.

To further test the reliability and validity of the survey instrument, an updated survey was then pilot tested for internal consistency among two undergraduate college classes (both of which were tourism related, comprised of freshmen through seniors), with 52 students responding. As these students are, for the most part, young undergraduates with little disposable income for frequent travel, and may not be in a current relationship, it was suggested they answer the questions to the best of their ability and reflect on their most recent relationship if they were not currently involved with someone. Basic issues were noted from the undergraduates that resulted in five minor grammar changes. Further clarification was also made to ensure that when measuring leisure vacation tripographics, the respondent did not reflect on business travel.

To verify the reliability of each scale used in the instrument for the pilot test, Cronbach alpha scores were reviewed. Research has suggested a Cronbach alpha score of .70 or higher is acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, George and Mallery (2003) provided the following rules of thumb: “> .9 is excellent, > .8 is good, > .7 is acceptable, > .6 is questionable, > .5 is poor, and < .5 would be Unacceptable” (p. 231). Within the pilot test of undergraduate students, n=52, all constructs measured had acceptable alpha coefficients (ranging from .90 to .95). Therefore, it appeared all scales used in the survey had acceptable internal consistency levels and were appropriate for the current research.

SURVEY FLOW

The final survey instrument began with IRB information followed by a filter question to verify the respondent was involved in a current relationship (see Appendix XX for a copy of the survey). Once verified to be in a relationship, the first section of the questionnaire measured vacation frequency and satisfaction, presented in three sections; (1) travel with one's significant other, and without children; (2) travel without significant other nor children; and (3) travel with significant other and children (if applicable, for each scenario).

The second part of the survey measured all major constructs being researched in this study, to include relationship satisfaction, investment size, quality of alternatives, and relationship commitment. The last part questioned respondent's demographic characteristics. A justification for each scale, and the specific items used in each scale, can be found in the conceptual chapter of this report.

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Demographic information collected for analysis in this study included gender, age, household income, sexual orientation, zip code and relationship status. Gender was operationalized by asking respondents to check male or female, while age was measured by asking respondents what year they were born. Household income was operationalized by providing eight categories ranging from \$14,999 and under to \$150,000 and more per year. Following the Ford Foundation's best practices for asking questions about sexual orientation on surveys, sexual orientation was measured based on a response to four categories; heterosexual or straight, gay or lesbian, or bisexual, and other, with an opportunity to specify "other" (Badgett, 2009). Next, geographic location was gauged by requesting the

respondent's zip code. Finally, relationship status was operationalized through four categories; currently married, in a registered domestic partnership or civil union, dating/engaged but not living together, or dating/engaged and living together.

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS AND DATA COLLECTION

The sample size for this study was determined with the use of multiple statistical guidelines. Kelly (2003) suggested that a sufficiently large sample is needed to be representative of a generalizable population. One way to determine sample size is through use of power analysis when determining sample size. Power analysis suggests a minimum sample size of 194, at a significance level of .05 (Cohen, 1992). Krejcie and Morgan (1970) noted that as the population increases, the sample size required for research increases at a diminishing rate. Therefore, required sample size remains relatively constant at approximately 380 cases.

For SEM studies, a general rule of thumb is that the minimum sample size should be no less than 200, or 5-20 times the number of parameters to be estimated, whichever is larger (Kenny, 2014). If a sample size is very large, over 400 respondents, the chi square will likely be significant, thus indicating poor model fit in SEM (Bryne, 2010). The current research seeks to understand differing travel party types, yet not all respondents will have experienced travel with each party type in question. As an example, while all respondents will have traveled, some may not have traveled with children or without their significant other. Therefore, to capture a relatively adequate sample size, an overall survey population of 400 was requested, knowing that fewer responses would be given based on the types of trips respondents had taken.

Criterion sampling involves selecting cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2001, p. 238). Thus, a specific criterion was placed on the respondent pool to create a sample of participants who were at least 25 years old, with a household income of \$25,000 or more, who were currently in a romantic relationship, and who had traveled for pleasure with or without their partner at least once in the past 2 years. Preference was requested for a 50-50 gender response rate to provide an even balanced sample response.

The data collection period ran from February 12th to February 13th, 2014. The survey was accessed by 915 respondents via an email invitation as they were deemed an appropriate fit of the aforementioned criteria. The survey was hosted online by Survey Monkey, a professional panel company. Survey Monkey maintains a rolodex of over 2.5 million unique panelists, representative of the US population (Survey Monkey, 2013), and offers incentives to participants including payment per survey and a donation to the respondents charity of choice (Tarran, 2011).

The survey began with an Institutional Review Board (IRB) required information section which requests consent of each respondent and provides the researcher's contact information. A filter question was then presented that asked participants if they were in a current relationship. If "no" was selected, they were forwarded to the end of the survey and thanked for their time. The survey took an estimated 20 minutes to complete. A computer based program was used to verify respondents completed all applicable questions prior to submission. It was expected the majority of responses would be collected in the first 48 hours after the survey email invitation was sent

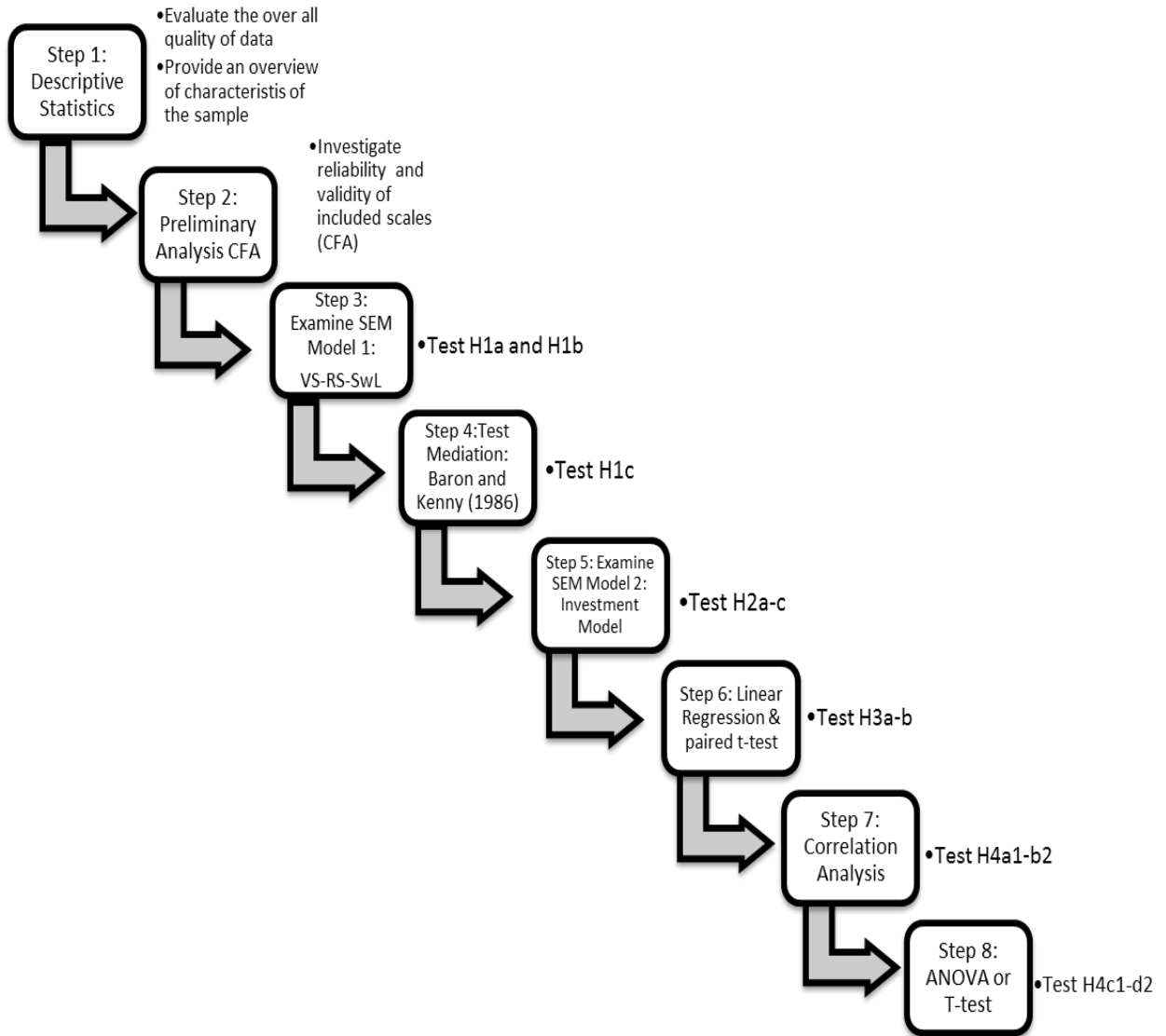
Yet, within 21 hours of being deployed 472 had already completed the study. Since only 400 responses were requested and paid for, the survey company discontinued the collection of responses once it realized more than the quota had been received.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Data analysis procedures for the current study included eight major steps, from descriptive analysis, preliminary data analysis, to model and hypothesis testing. Figure 7 outlines the data analysis procedures. Statistical software used in the analysis of the data included Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 22 (SPSS) and Analysis of Moment Structures 22 (AMOS), along with the expertise and knowledge of my statistically gifted dissertation committee.

Descriptive statistics were analyzed first to investigate the generalizability of the sample and identify characteristics of respondents. Nonresponse bias was checked through a comparison of early and late responder characteristics. To address concerns of panel respondent representativeness, demographic sample characteristics were cross validated with data from the US Census (2012).

FIGURE 7: MAJOR STEPS IN DATA ANALYSIS



MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Following descriptive statistical analysis, the next research focus was hypothesis testing. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was chosen to test the majority of hypotheses. Structural Equation Modeling is a statistical evaluation method that uses a confirmatory approach to explain a phenomenon. By utilizing SEM for analysis of data, unobserved (latent) and observed variables can be considered, unlike other statistical measures (Bryne, 2010). This is particularly important to the social science fields and disciplines (such as tourism and leisure sciences) which focus studies on abstract constructs, such as love, commitment, loyalty, and motivation. As these concepts cannot be observed and therefore not measured directly, SEM analysis allows the users to connect the unobserved variables with one that is observable.

SEM also provides a procedure for investigating relationships between sets of observed and latent variables in both confirmatory and explanatory nature. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is used when the relationship between the latent factors and variables is unknown and not substantiated by theory or previous research (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004). As the present study employed established scales, EFA was not required for analysis. Conversely, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used when theory or previous research is applied and used to explain the relationship between the factors. It was thus used to measure the adequacy of the measurement model (Schumacker and Lomax, 2004).

To conduct CFA, and subsequently SEM, for the current research, the statistical program AMOS 22, was used. AMOS was chosen over other model specification programs such as LISREL and EQS based on accessibility and affordability, as well as its documented

advantages such as the ability to account for errors in measurement models (Kline 2005) and ease of use when designing publication ready structural models (Byrne, 2001).

Hypothesis testing started with confirmatory factor analysis of the conceptual model to address H1a, H1b, H2a, H2b, and H2c. The conceptual model (Model 1 of analysis) postulated that vacation and relationship satisfaction were antecedents to satisfaction with life. Subsequently, CFA was also used to investigate model fit for the Investment Model (Model 2 of analysis). The main focus of this section was to determine model fit, specifically; the absolute fit index of chi square (χ^2), comparative fit indices of comparative fit index (CFI) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) and non-normed index (NNI).

Once CFA measurement models for Model 1 and Model 2 were determined a good fit, as indicated by recommended fit indexes found in Figure 8, SEM analysis was conducted and modified until both models resulted in acceptable and good fit indexes.

To test H1c, a procedure to test mediating effects was used, as outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986). Specifically, this hypothesis suggested vacation satisfaction had an effect on satisfaction with life as mediated by relationship satisfaction. Baron and Kenny's method focuses on the change of effect of the independent variable (vacation satisfaction) on the dependent variable (satisfaction with life) with the addition of a mediating variable (relationship satisfaction). This method has been extensively applied to previous tourism research (Lee, Kyle and Scott, 2012; Song and Li, 2008; Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

FIGURE 8: MAJOR FIT INDEXES

Indexes	Shorthand	General rule for acceptable fit if data are continuous	Categorical data
Absolute/predictive fit			
Chi-square	χ^2	Ratio of χ^2 to $df \leq 2$ or 3, useful for nested models/model trimming	
Akaike information criterion	AIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison (nonnested), not a single model	
Browne–Cudeck criterion	BCC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison, not a single model	
Bayes information criterion	BIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison (nonnested), not a single model	
Consistent AIC	CAIC	Smaller the better; good for model comparison (nonnested), not a single model	
Expected cross-validation index	ECVI	Smaller the better; good for model comparison (nonnested), not a single model	
Comparative fit			
		Comparison to a baseline (independence) or other model	
Normed fit index	NFI	$\geq .95$ for acceptance	
Incremental fit index	IFI	$\geq .95$ for acceptance	
Tucker–Lewis index	TLI	$\geq .95$ can be 0 > TLI > 1 for acceptance	0.96
Comparative fit index	CFI	$\geq .95$ for acceptance	0.95
Relative noncentrality fit index	RNI	$\geq .95$, similar to CFI but can be negative, therefore CFI better choice	
Parsimonious fit			
Parsimony-adjusted NFI	PNFI	Very sensitive to model size	
Parsimony-adjusted CFI	PCFI	Sensitive to model size	
Parsimony-adjusted GFI	PGFI	Closer to 1 the better, though typically lower than other indexes and sensitive to model size	
Other			
Goodness-of-fit index	GFI	$\geq .95$ Not generally recommended	
Adjusted GFI	AGFI	$\geq .95$ Performance poor in simulation studies	
Hoelter .05 index		Critical N largest sample size for accepting that model is correct	
Hoelter .01 index		Hoelter suggestion, $N = 200$, better for satisfactory fit	
Root mean square residual	RMR	Smaller, the better; 0 indicates perfect fit	
Standardized RMR	SRMR	$\leq .08$	
Weighted root mean residual	WRMR	$< .90$	$< .90$
Root mean square error of approximation	RMSEA	$< .06$ to $.08$ with confidence interval	$< .06$

*adopted from Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow and King (2006).

To test H3a and H3b, this study used linear regression to determine if vacation satisfaction and relationship commitment levels would significantly differ for those with differing travel parties, specifically those traveling (1) with significant other, (2) without significant other, and (3) traveling with children. Hypotheses H4a1, H4a2, H4b1, and H4b2 were measured with correlation analysis to determine if statistical relationships existed between relationship length, and age when compared to relationship commitment and

satisfaction. Finally, ANOVA and Tukey's t-test analysis were used to measure H4c1, H4c2, H4d1, and H4d2 to determine if differences in relationship satisfaction and commitment existed between groups based on gender and sexual orientation.

SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter presented the methods used to investigate the established hypotheses for this study. The research designed was presented as well as justification for the data collection method, specifically an online panel survey. Following, the development of the survey was discussed as were pilot test procedures for the survey. A brief review of the data collection process was included followed by a summary of the statistical methods used for data analysis.

CHAPTER V

DESCRIPTIVE FINDINGS

This chapter is comprised of detailed descriptive statistics of the sample to attempt to show the generalizability of the respondents. This section is also designed to verify the data is clean by addressing any practical issues, such as outliers, and normality assumptions prior to formal analysis.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

As detailed in Chapter IV, a respondent pool was drawn through a panel hosted by Survey Monkey in February, 2014. The survey was accessed by 915 participants, of which 472 agreed who met the aforementioned set criteria, and opted to complete the survey. Thus, the response rate for those who accessed the survey was 51.6% (472 of 915). The initial respondent criteria requested all participants were at least 25 years old, had traveled in the past 2 years, and were in a current relationship. All 472 respondents, through a self-report method, confirmed they met these three criteria. The survey also stipulated a household income of at least \$25,000. Thirty-seven respondents indicated incomes of \$24,999 or less near the completion of the survey, thus not meeting the intended criteria. These responses were outside the delimitations set for the current study and were therefore deleted from further analysis, resulting in a total response of 435 participants.

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the final sample. The sample was only slightly female dominated (51.3%). The average age of respondents was 46.1 years with median income range of \$50,000 to \$74,999. Over 62 percent of participants fell within the categories of \$25,000-\$49,999 per year (34.4%) and \$50,000-\$74,999 (27.8%) per year.

More than a quarter of the respondents had estimated incomes of \$75,000-\$99,999 (17.5%) and \$100,000-\$124,999 (9.2%), while only 6.2 percent reported incomes of \$150,000 or more per year.

TABLE 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Female	223	51.3%
	Male	212	48.7%
	Total	435	100%
Income	\$25,000-\$49,999 per year	149	34.3%
	\$50,000-\$74,999 per year	121	27.8%
	\$75,000-\$99,999 per year	76	17.5%
	\$100,000-\$124,999 per year	40	9.2%
	\$125,000-\$149,999 per year	27	6.2%
	\$150,000 or more per year	22	5.1%
	Total	435	100%
	Not living with significant other	41	9.4%
	Living with significant other and no children	166	38.2%
	Living with significant other and children	217	49.9%
	Living with children, but not significant other	6	1.4%
	Other	5	1.1%
	Total	435	100%
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual/Straight	401	92.2%
	Gay or Lesbian	16	3.7%
	Bisexual	9	2.1%
	Other	3	.7%
	Prefer not to answer	6	1.4%
	Total	435	100%
Relationship Status	Currently married	331	76.1%
	Registered domestic partnership or civil union	15	3.4%
	Dating/Engaged not living together	39	9.0%
	Dating/Engaged, living together	50	11.5%
	Total	435	100%

In addition to demographics, respondents were asked several questions about their lifestyles to reveal a more in depth understanding of their current relationship. Respondents had been involved with their current partner for an average of 17.7 years. The majority of respondents (88.2%) were living with their significant other (38.2%) or living with their significant other and children (49.9%). When asked to classify their current relationship status, the overwhelming majority were married (76.1%) while 3.4 percent recognized their relationship as a registered domestic partnership or civil union, and the rest were dating or engaged and either living together (11.5%) or not living together (9.0%).

Tripographics

To measure several aspects of tripographics, respondents were asked about their travel with and without their significant other, and with and without children, to reveal travel frequency, destination and travel party makeup of the trips which vacation satisfaction was examined. Table 2 displays the frequency of travel by group (with significant other, without significant other, and with significant other and kids). Additionally, respondents were asked which of fifteen listed vacation types they had taken with each of the differing travel parties. Of those who had taken at least one vacation with their significant other, yet without children (n = 355, 83%), top vacation destinations ranged from visiting friends and family (43.4%), sand, sun and surf (38.2%), shopping (29.4%) and historical site visits (28.7%).

For respondents who had vacationed at least once with their significant other and children in the previous two years (n = 249, 57.2%), top vacation destinations were visiting friends and relatives (30.0%), sand, sun and surf (24.8%), historical site visits (20.0%), nature (19.8%) and shopping (17.2%). Finally, for respondents who had traveled at least once in the previous two years without their significant other or children (n = 189, 44%),

visiting friends and family (18.2%), shopping (13.1%), gambling (8.7%), sporting vacations (6.9%), and nature (6.7%) were the types of trips most often taken.

TABLE 2 Frequency of Travel Between Groups

# of trips in the past 2 years	Frequency of vacation WITH significant other but no children	Frequency of vacation WITH significant other and children	Frequency of vacation WITHOUT significant other nor children
Never	80	186	246
1	74	70	83
2	95	77	54
3	44	39	15
4	58	28	15
5	20	8	12
6	23	12	5
7	10	3	1
8	4	2	2
9	4	1	1
10	12	5	
11	1		
12	4		
13	0		
14	1	1	
15	1	1	
16	0		
17	1		
25 or more	3	2	1

*No respondents in all 3 categories chose vacation frequency of 18 trips through 24 trips; therefore those options were eliminated from this table.

Nonresponse Bias Check

As indicated in the previous chapter, it was expected all responses would be captured within 48 hours. However, due to the panel company's efficiency in targeting the intended participants, and willingness of participants to complete the survey, the target number of

responses (n = 400) were finalized within 4 hours. While logically this would seem to indicate little room for nonresponse error, the issue was still addressed as several researchers have found that differences can exist between early and late survey responders (Voigt, Koespell, and Daling, 2003; Teitler, Reichman, and Sprachman, 2003). These studies suggest that non-response error could exist, as respondents who do not even access the survey (due to it being closed) may differ based on how long it takes them to respond.

Following the methods used by Li (2006), possible differences between early and late survey respondents were researched by comparing four demographic variables and an overall measurement of relationship commitment. The five demographic variables included gender, age, income, sexual orientation and relationship status. Responses to questions used to measure relationship commitment were summed to allow for comparison of an overall measure of commitment. Respondents were grouped based on the time they completed the survey. Those completing the survey within the first and fourth quarter of time blocks were assigned to early and late responders, respectively. Therefore, respondents 1-109 were labeled early responders, and 326-435 were labeled late responders.

In order to examine potential differences between early and late responders, two statistical tests were employed: chi-square and independent t-tests. As chi-square tests are used to measure differences between expected and observed frequencies of one or more groups (Corder and Foreman, 2009), it was utilized to measure group differences in gender, income, sexual orientation and relationship status. For the continuous variables, which included age and commitment level, independent sample t-tests were used to research differences between the two groups (Corder and Foreman, 2009).

Table 3 presents the chi-square analyses which compared early and late survey respondents' gender, relationship status, income, and sexual orientation. These tests showed only a significant differences between the two groups of gender (Chi square =10.255, $p=.001$). The data trend for the survey revealed that more female respondents fell within the late survey respondent category (59.5%) while more men were in the early respondent category (62.4%). While there can be numerous explanations for this, the responses were all collected within four hours, thus the actual time difference between late and early survey completion was minimal. The survey was administered and released during the late afternoon, and could have conflicted with respondents' work, school and daily tasks. Additionally, the survey was released based on Central Standard Time, and the respondent's time zone may have dictated availability to begin and complete the survey. All other variables used for comparison between the groups showed no significant differences ($p > .05$); relationship status ($\chi^2=2.584$, $p=.460$), sexual orientation ($\chi^2=1.358$, $p=.851$), and income ($\chi^2=2.983$, $p=.703$).

TABLE 3 Chi-Square Comparisons of Early and Late Respondents

Variable	Chi-Square	df	p
Gender	10.255	1	.001
Relationship Status	2.584	3	.460
Sexual Orientation	1.358	4	.851
Income	2.983	5	.703

Results of the t-test comparisons of early and late respondents on the variables of age and commitment are shown in Table 4. Commitment was measured based on seven questions from Rusbult's Commitment to Relationship scale, as detailed in previous chapters. Each individual's response to the seven questions was totaled, and a new variable of the summed total for commitment was used as a comparison variable for early and late respondents. Summing the ratings of likert-type scales before analysis is a common method used in statistical interpretation (Gliem and Gliem, 2003).

TABLE 4 T-Test Comparisons of Early and Late Respondents

Variable	T-Test	DF	p
Age	2.191	217	.030
Commitment	-.040	217	.968

The t-test comparing the age of early respondents (mean=47.96) and late respondents (mean=43.97) revealed a slight difference ($t=2.191$, $p=.030$). Thus, this indicated respondents in the early group were slightly older than those in the late respondent group. This could also be related to the respondents' work, school and daily tasks as well as the time zone they lived in. Results of the t-test analysis examining the relationship commitment of early respondents (mean=26.12) and late respondents (mean=26.14) revealed no significant difference ($t=-.404$, $p=.968$) between the two groups. With this variable being the study's penultimate dependent variable, it was deemed most important for this variable to show little variance between early and late responders. The similarity of the means and low t value suggest little bias between early and late responders.

Representativeness

Another goal of the current study was to have the sample be representative of the United States' overall population. While statistical comparisons are not feasible, the study's sample appears to be quite similar to the U.S. population. The current sample consisted of 51.3 percent females, had a median income of \$50,000 to \$74,999 and had an average age of 46.1 years old.

According to the U.S. Census (2012), the U.S. population consists of 50.3 percent females, has a median income of \$51,017, and the average age is 37.5. Since the current sample excluded those with incomes lower than \$25,000, it makes intuitive sense that the average income of the U.S. population is on the low end of the median for the current sample.

Similarly, it makes sense that the average age of the current respondents was somewhat higher than the U.S. population since it only included persons older than 25. According to the U.S. Census (2012), 32.4% of the population is under the age of 25. Thus, based on comparison of gender, age and income, the current sample appears to be somewhat representative of the U.S. population. Overall, results from the t-test analysis revealed early and late respondents were not different in terms of relationship commitment levels.

However, early respondents may have been slightly older than later respondents.

Reliability Check

To examine the initial reliability of the scales used in this study, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was examined for all scales used within the Investment Model as well as the vacation satisfaction and satisfaction with life scales. George and Mallery (2003) suggested

coefficients of .70 and higher are acceptable. The reliability coefficients for the scales utilized in this study are reported in Table 5.

Measurement scales of the Investment Model were individually tested for reliability and compared to initial reliability findings, as outlined in Chapter III. Quality of alternatives was measured using Rusbult's (1998) quality of alternatives scale. The reliability coefficient of the five measured items in this study was $\alpha=.84$, while Rusbult reported an alpha of .88. Investment Size was measured through five questions developed by Rusbult. The initial scale had a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=.84$, while the current study revealed a coefficient of $\alpha=.70$.

Rusbult's Commitment to Relationship scale was utilized to determine relationship commitment levels. The scale, inclusive of seven questions, two of which were reverse coded for analysis, had an initial reliability of $\alpha=.95$. The current study found a reliability of $\alpha=.90$. Finally, Relationship Satisfaction was measured utilizing Hendrick's (1998) Relationship Assessment Scale. The scale, composed of seven questions was found by Hendrick (1998) to have reliability of $\alpha=.86$ while the current study found $\alpha=.91$.

Satisfaction with Life was measured using Diener's Satisfaction with Life Scale, comprised of five measures. The current study had a reliability coefficient of $\alpha=.91$, comparable to Diener's initial reliability of $\alpha=.87$. Vacation Satisfaction was measured through a unifactorial four-item seven point semantic differential scale, which solely seeks an overall vacation satisfaction response. The scale, previously used by Huang and Hsu (2010) and Cole and Crompton (2002) has been found a reliable measure of vacation satisfaction with $\alpha=.94$ and $\alpha=.97$ respectively in their studies. The reliability coefficient of the vacation

satisfaction scale in this study was $\alpha = .94$. Since all scales yielded reliability coefficients above .70, all were deemed reliable and suitable for further analysis.

TABLE 5 Scale Reliability, Mean, and Standard Deviation

Variable Name	Previous α	Current α	Mean	S.D.
Relationship Satisfaction	.87	.91		
RS1 Your partner meets your needs			4.15	.881
RS2 You are satisfied with your relationship			4.15	.891
RS3 You are satisfied with your relationship compared to most others			4.24	.873
RS4 You wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship			3.85	1.07
RS5 Your relationship has met your original expectations			4.58	.731
RS6 you love your partner			4.20	1.15
RS7 There are many problems in my relationship			3.81	1.18
Investment	.84	.70		
I1 I have invested a great deal of time into my current relationship			4.45	.711
I2 My relationship with family and friends would be complicated if my partner and I were no longer together			3.31	1.27
I3 My sense of who I am is linked to my partner and our relationship			3.55	1.13
I4 Compared to others I know, I have invested a great deal of resources into my relationship			3.90	.863
I5 Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner and I would lose this if we were no longer together.			3.66	1.12
Alternatives	.88	.84		
A1 Alternatives to my current relationship are attractive to me			2.21	1.15
A2 My alternatives to my current relationship are close to ideal			2.40	1.21
A3 If I were not in my current relationship, I would do fine			3.01	1.16
A4 The people other than my partner that I would consider being involved with are very appealing			2.41	1.10
A5 My needs for companionship and intimacy could easily be filled by another relationship			2.46	1.19
Vacation Satisfaction	.94-.97	.94		
V1 Dissatisfied: Satisfied			6.03	1.23
V2 Terrible: Delighted			6.00	1.15
V3 Frustrated: Contented			5.92	1.22
V4 Displeased: Pleased			6.06	1.16

TABLE 5 Continued

Commitment	.95	.90		
C1 I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner			4.54	.725
C2 I want my relationship to last a long time			1.57	.717
C3 I feel very attached to my partner			4.38	.878
C4 It is likely I would date someone other than my current partner in the next few years			4.49	.810
C5 I would not be very upset if my relationship were to end in the near future			4.43	.810
C6 I want my relationship to last forever			4.24	1.17
C7 I am working toward making my relationship last for the future			4.06	1.29
Satisfaction with Life	.87	.91		
S1 In most ways my life is close to my ideal			3.59	1.01
S2 The conditions of my life are excellent			3.58	1.01
S3 I am satisfied with my life			3.77	.963
S4 So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life			3.86	.929
S5 If I could live my life over, I would not change much			3.33	1.17

CHAPTER VI

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

This chapter details the analysis procedures and findings of the study's stated hypotheses. Hypotheses H1a and H1b were explored through CFA for model fit and the final model run with SEM to understand the relationship postulated in the conceptual model. To test Hypothesis H1c, Baron and Kenny's (1986) procedure for evaluating mediating effects was used to investigate the relationship between vacation satisfaction and satisfaction with life, as mediated by relationship satisfaction. Hypotheses related to Vacation Satisfaction's role on the Investment Model (H2a-H2c) were examined through CFA to determine the measurement model was an acceptable fit to analyze with SEM. To determine the role vacations taken with differing travel partners may have on relationships (H3a-H3b), regression and paired t-tests were used to test differences between those who traveled with and without their significant other and children. Hypotheses 4a1-4b2 were posed to determine if relationship length or respondent age would be a determinant of relationship satisfaction or commitment. These relationships were analyzed through correlation analysis. Finally, to understand if gender or sexual orientation had an effect on relationship satisfaction or commitment (H4c1-H4d2), ANOVA with follow up t-tests were employed.

HYPOTHESES H1a AND H1b

The first step to test the conceptual model variables of Hypotheses H1a and H1b was to perform a confirmatory factor analysis of the overall model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the hypotheses, as empirical research had previously suggested a link between the constructs of the conceptual model and therefore a relationship pattern was

determined a priori (Suhr, 2006). CFA is used to observe and confirm whether the predetermined relationships between the observed variables and their underlying latent construct(s) exist (Suhr, 2006). It is recommended to test the measurement model first to reveal if inadequate fits exist before statistical analysis of the full model (Byrne, 2001). Figure 9 depicts the CFA measurement model with covariance between variables to test the conceptual model. The first step to examine the relationships between vacation satisfaction, relationship satisfaction and satisfaction with life was to obtain goodness of fit statistics and modification indices for the model. The fit indices reflected an acceptable fit by standards suggested by Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow and King, 2006 and through personal communication with experts in the field (Kyle, 2014). The model, with $\chi^2=302.38$ (N=355), $p<.001$, CFI=.958, GFI=.906, and RMSEA=.075 was deemed acceptable and a good fit for the measurement model as depicted in Table 6.

FIGURE 9: CFA Measurement Model 1 H1a-H1c

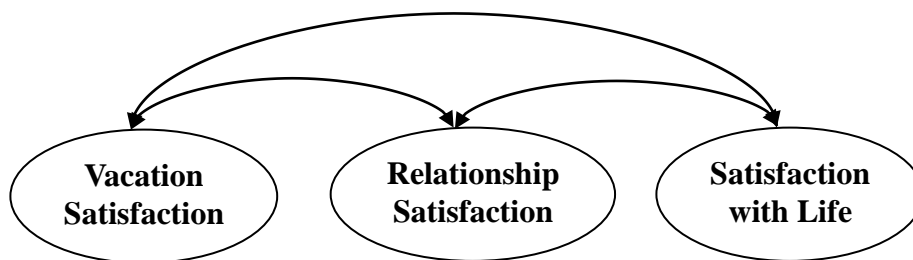


TABLE 6 Goodness of Fit Indices for Model 1

Statistic	Result
χ^2	302.379
Degrees of Freedom	101
CFI	.958
GFI	.906
RMSEA	.075

Validity and Reliability Checks

Convergent validity is the degree to which two or more measures that were designed to measure the same construct are related. Hatcher (1994) suggests convergent validity can be determined and verified by reviewing the t tests associated with factor loadings of each construct. If all factor loadings are statistically significant, the measures are said to be effectively measuring the same constructs (Hatcher, 1994). As shown in Table 7, all items were found to be statistically significant ($p < .05$), thus suggesting they measured the construct they were designed and used to measure. Furthermore, as detailed in Chapter V, each scale was measured for reliability by testing for Cronbach alpha. Table 5 previously displayed the alpha scores for each scale and revealed all scales were reliable between .84-.97. As the measures were deemed valid and showed good fit indices, the measurement model was then used to explore the structural model.

TABLE 7 Factor Loading, T Value and Significance for Model 1

Variable	Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Ratio (t Value)	P Value
Vacation_Sat 1	1.000			
Vacation_Sat 2	.926	.036	25.807	<.001
Vacation_Sat 3	1.013	.036	28.186	<.001
Vacation_Sat 4	.910	.037	24.340	<.001
Relationship _Sat 1	1.000			<.001
Relationship _Sat 2	1.071	.039	27.179	<.001
Relationship _Sat 3	.972	.044	22.281	<.001
Relationship _Sat 4	.907	.077	11.714	<.001
Relationship _Sat 5	1.089	.059	18.407	<.001
Relationship _Sat 6	.741	.041	18.156	<.001
Relationship _Sat 7	1.053	.071	14.865	<.001
SwL 1	1.000			<.001
SwL 2	1.003	.040	25.352	<.001
SwL 3	1.014	.037	27.388	<.001
SwL 4	.814	.043	19.135	<.001
SwL 5	.909	.058	15.636	<.001

Finally, discriminant validity was checked to verify the the extent to which latent variables discriminate from other latent variables. Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the inter-correlations of the constructs to the square roots of the average variance, as suggested by Fornell and Larcker, 1981. Discriminant validity was confirmed as square root of AVE was higher for each construct than any of the interfactor correlations. Table 8 reveals that the square root of the average variance for each of the factors is greater than any of the inter-correlations of the constructs. This finding confirms the factors used in the scales have discriminant validity.

TABLE 8 Discriminant Validity Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of Alternatives	0.726				
Vacation Satisfaction	-0.243	0.898			
Relationship Satisfaction	-0.485	0.472	0.786		
Investment Size	-0.266	0.195	0.437	0.604	
Commitment	-0.554	0.416	0.783	0.388	0.801

STRUCTURAL MODEL ANALYSIS

The final phase of analysis of Model 1 included structural equation modeling to determine the relationship strength between the latent variables (Figure 10). Overall Model 1 revealed a good fit with $\chi^2=302.46$, (N=355), $p<.001$, CFI=.958, GFI=.907, and RMSEA=.075 (Table 9). Therefore this model was used to test Hypothesis H1a and H1b.

FIGURE 10: Model 1 for SEM Analysis



TABLE 9 Goodness of Fit Indices for SEM Model 1

Statistic	Result
χ^2	302.46
Degrees of Freedom	302
CFI	.958
GFI	.907
RMSEA	.075

Hypotheses H1a and H1b examined the relationship between satisfaction with vacation, relationship and life (Table 10). Hypothesis H1a stated that Vacation Satisfaction would have a direct correlation with Relationship Satisfaction. The results suggest that, as predicted, Vacation Satisfaction has a positive effect on relationship satisfaction. Those who had higher levels of vacation satisfaction also had higher levels of relationship satisfaction.

For each increase in vacation satisfaction, relationship satisfaction increased .467 units. Therefore, H1a was supported.

Hypothesis H1b suggested Relationship Satisfaction would have a direct correlation to Satisfaction with Life. The findings show, as hypothesized, that as perceived relationship satisfaction levels increased, so too did satisfaction with life levels. For each increase in relationship satisfaction, the individual’s satisfaction with life increased .702 units. Therefore, H1b was also supported. Figure 11 shows the full model with correlation statistics.

TABLE 10 Summary of SEM Analysis for Model 1

			Standard Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Ratio (t-value)	P value
RS	<---	VS	.467	.035	8.826	<.001
SwL	<---	RS	.702	.060	14.354	<.001

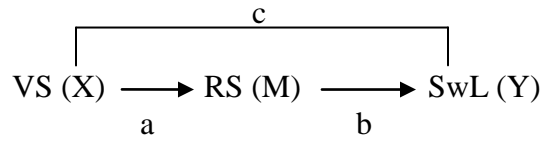
FIGURE 11: Model 1 SEM With Findings



HYPOTHESIS H1c

Hypothesis H1c suggested a mediating role of relationship satisfaction in the relationship between vacation satisfaction and satisfaction with life. Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation effects method was used to examine this relationship. Their method suggests testing the model with (1) no mediator, (2) with partial mediations, and (3) with complete mediation. Therefore, four structural models were examined through the outlined four steps in Table 11 to determine the effect of relationship satisfaction as a mediator. As stated by Baron and Kenny (1986), the purpose of Steps 1-3 is to verify whether zero-order relationships among the variables exist. If all relationships are significant, step four confirms full or partial mediation. In step four, mediation is supported if the effect of the mediating variable, in this case relationship satisfaction, (RS) remains significant after controlling for vacation satisfaction's effect. Partial mediation would be found if vacation satisfaction (VS) was still significant in step four, and full mediation would be found if VS was no longer significant. The findings from the analysis indicated that the relationships in the first three models were significant ($p < .05$) and that VS was not significant ($p = .191$) in step four when RS was no longer controlled. Therefore full mediation was confirmed, and hypothesis H1c was supported.

TABLE 11 Mediation Test for H1c

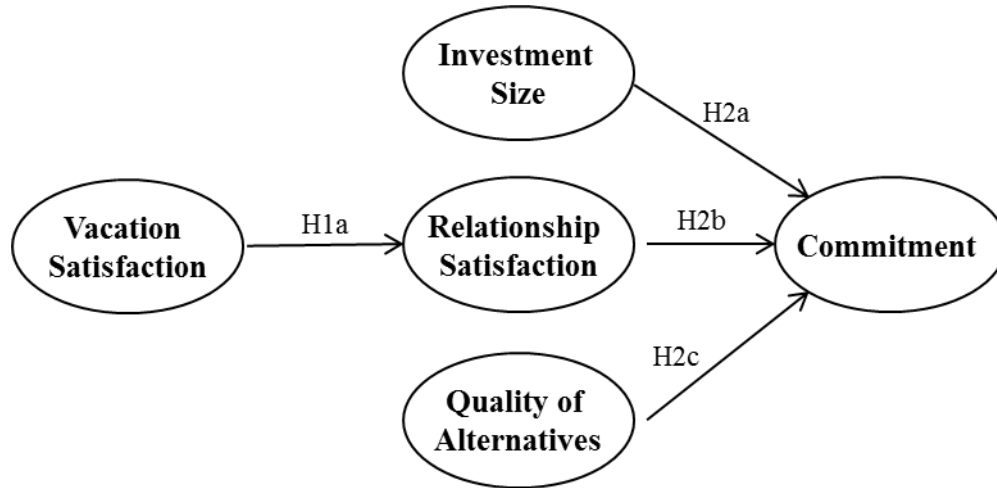


	Analysis	Visual	R ²	DF ₁	DF ₂	β	P
Step 1	Regression analysis: X predicting Y to test for path c	VS → SwL	.106	1	353	.326	<.001
Step 2	Regression analysis: X predicting M to test for path a	VS \xrightarrow{a} RS	.197	1	353	.443	<.001
Step 3	Regression analysis: M predicting Y to test path b	RS → SwL	.401	1	433	.634	<.001
Step 4	Multiple Regression: X and M predict Y		.391	2	352	.599	<.001
						.061	.191

HYPOTHESES H2a, H2b and H2c

Hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c were designed to test the constructs of the Investment Model with the addition of Vacation Satisfaction (Figure 12). Based on the premise of the Investment Model (Rusbult, 1983), it was hypothesized that relationship commitment would be significantly and positively influenced by investment size and relationship satisfaction. Conversely, it was hypothesized that relationship commitment would be significantly and negatively influence by quality of alternatives. To examine the model, confirmatory factor analysis was first employed to examine the measurement model, followed by hypothesis testing of the structural model.

FIGURE 12: Model 2 Vacation Satisfaction Applied to The Investment Model



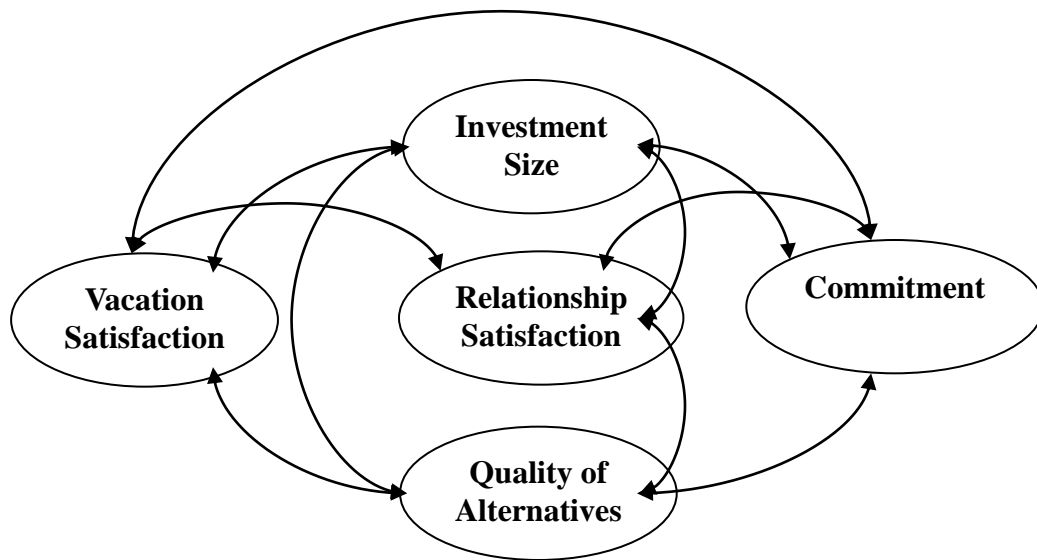
Measurement Model

The measurement model was tested using confirmatory factor analysis which allows for all factors to covary with one another (Figure 13). It has been recommended to test the measurement model first to reveal if inadequate fits exist before statistical analysis of the full model (Byrne, 2001). The measurement model based on Model 2 revealed a lack of acceptable fit as its goodness of fit statistics revealed, $\chi^2=1336.11$ (N=355), DF=340, $p<.0001$, CFI=.868, GFI=.766 and RMSEA=.091.

A review of the modification indices (MI) given by AMOS 22 revealed several significant MIs were associated with item e26. The item “It is likely I may date someone other than my partner in the next few years,” was part of Rusbult’s Relationship Commitment Scale. It is proposed the wording of this statement may have led respondents to incorrectly respond, thus skewing the results and leading to issues with the measurement

model. This statement was one of three throughout the survey that was reverse coded amongst a series of positively stated questions. Swain, Weathers, and Niedrich (2008) warn against the pitfalls of reverse coded Likert-type measures, as miscomprehension of negatively worded items is common.

FIGURE 13: Model 2 Measurement Model



It was therefore determined that deleting the item would improve the model without compromising the theoretical basis of the model. As Bagozzi and Baumgartner (1994) have found, scales of 3-8 items are sufficient as measurement for Likert-type scales and, removal of this particular scale item would still result in six other measurement items for this scale.

The deletion of the item resulted in a better fit for the model; however the indices were still not acceptable. The modified measurement model resulted in goodness of fit statistics of $\chi^2=1129.25$, $p<.001$, GFI=.797, CFI=.888 and RMSEA =.086. A second review of the modification indices revealed two different items were loading on several others resulting in at least three bad modifications for each. The first item corresponded to the question, “You wish you hadn’t gotten into this relationship,” as part of Hendrick’s Relationship Assessment Scale used to measure relationship satisfaction. Again, as with the first removed item, this question is also negatively stated amongst a majority of positively stated questions, thus potentially causing response error on the part of the respondent. It was decided removal of this item would not jeopardize the theoretical basis of the scale and was therefore eliminated from further analysis.

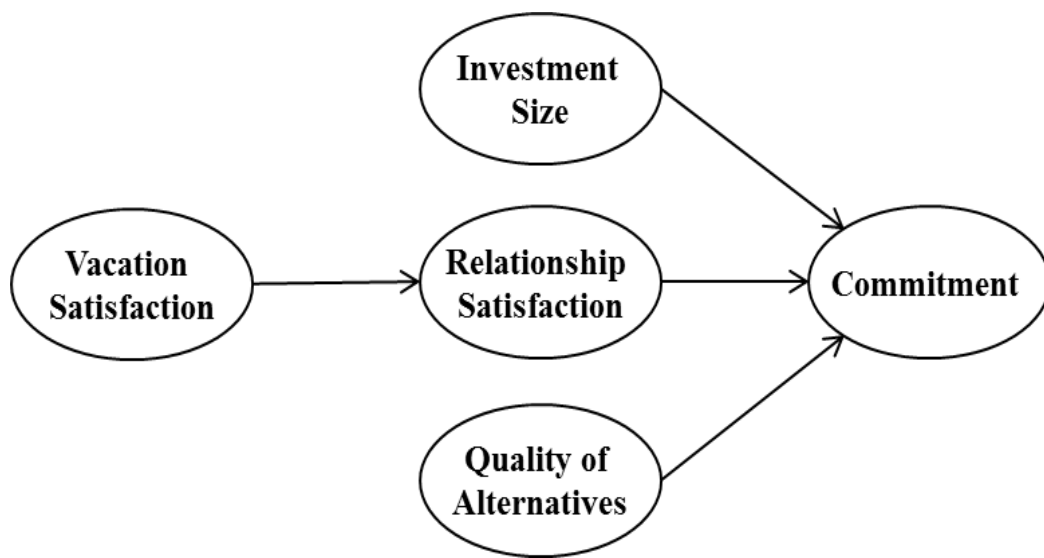
A second item from the same relationship satisfaction scale appeared to have strong cross loading with commitment as well as satisfaction. The item “You love your partner” was the only statement in the measurement scale that specifically used the word “love,” while all others specified “satisfaction.” It could be hypothesized that “love” could be perceived as a type of commitment by respondents, which could have caused the cross loading. It is further possible one could “love” their significant other without being satisfied with the relationship.

Hendrick, Hendrick and Adler (1988) studied couples to find if “love” alone led to satisfaction. While love appeared a correlate with satisfaction, several other measures, such as commitment, investment, self-esteem and self-disclosure were also contributors to overall satisfaction (Hendrick et al., 1988). This finding suggests that love alone did not necessarily equal satisfaction for couples. Removal of the item from the scale still left five measurement

items, well within the guidelines of 3-8 items suggested for acceptable measurement scales by Bagozzi (et al. 1994). It was therefore determined removal of this item was justified as a means to increase the overall model fit without jeopardizing the theoretical grounding of the model.

The deletion of the items in question resulted in adequate model fit, with $\chi^2=812.206$, $p<.001$, GFI=.840, CFI=.916, and RMSEA=.076. It is realized that the GFI is considerably low for an adequate model, but past research has argued that GFI is sensitive to higher sample sizes such as that in the current study (Fan, 1996). While a minimum value for the GFI of 0.9 has been suggested, some researchers have recommended that this index should no longer be used (Sharma et al, 2005); thus it will be used in conjunction with other measures, but will not be used to make final decisions about the model. The final model used for SEM analysis is found in Figure 14.

FIGURE 14: Model 2 Hypothesized Model



Hypothesized Model Analysis

The last step for the analysis of Model 2 involved structural measurement to test the hypotheses and determine how well the model fit the data. The hypothesized model, with $\chi^2=893.80$, $p<.001$, $GFI=.829$, $CFI=.904$, and $RMSEA=.080$ resulted in adequate model fit, although again GFI was considerably low (Table 12). Therefore, no further modifications were deemed necessary and the hypothesized model was used to test hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c. A summary of the SEM analysis can be found in Table 13 and Figure 15.

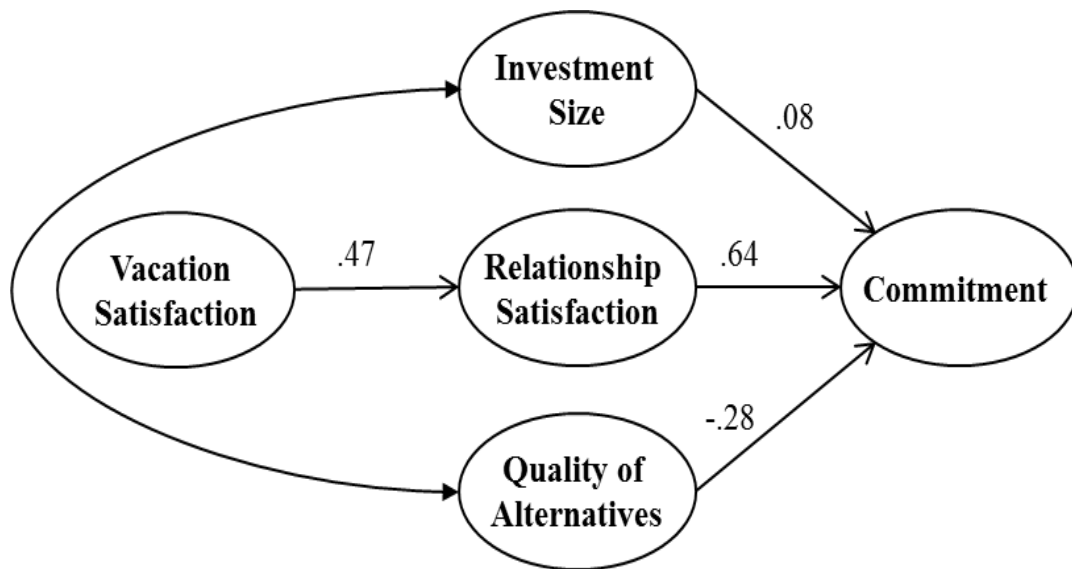
TABLE 12 Goodness of Fit Statistics for SEM Model 2

MODEL 2	χ^2	DF	CFI	GFI	RMSEA
Measurement Model	1336.10	340	.868	.766	.091
Modified Model	812.20	265	.916	.840	.076
Hypothesized Model	893.80	268	.904	.829	.080

TABLE 13 Summary of SEM Analysis for Model 2

			Standard Estimate (R^2)	Standard Error	Critical Ratio (t-test)	P
RS	<---	VS	.466	.035	8.806	<.001
COM	<---	RS	.642	.038	14.503	<.001
COM	<---	IS	.080	.180	1.624	.104
COM	<---	QoA	-.278	.033	-6.084	<.001

FIGURE 15: Model 2 Final SEM Model



Hypothesis 2a stated that Relationship Commitment would be significantly and positively influenced by Investment Size. The results however, revealed that investment size did not have a significant effect ($p > .05$) on relationship commitment. While previous studies have shown investment size to be a significant contributor to relationship commitment, the studies have consistently shown investment size explained the least amount of variance when compared to the other Investment Model constructs (Rusbult, 1983; Le and Agnew, 2003). Le and Agnew (2003) further showed that the association between investments and commitment was more significant for relationships of less than 18 months than for those of more than 18 months. Respondents to this study had an average relationship length of 17 years. Only 3 percent had a relationship of less than 1 year. This could contribute to the explanation of investment not being a significant predictor of commitment in the present study.

While not a significant predictor of relationship commitment, investment size still showed that as it increased 1 unit, perceived relationship commitment increased .08 units. It was therefore retained for analysis. Hypothesis H2a was thus not supported with the current data.

Hypothesis H2b stated that Relationship Commitment would be significantly and positively influenced by Relationship Satisfaction. The findings from this study were consistent with previous Investment Model analyses, and showed that satisfaction was the strongest and most significant predictor of commitment (.642). For each unit that an individual's satisfaction increased, their relationship commitment increased by .642 units. Thus, as perceived satisfaction with a relationship increased, so too did relationship commitment. Therefore, H2b was supported.

Hypothesis 2c stated Relationship Commitment would be significantly and negatively influenced by Quality of Alternatives. Consistent with previous studies (Linardatos and Lydon, 2011; Rusbult, 1998), the current study also found that quality of alternatives had a negative effect (-.278) on relationship commitment. The findings reveal that for every unit increase in alternatives to the current relationship, an individual's commitment to the relationship decreased by .278 units, thus creating a negative effect on commitment. Therefore, H2c was supported.

Combined, the findings suggest that an individual's commitment to their relationship is effected by perceived satisfaction and alternatives, but not by investment size. The results further showed that the model accounted for 56 percent ($R_{smc}^2=.560$) of the variance in relationship commitment. The current variance explained is in line with previous research findings. As an example, Le and Agnew's (2003) meta-analysis of Investment Model studies

showed satisfaction, investments and alternatives explained an overall combined average of 61 percent of the variance in relationship commitment.

HYPOTHESES H3a AND H3b

Hypothesis H3a suggested perceived Relationship Satisfaction would be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken with differing travel partners, specifically, travel (1) with one's significant other, (2) without one's significant other, and (3) with one's significant other and kids. To determine if vacation satisfaction between the varying groups could predict relationship satisfaction, H3a, linear regression analysis was used. General linear regression is one of the most commonly used techniques to study a relationship between variables (Pallant, 2010). In this study, the overall linear regression model was significant, $p < .001$, with $r^2 = .200$. For vacations take with their significant other, vacation satisfaction was a significant and positive predictor of relationship satisfaction, $p = .007$, $\beta = .401$.

However vacation satisfaction for vacations taken without their significant other and without children was found to have a negative and not significant ($p > .05$) effect on relationship satisfaction, $p = .267$, $\beta = -.162$. For every unit increase of satisfaction attributed to vacations without a significant other, an individual's relationship satisfaction decreased $-.162$ units.

When examining the coefficient for vacation satisfaction for trips taken with a significant other and children, it was found that vacation satisfaction was a positive, but not significant ($p > .05$) predictor of relationship satisfaction, $p = .069$, $\beta = .221$. Table 14 sums the findings for H3a.

TABLE 14 Summary of H3a Findings

	R ²	β	p
Overall Model predicting Relationship Satisfaction	.200		<.001
VS with Significant Other (n=355)		.401	.007
VS without Significant Other (n=189)		-.162	.267
VS with Significant Other and Kids (n=249)		.221	.069

Hypothesis H3b stated perceived relationship commitment would be predicted by vacation satisfaction amongst the same three different types of trips (with significant other, without significant other, and with children). The overall linear regression model was not significant, $p = .194$, with $r^2 = .053$. For those who traveled with their significant other, vacation satisfaction was not found a significant predictor of relationship commitment, $p = .603$, $\beta = .082$. Similarly, vacation satisfaction was not found to be a significant predictor of relationship commitment for those traveling without their significant other, $p = .230$, $\beta = -.190$, nor those traveling with their partner and children, $p = .058$, $\beta = .251$.

These findings are consistent with the proposed conceptual Model 2 used in this study. Model 2 observed a direct path from vacation satisfaction to relationship satisfaction, and relationship satisfaction was then found to be a mediator of relationship commitment (H3c). Further, a direct path from vacation satisfaction to relationship commitment was not found significant ($p > .05$) without the mediator of relationship satisfaction. Table 15 sums the findings for H3b.

TABLE 15 Summary of H3b Findings

	R ²	β	p
Overall Model predicting Relationship Commitment	.053		.194
VS with Significant Other (n=355)		.082	.603
VS without Significant Other (n=189)		-.190	.230
VS with Significant Other and Kids (n=249)		..251	.058

HYPOTHESES H4a1, H4a2, H4b1, and H4b2

Hypotheses H4a1 through H4b2 sought to understand the effect relationship length and age might have on relationship satisfaction and commitment. To understand the relationships between the variables, t-tests and correlation analyses were employed. Specifically, H4a1 stated relationship length would not be related to relationship commitment. As the hypothesis stated, relationship length ($\mu=17.74$, $n=435$) was not found a significant correlation with relationship commitment, $p=.287$. Thus, H4a1 was supported.

Hypothesis H4a2 stated relationship length would not be related to relationship satisfaction. This too was supported as the correlation was not significant, $p=.518$, thus indicating the number of years a couple had spent together did not directly correlate with the satisfaction they felt toward the relationship. This was consistent with a longitudinal study of marriages in America conducted in 1980 and again in 2000, which found that couples reported consistent levels of happiness over the course of the 20 year study, (Amato et al., 2003).

However, this finding was contradictory to other Existing research which has shown a positive shift in marital satisfaction occurs during the empty nest stage of a relationship, as couples have more time to focus on each other and their personal preferences (Gorchoff et al., 2008). Research has also indicated the highest levels of happiness are found at the early and later stages of marriage (Papalia et al., 2002). As the current study was a result of a onetime response to perceived relationship satisfaction, it is possible the finding is not a reflection of relationship satisfaction throughout the entire relationship. A limitation of this study is that it did not measure family lifestyle stage. Therefore, it wasn't known if the

respondent was at the “empty nest” lifecycle stage to be able to compare that to Existing research suggesting satisfaction increases at that stage for a couple.

Hypotheses H4b1 and H4b2 were hypothesized to understand the effect age may contribute to relationship satisfaction or relationship commitment. Age ($\mu=46.05$, $n=435$) was not found to be a significant indication of relationship commitment, $p=.292$, nor of relationship satisfaction, $p=.174$. This finding may indicate that positive and negative relationship satisfaction and commitment can be achieved at any age. It also suggests that variables other than age are more important for understanding relationship satisfaction and commitment.

HYPOTHESES H4c1 AND H4c2

Hypotheses H4c1 and H4c2 were included in the current study to understand the role gender plays on relationship satisfaction and commitment. Specifically, H4c1 stated commitment to relationship would not be different for males than it would be for females. The findings from the study support this hypothesis as the t-test showed no significant differences ($p=.511$) between female ($\mu=26.01$, $n=223$) and male's ($\mu=26.20$, $n=212$) perceived relationship commitment levels. Comparatively, H4c2 sought to understand if relationship satisfaction would differ across genders. Again, the findings showed no significant differences ($p=.828$) between females ($\mu=29.05$, $n=223$) and males ($\mu=28.94$, $n=212$) when examining perceived relationship satisfaction levels. Therefore, the findings from this study support both H4c1 and H4c2.

HYPOTHESES H4d1 AND H4d2

The final hypotheses were included to determine if perceived relationship satisfaction and commitment differ amongst varying sexual orientations. Hypothesis H4d1 states commitment to relationship would not be different for respondents with different sexual orientations. The findings from this study support the hypothesis as sexual orientation was not a significant indicator of relationship commitment ($p=.404$). Commitment was measured between two sexual orientation classifications, heterosexual/straight ($\mu=26.05$, $n=401$) and sexual minority, to include gay, lesbian, bisexual and other ($\mu=26.56$, $n=25$). Additionally, H4d2 stated relationship satisfaction would not differ for varying sexual orientations. Again, the findings supported the hypothesis as satisfaction was not significantly different between those with different sexual orientations ($p=.158$), heterosexual/straight ($\mu=29.10$) and sexual minority ($\mu=27.48$). The findings would seem to indicate sexual orientation is not a significant antecedent to explain relationship commitment and satisfaction levels. It could be suggested that a limitation to this finding is the rather obvious differing study population numbers, as the heterosexual respondent population ($n=401$) was significantly larger than the sexual minority population ($n=25$). However, 3.8% adults in the United States identify themselves as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (Gates, 2011). In this study, 426 respondents indicated sexual orientation, with 25 respondents (5.87% of respondents) revealing sexual orientation of gay, lesbian, bisexual or other. Thus, the sample size was relatively comparable to that of the US population, yet likely was not large enough to detect differences.

SYNOPSIS OF THE CHAPTER

The current chapter outlined the findings from the established hypotheses outlined in Chapters I and III. Structural equation modeling analysis found acceptable fit for both Model 1 and Model 2. Statistical support was found for all hypotheses with the exception of H2a, H3b, and subsections of H3a. A summary of the findings is found in Table 16.

TABLE 16 Summary of Statistical Findings

Hypothesis	Findings
H1a: VS will have a direct correlation with RS	Supported
H1b: RS will have a direct correlation with SwL	Supported
H1c: VS will have a positive correlation with SwL as mediated by RS	Supported
H2a: Commitment will be significantly and positively influence by Investment Size	Not Supported
H2b: Commitment will be significantly and positively influence by RS	Supported
H2c: Commitment will be significantly and positively influence by Alternatives	Supported
H3a: RS will be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken with: (1) Significant other	Supported
(2) Without Significant Other	Not Supported
(3) With Children	Not Supported
H3b: Commitment will be predicted by satisfaction with vacations taken with: (1) Significant other	Not Supported
(2) Without Significant Other	Not Supported
(3) With Children	Not Supported
H4a1: Relationship length will not be related to commitment to relationship	Supported
H4a2: Relationship length will not be related to relationship satisfaction	Supported
H4b1: Age will not be related to commitment to relationship	Supported
H4b2: Age will not be related to relationship satisfaction	Supported
H4c1: Commitment will not be different between genders	Supported
H4c2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different between genders	Supported
H4d1: Commitment will not be different between sexual orientations	Supported
H4d2: Relationship Satisfaction will not be different between sexual orientations	Supported

CHAPTER VII

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research was ternary; (1) to investigate the role vacation satisfaction had on relationship and life satisfaction (2) to examine the impact vacation satisfaction had on commitment as measured through the constructs of the Investment Model and (3) to understand if satisfaction is reflective of tripographics or the individual's demographics.

IMPLICATIONS FOR H1a, H1b, and H1c

Hypotheses H1a, H1b and H1c were designed to determine the relationships vacation and relationship satisfaction had with satisfaction with life. Based on previous literature (Sirgy, et al., 2011; Kompier, 2010; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004) it was hypothesized that (H1a) vacation satisfaction would have a direct correlation with satisfaction with life, (H1b) relationship satisfaction would have a direct correlation with satisfaction with life, and (H1c) vacation satisfaction would have a positive correlation with satisfaction with life as mediated by relationship satisfaction. These hypotheses were supported by the data.

First, a conceptual model was hypothesized which suggested relationship satisfaction served as a mediator between vacation and life satisfactions. It also suggested vacation satisfaction had a direct and positive correlation with relationship satisfaction, which in turn had a direct and positive correlation with satisfaction with life. The model was tested through structural modeling and was found to have acceptable fit with the data.

It was further found that vacation satisfaction was a positive and significant predictor of relationship satisfaction, explaining 20 percent of the variance in relationship satisfaction.

Furthermore, it was found that relationship satisfaction was a significant and positive predictor of satisfaction with life, explaining 40 percent of the variance.

While past studies have consistently shown that leisure satisfaction can lead to relationship satisfaction (Newman and Newman, 2008; Presser, 2000), the current findings more specifically examined satisfaction with travel. With the current study revealing that vacation satisfaction is directly related to relationship satisfaction, and indirectly related to life satisfaction, the findings suggest that travel benefits both one's relationships, and their overall well-being. This finding has implications for a variety of fields from psychology to marketing to tourism.

Several studies have recently focused on the benefits of travel, to include relationship, educative and health and wellness benefits for adults and couples. As found by Chen and Petrick, (2012), the more consumers know about the benefits of travel, the more likely and frequently they are to travel for those benefits. Petrick and Huether (2013) suggested that the travel industry should learn from the red wine and dark chocolate industries, which utilized knowledge of their inherent benefits to escalate the sales of their products. Thus, once touted as a guilty pleasure (like red wine and chocolate), travel could be promoted beyond just being pleasurable; to include the benefits it has for not only an individual, but for the couple and family.

Theoretically, implications of this model reveal that vacation satisfaction leads to relationship satisfaction, which leads to satisfaction with life. The use of vacation satisfaction, in place of leisure satisfaction, is more specific, giving a more clear understanding of what is causing both relationship and life satisfactions. Future research is

necessary in order to determine the antecedents of vacation satisfaction, as well as other variables that are related to relationship satisfaction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HYPOTHESES H2a, H2b, and H2c

Hypotheses H2a, H2b and H2c were designed to test the constructs of the Investment Model with the addition of vacation satisfaction. The Investment Model (Rusbult,1993) has been used to show satisfaction, investment size and quality of alternatives as significant predictors of relationship commitment. The present study found satisfaction, quality of alternatives and investment size accounted for 56 percent of the variance explained for relationship commitment. This is similar to previous studies which have shown an average of 61 percent variance explained (Le and Agnew, 2003). While in line with previous studies and the underlying premise of the Investment Model, this study also found relationship satisfaction (H2b) and quality of alternatives (H2c) to be significant predictors of relationship commitment. However, contrary to Rusbult's (1993) Investment Model, the current study found investments (H2a) were not a significant predictor of relationship commitment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HYPOTHESIS H2a

While typically found to be the least significant predictor of relationship commitment of the three included in the Investment Model, research has consistently shown investment as a significant predictor of commitment. Findings from this study indicate that investment size was not a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction ($r^2=.080$, $p=.104$). This was contrary to the stated hypothesis and Existing research. Investment size was measured with Rusbult's Investment Scale comprised of five Likert-type questions, as outlined in Chapter

III. Theoretically these findings could reflect differences in respondent demographics, a shift in the value importance of investments, or the need to measure investments through different means.

Survey responses to investment size were measured and analyzed as individual responses. Respondents were not grouped in categories by relationship length or relationship lifecycle. As previously suggested by Le and Agnew (2003), the association between investments and commitment has been found to be more significant for relationships of less than 18 months than for those of more than 18 months. The current study included respondents from a full spectrum of relationship lengths. It is possible that the breadth of the relationship types decreased the predictability of investment size as it relates to commitment. Future research is necessary in order to more fully examine this phenomenon.

Different types of investments may also have different impacts on relationship commitment. Research has suggested that investment types differ greatly on the influence they contribute on an individual's commitment to products, services and romantic relationships (Etcheverry, Le and Hoffman, 2012; Goodfriend & Agnew, 2008). Questions used to measure investment size through Rusbult's Investment Scale, are intangible in nature, questioning the time invested and relations with family and friends established through the current relationship. These measures focus on global, intangible measures rather than domain specific, tangible measures. It is possible that tangible investments, those more easily observed and measured, would be more predictive of relationship commitment than intangible investments. For example, specifically questioning investments of a house, children, finances and so forth, may add a more tangible and measureable aspect to determining investment size. The current measure did not include domain specific or

tangible items, therefore the distinction between which is more indicative of commitment was not measured. It is recommended that future research be dedicated to this line of study.

As the investment scale was first introduced in the 1980s, it is possible that values and attitudes toward relationships have significantly changed since its inception, thus possibly suggesting a need to modernize the “investments” in question. According to census data, the average age of marriage has increased steadily over the past 50 years, from 20 for females and 23 for males in 1960, to 27 and 28 respectively in 2010 (Census 2010). This increase could likely be attributed partly to women just beginning to enter the career force in the 1960s and 1970s, while today it is becoming the expected norm in society.

Also contributing to the increasing age of marriage is the value of education, as people are completing higher education degrees and entering the work force to secure a career track prior to marriage (Isen and Stevenson, 2010; Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2009). This has likely led to increasing financial independence and expanding career opportunities for both men and women. Marriage is now less likely to be about dependence on another for financial security or social status as each individual is more likely to bring their own independence into the relationship. It is also possible that due to the rise in a need for individuality in relationships (Amato et al. 2007), people are less likely to feel that leaving the relationship would cause an individual to “lose a sense of who they are,” or “lose many aspects of their life as they are linked to the partner,” as posed in the Investment Scale. The rise in individuality coupled with the financial independence many now bring to the relationship, calls into question the need to reevaluate what is classified an “investment” into a relationship. Specifically, there is a need to determine what is significantly contributing to relationship commitment if time and money are no longer highly significant determinants.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HYPOTHESIS H2c

The current research sought to understand the role perceived quality of alternatives had on relationship commitment. Consistent with previous literature, it was found that as an individual's awareness of alternatives to the current relationship increased, overall relationship commitment decreased ($r^2 = -.278$). This finding supports that of the Investment Model and serves to show the negative effect awareness of alternatives has on relationship commitment.

From a practical standpoint, this finding suggests the need to decrease the desire to seek out alternatives to the current relationship as this can ultimately lead to a decrease in relationship commitment levels. Byrne's Law of Attraction (1997) states a rather commonsense idea in that individuals prefer to align themselves with those who provide benefits in the form of rewards rather than costs or punishments. Under this law, Byrne says individuals prefer others who are similar to themselves because this leads to rewarding interactions and experiences (Byrne, 1997). People with common hobbies and interests tend to have higher levels of shared satisfaction than those with vastly differing interests. Thus, shared interests are viewed as rewards, while participation in hobbies or activities of interest to only one member of the dyad may lead to conflict and dissatisfaction. It may be suggested that couples communicate their individual interests early in a relationship to determine compatibility based on common interests. In relation to travel, it may be suggested that couples travel together early in a relationship to determine shared interests and similar travel habits, thus indicating the possibility of relationship commitment. Without sharing similar travel preference, or other interests, one might consider the possibility of others fulfilling the role left void by the partner's disinterest or dissatisfaction and, as research has shown,

relationship alternatives are the leading cause of divorce or termination of a relationship (Amato et al., 2007). This is not to suggest that couples with certain dissimilar interests can't achieve high levels of relationship commitment. Amato (2007) acknowledges an individual's need to retain a sense of self within a relationship. Thus, it can be suggested that couples should maintain a balance of individuality and shared interests to achieve satisfaction and dissuade from alternative partners as they desire to increase commitment levels.

Theoretically, the examination of the Investment Model revealed that one's commitment to a relationship is formed positively by their satisfaction with the relationship, and negatively by the perceived quality of alternatives to the relationship. Additionally, with investment size not being found to be a significant predictor in the model, it is possible that global measures of investments (as used in the current study) are not as beneficial in examining relationship commitment as they have been historically. Future research should be conducted qualitatively to assist in the development of measures for determining if a shift in perceptions of investment has occurred, and if global measures can be refined.

This model further revealed that vacation satisfaction can be used as an antecedent in the Investment Model. This addition aids in the theoretic understanding of the formation of relationship satisfaction and shows the beneficial role that vacations have on relationships. Future research is needed to better understand additional antecedents of relationship satisfaction, and how well vacation satisfaction compares to these other variables.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HYPOTHESES H3a and H3b

Hypotheses H3a and H3b researched the effects of vacation satisfaction for trips with differing partners may have on relationship satisfaction and commitment. Specifically, the

research sought to understand the effect of travel with (1) a significant other, (2) without a significant other, and (3) with a significant other and children has on relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Hypothesis H3a- With Significant Other

In the current study, of the travel partner types considered, vacation satisfaction was only a significant and positive predictor of relationship satisfaction when traveling with a significant other ($\beta=.401$, $p=.007$). It is therefore suggested that those in the fields of counseling, therapy and psychology consider the benefits of travel when prescribing measures to increase couple's relationship satisfaction levels. Vacations taken together as a couple may be offered as a means to strengthen relationship satisfaction and satisfaction with life. Several programs currently exist in which counseling and travel are intertwined in hopes of producing favorable outcomes for relationships. A travel company in India recently introduced "divorce tourism" as an outlet for couples on the brink of relationship termination (Isreal, 2011). The understanding was that couples need a chance to escape the everyday routine to get back to a focus on one another, increases communication, and have time away from the daily stressors of careers, children and other family members. The company acknowledged that couples who had relationship dissatisfaction at home were not likely to reverse the issues on their own during a vacation. Therefore, the program also provides relationship counseling onsite during the vacation.

As mentioned above, this finding should be used by tourism management to "prescribe" travel as a means for enhancing couples' relationships. A recent survey revealed by US Travel (2014) revealed that almost four in ten (38%) respondents said that the romance in their relationships improved after a vacation. Armed with this information and

the findings from this study, it may be suggested that destinations and attractions market special couples weekend getaways as not only a chance to escape daily stressors, but with the added benefit that vacations are “good for your relationship.” Honeymoons are often the standard first chance to getaway as a couple before entering the “real world” daily lifestyle together. Recognizing the need for couples to have time for each other, “babymoons” have become an increasing trend for couples to getaway as two, before time will become limited and the focus will shift to children. The industry has also recently started to capitalize on “divorce getaways” in which people take time to escape after difficult breakups, divorces or separations. Lacking however, is a “push” to drive couples to take time together after the honeymoon and (if applicable) the babymoon. It could be suggested the industry promote a more frequent and possibly routine escape for adult couples or parents to encourage relationship improvement and focus on one another away from the daily stressors. With research findings supporting travel as a relationship benefit, couples, relationship therapists, and others may become more inclined to view vacations as a “prescription” for increased relationship satisfaction and commitment.

Additionally, with U.S. workers being reluctant to use vacation days (Expedia, 2013), and divorces on the rise, employers who care about their employees relationships with their family should encourage their workers to take vacations with their significant others. A possible suggestion for tourism providers would be to encourage “blended travel,” or business and leisure travel combined. Business travel is typically exempt from the penalties of lost vacation days and often a company paid (or reimbursed) form of travel, thus the hesitancy to miss a day at the office or spend personal discretionary income is likely overcome. Blended travel includes travel for business purposes, with leisure time included

for family members who may accompany the traveling employee. With research to highlight the benefits vacations may provide for relationships and in turn possibly job performance, employers may begin to recognize the positive effects travel can provide and thus become more encouraged to promote use of vacation and family bonding time. As the total number of business trips is expected to increase almost 2 percent to 461 million, in 2014, (Trejos, 2014) it can be assumed many couples will spend time apart due to business travel required of one or both partner's careers. That, coupled with industry experts predicting business travel spending will jump 6.6 percent to over \$280 billion this year, reveals a substantial and growing market prime for the promotion of blended travel. The benefit would also likely be twofold. First couples and families would most likely spend more time together, thus possibly increasing relationship satisfaction and commitment. Second, industry providers could use incentives of additional leisure day discounts when business travelers book, to lengthen their stays. When booking a hotel room for business travel for example, an additional weekend day may be added at a discount incentive price for leisure with family, thus increasing bookings for the hotel and vacation time for couples or families.

Hypothesis H3a- With Children

While not a significant predictor of relationship satisfaction, travel with a significant other and child(ren) was a positive predictor of relationship satisfaction ($p=.069$, $\beta=.221$). To further understand contributors to the vacation satisfaction, respondents were asked how much time they spent participating in activities they enjoyed during differing vacation scenarios. For those vacationing with children, adults only took part in activities they enjoyed 52.5 percent of the total vacation time, by far the least amount of the three types of

travel. Other time was likely dedicated to children's activities or activities of other accompanying the family on the vacation.

It can be assumed that during vacations with children, adults often sacrifice their own needs and preferences for the enjoyment of the child(ren). However, as vacation satisfaction was shown to positively contribute to relationship satisfaction, it is important to include vacation activities that also enhance the adult's vacation satisfaction levels to help ensure satisfaction with the significant other is achieved throughout and after the vacation. Research by Lehto et al. (2009) found that a family vacation was deemed successful if all parties were satisfied with the overall aspects of the vacation. They suggested that in order to achieve a successful vacation as perceived by parents and children, "activities and programs [at the vacation site] that can provide ample opportunities for [parents and children] to interact can be appreciated by family travelers" (p. 475). Similarly, Kozak (2010) studied 445 families after taking a vacation and found that families depended on one another's evaluations of a vacation to assess their own satisfaction levels. Thus, this indicates that vacation satisfaction was more likely to be achieved if all parties were satisfied once they returned home.

Similarly, research by Gram (2005) included differences in children's and parents' overall motives for travel. Children were more likely to want fun and activities from a holiday, while parents were more inclined to hope for a relaxing vacation for all. Parents indicated a need for vacations to provide "togetherness," while still leaving room for rest. These findings suggest tourism destinations and activities with a family focus should promote togetherness, while also offering activities specifically for children to participate in at times separate from parents. In theory, this could potentially increase both parties' vacation satisfaction levels, which in turn could increase both their relationship satisfaction.

Recently, a popular hotel chain has brought to light the need for adults to have time to partake in their preferred activities during vacation. The hotel promotes connecting rooms for families with children, allowing children their own room with kid friendly activities, while the parents enjoy a quiet and relaxing room next door. The advertisement recognizes the need for family time as well as adult time during vacations in hopes of keeping adults and children satisfied with their vacation stay.

Many cruise lines, destinations and resorts already offer children's activities or time for parents to get away while the child is enrolled in these activities. However, as found in this research, parents are not participating in their own activities or achieving high levels of vacation satisfaction while traveling with children, thus they may not be taking advantage of these child friendly programs. It may be recommended to the industry to promote these activities or programs more frequently. It's possible that a negative stigma may be associated with those who travel with children yet spend time away from them during the vacation. The findings from this study, which show vacation satisfaction leads to relationship satisfaction, may provide the needed benefit parents require to understand vacation time spent away from children should not be viewed in a negative light, but rather a positive step toward family cohesion and happiness.

Hypothesis H3a- Without Significant Other

Finally, those vacationing without their significant other and without children were examined to determine vacation satisfaction's effect on relationship satisfaction. It was found that satisfaction of travel taken without a significant other was a negative, but not significant predictor of relationship satisfaction ($p=.267$, $\beta=-.162$). This finding suggests that vacations taken without one's significant other have a negative (albeit not significant) effect on their

relationship. This would suggest to marriage counselors and for individuals striving to make relationships work that travel without one's partner should be thoroughly discussed in the relationship and that couples should do all that they can to minimize these effects. More research is necessary in order to determine which types of trips have the most negative effects, and to determine if these trips actually lead to the demise of relationships.

Yet, additional data collected from the study suggests that the effects of these trips are not all that bad, and that they could provide other, positive benefits. It was revealed that for travel without one's significant other, respondents revealed they were able to partake in activities they enjoyed and preferred 80 percent of the time, while it was much lower for those traveling with a partner (65%) or with a partner and children (52.5%). This suggests that there may be other positive benefits of travel beyond relationship satisfaction, which might make these trips beneficial to the person's self-satisfaction, perceptions of worth, etc. As previously stated, Existing research has found a need for individuality within relationships, allowing each member of the dyad certain freedoms to pursue their individual activities (Amato, 2007). While travel with a significant other was found to be a significant and positive predictor of relationship satisfaction, it was shown those traveling with friends and without the partner spent more time doing activities they found most enjoyable. It can be suggested that travel with a significant other requires compromise, at times participating in travel for the appeasement of the significant other.

Additionally, the negative effects of these trips appear to possibly be minimal. When asked the perceived affect these trips had on their perceptions of their relationship, only 3.7% stated that the trip made their relationship somewhat or much worse, while the vast majority 60.3% stated it had no effect, and 39.7% stated vacation without their significant other made

their relationship somewhat or much better. These findings were almost identical for how these individuals perceived their partner felt about these trips as only 7.4% said their partner felt the vacation had a negative effect on the relationship. The majority, 54.5% saw no change due to the vacation, and 38.1% said their partner felt the vacation without them made the relationship better. This suggests that while girlfriend getaways and mancations might be perceived to negatively affect relationship satisfaction, yet have little actual negative affect on the relationship.

Future research is suggested to investigate the motives for travel without one's significant other, how travel without one's significant other to varying vacation destinations may effect relationship satisfaction and commitment, and if frequency of travel without one's partners has an effect on the relationship.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HYPOTHESIS H3b

As hypothesized, vacation satisfaction was not a significant direct predictor of relationship commitment ($r^2=.053$, $p=.194$) for any of the travel groups ((1) with and (2) without significant other and (3) with kids). As shown through the Investment Model, there are several variables that contribute to commitment, as one single item is not wholly predictive of romantic relationship commitment. It was found that the path between vacation satisfaction and relationship commitment was significant when mediated by relationship satisfaction. Thus, vacation satisfaction served as an indirect predictor of relationship commitment. Practically this may suggest that while a couple or individual feels satisfied with a vacation, it may not directly lead to commitment, suggesting there are other variables

that contribute to the commitment. This may suggest that individuals in a relationship may be satisfied, yet satisfaction alone is not a strong enough variable to solely lead to commitment.

For the tourism industry, this finding is similar to that of research in the services marketing literature, as it has been found that while a consumer may be satisfied with a product or service, this alone will not cement a committed relationship to the brand or provider. Consumer behavior researchers have typically discussed relationship marketing as being similar to that of romantic relationships, thus the findings from this study may be transferred to the marketing literature.

Bendapudi and Berry (1997) suggested in the services marketing literature (to encompass tourism service providers) that it may be preferable to build relationships based on dedication rather than constraints, as dedication leads to expansion and enhancement, thus relationship continuation (commitment). They suggest service providers enhance dedication to the product or brand through focusing on superiority to the competition (thus decreasing alternatives) and satisfaction with the overall experience and provider. These ideas would likely align with the notion of decreasing quality of alternatives and increasing satisfaction to increase commitment. This could suggest to industry providers that a focus on unique attributes indicating value or superiority over the competition would be a better antecedent to commitment than a focus on the time, financials or contracts (investments) one has with the company.

In a saturated tourism services market, many providers are offering the same products with little dissimilarity. It could be recommended that providers seek to focus on the unique attribute that keeps customers satisfied and from considering alternatives to increase dedication (commitment) to one provider over another. As the current research has shown,

investments were the least significant predictor of commitment, while satisfaction and quality of alternatives were better predictors. Through marketing, this finding could suggest companies focus less on how much a customer has invested, and rather why they have invested that much, by highlighting their satisfaction with the product or service and the unique attributes that particular service provides.

Many cruise lines, hotels, airlines and other tourism service providers currently reward customers for being dedicated and loyal customers for x amount of years, or for spending x amount of dollars per year, often requiring great investments of time and money. While not diminishing the gesture, it may prove more beneficial to remind the customer of why it is believed they have remained committed. This could be achieved by reminding the customer of unique cruises ports they have been to with the company over the past x years, or of the time they stayed at the hotel's location in a specific city or country. Rather than a focus on the investment of money or time, which may be viewed as a loss, a focus on the positive and unique attributes that keep the customer satisfied (a reward) is suggested.

Thus, a cruise line may send marketing material reminding a couple of the highlights of a special vacation taken together, possibly through photos, reminders of ports of call, or reviews of shows they attended on board. While this is another opportunity for the company to showcase their unique attributes over the competition, it may trigger thoughts of satisfaction for the consumer. Rather than thanking a customer for spending enough to achieve "gold status" or cruising x amount of times in the past year, thus conjuring thoughts of money spent during those stays, this approach would appeal to their emotional side in the hopes of reminding them of the satisfaction of the experience with not only the service provider, but with the travel partner as well.

Theoretically, these combined findings reveal that different types of trips have different effects on relationships. These findings further reveal that vacations with one's partner have the greatest effect on relationship satisfaction. With different types of vacations having differing effects, future research should further explore the underlying causes of these differences, and determine how different types of vacations can be engineered to maximize relationship satisfaction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HYPOTHESES H4a1, H4a2, H4b1, H4b2, H4c1 and H4c2

Finally, demographics were investigated to determine if gender, sexual orientation or age were predictors of relationship commitment or satisfaction. It was found, as stated in each hypothesis, that gender, sexual orientation nor age had little effect on relationship satisfaction or commitment. Practically this suggests tourism service providers can market relationship building vacations to both genders and those with different sexual orientations. Perceived relationship satisfaction and commitment appear to be thought almost equal between males and females and by those of different sexual orientations. The findings also suggest that regardless of age or relationship length, satisfaction and commitment are equally important factors along the entire spectrum of years spent together. There appeared no specific age or time in relationship where satisfaction and commitment were significantly different. This suggests to the industry that relationship enhancing activities and vacations are needed for adults of all ages and relationship stages.

Theoretically this suggests demographics (age, gender or sexual preferences) do not assist in the understanding of either relationship satisfaction or commitment. This is possibly due to the breakdown of stereotypes, where males and females, young and old and straight

and gay people today are less likely to feel compelled to be placed into a box, for how they should act. While the demographics did not provide insight into relationship satisfaction and commitment formation, this does suggest that other variables exist which explain the formation of these constructs.

The majority of the respondents were heterosexual or straight (94%), therefore resulting in a small sample of sexual minority respondents, 5 percent, with an additional 1 percent who preferred not to answer the question. This difference in group size may have made statistical analysis incapable of detecting differences between the groups. Future research, with a larger sexual minority sample, is necessary to identify if sexual preference is related to relationship commitment or satisfaction. Future research may also be suggested to investigate further demographics such as income, living situation, family lifecycle stage or career life cycle, as possible predictors of commitment and satisfaction.

LIMITATIONS

While this study was done prudently, no research is without limitations. This study was an attempt to gain an initial understanding of the benefits travel with differing travel partners may have on a relationship. As stated in Chapter I, the effect that travel without a significant other has on the non-traveling individual was only examined from the standpoint of the person who took part in the travel. It did not include the actual perceptions of the non-traveling significant other. Further research is suggested to measure the potential positive or negative impacts of travel for both partners.

The current research utilized a self-reported measure of travel behavior by asking satisfaction levels. It is arguably an acceptable way of measuring behavior, but it may

involve some measurement errors. Additionally, the survey was administered through one panel company during one set timeframe. This may have precluded respondents who do not have Internet access or skills to complete an online survey. However, as research has shown, online panel methods allow for a targeted sample representative of the population (Scholl, 2002), provide results similar to that of traditional survey methods (Evans and Mathur, 2005) and reveal little demographic differences between respondents who participate in panel surveys versus those who participate in other survey methods (McCabe, 2006).

Finally, the theoretical framework used throughout this study used research which had shown the directional influences among variables. Thus, the study examined the influence of variables on commitment and satisfaction with life through one directional means. Future research is suggested to examine the conceptualized relationships through cyclical measures. Thus, future research should examine whether relationship satisfaction leads to commitment, which inevitably leads to future relationship satisfaction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The current study was an initial attempt to understand the effect different travel scenarios have on relationship satisfaction and commitment. As stated in Chapter I, the study was limited to a one time evaluation of vacation and relationship satisfaction and commitment. It was also a measure of only one person's perception of vacation effects rather than a measure of both members of the dyad. Future research encompassing the results from both partners in the relationship, would likely help to strengthen the results and explain the effect different travel types have for both members of the relationship.

To understand the antecedents of commitment, the current study used scale measures developed over 30 years ago. While shown to be valid and reliable measures through a multitude of studies (Le and Agnew, 2003), it is possible the measurements are in need of updates to reflect today's relationship dynamics. With a progressive culture and ever changing family dynamics, it is recommended for future studies to determine if investments are different today than they have been in the past. A more domain specific measure is suggested to determine specifically what investments are important to couples in varying degrees of relationships (from dating, engaged, cohabitating, civil union, first marriage, second marriage etc.).

This study employed the constructs of the Investment Model which suggest alternatives, investments and satisfaction are antecedents to commitment. A future research question might seek to understand if the relationship between satisfaction and commitment is cyclical. In this study, it was found satisfaction increased commitment. Could it be possible that the more committed one is the more satisfied they will be? Can stronger commitment levels before a transgression help one once again achieve satisfaction after a transgression? Marketing research has shown that after a transgression, more committed and loyal customers typically still feel satisfied (dependent on the service recovery method) with the service than those customers who were not loyal or committed before the transgression (Mattila, 2001). It is possible that commitment (both to a relationship and a product or service) has variables related to it that influence satisfaction. Future research is suggested to understand if the relationship between satisfaction and commitment may be cyclical or if one variable has more effect on the other.

As this was the first study, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, to attempt to quantify the effects of travel on multiple levels, future research is suggested to further understand these markets. Specifically, research is suggested to understand the benefits sought and achieved through travel with and without one's significant other, and travel with children. Along the same lines, it is suggested as a benefit to the industry, to research the motives for travel with differing travel partners. The findings of such research could possibly indicate to the industry how to better position different vacations and better understand the target market. Furthermore, additional research is suggested to understand and identify the types of vacations people prefer or participate in without their significant other. It is possible differing vacation types may contribute to differing effects on a relationship. It is likely weekend getaways with friends to attend concerts, bachelor(ette) parties, family gatherings, spa retreats, sporting events, etc. will each have a different positive or negative effect on one's relationship. Further research is needed to learn the motives and effects of each vacation type to begin to understand best practices in marketing said vacations.

Additionally, this study's focus was on the benefits of travel for adult relationships. While travel has been found to be a positive predictor of satisfaction, it can be suggested there may be a vast array of benefits travel may provide to increase satisfaction with a multitude of concepts. Future research is suggested to reveal if vacations may contribute to satisfaction with careers, mental and physical health and education. If a direct correlation between vacation and job satisfaction can be demonstrated, a more lenient and liberal vacation leave policy may be suggested to increase productivity and job satisfaction.

It is further suggested for future research, that qualitative research be conducted to assist in determining other benefits that travel might have. It is possible that satisfying vacations include benefits for individuals including increases in self-perception and self-awareness, as well as improvements in health and intelligence. These studies should include longitudinal studies to assist in understanding the cumulative effects of vacations over a lifetime for these various potential benefits.

In conclusion, the current study was an initial attempt to show travel may contribute to increased relationship satisfaction, commitment and satisfaction with life. The findings of this study mimic author Pico Iyer's quote "*we travel, in essence, to become young fools again — to slow time down and get taken in, and fall in love once more.*" While further research is needed to understand the specifics of how or why travel may increase relationship satisfaction, this study serves as a springboard to understanding the powerful benefits vacations may provide for individuals, couples and families who wish to reignite and strengthen their love and commitment.

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APPENDIX A
FINAL SURVEY

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted by a researcher from Texas A&M University. The information in this form is provided to help you decide whether or not to take part. If you decide you do not want to participate, there will be no penalty to you, and you will not lose any benefits you normally would have.

Your participation is voluntary and all responses are anonymous. The survey is expected to take no longer than 20 minutes. Thank you in advance for your valuable input to this research study.

Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to gain an initial understanding of the effects of a with varying travel partners, to include friends, a significant other, or children.

Why Am I Being Asked To Be In This Study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you meet the criteria of respondents for this study: You have traveled, are over 25 years of age and are currently in a relationship.

How Many People Will Be Asked To Be In This Study?

500 people (participants) will be invited to participate in this study.

What Are the Alternatives to being in this study?

The alternative to being in the study is not to participate.

What Will I Be Asked To Do In This Study?

You will be asked to complete a survey hosted online. Your participation in this study will last up to 20 minutes.

Are There Any Risks To Me?

The things that you will be doing are no more risk than you would come across in everyday life.

Will There Be Any Costs To Me?

Aside from your time, there are no costs for taking part in the study.

Will I Be Paid To Be In This Study?

Not by the researcher.

Will Information From This Study Be Kept Private?

No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Your responses are not linked to you and cannot be identified to you by the researcher in any manner. Information about you will be kept confidential to the extent permitted or required by law.

Who may I Contact for More Information?

You may contact the investigator, Jim Petrick, PhD if you have questions about this research at (979) 845-8806 or jpetrick@tamu.edu. For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may call the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program office at (979) 458-4067 or irb@tamu.edu.

What if I Change My Mind About Participating?

This research is voluntary and you have the choice whether or not to be in this research study. You may decide to not begin or to stop participating at any time. If you choose not to be in this study or stop being in the study, there will be no effect on your relationship with Texas A&M University.

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***1. Do you wish to participate in this survey?**

Yes

No

Texas A&M Travel Survey

Questions in this section pertain to your current relationship. Please check one answer, unless otherwise specified.

***2. What is your current relationship status?**

- Do not have a significant other at this time
- Have a significant other I do not live with
- Living with significant other and no children
- Living with significant other and children
- Living with children, but not significant other
- Other (please specify)

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***3. How long have you been with your current significant other?**

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***4. Have you traveled for leisure at least once in the past two years?**

Yes

No

Texas A&M Travel Survey

This survey section is designed to capture your satisfaction with leisure vacations (not to include business travel) you have taken WITH your significant other, but not with your children.

***5. How many times in the past 2 years have you traveled for leisure (not business) WITH your current significant other, but not with your children?**

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***6. Please describe the most recent leisure vacation (not business) you have taken with your significant other, but not your children. Please include where you went and your primary activity.**

Where did you go?

What was your primary activity?

***7. How long ago was this vacation?**

Years:

Months (if less than 1 year):

***8. Consider the vacation you described above when answering the following questions. Again, this question refers to a vacation WITH your significant other, but without children:**

	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted	N/A
The way your plans worked out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way you felt emotionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way you felt physically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The pace-of-life you experienced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for engaging in your favorite leisure activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of fun you had.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of relaxation you had.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for engaging in new activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunities you had to be "close to nature."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The weather.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of pretty scenery you saw.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for "getting away from it all."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for being alone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your relationship with your spouse/significant other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The food you ate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accommodations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***9. Now, consider ALL vacations for leisure that you have taken WITH your significant other, but not children. Rate your overall vacation satisfaction when traveling with your significant other, but not with children. (1= Very Dissatisfied and 7= Very Satisfied)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dissatisfied:Satisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terrible:Delighted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frustrated:Contented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Displeased:Pleased	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***10. Vacationing WITH my significant other, without children, has made our relationship:**

- Much worse
- Worse
- Somewhat worse
- No change
- Somewhat better
- Better
- Much better

***11. My significant other would say vacationing together, without children, has made our relationship:**

- Much worse
- Worse
- Somewhat worse
- No change
- Somewhat better
- Better
- Much better

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***12. Which type(s) of vacation(s) have you taken WITH your significant other, without children? (Check ALL that apply)**

- Sporting vacations (spectator sports)
- Spa getaways
- Shopping
- Nature (hunting, camping)
- Food and Drink tours
- Extreme adventure (skiing, water sports, adventure parks)
- Cruises
- Historical sites visits
- Arts (museum tours, performing arts)
- Music (bands, symphony, musicals)
- Sand, surf and sun
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Wildlife Viewing (birds, whale watching)
- Gambling
- Volunteer/Mission
- Other (please specify)

***13. On average, how much money do you spend on a single vacation taken WITH your significant other, without children?**

s (USD)

***14. On average, what is the typical length of a vacation you take WITH your significant other, without children?**

***15. When vacationing WITH your significant other, without children, what percent of the time do you end up doing what YOU would prefer to do on vacation?**

Percent of Time:

Texas A&M Travel Survey

This survey section is designed to capture your satisfaction with leisure vacations (not business travel) you have taken WITHOUT your significant other and WITHOUT children (if applicable).

***16. How many times in the past 2 years have you traveled for leisure WITHOUT your current significant other and WITHOUT children? This does not include business trips.**

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***17. Please describe the most recent leisure vacation (not business) you have taken WITHOUT your significant other, and WITHOUT children. Please include where you went and your primary activity.**

Where did you go?

What was your primary activity?

***18. How long ago was this vacation?**

Years:

Months (if less than 1 year):

***19. Consider the vacation you described above when answering the following questions. Again, this question refers to a vacation WITHOUT your significant other, and WITHOUT children.**

	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted	N/A
The way your plans worked out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way you felt emotionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way you felt physically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The pace-of-life you experienced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for engaging in your favorite leisure activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of fun you had.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of relaxation you had.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for engaging in new activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunities you had to be "close to nature."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The weather.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of pretty scenery you saw.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for "getting away from it all."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for being alone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your relationship with your spouse/significant other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The food you ate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accommodations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***20. Now, consider ALL vacations for leisure that you have taken WITH your significant other, but not children. Rate your overall vacation satisfaction when traveling WITHOUT your significant other, and WITHOUT children. (1= Very Dissatisfied and 7= Very Satisfied)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dissatisfied:Satisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terrible:Delighted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frustrated:Contented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Displeased:Pleased	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***21. Vacationing WITHOUT my significant other, and WITHOUT children, has made our relationship:**

- Much worse
- Worse
- Somewhat worse
- No change
- Somewhat better
- Better
- Much better

***22. My significant other would say my vacations WITHOUT him or her has made our relationship:**

- Much worse
- Worse
- Somewhat worse
- No change
- Somewhat better
- Better
- Much better

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***23. Which type(s) of vacation(s) have you taken WITHOUT your significant other and WITHOUT children? (Check ALL that apply)**

- Sporting vacations (spectator sports)
- Spa getaways
- Shopping
- Nature (hunting, camping)
- Food and Drink tours
- Extreme adventure (skiing, water sports, adventure parks)
- Cruises
- Historical sites visits
- Arts (museum tours, performing arts)
- Music (bands, symphony, musicals)
- Sand, surf and sun
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Wildlife Viewing (birds, whale watching)
- Gambling
- Volunteer/Mission
- Other (please specify)

***24. On average, how much money do you spend on a single vacation taken WITHOUT your significant other and WITHOUT your children?**

s (USD)

***25. On average, what is the typical length of a vacation you take WITHOUT your significant other and WITHOUT children ?**

***26. Do you plan to take a leisure vacation (not business travel) WITHOUT your significant other and WITHOUT children in the next 12 months?**

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Maybe
- Probably not
- Definitely not

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***27. When vacationing WITHOUT your significant other and WITHOUT children, what percent of the time do you end up doing what YOU would prefer to do on vacation?
Percent of Time:**

Texas A&M Travel Survey

This survey section is designed to capture your satisfaction with leisure vacations (not business travel) you have taken WITH your significant other and WITH children (if applicable).

***28. Do you and/or your significant other have children under the age of 18?**

Yes

No

***29. How many times in the past 2 years have you traveled for leisure WITH your current significant other and WITH children? This does not include business trips.**

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***30. Please describe the most recent leisure vacation (not business) you have taken WITH your current significant other and WITH children. Please include where you went and your primary activity.**

Where did you go?

What was your primary activity?

***31. How long ago was the vacation you took with your significant other and children, as you described above?**

Years:

Months (if less than 1 year):

***32. Consider the vacation you described above when rating the following aspects of the trip. Again, this question refers to a vacation WITH your current significant other and WITH children.**

	Terrible	Unhappy	Mostly Dissatisfied	Neutral	Mostly Satisfied	Pleased	Delighted	N/A
The way your plans worked out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way you felt emotionally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way you felt physically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The pace-of-life you experienced.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for engaging in your favorite leisure activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of fun you had.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of relaxation you had.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for engaging in new activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The opportunities you had to be "close to nature."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The weather.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of pretty scenery you saw.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for "getting away from it all."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your opportunities for being alone.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your relationship with your spouse/significant other.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The food you ate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accommodations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***33. Now, consider ALL vacations for leisure that you have taken WITH your significant other, and WITH children. Rate your overall vacation satisfaction when traveling WITH your significant other, and WITH children. (1= Very Dissatisfied and 7= Very Satisfied)**

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dissatisfied:Satisfied	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Terrible:Delighted	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frustrated:Contented	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Displeased:Pleased	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***34. Vacationing WITH my significant other, and WITH children, has made our relationship:**

- Much worse
- Worse
- Somewhat worse
- No change
- Somewhat better
- Better
- Much better

***35. My partner would say vacationing together WITH children, has made our relationship:**

- Much worse
- Worse
- Somewhat worse
- No change
- Somewhat better
- Better
- Much better

Texas A&M Travel Survey

***36. Which type(s) of vacation(s) have you taken WITH your significant other and WITH children? (Check ALL that apply)**

- Sporting vacations (spectator sports)
- Spa getaways
- Shopping
- Nature (hunting, camping)
- Food and Drink tours
- Extreme adventure (skiing, water sports, adventure parks)
- Cruises
- Historical sites visits
- Arts (museum tours, performing arts)
- Music (bands, symphony, musicals)
- Sand, surf and sun
- Visiting friends and relatives
- Wildlife Viewing (birds, whale watching)
- Gambling
- Volunteer/Mission
- Other (please specify)

***37. On average, how much money do you spend on a single vacation taken WITH your significant other and WITH children?**

s (USD)

***38. On average, what is the typical length of a vacation you take WITH your significant other and WITH children?**

***39. Do you plan to take a vacation WITH your significant other and WITH children in the next 12 months?**

- Definitely yes
- Probably yes
- Maybe
- Probably not
- Definitely not

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***40. When vacationing WITH your significant other and WITH children, what percent of the time do you end up doing what YOU would prefer to do on vacation?**

Percent of Time:

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This survey section includes questions about your current relationship. Please answer honestly as all responses remain confidential and anonymous. Please check one per question.

***41. Please rate how satisfied you are with the following:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Your partner meets your needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are satisfied with your relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You are satisfied with your relationship compared to most others	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You wish you hadn't gotten into this relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Your relationship has met your original expectations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You love your partner	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
There are many problems in my relationship	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***42. If you were to grade your current relationship in terms of your satisfaction level, which grade would you give it? Again, your responses are anonymous and confidential.**

Texas A&M Travel Survey

Questions in this section are designed to capture what you feel you have invested in your current relationship. Please answer all questions honestly. Your answers are anonymous and confidential.

*43. Please rate your agreement with these statements about your current relationship.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have invested a great deal of time into my current relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My relationship with family and friends would be complicated if my partner and I were no longer together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My sense of who I am is linked to my partner and our relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compared to others I know, I have invested a great deal of resources into my relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Many aspects of my life have become linked to my partner and I would lose all of this if we were no longer together.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*44. If your current relationship were to end:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
You would miss important income, insurance or other property.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You would miss just having somebody around.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You would miss living in your house.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You would miss the help you get around the house.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You would miss being able to see your child(ren) regularly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
You would not have to work around the house so much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be hard to work out who would get what property.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be hard for you to find a new place to live.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having to move your things would be a burden.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dealing with the legal system would be difficult.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be hard to work out who would get the kid(s).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It would be awfully difficult to do the things necessary to divorce or separate.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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Questions in this section pertain to alternatives to your current relationship. As a reminder, please answer honestly to contribute to the importance of this study. All responses are confidential and anonymous.

***45. Please choose one response to each statement below.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Alternatives to my current relationship are attractive to me (dating another, time with friends or being on my own).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My alternatives to my current relationship are close to ideal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I were not in a my current relationship, I would do fine.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The people other than my partner that I would consider being involved with are very appealing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My needs for companionship and intimacy could easily be fulfilled by another relationship.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***46. The following questions are designed to measure relationship commitment levels.**

Please choose one response to each statement below.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I want my current relationship to stay strong no matter what rough times we encounter.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want to keep the plans for my life somewhat separate from my significant other's plans.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get satisfaction out of doing things for my partner, even if it means I miss out on something I want for myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends want to see my relationship with my significant other continue.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My family really wants this relationship to work out.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

***47. The following questions measure your commitment to your relationship. Please choose one response to each statement below.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am committed to maintaining my relationship with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want my relationship to last a long time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel very attached to my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It is likely I may date someone other than my current partner in the next few years.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would not feel very upset if my relationship were to end in the near future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want my relationship to last forever.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am working toward making my relationship last for the future.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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This section of the survey contains questions pertaining to your overall satisfaction with life. Again, your answers remain anonymous to these and all questions.

***48. Please choose one response to each statement below.**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
In most ways my life is close to my ideal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The conditions of my life are excellent.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
So far I have gotten the important things I want in life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If I could live my life over, I would not change much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Texas A&M Travel Survey

The final questions to this survey focus on your personal demographics. Answers are confidential and anonymous.

***49. What is your gender?**

- Female
 Male

***50. What is your current age?**

Enter your age:

***51. What is your estimated annual income level?**

- \$14,999 and under
 \$15,000 - \$24,999 per year
 \$25,000 - \$49,999 per year
 \$50,000 - \$74,999 per year
 \$75,000 - \$99,999 per year
 \$100,000 - \$124,999 per year
 \$125,000 - \$149,999 per year
 \$150,000 or more per year

***52. Do you consider yourself to be:**

- Heterosexual or Straight
 Gay or Lesbian
 Bisexual
 Prefer not to answer
 Other (please specify)

***53. How would you classify your current relationship?**

- Currently married
 In a registered domestic partnership or civil union
 Dating/Engaged, but NOT living together
 Dating/Engaged, living together

***54. What is your zipcode?**

5 digit zipcode: