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**Segmenting Pleasure Travelers**  
on the Basis of  
**Information Source Usefulness**  
**and Personal Value Importance**  
presented by  
**Lisa Teresa Fall**

has been accepted towards fulfillment  
of the requirements for  
**Ph.D.** degree in **Mass Media**

  
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SEGMENTING PLEASURE TRAVELERS  
ON THE BASIS OF  
INFORMATION SOURCES USEFULNESS  
AND  
PERSONAL VALUE IMPORTANCE

By

Lisa Teresa Fall

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
Michigan State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Communication Arts and Sciences

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**ABSTRACT**

**SEGMENTING PLEASURE TRAVELERS  
ON THE BASIS OF  
INFORMATION SOURCE USEFULNESS  
AND  
PERSONAL VALUE IMPORTANCE**

**By**

**Lisa Teresa Fall**

A review of the personal values literature illustrates that often times personal values serve as one of the dominant forces behind many of the decisions people make throughout their lives. Further, social adaptation and human values theory assert that personal values play a key role in influencing consumer behavior. However, values affect behavior that is more closely associated with services and products that have personal meanings and symbolism attached to them. Examples include lifestyle-defining activities such as vacation travel, food and clothing selection, and media use.

Two schools of research are relevant to this study. The first category emphasizes information source selection in relation to travel behavior. The second category focuses on the examination of personal values in relation to information source use. Taking into account results from previous studies regarding these two areas -- and linked with the theoretical underpinnings of human values and social adaptation -- this study investigates information source usefulness, personal values importance, demographics, and travel behavior in combination. Hence, this study proposes to expand the literature and to provide a model for future studies.

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, the study seeks to explain how the relationship among dominant personal value importance, demographics, and travel

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behaviors can be used to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments as defined in terms of information source usefulness. This study proposes a simplistic, yet theoretically-conceptualized model. Second, the study examines the relationship between personal values and information sources to determine whether these two variables influence various pleasure travel-related behaviors.

The study employs a survey method. The sample consists of 570 Michigan pleasure travelers. From this study, four information source segments are found: word-of-mouth, mass media, new media, and travel-tourism specific. Additional results demonstrate that personal value importance and information source usefulness, together, serve as relevant identification variables on which to segment pleasure travelers, as defined by the homogeneous within and heterogeneity between segments criteria. Results further reveal that, when examined by themselves, personal values do not influence information source usefulness. However, individually, one relationship emerges: being well-respected influences tourism-specific sources usefulness. Individually, these values also influence attraction selection. In particular, six significant relationships are revealed: excitement, fun and enjoyment, and warm relationships with others influence outdoor activity selection; self-respect and self-fulfillment influence state park selection; and fun and enjoyment influences casino/gambling selection.

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## Dedication

This study is dedicated to my parents, Ron and Flo Poli. I am so grateful for the personal values they have bestowed upon me. It is because of their virtuous upbringing that I possess my own individual values from which to base life's decisions upon. My parents have taught me to maintain strong personal morals which serve as my guiding force throughout my life -- so I do not have to refer to society's somewhat diluted values as a general decision-making blueprint. I can only hope that I will be as good of a parent to my children as my parents have been to me.

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To quote the Beatles, these past three years have been a long and winding road. Without the constant support of my family, professors, and friends, this study would have never been completed. To my parents, who have always believed in me and have encouraged me to follow my dreams, I offer my humblest gratitude.

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To members of my family, who have stood closely by me to push me when I needed a boost and who have continually celebrated even my smallest of achievements, I can not thank you enough for believing in me. To my sister; I am so glad that our lost friendship has been rekindled in the middle of this madness. You are so right: God has a reason for everything he does.

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To my children, Lucy and Luke, who have so patiently waited for "mommy to finish her homework," month after month, week after week, day after day; your endurance has fueled my motivation to cross the finish line. To Ashleigh Krueger; you win the "Baby Sitter of the Year" Award. And to my dear friends who have aided me in maintaining my sanity, thank you for making me stop and smell the roses once and a while.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Tourism Industry's Economic Impact**

If asked to determine one industry that makes a dominant impact on the United States' economy, chances are that most people will not readily identify the tourism industry. However, a financial recollection of how much money they spent on their most recent vacation may encourage them to re-evaluate their answer. During 1998 American travelers spent nearly \$425 billion while traveling within the United States, comprising 82.3 percent of the total U.S. travel expenditures.<sup>1</sup> In 1998 the travel, tourism and hospitality industry generated an estimated \$515 billion in total expenditures in the United States (including both domestic and international travelers). Spending by U.S. residents and international travelers within the United States generated an average \$1.41 billion a day, equating to \$58.8 million per hour, \$980,200 per minute, or \$13,300 per second. The following year was even more prosperous. In 1999, U.S. residents and international travelers spent an estimated \$519 billion on travel-related expenses within the United States. Domestic and international visitor expenditures for 2001 are projected to exceed \$577 billion -- representing a 73% increase since 1990.

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<sup>1</sup>All descriptive statistics cited in this chapter are available on Travel Industry Association's website: [www.tia.org](http://www.tia.org) (1999).

The overall impact on the economy is only one aspect of the travel industry's financial contribution. While revenues represent half of the equation, expenditures denote the other. The travel industry spends an enormous amount of money on promotions to entice potential travelers. During the 1998-1999 fiscal year, the money all 50 states allocated for tourism promotions totaled more than \$524 million. State travel offices are projected to spend a record \$644 million on tourism promotions during the 1999-2000 fiscal year, up 12.7% from the year before. This represents an average of \$12.9 million per state. Of the \$644 million, only ten states account for nearly half (\$325 million) of this investment. This means that the \$319 million balance is being dispersed (spent) among the remaining 40 states; this figure averages out only to a \$7.98 million per state.

The tourism industry's dynamic growth has substantial implications for communication managers. Consider, for example, those other 40 states that have substantially smaller tourism promotion budgets, yet still are competing for the same travel business as those competing states with bulging budgets that range from \$15.5 million to \$60 million. In addition to the financial constraints state tourism offices face, they must also contend with the risk that their messages may be lost among the barrage of clutter being disseminated by the millions of organizations that make up the tourism industries. It is critical for these tourism officials to determine the most appropriate and influential channels of communication for distributing key messages to targeted travelers. As importantly, communication managers must be able identify consumers' individual wants and needs. These desires can then be translated into persuasive promotional

appeals -- appeals with the potential to target some 41 million households that are projected to take at least one vacation trip per year by 2010.

### Personal Value Importance and Consumer Behavior

When determining what to say to whom and how best to disseminate key messages, communicators must take into consideration that today's consumers are much more savvy in their approach to making purchases than they have been in the past, according to Roper Starch Worldwide, an international marketing research firm that specializes in analyzing consumer trends (Miller, 1999). Consumer astuteness is a result of a "linked decade," defined by busy, mature, ethnically heterogeneous people who are confident in their ability to read anything, buy anything, and experience anything. Roper identifies four important motivational forces that will drive consumerism in the coming century. One motivator of special importance to communication managers is the continued and more dramatic thrust toward consumer individualism. Corresponding to this movement toward individualism is the premise that consumers expect their product and service providers to be able to "look inside their heads" and get to know them on a more personal level, according to Roper (Miller, 1999).

Human values theory aids in explaining how communicators can achieve a clearer, more personal understanding of their patrons' internal composition. The literature offers a variety of anecdotal descriptions to identify personal values. However, Milton Rokeach (1968, 1973, 1979) is credited for developing the formal definition of values:

"A value is an organized set of preferential standards that are used in making selections of objects and actions, resolving conflicts, invoking social sanctions, and coping with needs or claims for social and psychological defenses of choice made or proposed" (1979, p. 20).

When considering a formula for achieving marketing success, demographics can not be excluded from the equation. However, while demographics identify the people who have the capacity to act on a given message, psychographics determine whether they are motivated to act (Thompson, 1996). Therefore, in order to develop more cost-effective communication campaigns, organizations should consider employing lifestyle research before designing their messages so they can better identify special psychographic-related characteristics of their targeted audiences. The more organizations can know about their publics, the more precisely they can develop their messages. In turn, these messages can create stronger need appeals for products or services. Ultimately, a consumer's desire can result in a behavior to purchase --- which directly affects the company's bottom line.

Values are not relevant only to the marketing side of a product or service; the actual consumers also use values as barometers for purchase decisions. "Consumers aren't just modifying their tastes; they are transforming their values -- the very beliefs that affect behavior, or more specifically, purchasing habits," (Judy, 1996, p. 6). According to Roper, five milestones serve as the foundation for American lifestyles in the new millennium (Keller, 1998). One of these indicators, in particular, focuses on understanding how personal values define and influence buying decisions. In short, consumers are more outwardly continuing to make purchase decisions based, in part, on their personal values. Examples include increased investments in socially responsible companies; increased employment selection based on family-friendly benefits, continuing education opportunities and flexible work schedules; even increased membership in environmental interest groups.

In addition to understanding how values influence consumer behavior, the functions they serve are also pertinent to consumer behavior. Katz (1960) defines the knowledge functions of values as the search for meaning, the need to understand, and the trend toward better organization of perceptions and beliefs that provide clarity and consistency to overt behaviors. He contends that differences in people are due to different priorities in terms of their values. Rokeach, too, suggests three similar value functions: 1) "values are standards that guide on-going activities 2) value systems are employed as general plans to resolve conflicts and to make decisions and 3) values give expression to human needs" (1973, p. 13).

In sync with Katz and Rokeach is the premise that personal values influence behavior that is more closely associated with services and products that have personal meanings and symbolism attached to them. Examples include lifestyle-defining activities such as vacation travel, clothing selection, food preference, and media use. Given its "experiential" nature, travel planning will be used as the context for this study.

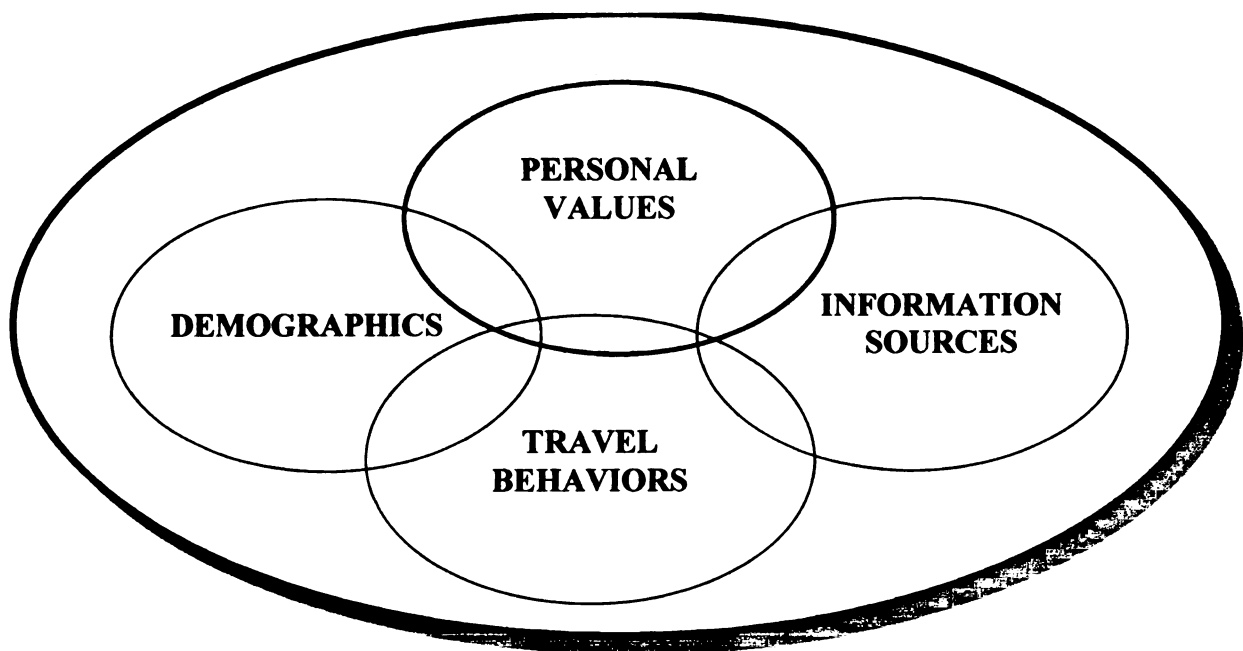
Two schools of research are relevant to the study. The first category focuses on the examination of personal values in relation to information source use. The second category investigates information source use in relation to travel. Taking into account the theoretical underpinnings of human values and social adaptation theory, this study proposes to broaden the literature by providing a working model that is unique from other studies. In particular, it focuses on the interaction among four variables in combination: information source usefulness, personal value importance, demographic characteristics, and travel behaviors.

Related to this study specifically, the hospitality/travel/tourism literature illustrates an array of consumer behavior models, some of which are more elaborate than others. Examples include the customer choice decisions of tourism services model (Woodside & MacDonald, 1994); vacation tourist behavior model (Moutinho, 1987); the tourist decision-making process (Mathieson & Wall, 1982); the travel decision process model (Schmoll, 1977); and a stimulus-response model of tourism behavior (Middleton, 1988). All of these models share a common thread: they include lifestyle and/or personal value variables in their framework. However, most of these models are rather intricate. In some instances, they may run the risk of trying to "be everything to everybody" by including such a broad spectrum of components.

Having referred to previous research to develop its blueprint, this study proposes a simplistic, yet theoretically-conceptualized model that distinguishes traveler profiles based on four dimensions: personal value importance, demographic characteristics, information source usefulness, and travel behaviors. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1

**Four Dimensional  
Pleasure Traveler Profile Model**





### Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this research was to examine the relationship between information sources and personal values within a tourism context in order to better understand how the two constructs aid in defining pleasure travelers. Also included in this research was an attempt to show the influence personal values have on information source usefulness.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, the study seeks to define pleasure traveler segments based on two identification variables: information source usefulness and personal value importance. It suggests a simplistic, yet theoretically-conceptualized model that distinguishes travelers on four dimensions: personal value importance, information source usefulness, travel behaviors, and demographic characteristics. Second, the study examines the influence personal values have on information source usefulness. One overarching research question guided this study: how can the relationship between dominant personal value importance, demographics, and travel behaviors be used to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments defined in terms of information source usefulness?

### Justification of the Study

Theories aid us in making sense of things and providing us with a better understanding of why things are the way they are. Hence, theoretically-driven investigations related to consumer behavior can offer opportunities for explanations as well as a for contributing to an organization's bottom line. Take values theory, for example, which contends that our personal values serve as internal guideposts for many

of the decisions we make. In fact, this theory asserts that values are a direct extension of who we are. Although we may not consciously be aware of the influence these personal values have on our lives, they quietly shepherd us throughout day-to-day activities. Given this premise, it is appropriate to assume that the information sources we refer to when making decisions related to something as enduring as vacation planning are, in a way, a reflection of ourselves.

Obtaining information prior to traveling is critical to the decision-making process. State travel offices can benefit from identifying the types of information sources travelers refer to when making these plans. In an effort to develop information source profiles, an array of individual traits, in tandem with demographic attributes, need to be studied. Examples include, but are by no means limited to, personality, lifestyle, attitudes and values.

The literature demonstrates that numerous studies have examined the types of information sources used to pleasure plan trips; yet another group of studies has looked at personal values and how they affect various travel behaviors, including source use. However, to date none have investigated the tripartite relationship between personal values, information sources, and travel behaviors. This study seeks to bridge that gap.

#### Delimitations

The study was delimited to the following criteria:

1. Individuals older than 17 years of age traveling to/within Michigan who stopped at various welcome centers throughout the state and were participating in overnight pleasure trips only were included in the sample.

2. The List of Values (LOV) defined by Kahle (1983, 1984) was selected from the values theory literature to test personal value importance.
3. Only external information sources that aid in making pleasure travel plans before a pleasure trip, in contrast to information sources that aid in planning during or after a pleasure trip were included in the study; internal search strategies such as personal experience were not included.

### Basic Assumptions

The study was based on the following assumptions:

1. Individuals have base values and value systems that guide their behavior and these values can be measured by the List of Values developed by Kahle (1983, 1984).
2. Travelers refer to an array of different information sources, both internal and external, when making travel plans.
3. These sources can be differentiated based on their usefulness for supplying information to make travel-related decisions.
4. Information source usefulness data will support the *a priori* theoretical framework of four information source factors composed of 19 source variables.

### Organization of the Dissertation

Beyond the introduction section of this dissertation, four additional chapters will examine the relationship between personal value importance and information source usefulness with a tourism context. Chapter 2 contains the literature review, which is divided into seven sections: personal value theory, social adaptation theory, personal

values theory and media use, List of Values (LOV), personal values theory and tourism, information source use and personal values theory, and information source use and tourism. The chapter concludes with a presentation of a conceptual framework for a four- dimensional model for traveler segmentation. Chapter 3 explains the procedures used to gather data and to examine the proposed relationships. Chapter 4 describes the results of the data collection and answers the 10 research questions posed in this study. Chapter 5 discusses the findings, conclusions, and implications for both academic and industry professionals. Limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also addressed in this final chapter.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is based on previous research from several bodies of literature. An overview of each area is discussed in this chapter. The chapter is divided into five discussions: personal values theory in combination with social adaptation theory; personal values theory and media use; personal values theory and travel/tourism; information source use and personal values theory; and information source use and travel/tourism.

#### Personal Values Theory

Values are central to peoples' lives, and because of their importance, values have been known to influence attitudes and behaviors (Kamakura & Novak, 1992). The study of human values has been cited as early 1931 when Allport and Vernon published A Study of Values. Enjoying a history rich in empirical examination, evidence of values-related studies are illustrated among an array of disciplines and within a variety of theoretical frameworks.

Burgess (1989) contends that values may be implicitly or explicitly found in many of the psychological theories developed by Adler, Dichter, Erikson, Freud, Fromm, Horney, and Jung. Until Milton Rokeach began conducting research in this area throughout the 1960s and 1970s, many of the previous studies that examined values included them as a sub-category of attitudes. Rokeach (1968, 1973 & 1979) is credited for operationally defining and investigating values on an individual basis.

Fundamentally, Rokeach's values theory is derived from consistency theory. As consistency theory explains, people are driven to reduce inconsistencies in order to regain cognitive balance in their lives. All consistency theories begin with the same premise:

people are comfortable with consistency. Values theory explains that people are guided by a need for consistency and that inconsistency creates a pressure to change.

Specifically, he defines a value as “an organized set of preferential standards that are used in making selections of objects and actions, resolving conflicts, invoking social sanctions, and coping with needs or claims for social and psychological defenses of choice made or proposed” (Rokeach, 1979, p. 20). “A value is an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1979, p. 5). Allport states, “A value is a belief upon which a man acts by preference” (1961, p. 454).

According to the values theory framework, values serve as standards that guide ongoing activities. Rokeach (1973) postulates that values serve as general plans for resolving conflict and making decisions. Values also serve motivational functions:

“They [values] are in the final analysis the conceptual tools and weapons that we all employ in order to maintain and enhance self-esteem. They are in the service of what McDougal (1926) has called the ‘master sentiment -- the sentiment of self-regard’” (Rokeach, 1973, p. 14).

This assumption likewise ties closely to the heart of this study, which posits that peoples’ values serve as internal motivators that influence their information source choices.

Values are developed and learned by each person (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach & Grube, 1984). They have dual purposes: they serve as cognitive representations of societal demands and as individual needs for morality and competence. Values transform these individual needs into shared goals and modes of behavior. “In this process, people may end up reflecting about their individual needs in the same way as those in which they

reflect about the demands made upon them by society and its institutions; moreover, they can thus end up seeing their own needs as conforming to societal demands" (Ball-Rokeach et al., 1984, p. 25).

Each person has a highly organized belief-attitudes-value system that guides behavior (Rokeach, 1979). These values are elaborately related to one's attitudes and behavior. Whereas values represent abstract ideals -- positive or negative -- that are not tied to any one specific object or situation, attitudes focus on specific objects and situations (Rokeach, 1968, 1973 & 1979). Further, values are more stable over time than attitudes because they are more centrally connected to an individual's cognitive system (Rokeach, 1973). As a result, under some circumstances values serve as better predictors of an individual's behavior over extended periods of time than do attitudes. Results from some studies suggest that values actually serve as determinants of attitudes and behavior (e.g., Homer & Kahle, 1988; Tolman, 1951; Parsons & Shils, 1951). Other researchers (e.g., Boote, 1981; Valette-Florence, 1986; Vinson, Scott & Lamont, 1977) have demonstrated that values represent an efficient, measurable set of variables that are more closely tied to motivation behavior than are demographic measures.

Five prevailing assumptions guide the nature of human values, according to Rokeach: 1) "the total number of values that a person possesses is relatively small; 2) all people everywhere possess the same values to different degrees; 3) values are organized into value systems; 4) the antecedents of human values can be traced to culture, society and its institutions, and personality; and 5) the consequences of human values will be manifested in virtually all phenomena that social scientists might consider worth investigating and understanding" (1973, p. 3).

"Once a value is internalized it becomes, unconsciously, a standard or criterion for guiding action, for developing and maintaining attitudes toward relevant objects and situations, for justifying one's own and others' actions and attitudes, for morally judging self and others and for comparing self with others," according to Rokeach (1968, p. 550). He conceptualizes values as existing in two hierarchical groups of beliefs. Instrumental values represent preferable modes of conduct and terminal values represent end-states of existence (1968 & 1973).

Although Rokeach asserts that values serve as antecedents to attitudes, he makes seven distinctions between the two constructs:

- 1) an attitude refers to an organization of several beliefs around a specific object or situation whereas a value refers to a single belief of a specific kind
- 2) an attitude focuses on some specified objection or situation whereas a value surmounts these objects or situations
- 3) a value represents an internal standard; an attitude does not
- 4) people possess smaller numbers of values than attitudes
- 5) values serve as determinants of attitudes and behavior because they occupy a more central position than attitudes within one's personality makeup and cognitive system
- 6) a value has a more immediate link to motivation than does an attitude due to its dynamism and
- 7) the content of a value may directly relate to ego defense, knowledge, adjustive and self-actualizing functions whereas the content of an attitude may be related inferentially (1973, p. 18).



## Social Adaptation Theory

The previous discussion provides the appropriate segue to explain the social adaptation theory and its theoretical linkage to values theory. The major premise behind social adaptation theory is that attitudes aid people in adapting to their environment. Hence, social adaptation theory plays an important role in understanding how values influence consumer behavior.

"According to the social adaptation theory, individuals adapt to various life roles in part through value development and value fulfillment. Value development summarizes previous experience and provides a strategy for dealing with new choices," (Kahle, 1996, p. 135). This theory postulates that values develop from life experiences. People encode external information and internally convert this information in order to promote adaptation. Individuals evaluate information based on its adaptive significance. Kahle (1983) further asserts that value fulfillment summarizes previous experiences and provides a strategy for managing new choices.

Studies have demonstrated that attitudes can change as a function of the situation (e.g., Lamm & Meyers, 1978) and as a function of personal activity (e.g. Tesser, 1978). Further, societal demands (e.g. Tedeschi, Schlenker & Bonoma, 1971) and cognitive activity (e.g. Wicklund & Brehm, 1976) play important roles in attitude change. An integration and extension of these premises has led to the social adaptation theory (Kahle, Kulka & Klingel, 1980; Kahle, 1983; Kahle, 1984) which accounts for personal influences and situational influences on attitude change.

Social adaptation theory is rooted in Piaget's (1976) theory of social psychology of attitudes which asserts that the primary function of attitudes and other social cognitions is adaptation; cognition facilitates the process of adapting to one's environment. More specifically, Piaget's theory explains that adaptation and abstraction serve as functions of cognition. "Abstraction consists in adding relations to perceptual data and not merely in deducing such relations from them" (Inhelder & Piaget, 1964, p. 247). On the other hand, "Adaptation implies optimal levels of equilibration under the circumstances," (Kahle, 1984, p. 43). The social adaptation theory explains that people seek balance, which is consistent with Rokeach's explanation of how people use their values system in everyday life.

Various studies have demonstrated that values influence certain behaviors and situations, ranging from drug addiction (Tetlock, 1986), religious behavior (Feather, 1984), and television viewing (Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach, & Grube, 1984) to cynicism (Boush, Kim, Kahle & Batra, 1993), fashion (Goldsmith, Heitmeyer & Freiden, 1991), gift giving (Beatty, Kahle & Homer, 1991) and pet ownership (Kropp, Smith, Rose & Kahle, 1992). Yet other studies have examined values as they relate to global communications (Kahle, Beatty & Mager, 1994), mall shopping preferences (Shim & Eastlick, 1998), and hotel choice (Zins, 1998).

As many of these researchers have pointed out in their studies, values serve as better predictors of certain consumer behaviors when these behaviors have personal meanings attached to them. Some examples include vacation planning; gift-giving behavior; occupational choice; selection of friends; and food, fashion, and media preferences.

## Personal Values Theory and Media Use

Tied directly to this study's objectives, social science researchers study variables that represent the best predictors for understanding why consumers refer to different kinds of media and non-media sources during their search for information. A functional interpretation of the media was first proposed by Laswell (1948) and Wright (1960). This body of research postulates that the media serve four basic functions: surveillance, correlation, entertainment, and cultural transmission (or socialization). McQuail, Blumer, & Brown (1972) extended the research and developed their own four typologies: diversion, personal relationships, surveillance, and personal identity (to include personal preference, reality exploration and value reinforcement). Katz, Gurevitch, & Hass (1973) assert that individuals use mass communication to "connect" themselves with different kinds of others, to include self, family, friends, and the nation.

Individuals turn to the media for an array of reasons. Derived from a division between cognitive and affective, and between active and passive types of motive factors, McGuire (1974) generated a matrix of 16 psychological motive typologies -- or "general paradigms" for media use. Three of these paradigms, in particular, serve as further justification for this study. They include consistency, reinforcement, and identification. McQuail (1994, p. 320) also provides a list of motives for and satisfactions derived from media use, two of which are relevant to this study.<sup>2</sup> They include finding support for one's own values and gaining insight into one's own life.

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<sup>2</sup>For a more detailed explanation of McQuail's list of motives for media use, refer to Mass Communication Theory: An Introduction by Denis McQuail, Sage Publications, 1994.

Klapper (1960) contends that people tend to expose themselves to mass communications that are consistent with their existing attitudes and interests. As Ball-Rokeach, Rokeach & Grube put it, "any information directly or indirectly provided to a person that is perceived to have implications for conceptions and presentations of the self as competent or moral, will become salient to the person" (1984, p. 31). Further, Klapper (1960) explains that if people are exposed to materials inconsistent with their existing views, they will utilize self-protective exercises. One such technique relevant to this study is selective exposure (traditionally known as "self-selection"). Selective exposure is defined as "an act of choice in which an individual selects from a range of possible activities or messages" (Zillman & Bryant, 1985, p. 37). Atkin explains that "exposure is a means to an end, as the individual seeks helpful information inputs for intrinsic purposes such as learning new behaviors, solving problems, making decisions, coping with environmental forces, and strengthening predispositions; this is frequently based on uncertainty reduction-needs" (1985, p. 63).

#### Development of List of Values

This study used the List of Values (LOV) instrument for measuring personal values variables. The decision was based on two reasons. First, the LOV has consistently demonstrated valid and reliable results in previous studies. Second, the LOV is theoretically linked to values theory and social adaptation theory, both which serve as the framework for this study. Hence, in order to better understand the LOV's appropriateness for the study, a brief historical discussion follows.

Initially, Gurin, Veroff, & Feld (1960) conducted a study with two distinct purposes in mind: to assess the subjective mental health and the life experience of American adults and to determine in some detail how American people cope with problems of adjustment that arise in their lives. They included a question that asked respondents to rank the first and second most important things in their life. These items represented nine personal values that are now reflected in Kahle's List of Values (LOV). These values were derived from Rokeach's original 18 terminal values. Subsequently, researchers Veroff, Douvan, & Kulka (1981) conducted a study similar to that of Gurin et al. (1960). This second study, which is sometimes referred to as the Study of Modern Living, replicated and extended the Gurin et al. (1960) study; it also included the nine values from the LOV as variables for examination. The purpose of the Veroff et al. study was to examine the relationship between social values and psychosocial adaptation. Variables under investigation included marriage, parenthood, work, mental health, and perceptions of self.

Kahle (1984) continued to build on the Gurin et al. (1960) and Veroff et al. (1981) research. He conducted a national probability study to determine the significance values have on peoples' lives as they relate to an array of variables, ranging from parenting and marriage, work and leisure, to personality factors, and overall well being and mental health. He randomly sampled 2,264 United States residents. For this study Kahle designed a values list based on the theoretical contributions of Rokeach's (1973) list of terminal values, Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of values, Feather's values and education study (1975) and values derived from the Veroff et al. study (1981). Kahle collapsed Rokeach's list of 18 values into nine. These nine values are primarily person-oriented

and are more directly related to a person's daily-life roles and situations (i.e., marriage, work, leisure, parenting) than are the original 18 values included in Rokeach's instrument (Beatty et al., 1985). Additionally, Kahle and his colleagues wanted to develop a measure that corresponded with the Maslow Hierarchy (1954) and would provide an instrument for empirically examining Maslow's work.

Kahle notes that the LOV does not claim to provide an exhaustive inventory of every value. However, the LOV does provide a useful instrument applicable for an array of social science studies (Kahle, 1999). Further, since the LOV is measured on an interval scale -- as opposed to the rank-ordering of Rokeach's value scale -- the LOV offers opportunities for more higher order statistical tests (Kahle & Kennedy, 1988; Beatty et al., 1985).

Additional research conducted by Kahle (1983 & 1984), Homer & Kahle (1988), and Kahle, Beatty & Homer (1986) has supported the premise that the LOV indicators may be better represented at a more abstract level by "value domains" that reflect either an external or internal orientation. These two orientations are based on the locus of control notion (Rotter, 1955) that explains the degree to which a person feels that the control of his/her world belongs to self, at one extreme, or fate, at the other. Internally-oriented values include self-fulfillment, self-respect, fun and enjoyment, excitement, sense of accomplishment and warm relationships with others whereas externally-oriented values include sense of belonging, sense of security, and being well-respected. The external values imply a dependence on people or circumstances outside the individual's own control whereas the internal values do not (Kahle, 1984).

## Personal Values Theory and Tourism

In a study among Toronto residents, Muller (1991) used the List of Values (LOV) to demonstrate that value-based research can be applied to the segmentation of international tourism markets. From the 429 completed questionnaires, three specific segments evolved: fun-and-enjoyment oriented; security conscious; and art, culture and environmentally cognizant. Results supported Muller's hypothesis that international visitors to Canadian cities can be segmented by the importance they attach to tourist criteria and that these segments have unique personal value orientations.

Madrigal & Kahle (1994) examined whether vacation activity importance ratings differed across segments comprised of tourists homogeneously grouped on the basis of their personal values. The sample consisted of 394 English-speaking tourists who were visiting Scandinavia. The LOV was used to measure the personal values variable. Results indicated that values reflected either an internal or external value domain structure. Results also demonstrated that segments comprised of tourists with similar value systems differ in their importance ratings of Scandinavian vacation activities.

Pitts & Woodside (1986) employed the Rokeach Value Scale (RVS) to examine personal values as a means of understanding leisure and recreation decision-making behavior. They administered a mail survey to 250 members of the University of South Carolina Consumer Panel. Five popular South Carolina attractions/tourist destination cities were examined. Personal values were significantly related to differences in choice criteria and to actual behavior.

Using both the LOV and Plog's (1972) allocentrism-psychocentrism scale, Madrigal (1995) conducted a study to assess the relationship between Plog's travel personality theory and values theory. According to Plog, allocentrics tend to be self-confident, intellectually curious and in control of their lives. On the other hand, psychocentrics tend to engage in non-active lifestyles and non-adventurous activities. Psychocentrics also prefer a high degree of familiarity in their travels in contrast to allocentrics who prefer taking trips to unique destinations. A convenience sample of 514 tourists visiting a popular destination site in central Arizona was used in Madrigal's study; data were collected over a three-week period. Results indicated that internally-oriented values were all positively associated with allocentrism. On the other hand, externally-oriented values were negatively associated with allocentrism. Finally, the data revealed that personal values serve as better predictors of independent versus group travel behavior than do Plog's allocentrism-psychocentrism scale.

#### Information Source Use and Personal Values Theory

Using the RVS, Becker & Connor (1981) found that various values do predict mass media usage. In particular, they examined television, magazine, and newspaper consumption patterns. By means of personal interviews, the researchers found that heavy television viewers have significantly higher religious value systems, less concern for achievement and success, and more concern with developing satisfying interpersonal relationships.

To determine whether demographics are better predictors of magazine readership than are psychographics, Urban (1980) conducted a random sample survey among 6,000 respondents. The instrument consisted of a mail questionnaire reflecting questions



related to both consumer-descriptive and behavioral-descriptive variable sets. Urban found that the primary determinant of overall magazine use was represented by five different magazines types. More than 70% of the total variance could be predicted with a combination of demographic, psychographic, media-usage, television-program-choice, and magazine-choice variables. Further, psychographic dimensions were more prevalent predictors for women than for men.

#### Information Source Use and Tourism

The literature is laden with evidence suggesting that external information search represents a motivated and conscious decision by consumers to seek out new information (e.g. Murray, 1991; Berning & Jacoby, 1974; Furse, Punj, & Steward, 1984; Moore & Lehmann, 1980). Also included in the literature is a wide spectrum of information source typologies, ranging from personal and impersonal (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1986); print media, electronic media, and professional consultant or travel agent (Raitz & Dakhil, 1989); and social, personal, marketing, and editorial (Vogt, 1993). Besides direct personal experience and advice from others, the most prominent information sources cited among the tourism literature include: destination specific literature, mass media and marketing, and travel consultants.

Various studies have examined the relevance of information sources (communication channels) in the travel/tourism industry (e.g., Darden & Perreault, 1975; Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Schul & Crompton, 1983; McDonough, 1984, 1986, 1987; Stynes & Mahoney, 1986; Moutinho, 1987; Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1991; Andereck & Caldwell, 1993; Hsieh & O'Leary, 1993; Fodness & Murray, 1998; Fall, 1999).

Many of these and other tourism-based studies have examined the different types of sources individuals refer to when making travel plans. Studies are consistent with results from the pilot study (Fall, 1999) that interpersonal sources, such family and friends, are frequently cited as the most dominant source (Snepenger & Snepenger, 1993; Rao, Thomas, & Javalgi, 1992; Raitz & Dakhil, 1989; Capella & Greco, 1987; Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Walter & Ton, 1977; Nolan, 1976).

Darden and Perreault (1975) found that media exposure groups were significantly different in terms of vacation duration, distance, and innovativeness. People with low media exposure tend to take shorter vacations located closer to their homes. Further, people in higher social classes consult the mass media more than other sources. Other researchers have revealed that different types of externally-oriented information source use differs greatly according to trip purpose, distance traveled and travel cost (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Fodness & Murray, 1999). Fodness & Murray (1998) demonstrated that travelers do not depend solely on only one type of information.

Using market segmentation strategies, Hsieh & O'Leary (1989) conducted an analysis to determine segments based on information source selection. A total of 1,209 in-home interviews were conducted over a one-month time period. The sample included residents from England, Scotland, and Wales. Four distinct clusters evolved from the study: word-of-mouth, brochures/pamphlets, travel agents, and combination package (which included 11 different information sources). Overall, sociodemographic variables did not vary significantly among the different clusters. Further, media habits were not differentiated among the clusters.

In another study, Andereck & Caldwell (1990) examined the relationship between visitor characteristics and information source importance. Data were collected by means of self-administrated questionnaires from 795 people who visited the North Carolina Zoo. A total of 740 respondents returned to the zoo and completed the post-visit questionnaire. These individuals were mailed a third follow-up questionnaire one month later; 630 of the initial 795 respondents completed this final questionnaire. A factor analysis revealed three distinct information source themes: past experience, word-of-mouth, and media. Several significant relationships among visitor characteristics and the manner in which these visitors rate the importance of specific information sources were detected. Further, as motivation to visit the Zoo increased, so did the importance rating across all three information source factors.

Since travel is intangible and based largely on an "experience," it may involve more risk than other consumer decisions (Morrison, 1989). Due to this risk, people tend to consult a greater variety of communication sources to aid in their travel decisions. Variables appropriate for examination to aid in further explaining information source use range from information characteristics and situation and environmental factors to product and individual characteristics (Vogt, 1993). Individual characteristics include personality, lifestyle, demographic, psychographic, and experience factors. This broad range of channel choices and potential explanatory variables, combined with an even more expansive listing of message content, reinforces the need for communication managers to further study message design and dissemination.

From the literature review, several assessments can be made. First, studies related to information source usage are binary in nature. In particular, the studies fall into two broad categories: they either examine the relationship between information use and distinct characteristics (such as demographics and psychographics) or they examine various search strategies employed by travelers. Additionally, although many researchers have employed segmentation analysis to define tourism-related segments and traveler profiles (e.g., Davis & Sternquist, 1987; Calantone & Johar, 1984; Manzanec, 1984), to date none have attempted to define these profiles on the basis of information source usefulness with regard to personal value importance.

#### Research Questions

One overarching research question guided this study:

**RQ1: How can the relationship among dominant personal value importance, demographics, and travel behaviors be used to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments defined in terms of information source usefulness?**

Two additional research questions aided in the development of segmenting pleasure travelers on the basis of personal value importance and information source usefulness:

**RQ2: What is the dominant personal value among travelers to/within Michigan?**

**RQ3: What is the dominant information source among travelers to/within Michigan?**

Results gathered from throughout the personal values, travel/tourism, and information source use literature also influenced and led to the assertion that personal value importance serves as a significant motivator of information source selection. Hence, this study intends to investigate whether this influence actually occurs by addressing seven auxiliary research questions:

**RQ4: To what extent do internal personal values such as fun and enjoyment, warm relationships with others, sense of accomplishment, excitement, self-fulfillment, and self-respect influence information source usefulness when travelers are planning pleasure trips?**

**RQ5: To what extent do external personal values such as sense of belonging, security, and being well-respected influence information source usefulness when travelers are planning pleasure trips?**

**RQ6: To what extent do internal personal values influence types of attractions visited?**

**RQ7: To what extent do external personal values influence types of attractions visited?**

**RQ8: To what extent do demographics influence internal value importance?**

**RQ9: To what extent do demographics influence external value importance?**

**RQ10: To what extent do demographics influence information source usefulness?**

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

The purpose of this research is twofold. First, the study seeks to define pleasure traveler profiles based on two dominant identification variables: information source usefulness and personal value importance. The research proposes that four information source constructs exist. The study also asserts that personal value importance can be distinguished on two domains, internal and external, as defined by Kahle (1983 & 1984). Hence, one overarching research question guided this study: How can the relationship among dominant personal value importance, demographics, and travel behavior be used to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments defined in terms of information source usefulness? The second purpose of the study is to assess the influence personal value importance has on information source usefulness and pleasure traveler attraction selection. Auxiliary research questions address this influence.

This chapter presents the research design, to include the following steps: sample selection, survey administration, instrumentation, data collection, and analytical tests. The chapter concludes with an overview of how the study's overall design quality is being addressed.

#### **Selection of the Sample**

When determining the kind of sample to examine, the researcher should take into consideration the purpose of the study (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000; Stacks & Hocking, 1993; Broom & Dozier, 1990). This study intends to investigate relationships among personal values and information sources in order to identify specific audience segments.

It does implicate that these results are indicative of the general population. Given the objective of the study -- which is to gain a better understanding of relationships between various information sources and personal values -- a nonprobability sample is appropriate (Wimmer & Dominick, 2000; Struhl, 1992). In the hospitality industry, purposive sampling is suitable for studies that seek to examine "known characteristics" (Ritchie & Goeldner, 1994; Clark, Wiley, Wilkie & Wood, 1998). In the case of this study, subjects were investigated based on one predominant behavioral characteristic: traveling for pleasure. The sampling frame for the study consists of adult travelers, ages 18+, who engage in pleasure trips to/within Michigan.

Several factors contributed to the decision to employ a purposive sampling method, include the seasonality of Michigan pleasure travel patterns. Market segmentation literature suggests that studies examining products or services related to seasonal patterns should be conducted during the season that best reflects normal purchase and/or behavior patterns. Reaching respondents during their heavy-use months is critical to decreasing the chances of obtaining skewed data (Struhl, 1992; Weinstein, 1987). Following these arguments, selection of participants for this research demanded a group of identifiable tourism information seekers. Thus, it was decided upon to examine individuals who stop at welcome centers to obtain a variety of information. Michigan was chosen as the research laboratory for various reasons, including constraints related to costs and time. Additionally, the researcher gained entrée to conduct research at the welcome centers in this state. (See "procedures" section in this chapter)

Researchers should adopt a "more is better" philosophy when conducting segmentation studies (Myers, 1993; Struhl, 1992; Weinstein, 1987). A minimum of 500 respondents is recommended (Struhl, 1992). A total of 570 usable surveys were obtained during this investigation. A more detailed description of the sample will be presented in Chapter 4.

#### Administration Procedures

The study employed a survey method, offering the opportunity for the researcher to investigate respondents in a naturalistic setting while engaged in the activity they were being asked to respond about: traveling. Self-administered surveys were distributed to travelers who stopped at welcome centers on various weekends throughout Michigan during the months of August, September and October, 1999, three of the five most frequently traveled months, as identified in travel pattern studies (Travel Michigan, 1998). In order to obtain the most representative sample of travelers coming not only from within their home state of Michigan, but also to obtain data from travelers coming from outside the state, the researcher conducted her survey collection at various welcome locations throughout the state. (See **Appendix A, Tables 1 and 2**)

The survey site consisted of an eight-foot table and several chairs located inside the front corridor of the welcome center. To increase response rates, entry forms were available for participants and non-participants to fill out for inclusion in a drawing to win two complimentary overnight hotel accommodations at a prominent resort on Mackinac Island, Michigan. Additionally, to entice travelers to fill out the questionnaires, complimentary "travel snacks" were available at the survey site. In an attempt to randomize an otherwise self-selected sample, every other welcome center visitor was



approached and asked if he/she would participate in the study. If he/she agreed, the researcher then pre-screened the traveler by asking if he/ she was 18 years old. If he/she was, the researcher then handed the respondent a clip board with the questionnaire attached to it. If he/she was not, then the researcher thanked him/her and declined the participation, explaining that respondents must be at least 18 years old to fill out the survey.

### Instrumentation

The instrument consisted of a four-page self-administered questionnaire that measures personal value importance, information source usefulness, select travel behaviors and various demographic characteristics. The questionnaire was pre-tested in 1999 when it was used as the instrument for a pilot study. During the pilot study the questionnaire was mailed to 1,000 randomly selected residents throughout Michigan and Illinois, yielding a 21% response rate. Based on the low response rate, other methods for administering the instrument were explored.

The decision to conduct an intercept-type survey at various welcomes throughout Michigan was based on three reasons. First, previous researchers who have investigated information source use have successfully conducted survey research at welcome centers throughout the United States (e.g., Fesenmaier & Vogt, 1993; Gitelson & Perdue, 1987; Sims & Teaff, 1989). Second, welcome centers offer a platform for surveying a large number of pleasure travelers. Since segmentation literature recommends at least 500 respondents, being able to reach these potential respondents was a major priority for this study. Finally, time and financial constraints related to completing this study were taken into consideration.

Before conducting the survey, the instrument was reviewed by hospitality marketing professionals and various academicians. Based on their suggestions, in addition to what the researcher learned from the pilot study, the questionnaire was further revised and refined. **(See Appendices B & C)**

### Operationalization of Variables

The primary variables under investigation in this study are personal values and information sources. Secondary variables include demographic characteristics and travel behavior. The operationalization of each variable follows.

#### Personal Values

The LOV was used to measure personal values. Respondents were first asked to rate nine personal values on a 1-5 scale based on importance: 1=not at all useful, 3=useful, and 5=extremely useful. According to Kahle (1983 & 1984) and other researchers who have tested the LOV for reliability, the nine values represent two dimensions, internal and external locus of control. **(See Table 1)**

**Table 1: List of Values (LOV)**

List of Values (LOV)	
<b>Internal Values</b>	<b>External Values</b>
Sense of Accomplishment	Sense of Belonging
Self-Fulfillment	Security
Self-Respect	Being Well-Respected
Fun & Enjoyment	
Excitement	
Warm Relationships with Others	

Locus of control is a personality trait defined by the degree to which a person feels that the control of his or her world belongs to self, at one extreme, or fate, at the other (Rotter, 1955). People with an internal locus of control believe they control their own destinies, while those with an external locus believe that what happens to them is due to luck or chance. Externals are less likely to take personal responsibility for the consequences of their behavior and are more likely to rely on external forces. Internals are more likely to take responsibility for consequences and rely on their own internal standards of right and wrong to guide their behavior, according to Baehr, Jones & Nerad (1993).

According to Kahle (1983 & 1984), who designed the LOV instrument to be used in consumer-related studies, the LOV offers four primary advantages. First, since the researcher obtains demographic predictions separately, sources of influence can be more readily identified. Novak & MacEvoy (1990) indicate that it is the inclusion of the demographic variables in the LOV model that has produced greater prediction capabilities. Second, this instrument is not of a proprietary nature; therefore, it is readily available for academic use. Third, the LOV questionnaire is shorter than other similar instruments such as the Values and Lifestyles Segmentation questionnaire (9 vs. 34 questions) and the Rokeach Value Scale (18 terminal and 18 instrumental values). Finally, the LOV research results are easier to communicate to managers because the exact phrases from the survey instrument are retained in the studies.

In short, the LOV instrument has been selected over others for four reasons: its ability to include demographic data in the analysis, its parsimonious characteristics, its demonstration of validity and reliability, and its straightforward administrative procedures.

### Information Sources

A thorough review of the tourism literature aided in determining which information sources to include for examination (e.g., Snepenger & Snepenger, 1993; Rao, Thomas & Javalgi, 1992; Raizt & Dakhil, 1989; Capella & Greco, 1987; Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Walter & Ton, 1977; Nolan, 1976). (See Chapter 2) After the instrument was pre-tested during a pilot study (Fall, 1999), two sources were added: auto club and travel channel.

Respondents were first asked to rate 19 information sources on a 1-5 scale based on usefulness: 1=not at all useful, 3=useful, and 5=extremely useful. Second, the respondents were instructed to review the items and rank the single most useful source when making travel plans. **(See Table 2)**

**Table 2: Information Source Variables**

<b>Information Sources</b>
Auto Club
Billboard Ad
Brochure/direct mail
CD-ROM
Chamber of Commerce/ Convention & Visitor's Bureau
Friend / Relative
Highway Welcome Center
Internet Website
Magazine Advertisement
Magazine Feature Story
Newspaper Advertisement
Newspaper Feature Story
Radio Advertisement
State Travel Publication
Tradeshow
Travel Channel
Travel Agent
Television Advertisement
Television Feature Story

Types of Attractions Visited

In an open-ended format, respondents were asked to indicate the types of attractions they are visiting/plan to visit on this particular trip. Using attraction categories developed by the Travel, Tourism, Recreation and Resource Center at Michigan State University; Travel Michigan; and the Travel Industry Association, travelers' answers were then coded based on 10 categories: cultural/historic, casino/gambling, outdoor activities, state parks, shopping, visiting friends/relatives, sight-seeing, sports, religious activities, and restaurants/night life. These attractions were then dummy coded for further statistical analysis.

### Total Number of Overnight Accommodations

In an open-ended format, respondents were asked to indicate the number of nights they plan to stay over/have stayed over during this particular trip in Michigan. Based on a range of responses, answers were then collapsed into two categories: 1-2 and 3+ nights.

### Total Number of Trips to/within Michigan

In an open-ended format, respondents were asked to indicate the number of trips they have made to/within Michigan within the past 12 months. Based on a range of responses, answers were then collapsed into three categories: 1-3, 4-5, and 6+ trips.

### Demographic Information

The nine demographics under investigation include age, gender, gross annual household income, employment status, level of education completed, race, marital status, number of children under the age of 18 living in the household, and residency. Respondents were asked to fill in the blanks to best describe their age, gender, and residency. Each of the remaining six demographics were categorically represented and respondents were instructed to check the most appropriate category.

### Statistical Analysis

Ten research questions were addressed in this study. Various statistical techniques were employed in order to address these questions: factor analysis, multiple regression analysis, cross-tabulations and chi-square statistics, and an array of other descriptive statistics. A more elaborate treatment of these techniques will be provided in Chapter 4.

### Tests for Design Quality

There are four tests commonly used to assess the overall design quality of a study: construct validity, content reliability, criterion validity, and reliability (Broom & Dozier, 1990; Wimmer & Dominick, 2000; Stacks & Hocking, 1993). Definitions of these four concepts and their treatment in this study are listed in Table 3. Treatment procedures will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. (See Table 3)

**Table 3: Tests for Design Quality**

<b>Design Criterion</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Treatment in this Study</b>
Construct Validity	Determines correct operational measures for concepts being studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literature review</li><li>• Pilot Study (Fall, 1999)</li><li>• Review by experts in the tourism/hospitality marketing industry and researchers specializing in this area</li></ul>
Content/Face Validity	Determines whether measurement device measures what it actually purports to measure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pilot Study (Fall, 1999)</li><li>• Examine results from previous studies that employed the List of Values</li><li>• Review by experts in the tourism/hospitality marketing industry and researchers specializing in this area</li><li>• Split-half technique</li></ul>
Criterion/External Validity (Generalizability)	Determines measurement device's ability for predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compare results to previous studies</li></ul>
Reliability	Demonstrates replicable procedures that will yield the same results or findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pilot Study (Fall, 1999)</li><li>• Literature Review</li><li>• Compare results to previous studies</li><li>• Cronbach's Alpha test</li><li>• Split-half technique</li></ul>

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **RESULTS**

Three dimensions of testing and refinement guided this study: validity, reliability, and utility. All three aspects are discussed throughout this chapter. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section describes the sample. The second section discusses findings related to personal value importance. The third section discusses findings related to information source usefulness. The final section addresses the 10 research questions.

#### **Description of the Sample**

Total sample size for this study is 570. The sample is gender-balanced with 57% female and 43% male, about three-fourths of whom are Michiganians. The sample is predominantly Caucasian (93%), three-fourths of whom are married. Nearly half of the respondents earn an annual household income of between \$40,000 - \$79,000. More than three-fourths of the sample is represented by 35-54 year-olds (41%) and those who are 55+ (41%); the mean age in this sample is 49. Half of the respondents work full-time while another 25% are retired and 20% work part-time or are not employed. Half of the respondents hold at least an associate's degree. The majority of the respondents (68%) no longer have any children younger than age 18 living at home. Nearly half of the respondents have taken 1-3 trips to/within Michigan throughout the past 12 months while more than half have taken 4+ trips. Half of these travelers have stayed overnight 1-2 nights while the other half has stayed over 3+ nights. (See Table 4)



**Table 4: Profile of the Sample**

<b>Descriptor Variables</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender:</b>	
Female	57%
Male	43%
<b>Income:</b>	
0 - \$39,999	26%
\$40,000 - \$79,999	42%
\$80,000 - \$119,999	17%
\$120,000+	10%
Did not answer	5%
<b>Age:</b>	
18-34	18%
35-54	41%
55+	41%
<b>Education:</b>	
High School Only	20%
Some College/No Degree	26%
Associates/Bachelors	31%
Masters and beyond	18%
Did not answer	5%
<b>Employment Status:</b>	
Full-time	50%
Part-time	10%
Retired	26%
Not Employed	9%
Did not answer	5%
<b>Marital Status:</b>	
Married	71%
Not Married	27%
Did not answer	2%
<b>Kids &lt;18 living at home</b>	
None	68%
1-2	25%
3+	7%
<b>Residency:</b>	
Michigan	73%
Neighboring State	20%
Out-of-Region	7%
<b>Number of Trips:</b>	
1-3 trips	38%
4-5 trips	25%
6+ trips	21%
Did not answer	16%
<b>Number of Overnights:</b>	
1-2 stayovers	49%
3+ stayovers	47%
Did not answer	4%

## Assessment of Information Source Factors

Testing for information source usefulness in this study is represented in three phases. Phase one tests the data to confirm whether the proposed four source factors exist in this sample. Phase two determines reliability coefficients for the four factors. Phase three tests the data by means of a split-half testing procedure.

### Factor Analysis Results

#### Phase One

In this initial phase of the information source usefulness analysis, all 19 information source variables were submitted to a factor analysis using a four-factor solution. Eigenvalues with values greater than 1.0 were retained. A value of 1.0 is the generally accepted level for retention of a factor since those with eigenvalues below the 1.0 level would be considered nearly meaningless (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983, p. 406). Loadings above .71 (50 percent variance) are considered excellent, .63 (40 percent) very good, .55 (30 percent) good, .45 (20 percent) fair, and .32 (10 percent of the variance) poor (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1983). Based on these criteria, all items with factor loadings that fell below .50 were excluded from further testing.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>During all subsequent factor analyses that took place throughout the study, the same criteria were used, to include a varimax rotation principal components, eigenvalues with values greater than 1.0, and factor loadings of .50 and above.

A total of 58% of the variance was explained during the initial factor analysis. A further examination of the highest loadings displayed in Table 5 reveal that component 1 represents a mass media theme, components 2 and 3 are travel-tourism specific, and component 4 represents a new media theme. The billboard variable did not load above .50 on any of the factors; therefore, it was excluded from any further factor analysis testing.

The second factor analysis (now excluding billboard) explained 60% of the variance, as illustrated in Table 6. Again, the highest factor loadings reveal that component 1 represents a mass media theme, components 2 and 3 are travel-tourism specific, and component 4 represents a new media theme.

In addition, another issue, determining what constitutes the word-of-mouth factor, had to be addressed. During both of the previous factor analyses, the friend/relative variable loaded above a .50 on the new media component. However, when tested for scale reliability using Cronbach's alpha, it was apparent that the friend/relative variable was dramatically reducing the reliability score for new media factor ( $\alpha = .63$  with friend/relative versus  $\alpha = .79$  without friend/relative).<sup>2</sup> For further clarification to aid in the final decision, a third and final factor analysis was conducted and the friend/relative

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<sup>2</sup> The generally agreed upon acceptable scores for Cronbach's alpha coefficients are .70 and above (Robinson, Shaver & Wrightsman, 1991; Robinson & Shaver, 1973).

**Table 5: Rotated Component Matrix Results (Variance Explained: 58%)  
For Information Source Factor Loadings**

<b><u>Items</u></b>	<b>Component 1</b>	<b>Component 2</b>	<b>Component 3</b>	<b>Component 4</b>
Auto club		.415	<b>.545</b>	
Brochures / Direct mail	.198	<b>.580</b>	.395	
CD-ROM	.135	.163	.371	<b>.685</b>
Chamber of Commerce / CVB	.145	<b>.768</b>	.135	
Internet Website	.112		.173	<b>.816</b>
Magazine Ad	<b>.798</b>	.147		
Magazine Feature	<b>.771</b>	.311		.169
Newspaper Ad	<b>.798</b>	.159		
Newspaper Feature	<b>.741</b>	.313		.196
State Travel Publication	.164	<b>.714</b>	.150	.164
Tradeshow			<b>.645</b>	.274
Travel Channel	.217	.305	<b>.600</b>	.128
Travel Agent	.107		<b>.607</b>	.303
TV Ad	<b>.701</b>		.391	.158
TV Feature	<b>.606</b>	.205	.318	.228
Friend / Relative				<b>.588</b>
Billboard Ad	.212		.486	-.165
Radio Ad	<b>.644</b>	-.134	.431	
Highway Welcome Ctr.	.114	<b>.791</b>		

***Note: Only loadings of .1 and above are reported in this table***

**Table 6: Rotated Component Matrix Results (Variance Explained: 60%)  
For Information Source Factor Loadings**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Component 1</b>	<b>Component 2</b>	<b>Component 3</b>	<b>Component 4</b>
Auto club		.348	<b>.650</b>	-.127
Brochures / Direct mail	.215	<b>.549</b>	.436	
CD-ROM	.148	.169	.342	<b>.719</b>
Chamber of Commerce / CVB	.145	<b>.761</b>	.186	
Internet Website	.114		.165	<b>.836</b>
Magazine Ad	<b>.799</b>	.158		
Magazine Feature	<b>.765</b>	.305		.105
Newspaper Ad	<b>.801</b>	.172		
Newspaper Feature	<b>.738</b>	.297		.116
State Travel Pub	.163	<b>.726</b>	.141	.198
Tradeshow			<b>.667</b>	.246
Travel Channel	.250	.260	<b>.632</b>	
Travel Agent	.141		<b>.683</b>	.221
TV Ad	<b>.723</b>		.306	.198
TV Feature	<b>.622</b>	.173	.368	.159
Friend / Relative				<b>.558</b>
Radio Ad	<b>.667</b>	-.124	.297	.145
Highway Welcome Ctr.	.107	<b>.811</b>		.104

***Note: Only loadings of .1 and above are reported in this table***

variable was excluded from the test. Results illustrated in Table 7 reveal that by excluding this variable, 63% of the variance -- a three percent increase -- was now being explained among the remaining 17 information source variables. This 63% is comparable to the 65% variance explained in the pilot study (Fall, 1999) upon which the study, in part, was based.

These findings related to the friend/relative variable support the premise that word-of-mouth will emerge as an information source domain. Hence, for the remainder of testing throughout the study, friend/relative served as the word-of-mouth factor. Three reasons substantiate the decision. First, although friend/relative loaded on the new media factor, a scale reliability analysis indicated that this variable was reducing the alpha score. Second, in this study nearly half of the respondents (46%) report that friend/relative is the most useful information source. Third, a variety of studies have illustrated that word-of-mouth is the dominant information source people refer to when making travel plans and it emerges as a prominent factor during various factor analyses (e.g., Gitelson & Crompton, 1983; Nolan, 1976; Raitz & Dakhil, 1989; Fall, 1999).

**Table 7: Rotated Component Matrix Results (Variance Explained: 63%)  
For Information Source Factor Loadings**

<b><u>Items</u></b>	<b>Component 1</b>	<b>Component 2</b>	<b>Component 3</b>	<b>Component 4</b>
Auto club		.333	<b>.669</b>	-.120
Brochures / Direct mail	.210	<b>.549</b>	.424	
CD-ROM	.157	.204	.267	<b>.802</b>
Chamber of Commerce / CVB	.143	<b>.763</b>	.186	
Internet Website	.128			<b>.882</b>
Magazine Ad	<b>.798</b>	.160		
Magazine Feature	<b>.767</b>	.305		
Newspaper Ad	<b>.800</b>	.179		
Newspaper Feature	<b>.741</b>	.293	.127	
State Travel Pub	.165	<b>.733</b>	.138	.173
Tradeshow			<b>.640</b>	.306
Travel Channel	.246	.258	<b>.630</b>	.113
Travel Agent	.142		<b>.706</b>	.193
TV Ad	<b>.723</b>		.280	.235
TV Feature	<b>.624</b>	.165	.409	
Radio Ad	<b>.667</b>	-.114	.268	.188
Highway Welcome Ctr.	.108	<b>.815</b>		

***Note: Only loadings of .1 and above are reported in this table***

## Phase Two

This phase focused on whether to combine components 2 and 3 when constructing the tourism-specific factor, was addressed during this phase. Before constructing the final factors, all four factor scales were submitted to a scale reliability test using Cronbach's alpha. Additionally, components 2 and 3 were collapsed and tested so this combined alpha score could be compared to those of the individual scores. Individually, results produced acceptable alpha coefficient scores related to component 2 ( $\alpha = .78$ ); component 3 was marginally acceptable ( $\alpha = .70$ ). However, when tested in combination, components 2 and 3 produced an acceptable score ( $\alpha = .80$ ). Hence, the decision was made to collapse components 2 and 3 when constructing the final tourism-specific scale. Table 8 depicts the final breakdown of the four factors and their respective alpha coefficient scores.

## Phase Three

The final phase of the information source testing involved submitting the data to split-sample testing procedures. Split-sampling testing, in tandem with high reliability estimates, should provide support for the proposition that specific factors do indeed exist (Nunnally, 1979, p. 233; Carmines & Zeller, 1979, p. 41). Gorsuch (1979) uses the term "factorial invariance" to define a stable factor structure. He explains that if two factor patterns mirror each other, the tenet is that the scales are tapping into the same underlying factors; therefore, they are valid and reproducible. Gorsuch warns that major differences should raise questions about scale items being included as well as the analytic techniques being employed.



**Table 8: Final Information Source Factors  
and Alpha Reliability Scores**

<b><u>Factors</u></b>			
<b>Mass Media</b>	<b>New Media</b>	<b>Tourism-Specific</b>	<b>Word-of-Mouth</b>
Magazine Ad	CD-ROM	Auto Club	Friend/Relative
Magazine Feature	Internet Website	Brochures / Direct Mail	
Newspaper Ad		Chamber of Commerce/ CVB	
Newspaper Feature		Highway Welcome Center	
Radio Ad		State Travel Publication	
TV Ad		Tradeshow	
TV Feature		Travel Agent	
		Travel Channel	
$\alpha = .88$	$\alpha = .79$	$\alpha = .80$	

To test the validity of the factors and to test for factorial invariance, the entire sample (N=570) was divided in half. The questionnaires were numbered sequentially after they were returned from the various welcome centers. To test for invariance, odd numbered questionnaires were designated as "sample 1" and even numbered questionnaires were designated as "sample 2" in accordance with conventional procedures recommended by Nunnally (1979, p. 233). These three samples were then each submitted to a factor analysis and scale reliability analyses.

The factor loadings of the entire sample were compared to the two subsequent split samples. The data in Table 9 demonstrate that all of the factor loadings are comparable to each other and all load highest on the same information source domains.

**Table 9: Factor Analysis Comparison of Entire Sample to Split-Sample Information Source Factor Loadings**

Items	Scale Dimensions								
	<u>Mass Media</u>			<u>Travel/Tourism</u>			<u>New Media</u>		
	Entire N=570	S - #1 n=275	S - #2 n=275	Entire N=570	S - #1 n=275	S - #2 n=275	Entire N=570	S - #1 n=275	S - #2 n=275
Auto club				.669	.700	.712			
CD-ROM							.802	.816	.795
Chamber of commerce				.763	.747	.768			
Brochure/direct mail				.549	.532	.520			
Hwy. Welcome center				.815	.833	.823			
Magazine ad	.798	.803	.844						
Magazine feature	.767	.788	.770						
Newspaper ad	.800	.790	.813						
Newspaper feature	.741	.720	.747						
Radio ad	.667	.646	.720						
State travel publication				.733	.763	.753			
Tradeshow				.640	.648	.594			
Travel agent				.706	.697	.712			
TV ad	.723	.753	.749						
TV feature	.624	.630	.603						
Travel channel				.630	.638	.632			
Internet website							.882	.865	.869

*Note: Only factor loadings of .5 and above are recorded in this table*

Table 10 demonstrates that the variance explained by the three tests is comparable as well.

**Table 10: Variance Explained Comparison of Entire Sample to Split-Sample Information Source Factor Analyses**

Original Sample Variance Explained	Split-Sample #1 Variance Explained	Split-Sample #2 Variance Explained
N = 570	N = 285	N = 285
63%	63 %	66%

To further assess the validity of the mass media, new media, and travel/tourism-specific factors and to test for factorial invariance, the entire sample and the two split-halves also were submitted to scale reliability analyses. Again using criteria outlined by

Nunnally (1979), all three samples produced comparable -- and adequate -- alpha reliability coefficient scores, as illustrated in Table 11. This final phase of the factor testing supports the premise that information sources used for travel planning can be significantly differentiated on four dimensions: mass media, new media, travel/tourism-specific, and word-of-mouth.

**Table 11: Alpha Reliability Coefficient Comparison of Entire Sample to Split-Sample Information Source Factor Analyses**

<b>Information Source Factor</b>	Entire Sample N = 570	Split-Sample #1 N = 285	Split-Sample #2 N = 285
Mass Media	$\alpha = .85$	$\alpha = .86$	$\alpha = .88$
New Media	$\alpha = .80$	$\alpha = .81$	$\alpha = .79$
Travel/Tourism	$\alpha = .80$	$\alpha = .79$	$\alpha = .81$

### Addressing the Research Questions

Now that the information source factors were constructed and tested for reliability and validity, the remainder of the analyses were able to take place. The 10 research questions are addressed throughout the remainder of this chapter. Each research question is restated, followed by its respective table of data and a discussion of the findings.

**RQ1: How can the relationship among dominant personal value importance, demographics and travel behaviors be used to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments defined in terms of information source usefulness?**

This initial research question addresses the primary objective of the study, which is to determine how the relationship between information source usefulness and personal value importance, in combination with demographics and travel behaviors, can be used successfully to segment travelers.

Data in Table 12 reveal an array of information that is useful for segmenting travelers. In order to more clearly describe each segment, the four factors were further collapsed into low, moderate, and high categories based on frequency distributions. Then the factors were cross-tabulated with various demographic, travel, and personal values data. Only the high percentage scores are reflected in Table 12, followed by an exploratory impressionistic analysis based on the findings and findings from Kahle's (1983, 1984, & 1986) previous studies.

#### Description of Each Information Source Segment

The earlier results from the factor analyses and scale reliability tests indicate that four underlying information source domains exist. The following discussion will aid in further supporting the premise that these identifiers can be used for successful market segmentation analysis. Each segment is discussed in relation to its dominant personal value and other demographic characteristics. Further, implications for communication managers are addressed. Table 12 provided the data from which this discussion is based.

#### Profile of Word-of-Mouth / Sense-of-Accomplishers

Individuals in the word-of-mouth segment rate sense of accomplishment as their most important personal value. As Kahle (1983) explains, sense-of-accomplishers tend to be goal-oriented, as reflected in their inclination for higher education and prestigious careers. Sense-of-accomplishers strive to place themselves in positions that allow for

**Table 12: Profile of Information Source Segments  
Reported in Highest Percentages**

<b>PLEASURE TRAVELER MARKET SEGMENTS</b>				
	<b><u>Word-of Mouth</u></b>	<b><u>Mass Media</u></b>	<b><u>New Media</u></b>	<b><u>Tourism- Specific</u></b>
<b>DOMINANT VALUE:</b>	Accomplishment	Sense of Belonging	Excitement	Self-Fulfillment
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS:</b>				
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	28	34	18	35
Male	34	39	25	41
<b>Income</b>				
0 - \$39,999	35	35	20	35
\$40,000 - \$79,999	28	35	23	37
\$80,000 - \$119,999	33	43	19	33
\$120,000+	29	30	22	47
<b>Age:</b>				
18-34	29	32	25	39
35-54	32	40	26	39
55+	30	34	16	36
<b>Education:</b>				
High School Only	27	38	19	41
Some College/No degree	32	33	25	40
Associates/Bachelors	32	35	20	33
Masters and beyond	32	38	22	38
<b>Employment Status</b>				
Full-time	37	38	21	36
Part-time	22	33	26	39
Retired	26	39	19	38
Not Employed	27	24	21	39
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Married	31	37	21	39
Not Married	30	34	23	34
<b>Kids &lt;18</b>				
None	31	36	21	39
1-2	30	35	24	33
3+	32	34	13	40
<b>Residency</b>				
Michigan	31	37	22	39
Neighboring State	28	27	16	29
Out-of-Region	33	47	33	40
<b>TRAVEL BEHAVIORS:</b>				
<b>Number of Trips</b>				
1-3 trips	29	33	21	35
4-5 trips	30	39	23	38
6+ trips	33	36	30	40
<b>Number of Overnights</b>				
1-2 stayovers	30	35	24	38
3+ stayovers	32	37	19	37

much autonomy and self-direction. They are self-confident, enterprising, energetic, and have a strong need to be socially outstanding. The praise they earn from others enhances their self-esteem and further fuels their need for achievement.

These value attributions aid in understanding why individuals rate word-of-mouth as their most useful information source. Since word-of-mouth / sense-of-accomplishers are career-oriented and able to achieve self-satisfaction, they are, often times, in the business limelight. They perceive human relations-related strategies as effective channels of communication. Further, they also participate in regular word-of-mouth and networking communication activities themselves as part of their ongoing quest to achieve a high degree of social standing in the community.

This segment has some other generalizable attributes. The more educated respondents tend to rate this source more usefully. This result supports the "knowledge is power" adage. Respondents who have had more formal education may place higher confidence in word-of-mouth sources due to their comfort level with their own decision-making capabilities. Individuals in the upper-middle to upper-class income bracket tend to rate this source higher. Income and education traditionally compliment each other; those earning higher incomes are typically better educated.

The results further reveal that full-time employees rate this source most usefulness. This finding may be rationalized by the point that these individuals have more access to "human" resources than do the unemployed. Therefore, they have more day-to-day opportunities to develop stronger interpersonal relationships that may, in turn, strengthen their trust in word-of-mouth sources. Also, as strong sense-of-accomplishers,

they realize the benefits to networking as a way to earn a higher stature in their professional life.

Implications for Professionals. Communication managers should strongly consider using word-of-mouth / sense-of-accomplishers as intervening publics for message dissemination. This suggestion is supported by the notion that these individuals use word-of-mouth as a communication tactic in their every day activities to accomplish their goals, and they also refer to word-of-mouth sources themselves when they need information. Examples for use as intervening publics include incorporating these individuals' testimonials in local and state-wide tourism promotion campaigns and inviting them to serve on boards and other decision-making committees. Additionally, these individuals are prime targets for public relations-generated messages and tactics because they understand -- and respect -- the underlying principles and financial benefits of strategic relationship management.

#### Profile of Mass Media / Sense-of-Belongers

Individuals in the mass media segment rate sense of belonging as their most important personal value. Kahle (1983) explains that sense-of-belonging represents an externally-oriented deficit value; people strive to obtain it. To value sense of belonging means to desire affiliation with others. Another point Kahle makes is that advocates of this value tend to remain true to conventional methods when dealing with new situations and problems. This premise supports the reasoning behind why these individuals rate mass media as the most useful information source; it is a long-standing traditional medium that offers familiarity. Conventional mass media-related sources may provide comfort to these individuals. Further, sense-of-belongers tend to believe they are not part

of the mainstream society and are more likely to feel alienated from life. These individuals may turn to the mass media for some kind of affiliation and group recognition.

The relationship between those in the mass media segment who deem sense of belonging most importantly may further be explained by the rational that these individuals view their information sources as a kind of association symbol to define their place in society. Many kinds of magazines and newspapers offer a certain group affiliation. Take, for example, the Wall Street Journal and Forbes. Both of these publications have positioned themselves as prominent resources for the serious business person. Readers who value sense of belonging (e.g., association) with this upper echelon business type may read these publications for that very reason. In the context of travel, Conde Naste has a particular en vogue appeal about it as well. Would-be travelers may choose to read this magazine in order to be "in the know," even if they are not necessarily planning to travel in the near future. This assertion about using various media to project certain personal images ties back to earlier discussions that focus on the premise that personal values serve as prominent motivators for many of our day-to-day decisions. The self-concept theory (Rosenberg, 1979) also aids in the explanation. This theory posits that when people perceive themselves to portray a certain image, often times they will project behavior that reinforces this image.

Additionally, those individuals in the 35-54 age bracket who earn \$80,000 - \$119,999 and live outside Michigan and its surrounding states tend to rate the mass media more usefully, as do those employed full-time and retired. This latter observation related to retirees may be explained by research results from the Yankelovich MONITOR



(Smith & Clurman, 1997) that indicates that matures (ages 55+) tend to gravitate toward traditional mass media sources for information due to their strong value for allegiance. They were raised in the heyday of the newspaper and magazine era.

Implications for Professionals. This segment offers several ramifications for communication managers. As indicated, mass media/sense-of-belongers strive for affiliation, which is one of the overarching premises of the media the uses and gratifications theory. Therefore, when targeting this audience, campaign developers should construct messages that promote the opportunity to be a part of a group. State tourism officials should highlight group-related activities that encourage human interaction. However, they should make sure to package these messages in a more traditional fashion, due to the believers' tendency toward conventionalism. Suggestions include running advertisements in the travel section of Sunday newspapers and on popular radio stations and positioning feature stories in auto club newsletters, travel magazines, and travel sections of Sunday newspapers.

#### New Media / Excitement-Seekers

Individuals in the new media segment rate excitement as their most important personal value. Kahle (1983) indicates that selectors of this value are the most autonomous of the nine value groups. This segment takes time to enjoy life and is not overly concerned with life's problems. These individuals are creative, optimistic, somewhat footloose, and unconventional; they are versatile in nature, making it easier to tackle problems by fostering new solutions. Individuals in this group produce high scores of intelligence, are self-starters and self-sufficient. However, excitement-oriented people

do not feel a strong need to commit themselves to highly complex jobs that require much outside work and infringe on their free time that could otherwise be spent having fun.

The previous assertion supports the reasoning behind why these individuals rate new media as the most useful information source. First, the internet, in particular, is a less-time consuming medium that allows instantaneous access to a wealth of information with the stroke of keyboard. This instant gratification is somewhat indicative of the excitement-seeking segment. Additionally, much internet research has found that many individuals experience high levels of personal enjoyment while "surfing the net." Finally, the internet offers increased telecommuting opportunities for many people in an array of occupations, which is supported by results from this study. Part-time employees comprise the highest scores in the high usefulness category. Individuals in the new media / excitement-seeking segment are prime candidates for this work-from-home employment situation, especially since they thrive on personal freedom.

Implications for Professionals. Of the four segments, this one is the most idiosyncratic. Although the segment is defined by new media usefulness, the usefulness score are relatively low. Hence, before spending abundant promotional dollars on developing a web presence, communication managers should do their homework to see if they are indeed successfully reaching this market segment. Just because this segment rates new media as most useful source does not guarantee that the internet is the magic bullet information channel.

However, these findings are fruitful from a message development standpoint. When targeting this segment, communication managers should promote the fun and exciting aspects of their products and services. For example, state tourism officials

should include events that have excitement appeal (e.g., bungee-jumping contests, mountain-hiking expeditions, etc.) Further, the messages should reinforce the fact that visitors can participate in several different activities -- all in one trip. New media/ excitement-seekers are enticed by opportunities that offer an array of experiences as opposed to just one single activity. It is not so much a "more bang for the buck" issue. More so, it is about fulfilling this segment's need to participate in many activities in one fell-swoop so they do not believe they are being cheated out of leisure time they could otherwise be using to further their fun. Many tourism destination locations throughout the United States successfully participate in cooperative promotional programs that support the concept of "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts." In other words, they encourage travelers to visit their location because there are some many things to do all in the same geographic area. These collaborative campaigns provide further opportunities for capturing the attention of new media / excitement seekers.

#### Tourism-Specific / Self-Fulfillers

Individuals in the tourism-specific segment rate self-fulfillment as their most important personal value. Self-fulfillers, according to Kahle (1983) thrive on achieving self-satisfaction and they strive for perfection. They are continually looking for more challenges in their life, whether related to their careers, relationships, or leisure activities. However, they are not satisfied by only intangible obtainments; they also seek intangible (intrinsic) satisfaction. Self-fulfillers tend to believe they are not living up to their full potential and they obsess over details (Kahle, 1983).

The characteristics of self-fulfillers aid in understanding why they rate tourism-specific sources as their most useful information source. Since self-fulfillers are always working toward that final self-actualizing finish line, they may turn to tourism-specific sources as a way to escape and fulfill themselves intrinsically. Explained in another way, self-fulfillers may chose to live vicariously by means of tourism-specific sources. If they can not actually take a vacation to some far away place, they may, in part, satisfy this travel urge by going through the motions of collecting information from organizations like welcome centers or chambers of commerce that are directly affiliated with travel-related activities. The mere association with tourism-related organizations may satisfy their need to travel.

Married respondents tend to rate this source more usefully than their non-married counterparts. A possible explanation may be that non-married respondents are more skeptical about word-of-mouth source information because they do not have a "significant other" to confer with when making final decisions. Conversely, married respondents may be more secure with information provided by this source because they can fall back on the "two heads are better than one" concept before making their final travel decisions.

Implications for Professionals. The messages used to target these tourism-specific / self-fulfillers should clearly project the concept of personal fulfillment. Successful travel campaigns should highlight aspects related to satisfying personal needs. Examples include spas and resorts that offer relaxation and pampering, cultural attractions and historical sites that offer educational fulfillment, and nature-related

attractions like the Grand Canyon and the Great Smoky Mountains that offer tranquility and personal sanctuary.

### Dominant Personal Value Among Michigan Travelers

#### **RQ2: What is the dominant personal value among travelers to/within Michigan?**

After rating each of the nine personal values on a 1-5 scale, respondents were then asked to write in their overall most important value. Table 13 depicts the values in descending rank order by frequency distribution.

**Table 13: Ranking of Personal Values in Order of Importance**

<b>Value Ranking</b>	<b>Personal Value</b>	<b>Locus of Control</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Warm Relationships With Others	Internal	27.2
2	Self-Respect	Internal	17.7
3	Security	External	13.3
4	Fun & Enjoyment	Internal	10.7
5	Sense of Accomplishment	Internal	9.3
5	Self-Fulfillment	Internal	9.3
6	Well-Respected	External	5.8
7	Sense of Belonging	External	3.9
8	Excitement	Internal	.2

**N = 570**

Results highlighted in Table 13 demonstrate that warm relationships with others is the dominant personal value among this sample, followed by self-respect. In terms of locus of control, a total of 74% of the sample ranks an internally-oriented value most importantly while only 23% ranks externally-oriented values most importantly. The remaining three percent did not answer this survey question. This data suggest that internal values are more apt to play a part in individuals' travel-planning activities. And, as the internal locus of control concept asserts, these people believe that they have control over their own destinies, which indicates that they are somewhat more proactive in their overall decisions. In this case, the findings suggest that respondents in this sample are more assertive when it comes to seeking out travel information.

The primary finding that most people report warm relationships with others as their overall most important value reinforces the need to include public relations strategies and tactics in the overall communication mix. The practice of public relations is founded up the principle of developing mutually beneficial relationships with targeted audiences. This finding also strengthens to need to incorporate relationship management into the overall management program. In the travel/tourism industry, offering the highest level of quality customer service is critical. For example, when travelers stay at a hotel, the accommodations they pay for are only a small contribution of the overall "guest experience." The customer service they receive from hotel employees from the minute they check-in and receive their room key to the moment they pay their bill and check-out all becomes part of the overall experience. Knowing that warm relationships with others is a dominant personal value among pleasure travelers further supports the importance of providing congenial, yet professional service at all levels of the operation.

### Dominant Information Source Among Michigan Travelers

#### **RQ3: What is the dominant information source among travelers to/within Michigan?**

After rating each of the 19 information sources on a 1-5 scale, respondents were then asked to write in their overall most useful information source. Table 14 illustrates the information sources in descending rank order by frequency distribution. Data demonstrate that friend/relative is the dominantly-ranked information source among this sample, followed by internet website. In terms of information source domains, a total of 46% of the sample ranks word-of-mouth most useful, 28% ranks tourism-specific sources most useful, 15% ranks mass media sources most useful and 8% ranks new media most useful. The remaining three percent did not answer this survey question.

This finding for high word-of-mouth usefulness further supports the need to incorporate well-defined, goal-driven public relations-oriented objectives, strategies and tactics. People who travel can serve as the travel industry's best public relations communicators -- or its worst enemy. It is crucial that the travel/tourism industry strives to provide visitors with the most pleasurable experience possible.

Results from this study also indicate that tourism-specific information sources that are more human relations-oriented (chamber of commerce, highway welcome center, travel agent) and public relations-oriented (brochures, state travel publications) are more value to information-seekers than are traditional advertising sources. While some visitors are inclined to stop at welcome centers to pick up information, others may call the local convention and visitors bureau to request that print material be mailed to them. Hence, tourism officials should conduct market research to determine appropriate kinds

**Table 14: Ranking of Information Sources  
in order of Usefulness**

**N = 570**

<b>Information Source Ranking</b>	<b>Information Source</b>	<b>Information Source Dimension</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Friend/Relative	Word-of-Mouth	45.8
2	Internet Website	New Media	8.4
3	Chamber/CVB	Tourism-Specific	7.2
4	Highway W.C.	Tourism-Specific	5.9
5	Auto Club	Tourism-Specific	5.7
6	Magazine Feature	Mass Media	4.5
7	Brochures/ Direct Mail	Tourism-Specific	3.2
8	Travel Agent	Tourism-Specific	2.9
9	State Travel Publication	Tourism-Specific	2.7
10	TV Feature	Mass Media	2.5
11	Newspaper Feature	Mass Media	1.8
12	TV Ad	Mass Media	1.6
12	And Newspaper Ad	Mass Media	1.6
13	Billboard Ad	Mass Media	1.4
14	Magazine Ad	Mass Media	.9
14	and Radio Ad	Mass Media	.9
15	Travel Channel	Tourism-Specific	.7
16	Trade Show	Tourism-Specific	.4
<b>Not ranked</b>	CD-ROM		



(either human relations- or public relations-oriented) of travel-related sources to use when targeting potential visitors. Further, the data suggest that the internet website is the up-and-coming source people are turning to when making travel plans. This result is supported by recent data released by the Travel Industry Association from a February, 2000 survey that included a representative sample of 1,300 American adults. During this telephone survey respondents were asked to rate 14 different types of travel media based on their usefulness when making vacation travel plans. Internet website (26%) is ranked the most useful source, followed by newspaper travel section (14 %) and motor club magazine (10%).

Finally, results in Table 14 suggest that, in general, individuals rate public relations-related sources more usefully than they do traditional advertising sources. Again, this finding supports an underlying assertion in this study that consumers want more *individualized* information. And, one way to personalize these messages is by tapping into one's personal value structure.

#### Additional Statistical Analyses

In order to address the remaining seven research questions, various statistical analyses were conducted. Significance was evaluated at  $\alpha = .05$  for a two-tailed test. Regression coefficients are represented in standardized form (i.e., Beta) to make meaningful comparisons between equations using different independent variables.

### Assessment of Personal Value Influence

**RQ4: To what extent do internal personal values such as fun and enjoyment, warm relationships with others, sense of accomplishment, excitement, self-fulfillment, and self-respect influence information source usefulness when travelers are planning pleasure trips?**

**RQ5: To what extent do external personal values such as security, sense of belonging, and being well respected influence information source usefulness when travelers planning pleasure trips?**

To address RQ4 and RQ5, the personal value factors and the information source factors were submitted to a linear multiple regression analysis. Results are displayed in Table 15. Results from the regression analysis illustrate that none of the six internal values, whether in combination or individually, significantly influences any of the four information source factors. Further, the variance explained by these values is minute (e.g.,  $r^2 = .003$  for word-of-mouth,  $r^2 = .012$  for mass media,  $r^2 = .019$  for new media, and  $r^2 = .025$  for tourism-specific).

Results also demonstrate that none of the three external values, in combination, significantly influences any of the information source factors. However, when examined individually, being well-respected has a negative influence on tourism-specific information usefulness ( $\beta = -.129$ ,  $p = .017$ ). As being well-respected increases, tourism-specific usefulness decreases. This finding suggests that individuals who are more concerned about the level of respect they earn from others are less apt to turn to tourism-specific sources for information when planning pleasure trips.

**Table 15: Linear Multiple Regression Results  
for Personal Values and Information Sources**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables											
	Information Source Factors											
	Word-of-Mouth			Mass Media			New Media			Tourism-Specific		
Personal Values	$\beta$	p	t	$\beta$	p	t	$\beta$	p	t	$\beta$	p	t
<b>(Internal)</b>												
Fun & Enjoyment	.004	.943	.072	-.006	.918	-.103	.037	.548	.601	-.037	.541	-.612
Warm Relations	.054	.363	.910	.011	.860	.176	.014	.819	.229	.020	.740	.332
Excitement	.018	.753	.315	.015	.798	.256	.048	.391	.858	.103	.068	1.82
Accomplishment	-.013	.830	-.215	.026	.668	.429	.025	.684	.407	.056	.353	.930
Self-Fulfillment	-.003	.969	-.039	-.032	.634	-.476	.046	.493	.686	.084	.207	1.26
Self-Respect	-.004	.959	-.052	.098	.168	1.37	-.155	.826	-.220	.027	.696	.392
<b>(External)</b>												
Security	-.030	.570	-.568	-.062	.241	-1.17	-.029	.588	-.542	-.019	.721	-.358
Sense of Belonging	.014	.802	.251	.002	.977	.029	.071	.213	1.24	-.055	.326	-.983
Well-Respected	-.024	.662	-.437	.039	.477	.712	-.054	.322	-.990	-.129	.017	-2.38
R <sup>2</sup>	.003			.012			.019			.025		
Df	9			9			9			9		
F	.185			.737			1.19			1.56		
Overall p	.996			.675			.295			.123		

The notion of self-concept compliments and sometimes overlaps with values theory. According to the self-concept theory, when people perceive themselves to portray a certain image, often times they will project behavior that reinforces this image (Rosenberg, 1979). In combination, these two theories aid in explaining this result. In the case of this study, people who perceive themselves as being well-respected may believe they have no need for tourism-specific information. Because travel literature is generally rather colorful and less conservative, they may think this particular kind of information does not "fit" the image they are trying to depict. Additionally, these individuals may be more likely to confer with colleagues and peers who they believe represent the same stature as they do, and, therefore, will be able to supply them with both credible and valuable information to aid them in their travel planning.

**RQ6: To what extent do internal personal values influence types of attractions visited?**

**RQ7: To what extent do external personal values influence types of attractions visited?**

In order to answer RQ6 and RQ7, the top five attractions reported by respondents were submitted to a logistic multiple regression analysis. Results are illustrated in Table 16 and reveal three overall findings. The first set of findings is related to outdoor attraction selection. When all nine values are tested in combination, they approach significance with this activity ( $\chi^2 = .028$ ,  $p = .082$ ). When examining the individual value scores, two internal values are positively contributing to this influence: excitement ( $\beta = .251$ ,  $p = .054$ ) and warm relationships with others ( $\beta = .354$ ,  $p = .016$ ). In short, as these two values increase in importance, outdoor activity selection also increases. A look at

activities represented by the outdoor category helps to clarify this result. In this sample, outdoor activities include any kind of outdoor recreational activities (fishing, boating, water-skiing, going to the lake, etc.) as well as camping, hunting, and participation in color tours. Providing excitement is indicative of many of these outdoor activities. Further, many of these pastimes encourage interaction with others, which helps to explain why the value of warm relationships with others emerges as a significant indicator.

An additional internal value, fun and enjoyment, is negatively influencing outdoor activity selection ( $\beta = -.392, p = .011$ ). As fun and enjoyment importance decreases, outdoor activities increase. This value also is making the largest contribution among the nine values. An explanation for this finding may stem from the fact that although many of these outdoor activities are recreational in nature, they also require a degree of physical labor (e.g., boating, biking, walking the bridge, golfing). Therefore, these respondents may not view these activities only as a means for leisure pleasure but also as a way to get some exercise, which may not always be viewed as enjoyable -- especially when one is on vacation.

The second set of findings from the data in table 16 related to state park attraction selection. When all nine values are tested in combination, they approach significance with this activity ( $r^2 = .029, p = .071$ ). When examining the individual value scores, a negative relationship between self-respect importance and state park attraction selection emerges ( $\beta = -.369, p = .045$ ). As self-respect increases, state park attraction selection decreases. In short, people who place a high value on self-respect are less apt to participate in state park activities. An explanation for this finding may be traced back to the self-concept theory discussed early in this chapter. Since these people place high

importance on their internal respect level, then they also place high importance on how other people perceive them. They may believe they have a certain image to uphold. As values theory explains, many of the behaviors we engage in are a representation of our value systems. Hence, for these people, maintaining a high level of self-respect means behaving in certain ways, or, this case, participating (or not participating) in particular activities. Visiting state parks simply may not be good enough for them. Or, they may believe that engaging in this not-so-savvy, somewhat primitive activity could hurt their image, and, in return, diminish their self-respect.

Evidence of a positive relationship between self-fulfillment importance and state park selection ( $\beta = .390$ ,  $p = .026$ ) also is apparent. As self-fulfillment increases, so does state park attraction selection; this internal value also is contributing the overall most influence. As Kahle (1983) points out, self-fulfillers "reach for the limits" in their leisure activities, seeking to enhance their achievement domain. Many state parks are somewhat peaceful and their natural setting is often a selling point. They offer a reclusive, yet cost-effective, opportunity to which people can escape. Thus, self-fulfillers are able to achieve a feeling of internal tranquility. They may view the chance to relieve stress as yet another accomplishment on their life-long achievement checklist.

The final set of findings illustrated by data in table 16 is related to casino/gambling attraction selection. In combination, the nine values do not influence selection related to this attraction ( $r^2 = .018$ ,  $p = .390$ ). However, when examining the individual value scores, results reveal that fun and enjoyment is significantly related to this activity ( $\beta = -.405$ ,  $p = .036$ ). As fun and enjoyment importance increases, gambling decreases. At face value, one may first think that this inverse relationship does not make

**Table 16: Logistic Multiple Regression Results  
for Personal Values and Attraction Selection**

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables									
	Pleasure Travel Attraction Selection									
	Cultural/Historic		Outdoor		Shopping		State Park		Casino	
<b>Personal Values</b>	$\beta$	p	$\beta$	p	$\beta$	p	$\beta$	p	$\beta$	p
<b>(Internal Values)</b>										
Accomplishment	-.159	.227	.111	.446	-.022	.863	-.217	.128	-.118	.512
Excitement	-.161	.163	.251	<b>.054</b>	-.083	.463	-.188	.132	.293	.082
Fun & Enjoyment	.165	.235	-.392	<b>.011</b>	.150	.267	.214	.155	-.405	<b>.036</b>
Warm Relations	-.052	.694	.354	<b>.016</b>	-.210	.119	.034	.812	-.051	.767
Self-Respect	-.206	.219	-.021	.900	-.032	.837	-.369	<b>.045</b>	.287	.190
Self-Fulfillment	.244	.124	-.200	.228	.183	.221	.390	<b>.026</b>	.068	.737
<b>(External Values)</b>										
Security	.115	.343	.039	.754	.018	.874	.140	.298	-.103	.493
Sense of Belonging	-.045	.712	.060	.651	-.095	.432	-.088	.512	.162	.316
Well-Respected	.128	.256	-.024	.834	.021	.847	.188	.134	.082	.568
Chi-Square	9.25		15.3		6.1		15.7		9.5	
Df	9		9		9		9		9	
R <sup>2</sup>	.017		.028		.011		.029		.018	
Overall p	.414		<b>.082</b>		.724		<b>.071</b>		.390	

sense. In fact, based on the messages being portrayed in the media, casino gambling is fun. Therefore, as fun and enjoyment increases, so should casino/gambling activity. However, in reality it may be that these respondents do not necessarily view gambling as fun and enjoyable -- but as more as a resource for financial gain. In other words, they may not engage in gambling for leisure or recreational purposes. Instead, they may engage in gambling activities for the sole purpose of making money. And, since gambling success is left up to fate and chance, financial gain may not always be the case; therefore, the thrill of gambling subsides.

As for the externally-oriented values, data reveal that none of these values significantly influences attraction selection. The locus of control premise provides insight for this finding. As Rotter (1955) explains, externals are less likely to take personal responsibility for the consequences of their behavior; further, they believe whatever happens to them is due to luck or chance. In sum, they are not very proactive or assertive. Since the travel activities examined in this study demand a certain degree of assertion, this point may play a factor in understanding why none of the external values influences these activities.

#### Assessment of Demographic Influence

**RQ8: To what extent do demographics influence internal value importance?**

**RQ9: To what extent do demographics influence external value importance?**



To address RQ8 and RQ9, various demographics and all of the nine personal values were submitted to a linear multiple regression analysis. Two pertinent findings related to age and employment are revealed in this analysis. Results are depicted in Table 17, revealing that age is significantly influencing overall personal value importance ( $r^2 = .032$ ,  $p = .042$ ). An examination of the individual values reveals that excitement ( $\beta = -.169$ ,  $p = .003$ ) is being influenced the most. However, this relationship is negative; as age increases, excitement importance decreases. This finding is supported by the Yankelovich MONITOR findings: as people age, their need for excitement outside the home goes down. Although today's matures are more active than were they were a decade ago, they still spend a considerable amount of their leisure time at home (Smith & Clurman, 1997).

Additionally, employment is significantly influencing overall personal value importance ( $r^2 = .038$ ,  $p = .014$ ). An examination of the individual values illustrates that excitement is being influenced the most ( $\beta = -.136$ ,  $p = .017$ ), followed by sense of belonging ( $\beta = .128$ ,  $p = .027$ ) and being well-respected ( $\beta = -.113$ ,  $p = .042$ ). Related to excitement, as employment status decreases (e.g., part-time, retired, not employed), excitement decreases as well. The composition of this sample aids in the explanation. Retires make up 26% of the entire sample; respondents ages 55+ make up 41% of the entire sample. Hence, age also is driving the results. And, as stated earlier, as age goes down, so does the need for excitement.

**Table 17: Linear Multiple Regression Results  
for Personal Values and Demographics**

Dependent Variables	Independent Variables							
	Demographics							
	Age		Education		Employment		Annual Income	
Personal Values	$\beta$	P	$\beta$	p	$\beta$	p	$\beta$	p
(Internal Values)								
Accomplishment	.042	.502	.099	.118	-.067	.286	.071	.265
Excitement	-.169	.003	-.081	.161	-.136	.017	-.058	.329
Fun & Enjoyment	.003	.955	.098	.121	.025	.691	-.051	.424
Warm Relations	-.070	.252	-.045	.466	-.023	.700	-.026	.678
Self-Respect	-.036	.618	-.047	.516	.022	.758	-.099	.181
Self-Fulfillment	.072	.294	-.035	.614	.046	.503	.104	.138
(External Values)								
Security	-.011	.841	-.035	.520	.019	.722	.047	.394
Sense of Belonging	.092	.107	-.002	.967	.128	.027	-.080	.171
Well-Respected	-.012	.823	.044	.435	-.113	.042	-.011	.848
R <sup>2</sup>	.032		.012		.038		.016	
df	9		9		9		9	
F	1.95		.694		2.32		.924	
Overall p	.042		.714		.014		.504	

Of special note about this latter finding is that two of the *external* values are being influenced by employment. These results further reinforce the premise of locus of control (Rotter, 1955). In this case the external locus of control values are being influenced by employment status. As discussed earlier in this chapter, people who rate externally-oriented values more importantly tend to believe that chance or fate -- or in this case, employment status -- controls their destinies. The relationship between sense of belonging and employment status reinforces the external locus of control premise. As employment status decreases, sense of belonging value importance decreases.

As Kahle points out (1983), sense of belonging is a *deficit* value. Hence, by not having it, people tend to focus more on it. In this case, individuals may view their employment status as a way to fulfill this socialization deficiency. Those that do not have a full-time position may yearn for more human contact. This is a predominantly increasing issue for organizations that allow employees to telecommute. Allowing employees to work from home offers them more autonomy. In many situations the level of work productivity also increases. However, a decrease in socialization may occur; employees may tend to feel "disconnected" from their place of employment. This can lead to depression, which, in turn, can lead to decreased work productivity.

Contrarily, as employment status decreases, well-respected value importance decreases. Again, the external locus of control rational aids understanding this finding. People who are no longer employed place a diminished value on being well-respected. Often times, peoples' professional status and success contribute to the level of respect they receive by their friends, family, colleagues and peers. Hence, if they are no longer employed, they may also no longer care as much about the external level of respect they

are earning. Note: being well-respected is different from the internally-oriented self-respect one can obtain without the influence of external factors.

**RQ10: To what extent do demographics influence information source usefulness?**

To address this final research question, various demographics and all four information source factors were submitted to a linear multiple regression analysis. Results used to address RQ10 are displayed in Table 18.

With regard to word-of-mouth source usefulness, in combination these four demographics influence this source ( $r^2 = .025$ ,  $p = .016$ ). Individually, employment status is the only demographic characteristic significantly contributing ( $\beta = -.110$ ,  $p = .018$ ); as employment status decreases, word-of-mouth usefulness decreases. People who are not employed may have less of an opportunity to converse with others. Therefore, they may place a lower value on word-of-mouth sources for the simple fact that they don't have this source readily available to refer to as opposed to people who are employed full-time. A further explanation for this finding may be that since these non-employed respondents may not have regular (or available) access to such human resources, they have chosen alternative -- and more accessible -- distribution channels to obtain their information. In turn, these channels (internet, radio, television, etc.) may have become more valuable to them over time.

This latter finding is important for organizations who are promoting products and services to people who may not be employed full-time. Directly related to this study, these people may have more *time* to travel. These findings suggest that word-of-mouth

**Table 18: Linear Multiple Regression Results  
for Information Sources and Demographics**

	Dependent Variables					
Independent Variables	<u>Word-of-Mouth</u>			<u>Mass Media</u>		
Demographics	β	p	t	β	P	T
Age	-.051	.257	-1.13	.019	.684	.407
Education	.069	.138	1.48	-.003	.956	-.055
Employment	-.110	.018	-2.28	-.069	.143	-1.46
Income	.026	.574	.563	.052	.260	1.12
R <sup>2</sup>	.025			.007		
Df	4			4		
F	3.07			.885		
Overall p	.016			.473		
	<u>New Media</u>			<u>Tourism-Specific</u>		
	β	p	t	β	p	T
Age	-.128	.005	-2.81	.108	.914	.108
Education	.056	.234	1.19	-.003	.949	-.064
Employment	.063	.482	1.36	.006	.890	.139
Income	.032	.172	.704	.072	.116	1.57
R <sup>2</sup>	.023			.005		
Df	4			4		
F	2.77			.637		
Overall p	.026			.637		

(e.g., public relations related strategies and tactics) may not be the most operative choice for disseminating information to this niche market. Traditional mass media channels may be more effective instead.

With regard to new media, in combination these four demographics influence word-of-mouth usefulness ( $r^2 = .023$ ,  $p = .026$ ). Individually, age is the only demographic characteristic significantly contributing ( $\beta = -.128$ ,  $p = .005$ ). As age decreases, new media source usefulness also decreases. This finding supports much of the current research related to new media and technology. However, recent trend research has revealed that this inverse relationship is beginning to change. Many "empty-nesters" who no longer have college tuition and mortgage payments are beginning to invest in computers and technological training so they, too, can utilize the many resources the internet provides (Raymond, 2000).

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

The primary objective of this study was to examine interrelationships among information source usefulness segments with regard to personal value importance -- in combination with demographics and travel behaviors. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses prominent findings. The second section suggests applications for use of the proposed pleasure traveler segmentation model in both the academic and professional sectors. The third section addresses limitations related to the study. The final section proposes future research ideas.

#### **Discussion of Key Findings**

In addition to determining the worth of results in terms of statistical significance, researchers also examine their findings based on meaningfulness and utility. In fact, the main objective of a successful market segmentation analysis is to be able to use the information obtained from the results in an array of capacities, including to target potential consumers. Some of these meaningful results, in combination with statistically significant results, are discussed in this section.

Adapting concepts introduced in consumer behavior, the proposed pleasure traveler profile model suggests that information usefulness can be defined by four constructs: word-of-mouth , mass media, new media, and travel/tourism-specific. Results from this study illustrate that these information source constructs do indeed exist and that they can be used to successfully segment travelers based on attributes defined in each segment. This four-factor finding illustrates that travelers perceive information resources available to them as various domains -- not as one large overwhelming pool of

data. These results also support the premise that individuals store their information "categorically" for easier memory-retrieving purposes. This finding is useful for travel/tourism professionals who are responsible for making decisions regarding how to best channel targeted messages. Further market research can aid these organizations in determining which channels are most effective for targeting a particular public.

Second, results indicate that, in general, neither internal nor external values importance significantly influences information source usefulness. This finding supports the travel segmentation literature, which suggests that personal values should not be the only identifier communication managers should consider when developing their targeted messages. Instead, they should consider including psychographic- and lifestyle-related indicators *in combination* with demographic characteristics. This hybrid segmentation analysis will offer a more comprehensive description of target publics.

Third, in combination, the nine personal values investigated in this study do not significantly influence attraction selection. However, when examined individually, several internal values significantly influence attraction selection. These results indicate that certain personal values do influence decisions individuals make when determining attraction selection while on vacation. This finding further aids in addressing the primary objective of the overall study which asks how information source usefulness and personal value importance -- in combination with travel behaviors and demographics -- can be used to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments. In short, combining all personal values for segmentation analysis is not very advantageous. However, examining peoples' values *individually* does provide valuable insight that can, in turn, be incorporated into message construction. More specifically, this individual analysis provides a clearer



description of what may be intrinsically influencing travelers' attraction selection. Hence, these relationships (e.g., warm relations with outdoor activities, self-fulfillment with start park attractions) can be reflected in tourism promotional campaign messages.

A final key finding is related to demographics. When examined in combination, age, education, employment, and annual income significantly influence personal value importance. In particular, two demographic characteristics -- age and employment status -- significantly influence individual personal values. Again, this insight is useful for constructing messages as well as determining how to disseminate the information. For example, if a tourist destination location offers an array of excitement-related attractions, results from this study suggest that older travelers are not as apt to participate in these activities. Hence, if targeting this cohort, the message should, instead, focus on activities that are not as excitement-oriented, but perhaps, connote more of an enhanced family-oriented value.

## Conclusions

From the findings set forth in the previous chapter and the discussions included throughout this chapter, an array of conclusions may be drawn. One set of conclusions is analytical in nature. These conclusions are formulated from the results of the statistical procedures used to test and refine the information source scales as well as the results from the traveler profiles identified. The other set of conclusions is speculative; this discussion makes assertions based on the findings.

### Analytical Conclusions

Findings from this study have led to three analytical conclusions. First, findings discussed in Chapter 3 support the *a priori* framework of four information source factors

(segments): word-of-mouth, mass media, new media, and tourism-specific. These segments were found to be reliable (i.e., each factor showed strong internal consistency) and valid as related to measuring a single concept or trait.

Second, results demonstrate that the four source segments are homogeneous within as related to demographic characteristics and heterogeneous among the segments as related to personal value importance and information source usefulness. Hence, these results support the worthiness for segmentation based on the two identification variables examined in this study. Further, these results support the proposed four-dimensional pleasure traveler profile model as a useful technique for developing promotional messages geared toward potential pleasure traveler consumers.

Third, this study addresses the issue of personal value importance. Findings illustrate that among this sample of pleasure travelers, none of the nine personal values tested in this study, whether examined in combination or individually, significantly influences information source usefulness. In sum, when testing the influence personal value importance has on information source usefulness, this study illustrates that researchers should not attempt to predict information source usefulness based on personal value importance alone. However, they should strongly consider examining personal value importance in combination with other variables such as demographics, travel behaviors and other lifestyle-defining characteristics.

#### Speculative Conclusions

From a theoretical standpoint, findings provided from this study support three conclusions. First, when testing the influence value importance has on information source usefulness, researchers should consider examining personal values on an

individual basis as opposed to domains as many of the personal values appear to be associated with each other.

A second assertion derived from these results is that travelers do not decipher interpersonal from non-interpersonal promotional materials when they think of tourism-specific sources. As demonstrated by the tourism-specific construct, marketing and public relations-oriented collateral such as brochures, direct mail, and travel publications are clustered together with interpersonally-oriented sources such as welcome centers, trade shows, chambers of commerce, and auto clubs. On the other hand, travelers clearly perceive the traditional mass media vehicles (e.g., radio, newspaper, magazine, television advertisements) as one domain.

A final assertion supports the lifestyle and psychographic literature. In some instances when the purchase choice is personal in nature, it is more advantageous for an organization to distinguish potential consumers based on their values and lifestyle-related-behaviors in combination with demographic attributes.

### Implications

#### Applications for Academicians

Findings revealed in this study offer several ramifications for academicians, both within a research as well as an instructional context. Regarding research, this study provides a springboard for further personal value-oriented investigations in relation to message development as well as channel dissemination. From this study it was concluded that when measuring relationships between personal value importance and information source usefulness, scholars should consider individual examinations of peoples' core personal values. The beauty of value individuality testing is just that: it

better preserves and clarifies consumer profiles. Kahle and others have provided a firm foundation of descriptive information about the nine values included in the LOV instrument. Researchers continue to use this instrument in an array of frameworks; hence, the data are robust, diversified, and plentiful.

Second, as the onset of new media continues to progress at a rapid pace and diffusion of its use becomes more widespread, researchers should continue to investigate various psychographic-oriented predictors in relationship to new media usefulness and utility. This study only included CD-ROM and internet websites to represent new media / technology-related information sources. Future studies should include e-mail, chat rooms, and news and user groups in the investigation.

Third, this study expands the personal values theory literature. It has examined a four-dimensional model that combines two theoretically complementary constructs: personal values and information sources. As the literature proclaims in a widespread fashion, a better understanding of human composition can enable communicators to more acutely target their messages, which will, in turn, encourage consumption /purchase of a given product or service.

With regard to instruction, this study provides support for academicians to consider incorporating more lifestyle and psychographic research techniques in their curriculum. Regardless of the communication discipline -- whether it is marketing, advertising, public relations, or sales promotions -- results from the study reinforce the need for inclusion of these kinds of topics when teaching about the communication mix. Travel and tourism is only one of many industries that should focus more energy on developing individualized message campaigns to promote products and services.

Business-related industries, in general, can benefit from enhanced "relationship management" employed by means of various message dissemination techniques.

For example, many public relations professors incorporate John Marston's (1970) seminal R-A-C-E (research, action planning, communication, evaluation) model when teaching writing and campaign planning courses. Personal values can be logically included in each of these stages. In fact, most of the mainstream public relations textbooks include some kind of reference related to the importance of psychographics in relation to targeting particular publics and developing key messages.

#### Applications for Industry Professionals

Results from this study can also be helpful for communication managers. Overall, the investigation of the feasibility to profile travelers based on information source usefulness and personal value importance has produced some fruitful results that can aid the industry in several ways. First, the study has revealed that personal values are not the most efficient predictors of consumer behavior. They do not explain much variance in relation to information source usefulness. Hence, this research discourages communication managers from developing messages that only tap into potential consumers' personal values. As the literature suggests, this study advocates a combination of both psychographic and demographic persuasive appeals.

Additionally, results reinforce continued findings that friends and relatives still represent the dominant source for obtaining information related to travel. Common sense dictates that communication professionals should consider focusing on these intervening publics when disseminating messages. Further, this finding reinforces the point that, in some instances, it may not be feasible to rely on traditional promotional methods for

message distribution. This finding also has implications related to the service level of the hospitality/tourism industry. It is critical that organizations strive to maintain the highest levels of customer satisfaction because these consumers are the primary source people turn to when they are seeking out travel-related information. If the guests have a pleasurable experience, then they may serve as future advocates of that particular product or service. However, if their experience is not pleasurable -- and depending on the degree to which they experience such unhappiness -- they may serve as the organization's most aggressive adversary.

Further, the study has attempted to test some of the assertions found in the values theory literature. All theories attempt to explain why things are; good theories actually do provide viable explanations. By linking value importance to source usefulness during this study, the researcher was able to address the age-old question, "It sounds good in theory, but will it work in practice?" In this case, the relationships that emerged between the two constructs further support the premise that personal value importance and information source usefulness, in combination with demographics and travel behaviors, serve as viable identifiers for market segmentation analysis.

As pointed out in Chapter 1, it is apparent that many state tourism offices have limited promotional budgets. Therefore, these organizations must carefully weigh their decisions about fund allocation as it relates to various mediums. "The biggest bang for the buck" continues to be a popular objective. Determining the specific sources of information a targeted public refers to when making purchasing decisions can, potentially, provide that bang.

### **Limitations of the Study**

Like all studies, this one was confined to limitations. First, the sample should be considered self-selected and not representative of the general population. Since a purposive sample was investigated, results are limited to this particular sample. Second, the location of the survey took place only at welcome centers throughout Michigan. As the demographic profiles from the study have indicated, this was a relatively homogeneous group, although the researcher attempted to overcome this limitation by conducting the research at various geographic locations. In the future, a more robust sample of respondents should be included. Fourth, more variables that represent new media should be included in future studies. While this study only included CD-ROMs and internet websites, other suggestions include: personal e-mails and e-mail newsletters, chat rooms, and news groups/user groups.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This study has developed a blueprint for future testing. First, the four information source factors should be further tested in varied environments to determine reliability and validity. In this study, only pleasure travelers were polled. Future studies may examine business travelers, group travelers, bus tour travelers, even high school and college-level spring break travelers.

Second, the idea behind the development of the four-dimension model is that it can be applied to various entities that make up travel/tourism profession. For example, this model can be modified to fit the needs of the airline, hotel, restaurant, or amusement park industry. Although simplistic, the model is theoretically conceptualized based on assertions from the values theory and social adaptation theory literature.

A third suggestion for future research is to examine each of the nine list of values variables individually, as opposed to investigating them as domains. Results may then be more fruitful and robust. Additionally, the more we can learn about human values, the more we can focus on predictive measures for testing their influence on consumer behavior.

#### Final Comments

The primary contribution this study makes is that it demonstrates that the tripartite relationship among dominant personal value importance, demographics and travel behaviors serves as a viable way to differentiate pleasure traveler market segments as defined in terms of information source usefulness.

Selye (1976) provides a clarification for the value of studying human values and social adaptation:

"Life is largely a process of adaptation to the circumstances in which we exist. A perennial give-and-take has been going on between living matter and its inanimate surroundings, between one living being and another, ever since the dawn of life in the prehistoric oceans. The secret of health and happiness lies in successful adjustment to the ever-changing conditions on this globe; the penalties for failure in this great process of adaptation are disease and unhappiness...." (p. xvi-xvii).



## **APPENDICES**

## Appendix A

### Survey Research Schedule

**Table 1**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Timeframe</u>	<u>Center Site</u>
Friday, Sept. 3	12 p.m. - 7 p.m.	Clare, MI
Sunday, Sept. 5	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Mackinaw City, MI
Saturday, Sept. 11	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	New Buffalo, MI
Saturday, Sept. 18	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.	Monroe, MI
Saturday, Sept. 25	9 a.m. - 5p.m.	Clare, MI
Friday, Oct. 1	9 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Clare, MI

---

**Table 2**

#### State Representation of Visitors to Various Michigan Welcome Centers

<u>Center Site</u>	<u>State(s) Visitors Represent</u>
Clare	Throughout the state of Michigan as well as from feeder states (e.g., Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Canada)
Mackinaw City	Throughout the state of Michigan -- to include a large representation from the UP; also Canada and Wisconsin
Monroe	Ohio, Indiana, and Canada
New Buffalo	Illinois and Indiana

## **APPENDIX B COVER LETTER**

Dear Welcome Center Visitor:

This study is being conducted by a PhD candidate in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences at Michigan State University in collaboration with the Travel, Tourism, and Recreation Resource Center at Michigan State University. The information you provide to us **IS VERY VALUABLE** and will contribute to a better understanding of how the tourism industry can meet the needs of travelers like yourself.

Attached is a short questionnaire that asks for information directly related to consumer travel planning. **It takes about five minutes to complete.** You are assured complete confidentiality. Any data gathered will only be reported in the aggregate so that you will not be identified or associated with the data you provide. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Participation in this survey is voluntary; if you choose not to participate, then simply do not complete this questionnaire. However, you indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this questionnaire.

If you have any questions related directly to this study, please contact me at: #517-353-0793 or by e-mail: [lisafall@pilot.msu.edu](mailto:lisafall@pilot.msu.edu)

For questions about participants' rights as human subjects of research, please contact: David E. Wright, UCRIHS Chair at: 517-355-2180.

Thank you for taking time to participate in this study. Enjoy your travels!

Best regards,

Lisa T. Fall  
Project Coordinator

**APPENDIX C**

**SELF-ADMINISTERED  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Throughout this survey, the term "pleasure trip" is being defined as any Overnight trip to a place at least 50 miles from your home that was made for your enjoyment -- including vacations, weekend get-aways, shopping excursions, and trips to visit friends and relatives.**

(1) Not counting this trip, have you taken one or more additional pleasure trips in the state of Michigan in the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO

(2) If "yes," how many such trips have you taken in the past 12 months? \_\_\_\_\_

(3) What is the primary purpose of this particular visit?

\_\_\_\_\_ Business \_\_\_\_\_ Pleasure \_\_\_\_\_ Both \_\_\_\_\_ Other (briefly describe below)

(4)  
Nearest city(ies)/town(s)  
where you stayed or plan  
on staying during this  
particular trip in Michigan  
(write them in spaces below)

(5)  
Were you a first-  
time visitor to  
this city?  
(circle yes or no)

(6)  
Types of attractions  
you visited/are visiting  
on this particular trip in  
Michigan (*e.g., casino,*  
*historic site, state park,*  
*shopping mall, etc.*)  
(write them in spaces below)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes // No

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes // No

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes // No

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes // No

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes // No

5. \_\_\_\_\_

- (7) Please indicate the total number of nights you plan to stay over/stayed over during this particular trip in Michigan. (Write the total on the line below)

\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL NIGHTS

- (8) Please give your best estimate of the total amount of money your entire travel party plans to spend/has spent on this particular trip (to include food, lodging, entertainment, souvenirs, etc). (write the total on the line below)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ ESTIMATED TOTAL

- (9) The following is a list of things people tend to look for or want in life. Please look at this list carefully and then rate EACH item in terms of how IMPORTANT it is to you in your daily life.

(Circle one number to the right of each item)

	<u>Not all all</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Very</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Extremely</u> <u>Important</u>
Being well-respected	1	2	3	4	5
Excitement	1	2	3	4	5
Fun and enjoyment	1	2	3	4	5
Security	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of Accomplishment	1	2	3	4	5
Sense of belonging	1	2	3	4	5
Self-fulfillment	1	2	3	4	5
Self-respect	1	2	3	4	5
Warm relationships With others	1	2	3	4	5

- (10) Now go back and look at the items in the left column again and write the single MOST IMPORTANT item on the line below:

\_\_\_\_\_

- (11) The following is a list of information sources people use when making travel / vacation plans. Please look at this list carefully and then rate EACH item in terms of its USEFULNESS in helping you make pleasure trip decisions.

(Circle one number to the right of each item)

	<u>Not at all Useful</u>	<u>Somewhat Useful</u>	<u>Useful</u>	<u>Very Useful</u>	<u>Extremely Useful</u>
Billboard Advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
Magazine Advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
Newspaper Advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
Radio Advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
Television Advertisement	1	2	3	4	5
Magazine Feature Article	1	2	3	4	5
Newspaper Feature Article	1	2	3	4	5
Television Feature Story	1	2	3	4	5
Travel Channel	1	2	3	4	5
Auto Club	1	2	3	4	5
Brochures / Direct Mail	1	2	3	4	5
Chamber of Commerce and/or Visitors Bureau	1	2	3	4	5
Highway Welcome Center	1	2	3	4	5
State Travel Publication	1	2	3	4	5
CD-ROM	1	2	3	4	5
Internet Website	1	2	3	4	5
Friend / Relative	1	2	3	4	5
Trade Show	1	2	3	4	5
Travel Agent	1	2	3	4	5
Other (please explain)	1	2	3	4	5
_____					

- (12) Now go back and look at the items in the left column again and write the single MOST USEFUL source on the line below:

\_\_\_\_\_

- (13) For the following question, please include ALL persons living in your household, including YOURSELF, a spouse, significant other/live-in, relatives, friends, children, etc.

<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Gender (F=female, M=male)</u>
<u>SELF</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- (14) The following demographic questions pertain only to YOU, the respondent.

<b>a) RACE:</b>	<b>b) HIGHEST EDUCATION LEVEL COMPLETED:</b>	<b>c) PRIMARY EMPLOYMENT STATUS: (check only one)</b>
_____ Caucasian/White	_____ Elementary	_____ Employed full-time
_____ African American/Black	_____ High School	_____ Employed part-time
_____ American Indian/Eskimo/Aleut	_____ Some College, no degree	_____ Retired
_____ Asian & Pacific Islander	_____ Associate's degree	_____ Not employed
_____ Hispanic (of any race)	_____ Bachelor's degree	_____ Student
_____ Multi-racial	_____ Master's degree	_____ Other (please explain)
_____ Other (please explain below)	_____ Doctoral degree	_____

**d) CURRENT MARITAL STATUS:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Not Married (never married, divorced, widowed)  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Married

**e) Please indicate your TOTAL annual household gross income (before taxes):**

_____ \$0 - \$19,999	_____ \$80,000 - \$99,999
_____ \$20,000 - \$39,999	_____ \$100,000 - \$119,999
_____ \$40,000 - \$59,999	_____ \$120,000 +
_____ \$60,000 - \$79,999	

**f) Please indicate the CITY, STATE and ZIP CODE where you currently reside:**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your participation. Your information is very valuable!*



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