Comparative Profiles of Travellers on Cruises and Land-based Resort Vacations

Abstract
This paper provides profiles of cruise vacationers and the guests of four different types of land-based resorts (casino, oceanside beach, ski, and summer country). It investigates differences between the five groups of travellers. These travellers are found to have different sociodemographics, trip planning characteristics, activity participation patterns, benefits experienced, and general attitudes toward travel.

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Introduction

Since 1970, the cruise industry serving North America has undergone phenomenal growth as more and more people discover this vacation alternative. The Cruise Lines International Association estimates that the annual passenger volumes on cruises of two days or more have grown from 500,000 in 1970 to 4.8 million in 1994 (CLIA, 1995). Instead of competing with the airlines, the cruise lines have become their partners and now compete with destinations, resorts, and other vacation alternatives. The cruise ship itself has become a floating resort providing the maximum possible leisure and entertainment facilities. In fact, the most often mentioned advantage of cruises over land-based programs is its all-inclusive pricing structure.

This study provides profiles of cruise vacation travellers and four different resort vacation traveller groups including oceanside beach resorts, summer country resorts, casino resorts, and ski resorts. More importantly, the study investigates differences in the profiles of the five groups of vacation travellers with respect to socio-demographics, trip planning characteristics, activity participation patterns, benefits experienced, and general travel attitudes. It is hypothesised that cruise travellers are distinctly different from the four other groups.

Literature review

The cruise industry

The cruise industry has been one of the most exciting growth areas in North American tourism in the past 25 years. Its average rate of growth has been far greater than any other vacation category. More ships and berths are available than ever before. At the end of 1994, there were 133 ships providing a combined capacity of 105,062 lower berths (Table 1) serving the North American cruise market (CLIA, 1995). By the year 2000, CLIA, whose member cruiselines comprise 95% of the current capacity, projects eight million passengers a year. Cruise revenues in 1992 were more than $6 billion and by mid-decade will probably reach $12 billion to $13 billion annually (CLIA, 1994). The North American market accounts for about 80 percent of the world cruise market of three or more days. Taking a cruise remains the dream of 60 percent of all adults according to CLIA (Baratta, 1994). Therefore, a pool of millions of potential passengers remains untapped (Ward, 1991).

Table 1: Major Cruise Lines and Cruiseline Capacities, 1993.

Cruise Line	Capacity	Share of Capacity	Cum. Share	No. of Ships	Average Ship Size
1. Royal Caribbean	14,228	13.8%	13.8%	9	1581
2. Carnival	12,514	12.1%	25.9%	8	1564
3. Princess	10,080	9.8%	35.7%	9	1120
4. Norwegian	8,408	8.2%	43.9%	6	1401
5. Holland America	7,515	7.3%	51.2%	6	1253
6. Celebrity	6,037	5.8%	57.0%	6	1006
7. Costa	5,948	5.8%	62.8%	7	850
8. Cunard	4,563	4.4%	67.2%	7	652
9. Epirotiki	3,840	3.7%	70.9%	8	480
10. Regency	3,747	3.6%	74.5%	5	749
11. Premier	3,038	3.0%	77.5%	3	1013
12. Royal	2,239	2.2%	79.7%	3	746
13. Dolphin	2,143	2.1%	81.8%	3	714
14. Cunard Crown	2,126	2.1%	83.9%	3	709
15. American Hawaii	1,489	1.4%	85.3%	2	745
16. Sun Line	1,098	1.1%	86.4%	3	366
17. Majesty	1,056	1.0%	87.4%	1	1056
18. Paquet French	1,016	1.0%	88.4%	2	508
19. Royal Viking	970	0.9%	89.3%	2	485
20. Crystal	960	0.9%	90.3%	1	960
21. American Family	874	0.8%	91.1%	1	874
22. Fiesta Marina	862	0.8%	91.9%	1	862
23. Renaissance	856	0.8%	92.7%	8	107
24. Orient Line	845	0.8%	93.5%	1	845
25. Club Med	772	0.8%	94.3%	2	386
26. Commodore	744	0.7%	95.0%	1	744
27. Seawind	624	0.6%	95.6%	1	624
28. Delta Queen Steamboat Co.	592	0.6%	96.2%	2	296
29. Dolphin Hellas	568	0.6%	96.8%	1	568
30. Cunard EuropAmerica River	456	0.4%	97.2%	3	152
31. Windstar Sail Cruises	444	0.4%	97.6%	3	148
32. World Explorer	440	0.4%	98.0%	1	440
33. Seabourn	424	0.4%	98.4%	2	212
34. Star Clipper	360	0.4%	98.8%	2	180
35. Diamond	354	0.3%	99.1%	1	354
36. Clipper	240	0.2%	99.4%	2	120
37. Seven Seas	172	0.2%	99.6%	1	172
38. American Canadian	160	0.2%	99.8%	2	80
39. Classical	140	0.1%	99.9%	1	140
40. Oceanic	120	0.1%	100.0%	1	120
41. Silversea	0	0	100.0%	0	0
TOTALS	103,062	100.0%	100.0%	131	787

Source: Cruise Lines International Association, 1994.

The cruiselines' expanding capacity demands that the number of passengers increase at the same rate. While only 5 to 6 percent of the U. S. population has ever cruised, it is not clear if consumer interest will grow in tandem with the industry's capacity. A challenge facing the cruise industry today is to create a genuine desire or need to take a cruise among a greater proportion of the North American population.

Recently, cruise ships' marketing directors have begun to look to resort customers for new business. According to Davidoff (1994), cruise lines are continuing to grow while resorts are struggling to maintain their market share. Club Med felt such pressure from cruiselines that they entered the lucrative business themselves in the early 1990s with the building of luxurious sailboats (Club Med I and Club Med II). These ships are Club Med's counteroffensive against competitors like Carnival Cruise Lines, which has been eating into the Club's Caribbean market share (Levine 1989). Other major hotel/resort companies are being attracted to diversify into the cruise business by its stellar growth performance. These include Radisson in association with Diamond Cruises, Holiday Inns, and The Walt Disney Company which will enter the Caribbean cruising market with its own ships in 1997. At the same time, cooperation between the resort industry and cruiselines is growing. For example, Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. and Hyatt International Corp. share passenger and customer mailing lists (Baum, 1990).

The cruise market

There is a growing body of research information on the characteristics of cruise travellers. Traditionally, CLIA, the industry's main trade association, has been the major source of information on the market, but in recent years other independent surveys have become available. These include the dataset being used in this study and Plog Research's American Traveller Survey (Santo, 1994).

The 1993 CLIA Cruising Dynamics Study segmented cruisers into frequent cruisers (took 3 or more cruises in the past 6 years since 1987) and first-time cruisers (took first cruise in last two years since 1991) (CLIA, 1994). The study's findings showed that cruisers are also frequent vacation travellers. Both frequent and first-time cruisers take frequent vacations; frequent cruisers averaging almost three vacations and first-time cruisers averaging two vacations per year. Interestingly, frequent cruisers averaged 2.9 package tour trips, 3.0 resort trips where they made their own arrangements, 2.4 resort trips as part of packages, and 2.1 all-inclusive resort vacations in the past six years. For first-time cruisers, these statistics were 2.3, 2.9, 2.3, and 1.8 respectively. These figures suggest that the cruise and resort markets are not necessarily unique, but that there is a certain degree of overlap in their customer bases.

The demographics of the cruising population have changed dramatically over the years. Today's new cruisers (first cruise since 1989) are younger and vacation more with their children. According to CLIA's 1994 Cruise Market Profile Study, the fastest-growing passenger segment, for both males and females, is between the ages of 25 and 39. The average cruise vacationer is now 49 years of age and has an income of $63,000 per year (Baratta, 1994). The over 60s market has declined significantly in overall percentage terms. A 1991 study conducted by Raymond James & Associates, Inc. also concluded that the average age of new cruise passengers was dropping. In 1985, the median age was 58, by 1991 it had dropped to just under 43. The age drop was attributed to changing perceptions about cruising as a retirement activity to cruising as a choice for honeymooners, families and other young adults. The average income levels of passengers were also found to be falling. The $20,000 to $29,900 and $40,000 to $59,000 categories were growing while the over $60,000 category was decreasing in relative terms (Baum, 1993).

A more recent national survey conducted by Plog Research, Inc. tends to confirm the findings of these two previous studies. This survey divided cruise vacationers into two distinct groups; "captured cruisers" (had taken a cruise since 1990 and were considering taking another cruise in the next three years) and "cruiser wanna bes" (have never cruised, but are considering taking a cruise in the next three years). The average age of "captured cruisers" was found to be 50, while "wanna bes" were younger at 44. The average household incomes of "captured cruisers" was $64,270, while "wanna bes" averaged $53,870. "Captured cruisers" also tended to be better educated and were more likely to be married than "wanna bes." A significantly higher proportion of "wanna bes" had children under 18 years living at home (Santo, 1994). This last statistic confirms the trend toward more family groups taking cruise vacations than before.

Reasons for increasing popularity of cruises

There appears to be a consensus that cruises offer several unique advantages over alternative vacations. Typically, these advantages of cruise vacations are summed up in terms of greater convenience and ease of planning for the customer. Cruises are easy to book, are offered for a virtually totally-inclusive package price, require minimum effort to arrange, and provide maximum relaxation. They also provide programs for children, and passengers can visit a number of foreign destinations with minimum inconvenience. Furthermore, the cruise product continues to diversify. New ship designs, themes, and activities are reaching out to new market segments (Hobson, 1993). Davidoff (1994) identified five more specific appeals of cruises to travellers:

(1) passengers have the opportunity to visit a variety of places in a short period of time without the hassles of other modes of travel;

(2) ships are self-contained;

(3) cruise ships have a cruise director with an entire staff whose sole function is to make sure passengers have a good time;

(4) high quality food is served in elegant style; and

(5) everyone usually begins and ends their vacations on the same day.

Some previous research studies have asked cruise travellers to compare features of cruises with those of other vacation alternatives, including land-based resorts. The 1993 CLIA Cruising Dynamics Study reports that cruising compares extremely well to other types of vacations. The majority (63% to 66%) of first-time and frequent cruisers rate cruising as better than other vacation experiences. Relaxation, pampering, the chance to see different geographic areas, value for money, and variety of activities were the top five reasons why cruising was rated better than other vacation types. Some 71% of first-time cruisers indicated their first cruise experience exceeded all expectations. Some 83% of frequent cruisers said they were either "extremely satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their cruise vacations (CLIA, 1994). These statistics help explain why so many first-timers become repeat cruisers, and why frequent cruisers continue to cruise.

The results of the 1992 CLIA Market Profile Study indicate that among people who have taken both a cruise vacation and resort vacation in the past five years, cruising rates exceptionally well on all key descriptive characteristics. They are as follows in descending order of net differences: pampered by staff (+48%), well organised (+35%), able to have pleasurable dining experiences (+28%), relaxing (+27%), a good value for the money (+23%), festive (+22%), hassle free (+22%), able to meet interesting people (+19%), extravagant (+18%), exotic (+17%), good way to try out vacation spot (+16%), fun (+12%), and a bargain (+12%) (CLIA, 1994).

From these data, it can be seen that cruises are perceived to offer several distinct advantages over other types of vacations, in particular over resorts. However, previous research has not made it clear whether cruise and resort vacationers have the same sociodemographic profiles, trip planning characteristics, and travel attitudes as those who use land-based resorts.

Objectives

This study was designed to determine if travellers who take cruise vacations have different sociodemographics, trip planning characteristics, activity participation patterns, benefits experienced, and general travel attitudes from those who take the other four distinct resort vacations (oceanside beach resort, summer country resort, casino resort, and ski resort). Even though cruises and resorts compete more fiercely for customers today, research comparing the two groups of travellers is very limited. Therefore, this study's comparison of these pleasure travellers should provide important market-based information for travel marketers to devise competitive marketing strategies for both cruises and resorts. The specific research questions addressed were to determine if:

(1) the five trip types have different sociodemographic characteristics;

(2) trip types differ in trip planning characteristics;

(3) activity participation patterns vary across trip types;

(4) benefits experienced vary across trip types; and

(5) differences exist among trip types in general attitudes toward travel.

Methods

Operational definitions

1. *A cruise vacation is an overnight trip on a cruise ship where the passenger enjoys all the on-board activities and the planned stops at points of interest along the way* (Longwoods, 1990).

2. *A resort vacation is an overnight trip to a resort or resort area where a wide variety of activities such as beaches, skiing, golf, tennis and so on, are available close by or on the premises.* (Longwoods, 1990).

Data source

This study was based on a survey conducted during 1989 and 1990 for Tourism Canada by the Longwoods Research Group Limited. Its purpose was to provide a continuing marketing study for Tourism Canada in order to better understand the United States' travel market, its largest source of foreign travellers. The U.S. Pleasure Travel Market Study was conducted in two phases. In Phase I, a randomly selected sample of 3,050 households in each of the nine census regions was mailed self-administered questionnaires. From November 1989 through January 1990, 18,379 questionnaires were returned, resulting in a 67% return rate. The Phase II questionnaire was sent to 15,094 of the original Phase I respondents who indicated that they had taken at least one overnight pleasure trip in the past twelve months. This questionnaire included more specific items about respondents' overnight trips. Questions were asked about:

(1) trip planning characteristics;

(2) trip "logistics" (seasonality, composition of travel party, modes of transportation, spending, etc.);

(3) the vacation experience (places visited, activities participated in, benefits experienced, satisfaction measures);

(4) future vacation plans and travel attitudes in general; and (5) perceptions of specific destinations.

By late March of 1990, 12,908 completed questionnaires were returned, resulting in an 86% response rate. In Phase II, low incidence trip types, such as cruise vacations, were over-sampled to build their base sizes, while more popular trip types, such as visiting friends and relatives, were undersampled. As a result, a weight in the Phase II section was necessary to return the trip types to the proper proportions. The present study utilised the Phase II data.

Subjects

The U.S. Pleasure Travel Market Study divided the U.S. pleasure travel market into nine vacation trip-type segments: a visit to friends or relatives; a combined business/pleasure vacation; a touring vacation; an outdoors vacation; a city trip; a theme park vacation; a local excursion; a cruise vacation; and a resort vacation. The resort vacation category was further divided into four different sub-segments: (1) oceanside beach resort; (2) summer country resort; (3) casino resort; and (4) ski resort. In this study, the respondents whose main purposes of trip were either a cruise vacation or one of the four different kinds of land-based resort vacations were selected. There were 375 respondents in the cruise group; 1,287 respondents in the oceanside beach group; 433 respondents in the casino group; 399 respondents in the ski group; and 826 respondents in the summer country resort group. The total sample size was 3,320.

Data analysis

The dependent variable was the trip type (a cruise, oceanside beach, ski, casino, or summer country resort vacation). The independent variables chosen to investigate the differences among the trip types were:

(1) socioeconomic and demographic variables including age, gender, education level, marital status, income, and employment status;

Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Five Trip Types.

Demographics	Cruise	Beach Resort	Casino Resort	Ski Resort	Summer Country Resort
			(%)		
Age					
18-24	11.0	10.6	3.3	16.2	13.1
25-34	18.2	27.6	17.7	38.8	21.6
35-44	15.0	25.2	17.3	26.9	21.2
45-54	19.5	14.6	17.3	12.2	17.1
55-64	19.0	11.5	21.3	3.5	14.2
65+	17.4	10.5	23.1	2.5	12.8
Chi-square = 267.44, df = 20, p = 0.0000**					
Gender					
Male	45.1	51.2	47.5	60.0	51.0
Female	54.9	48.8	52.5	40.0	49.0
Chi-square = 20.39, df = 4, p = 0.0004**					
Marital Status					
Married or living together	56.4	62.8	60.9	51.6	67.7
Single	25.4	23.1	17.6	37.6	19.3
Separated	0.7	0.6	1.4	0.2	1.7
Divorced	7.8	8.7	10.4	9.0	6.2
Widowed	9.6	4.8	9.7	1.7	5.1
Chi-square = 114.46, df = 16, p = 0.0000**					
Education					
Some elementary	0.7	0.7	0.7	0	1.0
Completed elementary	1.5	0.5	0.9	0.3	0.6
Some high school	7.0	2.8	5.2	0.7	3.5
Completed high school	20.9	25.5	31.4	17.9	24.9
Some college	31.4	29.5	39.4	29.8	27.8
Completed college	18.1	19.2	11.9	28.5	21.6
Postgraduate	20.3	21.8	10.5	22.7	20.3
Chi-square = 128.30; d.f. = 28; p = 0.0000**					
Income					
Under $25,000	29.0	28.0	35.7	16.3	34.5
25,000-29,999	7.0	6.9	11.0	5.2	7.3
30,000-39,999	22.8	17.7	17.3	14.0	14.4
40,000-44,999	4.2	7.3	4.6	5.5	7.3
45,000-59,999	13.4	16.9	12.0	17.9	14.8
Over 60,000	23.7	23.1	19.3	41.0	21.7
Chi-square = 130.92, df = 20, p = 0.0000**					
Employment Status					
Homemaker	8.0	7.7	7.5	7.0	9.0
Student	6.4	3.8	2.2	6.4	5.1
Retired	21.6	12.9	26.4	3.4	16.7
Disabled	2.5	0.5	1.7	0.1	1.8
Temporarily unemployed	0.9	1.3	1.1	1.5	2.8
Part time	9.6	10.2	7.8	10.5	11.7
Full time	50.9	62.9	53.2	71.1	52.9
Chi-square = 172.21, df = 28, p = 0.0000**					
Sample sizes	375	1287	433	399	826

** p < 0.01

(2) travel planning characteristics including length of planning cycle, the person mainly responsible for selecting destination, and information sources used to plan trip;

(3) activity participation patterns;

(4) benefits experienced during the trip; and

(5) travel attitudes.

For the first four independent variables, chi-square tests were used to determine whether differences existed among the five trip types. For travel attitudes, 19 statements describing how people felt about vacation travel were analysed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to determine which statements differed significantly across the five trip types. When differences were found among the five trip types for specific attitude statements, a Duncan's multiple-range test was utilised to distinguish which trip types were significantly different from the others.

Table 3: Trip Planning Characteristics of Five Trip Types.

Trip Planning Characteristics	Cruise	Beach Resort	Casino Resort	Ski Resort	Summer Country Resort
			(%)		
Time Spent Planning Trip					
More than 1 year	11.9	5.4	2.4	4.7	4.4
6 - 12 months	40.3	22.3	11.5	23.5	21.5
3 - 5 months	26.3	24.6	23.4	20.8	21.5
2 months	10.9	15.8	19.7	18.8	13.5
1 month	5.9	14.5	17.1	16.2	17.1
2 - 3 weeks	3.5	10.6	16.8	10.6	12.1
1 week or less	1.2	6.8	9.0	5.5	9.9
Chi-square = 218.42, df = 24, p = 0.0000**					
Mainly Responsible for Selecting Destination					
Yourself	36.4	41.6	42.3	36.6	39.4
Spouse/Partner	23.4	29.1	25.8	21.6	30.7
Your parents	2.5	4.2	3.0	2.2	2.7
Other family member/relative	12.3	11.8	8.3	7.8	10.1
Friend	8.6	8.6	10.5	21.8	9.7
Travel agent	4.1	0.7	1.3	0.3	0.6
Tour company	1.4	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.4
A club/organisation	9.2	2.8	6.5	7.4	3.6
The company you work for	2.2	1.0	1.6	1.7	2.7
Chi-square = 171.30 df = 32, p = 0.0000**					
Sample sizes(n)	375	1287	433	399	826

** p < 0.01

Results

Sociodemographic characteristics

Using chi-square tests, all of the demographic characteristics were significantly different at the 0.01 level among the five trip types (Table 2).

Age groups

The results showed that the cruise and casino groups were considerably older than the oceanside beach, ski, and summer country resort groups. In fact, approximately 65% of the ski group, 53% of the oceanside beach group and 43% of the summer country resort group were between 25 to 44 years old, while 33% of the cruise group and 35% of the casino group fell into this category. The ski group had the highest percentage (16.2%) of respondents in the under-25 age group, and the casino group had the lowest percentage (3.3%) in this age category.

In the 65 and over age category, the proportions of 23% of the casino group and 17.5% of cruise group were the highest among the five groups. The median ages of both the cruise and casino groups were between 45 to 54 years old, while the median age for both the oceanside beach and the summer country resort groups was in the 35 to 44 category. The median age of the ski group was between 25 and 34.

Gender

The largest difference in gender was found in the ski group, where a greater proportion of the respondents were male (60% versus 40% female). In the cruise group, female travellers represented 55%, whereas male travellers accounted for 45%. On average, in the other three groups, the proportions of male and female travellers were approximately equal.

Marital status

Almost 38% of the respondents who took ski vacations were single, while only about 18% of those who took casino vacations were in this category. The majority of respondents in all groups were married, although the ski group had the lowest percentage of married travellers (51.6%).

Educational level

The respondents in the ski group were better educated than the other four groups. The percentage of the ski group whose highest education level was elementary or high school was the lowest among the five groups (18.9%). The majority of the ski group were college educated or postgraduates.

The casino group had the highest proportion of respondents whose highest education was elementary or high school. The respondents who had completed postgraduate work in the casino group account for only 10.5%, while they represented over 20% of each of the other four groups.

Income

People in the ski group had significantly higher incomes than the other groups; only 16.3% of respondents in the ski group made under $25,000. Some 36% of the casino group and 35% of the summer country resort group had incomes in this range. The ski group had the highest proportion of respondents in the over $60,000 category, at 41%. Approximately 59% of respondents in the cruise group made under $40,000.

Employment status

The majority of the respondents in all five groups were employed either part- or full-time, and the ski group had the highest percentage (81.6%). Differences appeared in the percentages in the retired category with some 26% of the casino and 22% of the cruise group respondents being retired. Only 3.4% of the ski group were retired.

Trip planning characteristics

Using chi-square analyses, the results again showed significant differences at the 0.01 level among the five groups for each of the trip planning characteristics (Tables 3 and 4).

Length of planning period

The cruise group spent the longest time in planning vacations, often taking six to 12 months to plan their cruise trips (40%). Only 12% of the casino group planned for 6 to 12 months. Approximately 12% of the cruise group planned their trips a year or more ahead. Only 10% of the cruise respondents planned their trips one month or less before embarkation. For the same time period (one month or less), all the other four resort groups had over 30% of their respondents (Table 3).

Dominant person in selecting destinations

A large proportion of the respondents or their spouse/ partners were mainly responsible for selecting destinations for trips. Although only small percentages of the respondents in each group mentioned travel agents, the results clearly showed that the cruise group tended to rely more heavily on travel agents when selecting destinations. Approximately 22% of the ski group picked "friends" and this was roughly twice as high as the percentage for the other four groups (Table 3).

Information sources used

The results showed statistical differences among the five trip type groups in information source usage. The most used source of information by the oceanside beach, casino, ski, and summer country resort groups was personal experience from past visits. About 40% or more of the respondents in the four groups used this source, while only 25% of the cruise group used their past personal experiences. The top information source for the cruise group was the advice of relatives and friends (Table 4).

Among the oceanside beach,

Table 4: Information Sources Used by Five Trip Types.

Information Sources	Cruise	Beach Resort	Casino Resort	Ski Resort	Summer Country Resort
			(%)		
Advice from relatives or friends	27.2	17.6	10.2	14.0	16.4
Personal experience from past visits	24.9	43.4	39.9	50.0	44.3
Travel agent	17.1	8.7	12.6	3.7	3.1
Newspapers	5.3	1.8	6.1	2.2	2.1
Company that specialises in package tours	4.6	0.8	3.6	2.7	1.5
Magazines	2.7	1.9	0.8	3.6	1.5
Books	2.5	1.4	1.0	1.0	0.6
Association/club	2.4	2.1	4.2	2.7	4.1
Airline/commercial carrier	1.2	0.9	2.0	0	0.2
Television	1.1	0.3	0.0	0.5	0.3
Auto club	0.8	2.1	2.3	0.3	2.4
Hotel or resort	0.7	2.9	4.1	3.0	4.4
Radio	0.7	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Government tourism office	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.1
Local visitors' bureau (CVB)/ chamber of commerce	0.0	1.8	0.1	1.9	1.4
None of these	3.9	9.3	10.1	7.5	10.3
Other	4.8	4.4	2.9	6.7	7.4
Chi-square = 350.86, df = 64, p = 0.0000**					
Sample sizes	375	1287	433	399	826

** $p < 0.01$

ski, and summer country resort groups, the top two information sources were personal experience from past visits and advice from relatives and friends. The casino group most often used their past experiences, travel agents, and advice from relatives and friends. Respondents who took cruise vacations relied more heavily on travel agents than the other four groups.

Vacation activity participation

Significant differences were found at the 0.05 level among the five groups for 45 of the 50 vacation activities specified in the Phase II questionnaire (Table 5). The responses were for personal participation in each activity on travel trips. The highest activity participation rates in the cruise group were for walking (72.4%), sunbathing

Table 5: Activity Participation on Trips by Five Trip Types.

Activities	Cruise	Beach Resort	Casino Resort	Ski Resort	Summer Country Resort	p-value
Walking	72.4	74.3	50.2	41.9	69.4	0.000**
Sunbathing	57.5	65.4	12.5	3.2	29.4	0.000**
Swim in a pool	49.2	51.4	19.9	30.7	35.7	0.000**
Swim in the ocean	49.0	67.2	3.9	0.0	5.6	0.000**
Snorkelling	25.3	11.2	0.2	0.0	1.2	0.000**
Use an indoor fitness centre/gym	21.0	6.3	5.3	9.5	8.2	0.000**
Use a hot tub	18.2	18.6	9.4	42.6	21.0	0.000**
Use a sauna	13.2	7.1	5.6	19.9	11.6	0.000**
Shuffleboard	12.6	3.1	1.4	0.0	4.4	0.000**
Aerobics	12.3	1.7	0.2	1.3	2.6	0.000**
Bird watching	8.8	9.9	2.0	0.0	10.7	0.000**
Skeet shooting	7.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.000**
Jogging/running	4.9	6.0	1.8	0.0	7.4	0.000**
Scuba diving	4.5	2.9	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.000**
Hiking/backpacking	3.7	6.8	2.2	0.0	18.2	0.000**
Swim in a lake/river	2.9	3.5	2.8	0.0	22.1	0.000**
Jet-skiing	2.4	2.1	1.1	0.0	1.3	0.018*
Weight training	2.4	1.0	0.2	2.7	2.5	0.002**
Bicycling	2.3	11.0	0.2	0.0	7.4	0.000**
Para-sailing	2.1	3.3	0.1	0.0	1.0	0.000**
River rafting/ whitewater rafting	1.9	0.1	1.3	0.0	1.2	0.000**
Sailing	1.9	4.8	0.3	0.0	1.9	0.000**
Helicopter ride	1.6	1.6	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.019*
Miniature golf	1.6	18.9	1.8	0.0	15.1	0.000**
Power boating	1.5	4.0	1.3	0.0	9.2	0.000**
Fishing (saltwater)	1.4	12.3	0.5	0.0	4.2	0.000**
Badminton	1.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.8	0.040*
Hang gliding	1.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.6	0.044*
Mountain climbing	0.9	1.1	1.2	0.0	4.8	0.000**
Canoeing	0.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	7.0	0.000**
Horseback riding	0.5	2.8	1.1	0.0	5.2	0.000**
Water skiing	0.5	1.5	0.2	0.0	4.2	0.000**
Wind surfing	0.5	1.7	0.5	0.0	0.6	0.005**
Bowling	0.4	1.7	3.3	3.1	2.3	0.022*
Golf	0.4	7.8	3.3	0.0	9.4	0.000**
Fishing (freshwater)	0.3	2.0	3.1	0.5	19.7	0.000**
Hunting (small game)	0.1	0.1	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.038*
Surf boarding	0.1	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.001**
Lawn bowling	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	0.027*
Camping	0.0	2.7	2.1	0.0	11.5	0.000**
Croquet	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.5	1.4	0.003**
Skiing (X-county)	0.0	0.0	0.6	10.7	0.1	0.000**
Skiing (downhill)	0.0	0.0	0.9	77.4	1.2	0.000**
Trail-riding	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	0.000**
Tennis	0.9	6.2	1.5	2.7	5.8	0.000**

** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$

Note: No significant differences at the p = 0.05 level were found for hot air ballooning, hunting (big game), kayaking, racquetball, and squash.
Multiple responses

Table 6: *Phrases That Best Describe Vacation Experience on This Trip by the Five Trip Types.*

Experiences	**Cruise**	**Beach Resort**	**Casino Resort**	**Ski Resort**	**Summer Country Resort**	**p-value**
			(%) a			
Relaxing	89.1	87.3	56.5	70.0	86.1	0.000 **
Enjoyable	81.9	79.1	69.1	76.4	78.3	0.000 **
Fun	80.7	76.6	73.0	81.8	71.1	0.000 **
Excellent food	74.4	44.1	43.3	26.9	35.8	0.000 **
Excellent value for the money	50.7	35.6	35.3	35.9	36.9	0.000 **
Exciting	49.1	31.1	49.7	49.8	26.4	0.000 **
Excellent accommodations	42.9	38.2	34.9	27.3	31.3	0.000 **
Romantic	39.4	27.3	15.9	20.9	25.5	0.000 **
Educational	38.7	22.1	9.6	15.5	25.0	0.000 **
A real adventure	29.4	11.7	12.1	17.9	12.2	0.000 **
Expensive	17.4	16.6	18.8	20.4	13.2	0.012 *
Full of surprises	17.4	14.6	18.7	11.8	10.5	0.000 **
Physically demanding	10.3	6.5	6.6	44.7	10.2	0.000 **
Disappointing	8.5	2.8	1.9	2.9	2.3	0.000 **
Boring	2.2	1.4	0.6	1.0	2.7	0.035 *

** $p < 0.01$ * $p < 0.05$

Note: Multiple responses

(57.5%), swimming in a pool (49.2%), swimming in the ocean (49%), snorkelling (25.3%), using an indoor fitness centre/gym (21%), using a hot tub or sauna (18.2%), shuffleboard (12.6%), and aerobics (12.3%).

Benefits experienced on trip

Significant differences were found at the 0.05 level among the five trip types for each of the 15 benefit statements supplied in the Phase II questionnaire (Table 6). Cruise respondents indicated more often than the others that their vacations were relaxing (89.1%), enjoyable (81.9%), fun (80.7%), provided excellent food (74.4%), and value for the money (50.7%). The cruise travellers also had the highest agreement rates among the five groups for the statements on excellent accommodations (42.9%), romantic (39.4%), educational (38.7%), and a real adventure (29.4%). However, the cruise group also had a higher percentage (8.5%) than the other four groups for the phrase "disappointing." The ski group respondents had the highest agreement rate (44.7%) for the phrase "physically demanding."

Travel attitudes

Nineteen attitude statements describing how people felt about pleasure travel were rated by respondents on a scale of one to five, with one implying that the respondent "agreed strongly," and five meaning "disagreed strongly." Using one-way ANOVA tests, all 19 statements were significantly different among the five trip types at the 0.05 level (Table 7). For 11 of the 19 attitude statements, the cruise vacationers' opinions differed significantly from those of the four other groups.

The cruise vacationers agreed most with the following nine statements and their lower mean scores were found to be significantly different from those of the other four groups using Duncan's multiple-range tests:

1. I like to have all my travel arrangements made before I start out on vacation (mean score = 1.62).

2. Taking an escorted group tour is a great way to meet travel companions and make new friends (mean score = 2.16).

3. I like to go on short guided tours when vacationing (mean score = 2.32).

4. You get to learn more on an escorted group tour than by travelling on your own (mean score = 2.32).

5. Taking an escorted group tour is a safer way to travel compared to travelling on your own (mean score = 2.38).

6. Taking an escorted group tour is a more convenient way to travel compared to travelling on your own (mean score = 2.49).

7. Taking an escorted group tour is a less expensive way to travel compared to taking the same vacation on your own (mean score = 2.57).

8. I take advantage of all-inclusive vacation packages whenever I can (mean score = 2.59).

9. When travelling to a new destination, I'd prefer to go with a tour group (mean score = 2.9).

Generally speaking, statements

Table 7: Attitudes about Travel among Five Trip Types.

Attitude Statements	**Cruise**	**Beach Resort**	**Casino Resort**	**Ski Resort**	**Summer Country Resort**
I like to have all my travel arrangements made before I start out on vacation (F = 8.32, p = 0.0000 **)	1.62[a]	1.89[b]	1.84[b]	1.95[bc]	2.00[c]
When vacationing I like to try new foods and dishes (F = 6.75, p = 0.0000 **)	2.02[b]	2.12[b]	2.41[a]	2.03[b]	2.15[b]
Taking an escorted group tour is a great way to meet travel companions and make new friends (F = 11.68, p = 0.0000 **)	2.16[a]	2.56[b]	2.50[b]	2.58[b]	2.50[b]
I usually travel on reduced airfares (F = 9.07, p = 0.0000 **)	2.31[a]	2.56[b]	2.57[b]	2.15[a]	2.63[b]
I like to go on short guided tours when vacationing (F = 19.95, p = 0.0000 **)	2.32[a]	2.92[b]	3.08[c]	3.04[bc]	2.88[b]
You get to learn more on an escorted group tour than by travelling on your own (F = 17.43, p = 0.0000 **)	2.32[a]	2.85[bc]	2.82[bc]	2.96[c]	2.74[b]
Taking an escorted group tour is a safer way to travel compared to travelling on your own (F = 22.95, p = 0.0000 **)	2.38[a]	2.97[b]	2.81[c]	3.05[b]	2.83[c]
Taking an escorted group tour is a more convenient way to travel compared to travelling on your own (F = 22.67, p = 0.0000 **)	2.49[a]	3.09[b]	2.92[c]	3.17[b]	2.90[c]
It is important to me that the people I encounter on a vacation trip speak my language (F = 3.81, p = 0.0044 **)	2.57[bc]	2.50[ac]	2.38[a]	2.70[b]	2.57[bc]
Taking an escorted group tour is a less expensive way to travel compared to taking the same vacation on your own (F = 13.44, p = 0.0000 **)	2.57[a]	3.00[b]	2.85[c]	3.03[b]	3.00[b]

cont.

associated with escorted tours and packaged vacations (#s 2 and 4-9), were rated lower (more agreed) by the cruise vacationers than the other four groups.

Statement #1 highlights the greater concern among cruise vacationers for having all their travel arrangements made before departure. This helps explain their predisposition towards vacation packages and escorted tours. The statement "I often take vacations on the spur of the moment" was rated significantly higher (more disagreed) by the cruise group than by the other four groups. This again emphasises the greater time and emphasis on pre-trip planning by cruise vacationers. The statement "I usually choose vacation places where I have been before" was also rated significantly higher by cruise vacationers. This implies that cruise vacationers look for more variety in the destinations they visit over time. The multi-destination nature of many cruises seems well suited to meet this need for variety.

The casino group showed significantly different attitudes for four of the 19 statements. "When vacationing I like to try new foods and dishes" was rated higher (more disagreed) by the casino group than the other four groups. The casino group also agreed more strongly than the other four groups with the statement "a vacation in the U.S. is more appealing to me than a vacation in a foreign country." Overall, the casino resort group appeared to be the most predisposed of the five toward domestic travel, and perhaps the least adventurous travellers. Although not quite as positive as cruise vacationers, they generally exhibited more favourable attitudes toward escorted group tours and packages than the three other land-based resort groups. For example, statements 7 and 8 listed above were rated lower (more agreed) by the casino resort group and the scores were found to be significantly different from the other three land-based resort groups.

The attitudes of the three other land-based resort groups (oceanside beach, ski resort, and summer country resort) could not

Table 7 (cont.)

Attitude Statements	**Cruise**	**Beach Resort**	**Casino Resort**	**Ski Resort**	**Summer Country Resort**
I take advantage of all-inclusive vacation packages whenever I can (F = 29.6, p = 0.0000 **)	2.59[a]	3.32[b]	3.17[c]	3.41[b]	3.37[b]
These days I find myself taking more and more short pleasure trips and fewer long vacations (F = 5.55, p = 0.0002 **)	2.70[b]	2.68[b]	2.64[bc]	2.45[a]	2.51[ac]
When travelling to a new destination, I'd prefer to go with a tour group (F = 32.59, p = 0.0000 **)	2.90[a]	3.66[cd]	3.45[b]	3.78[c]	3.56[bd]
A vacation in the U.S. is more appealing to me than a vacation in a foreign country (F = 10.92, p = 0.0000 **)	2.97[a]	2.72[b]	2.43[c]	2.91[a]	2.63[b]
I usually pay more to get luxuries and extras on a vacation trip (F = 4.04, p = 0.0029 **)	3.13[bc]	3.21[bc]	3.29[ac]	3.31[ac]	3.43[a]
I usually choose vacation places where I have been before (F = 5.84, p = 0.0001 **)	3.29[a]	2.98[b]	2.93[b]	3.07[b]	3.07[b]
I usually travel on a no-frills budget (F = 3.05, p = 0.0162 *)	3.29[a]	3.15[ac]	3.00[bc]	3.02[bc]	3.10[bc]
I often take vacations on the spur of the moment (F = 3.19, p = 0.0126 *)	3.55[a]	3.34[b]	3.24[b]	3.21[b]	3.35[b]
I like to make my arrangements as I go along on a vacation (F = 5.55, p = 0.0002 **)	3.72[a]	3.44[bc]	3.56[ac]	3.29[b]	3.39[b]

Note: Similar letter superscripts are not significantly different based upon a Duncan's multiple-range test at the p = 0.05 level.

be clearly differentiated from one another. It did, however, appear that the ski resort travellers had the most negative attitudes toward escorted group tours.

Conclusions and implications

This analysis has shown that there are significant differences among the five trip types in terms of sociodemographic profiles, trip planning characteristics, benefits experienced, activity participation, and travel attitudes. Specifically, cruise vacationers can be identified by distinct travel attitudes, trip planning characteristics, and benefits experienced. In addition, considerable variation was found among the four land-based resort traveller groups, especially in comparing the casino resort travellers to the other three groups.

Cruise vacationers

Cruises attracted more older travellers (45 years or more) than younger (under 45 years). Travellers taking cruise vacations were predominantly female (54.9%), married (56.4%), and had middle-income levels. A significant proportion of cruise vacationers (17%.4) were retired. Cruise vacationers spent significantly more time planning their trips than the four other groups. They were more likely to use travel agents.

The cruise vacationers had the highest activity participation rates among the five groups for swimming in a pool, snorkelling, using an indoor fitness centre/ gym, using a hot tub, shuffle-board, aerobics, and skeet shooting.

The majority of cruise vacationers rated cruising exceptionally well on most of the key benefits experienced on trips. They also showed a strong preference for escorted tours and packaged vacations. The results indicated that cruise vacationers like to take advantage of all-inclusive vacation packages whenever they can. In addition, cruise vacationers tended not to choose repeat destinations and not to take vacations on the spur of the moment.

Oceanside beach resort vacationers

Travellers who took oceanside beach resort vacations tended to be aged between 25-44 years (52.8%), and mostly married (62.8%). They relied most on personal experience from past visits and advice from relatives or friends as information sources. They had the highest participation rates among the five groups for walking, swimming in the ocean, sunbathing, miniature golf, fishing in saltwater, bicycling, and bird watching. Relaxing, fun and enjoyment were the most important benefits they experienced on trips.

Casino resort vacationers

Casino resort vacationers were more likely to be older, married, less well educated, have lower household incomes, and a large percentage (26.4%) were retired. Compared with the other groups, the length of planning period for this group was relatively short. They relied most on personal experience from past visits and travel agents as information sources. They did not participate in a diverse range of activities while on vacation. The only activities in which the casino group had the highest participation rate among the five groups were bowling and hunting (big game).

Compared to the other four groups, travellers in the casino group tended to be more reluctant to try new foods and dishes when they travelled. Finally, they showed the strongest level of agreement that a vacation in the U.S. was more appealing than a vacation in a foreign country.

Ski resort vacationers

Ski resort vacationers had higher incomes and were better educated than the other four trip type groups. This group also had the highest proportions of respondents who were single, who were male, and who had full-time jobs. Concerning the dominant person in selecting destinations, "friends" played the most important role besides the respondents themselves and their spouses. They relied most on personal experience from past visits as their major information source. In addition to skiing cross-country or downhill, ski resort vacationers had the highest participation rates among the five groups for using a hot tub and using a sauna during their trips. Physically demanding was one of the most salient benefits experienced by the ski resort group.

Summer country resort vacationers

The summer country resort category attracted younger as well as older travellers. Travellers taking summer country resort vacations tended to be married and have modest incomes. They relied most on personal experience from past visits and the advice of relatives and friends. They had the highest participation rates among the five groups for swimming in a lake or river, fishing in freshwater, hiking/backpacking, bird watching, camping, golf, canoeing, and tennis while on vacation. Relaxing and enjoyable were the phrases that best described the benefits they experienced on their vacations.

Cruising versus land-based resorts

Those respondents who took land-based resort vacations used their personal experience from past visits more than all other possible sources of information. Cruise vacationers were heavier users of travel agents. They began their trip preparation well in advance, and tended to get advice from relatives and friends. This seems to correspond with the estimate that only 5 to 6 percent of Americans have ever cruised, resulting in fewer people with past experiences of cruise vacations. Thus, the role of the travel agent as a major source of formal tourist information is of greater importance with cruises. These findings support the contention of previous researchers that the travel agent's role is very important when travellers are considering trips to remote destinations or where travellers have only a vague idea of where they want to go.

This study shows that cruising rates well against land-based resort vacations on benefits experienced including "relaxing," "excellent food," "romantic," "excellent accommodations," "educational," "enjoyable," "a real adventure," and "excellent value for the money." The last five benefit statements do not appear in CLIA's periodic National Market Profile Study. In the 1990 CLIA study, the characteristic "lodged in comfortable accommodations" was rated lower for cruising than for traditional resorts. Therefore, the findings of this study on the comfort of accommodation contradict the CLIA study's findings. The median age of cruise vacationers in this study was in the 45 to 54 age category. This was slightly higher than the study conducted by Raymond James which reported a median age of under 43 in 1991.

The findings indicate that cruise vacationers have a high tendency to agree with attitude statements concerning the advantages of escorted tours and all-inclusive package vacations. Therefore, the cruise industry's present advertising efforts, underlining the all-inclusive nature of cruise vacations, seem to be on the right track in attracting potential cruisers' attention. Since cruise vacationers rely more on travel agents, cruiselines should continue their close relationships with travel agencies. The cruise industry is very supportive of the travel agency community as its primary source of business growth.

The results of this study only address the perspectives of past cruisers. Since potential travellers who have not previously taken cruises might perceive cruises as being for the affluent and older people, efforts should be directed towards dispelling these existing stereotypes. The cruise industry will have to more adequately address these issues to increase its market penetration and avoid the potential overcapacity problem that is a real future possibility.

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