

Luxury Tourism as a Community Economic Development Strategy in the Depleted Community of Gananoque and the 1000 Islands

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ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to shed the light on how the luxury tourism may serve as a community economic development strategy in the depleted communities. The purpose of the study is to identify the interests and preferences of potential tourists in the 21st century, primarily those individuals who have the time and money to spend a week visiting the 1000 Islands region, thereby contributing much more to the local economy than those tourists for stay for only a few hours. The study used a simple Non-Experimental Fixed Research Design questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale for 17 possible aspects of a luxury vacation in the 1000 Islands. The survey was conducted by telephone, and the Chairs of the various chapters of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons were contacted with a goal of speaking to half of the 51 CARP Chapter Chairs. Of the 17 items that were scored by the 15 research participants, Leisure Time proved to be the most popular item surveyed.

Keywords: *Luxury, Tourism, Economic development, Community, Hospitality*

INTRODUCTION

This is a study of how luxury tourism may serve as a community economic development strategy in the depleted communities such as the community of Gananoque and the 1000 Islands. The community has a rich history as both a tourist destination and an industrial centre. In the past decade, not unlike many other communities in Canada, Gananoque has seen its major industrial employers, which were previously located in the community, disappear. They have either gone out of business, or, in the case of the larger multi-national corporations, have relocated elsewhere, where labor and operating costs are significantly lower. As a result, the once thriving community has become

a depleted community and the residents have been thrown into a liminal state. However, the natural beauty of the area has not changed and still serves as a magnet for tourists from around the world.

The traveler of the 21st century seeks authentic and cultural experiences which are personally enriching, rewarding and memorable. As the tourism marketplace is changing, to be successful and sustaining requires fresh approaches, both economically and culturally. In order to minimize the negative impact of tourism in the community, attempts should be made to target the most desirable tourists: high-yield, low-impact visitors, who come in numbers

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and at times that can be comfortably handled by the community, who respect community values, appreciate and respect the Town's cultural and natural heritage, and are willing to appreciate and conserve it. However, for the Town to be an attraction in itself, social, economic, and organizational capital must be invested to ensure a higher quality of life for both the Town's residents and tourists alike.

The purpose of the study is to identify the interests and preferences of potential tourists in the 21st century, primarily those individuals who have the time and money to spend a week visiting the 1000 Islands region, thereby contributing much more to the local economy than those tourists for stay for only a few hours.

While there has been a significant amount of research conducted regarding luxury tourism, the target market of baby boomer tourists, as well as the efforts of other depleted communities to reinvent themselves, the purpose of this study will match the preferences of tourists in the target market, with the assets of the local area. There is very little research available which addresses this topic, and no peer-reviewed research has been conducted which specifically targets the 1000 Islands region. This study will help address that gap by probing for the wants and needs of different segments of the Ontario luxury tourism market, and explore the appeal of special bundles of tourism offerings of Gananoque and the surrounding 1000 Islands region.

The remainder of the paper is organised as follows. The following section provides a review of research available on the luxury tourism market in addition to identifying the assets of Gananoque and the surrounding 1000 Islands region. The literature review will focus on The Baby Boomer Tourist Market and Tourism as a CED Strategy in Depleted Communities. Data collection and models development are described in the section that follows. While the findings are discussed in section four, the conclusion is offered in the final section.

Literature Review

Today, people from various corners of the globe seek new places to travel. With a rapidly growing middle class in heavily populated countries such as China and India, tourism is expected to increase in the coming years. There has been a considerable amount of research

conducted on topics related to tourism generally, as well as more specific topics such as luxury tourism, the demographic target market, and specific geographic regions and/or types of tourism products offered. As well, there have been numerous studies conducted which investigate the use of tourism as a community economic development strategy. In fact, there seems to be an endless amount of research available on the broad subject of tourism.

The Baby Boomer Tourist Market

There is a substantial amount of literature available which addresses how the Baby Boomer Tourists (BBTs) are motivated, think, and see themselves. When discussing Baby Boomer Segmentation, psychographic classification of respondents takes into consideration how people think; what motivates them to act; how they perceive themselves, their own environment, and their overall work environment, the self-image they want to project; and what they seek in life and their aspirations; what is likely to interest them; and what channels of communication can effectively reach them. (Cleaver et al., 2000) Their research, which identifies four major lifestyle groups of baby boomers, is consistent with the results of other studies conducted, which identifies segmentation within the Baby Boomer cohort. For example, the wellness tourism offering is often taken to include luxury. (Konu et al., 2010) Typical wellness visitors are high income visitors, older people, motivated by a desire for rest, relaxation, health, rejuvenation or escapism (Smith and Puczko, 2009).

The results of the Cleaver research identified six distinct dimensions of travel motives as well as sub-sections for each dimension. As noted in table 1, through analyzing and measuring leisure motives, travel risk tolerance, and travel patterns, calculations were made related to the six dimensions for travel motives of the BBTs and individual item loadings on each factor.

Table 1 shows that the strongest factors are: Self-Betterment, being opportunities for expressing creativity and acquiring spiritual experiences and renewal; Discovery, to collect new and different experiences and learning new things and enriching your life; and Status Seeking, being the notion of keeping up with all the holiday traveling that you see others doing and enabling you to go places where your

friends or rivals have not been. Similarly, the research conducted by Muller and O’Cass (2001), produces seven travel motives, which are extracted from 48 reasons for travel.

Table 1: Six dimensions of travel motives and individual item loadings on each factor

Factor Label and Individual Items	Item-Factor Loading
Self-Betterment	
✓ To find opportunities for expressing your creativity	0.761
✓ To acquire spiritual experiences and achieve spiritual renewal	0.701
✓ To challenge your physical abilities	0.576
✓ To keep you well informed and on top of what is going on	0.562
✓ To improve or renew your skills as a traveler	0.543
✓ To broaden your community awareness and responsibility as a fellow human being	0.537
Thrill Seeking	
✓ To keep you life packed full with activities	0.634
✓ To obtain some form of physical invigoration	0.607
✓ To be able to tell stories of holiday adventures and mishaps to your grandchildren or children	0.596
✓ To find thrills or excitement	0.595
✓ To meet new people and make new friends	0.517
Discovery	
✓ To collect new and different experiences	0.734
✓ To learn new things and enrich your life	0.718
✓ To experience the fun of discovery	0.633
✓ To satisfy your curiosity or increase your general knowledge Status Seeking	0.569
Status Seeking	
✓ To keep up with all the holiday traveling that you see others doing	0.790
✓ To enable you to go places where your friends or rivals have not been	0.757
✓ To gain the respect of others Reminiscence	0.532
Reminiscence	
✓ To visit a place where you family’s roots are	0.653
✓ To visit a friend or relative	0.650
✓ To make pilgrimages to places that hold memories for you	0.546
✓ To be able to relive some of the good memories and good times from your past	0.528
✓ To be entertained and looked after by others Escapism	0.496
Escapism	
✓ To relax and do nothing at all	0.694
✓ To indulge in a bit of luxury	0.646
✓ To get away from doing too much thinking	0.623
✓ To get away from the demands at home and in daily life	0.570

Courtesy of Cleaver et al. (2000), Page 282

When reviewing each of the traits as outlined in table 2, one notices much overlap with the factors cited by Cleaver et al. (2000). The Muller and O’Cass research also revealed that people aged 55 and older perceive themselves as being considerably younger than their actual ages. This is supported by research conducted by Cleaver, et al, which reveals that seniors sense they are about a decade younger than indicated by their chronological age. Muller and O’Cass point out that the distinction between actual and subjective age is important, as quite often, the age one perceives oneself to be, rather than one’s actual age, determines attitudes, interests and preferred activities, particularly in the domain of leisure, recreation and tourism.

There are a lot of stereotypes regarding senior travelers as being too old, frail, or unwell to travel, and uninterested in new things and new experiences. The research would indicate otherwise. As a group, BBTs are enthusiastic about traveling, and their preferences for vacation activities are frequently associated with much younger people. With a wealth of research readily available which identify sub-groups within the senior traveling market to aid in the development and promotion of new tourism products, Muller and O’Cass astutely conclude that understanding how people see themselves in terms of their age offers the marketer a new opportunity to tailor products and communications to the desired segments. Muller and O’Cass clearly outline the motive factors and reasons for travel identified in their research, but do not include the important factor uncovered in their research: BBTs often do look and act much younger than their age.

Although a more compact list is produced by Kim et al. (2012), in their research related to the development of a scale to measure memorable tourism experiences, the categories of Hedonism, Involvement, Local Culture, Refreshment, Meaningfulness, Knowledge and Novelty could all fall into the categories of Travel Motive Factors outlined in table 2 produced by Muller and O’Cass.

In their research, Lehto et al. (2008) echo the findings of other studies, concluding that older travelers are not a homogeneous group, but there are common tourism experiences sought by both the Baby Boomers and their predecessors, known as the Silent Generation, born between 1925 and 1945. Lehto et al. (2008) support the

previous studies cited in this paper by stating that as people get older, their chronological age could become less reliable as a predictor of behaviour, possibly because the aging process is a developmental process that many factors can influence. Furthermore, Formica and Kothari (2008) argue that more senior travelers and leisure time will have a significant impact on the travel industry, and differentiated services will be offered at destinations to satisfy a self-centered and diverse traveler.

Historical, political, economic, and social events of the time, as well as technological advances, educational opportunities, and lifestyle changes may all play important roles in influencing the collective attitudes, preferences and behaviors of age cohorts.

Table 3 is a list of Participation Rates for Travel Activities by Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation. The complete list has been edited and reduced to include only those travel experiences which would be possible in the 1000 Islands Region. The statistics in table 3 supports the previous arguments that the Baby Boomer cohort is different from previous cohorts when comparing travel preferences. Trends emerge which clearly reflect a more physically active cohort. More sedentary activities such as bird watching, visiting museums or attending a theatre performance have declined in popularity with the Baby Boomers, while activities which require more active participation such as biking, kayaking and hiking are more popular among the Baby Boomers than members of the Silent Generation.

Activities which have high participation rates by both cohorts, more than 30%, namely going on picnics in park settings, visiting historical sites, natural wonders, gaming facility, restaurant dining, shopping and wandering around small towns and villages are of great importance to this research paper. For the purpose of this paper, the research conducted by Bowie and Chang (2005) related to tourist satisfaction was particularly relevant. It augmented the previously noted research as to the expectations of tourists, but it also served as an analysis of the sectors and critical incidents of a guided package tour. While the tour leader plays a critical role in such a package tour, it underscores the importance of some of the unstated expectations possessed by many tourists that can be regarded as essential to a pleasant trip.

Table 2: Seven travel motive factors extracted from the 48 reasons for travel

1. Physical Stimulation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To give me a chance to participate in a spot I am fond of✓ To find thrills or excitement✓ To obtain some form of physical invigoration
2. Camaraderie
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To meet new people and make new friends✓ To become better friends with someone, by holiday marking together✓ To travel together with a group of people who share my interests and values
3. Status Seeking
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To enable me to go to places where my friends or rivals have not been✓ To gain the respect of others✓ To keep up with all the holiday travelling that I see others doing✓ To be able to tell stories of my holiday adventures and mishaps to my grandchildren✓ To be able to tell others about where I have been and what I have seen
4. Nostalgia
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To visit a friend or relative✓ To make pilgrimages to places which have memories for me✓ To visit a place where my family's roots are✓ To try to achieve family togetherness on a holiday✓ To be able to relive some of the good memories and good times from my past✓ To enjoy surroundings that are comforting and reassuring
5. Thinking and Reflection
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To help me think about who I am and what life means✓ To raise my self-esteem✓ To challenge my mental abilities✓ To share my thoughts and feelings with my travelling companion✓ To go to a place where I can feel safe again✓ To find simplicity, certainty, or peace of mind and soul✓ Because I sometimes like to be alone
6. Escapism
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To get away from the demands at home and in daily life✓ To relax and do nothing at all✓ To indulge in a bit of luxury✓ To get away from doing too much thinking✓ To avoid boredom✓ To be entertained and looked after by others✓ To change my surroundings for the sake of change
7. Self-Enrichment and Discovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ To collect new and different experiences✓ To satisfy my curiosity or increase my general knowledge✓ To keep me well informed and on top of what's going on✓ To learn new things and enrich my life and become a more cultured person✓ To feel connected with other people and experience a sense of community✓ To experience the fun of discovery✓ To feel I am actively involved in the world around me✓ To be a little adventurous✓ To improve or renew my skills as a traveler

Courtesy of Muller & O'Cass, page 291

Table 3: Travel activities participated by baby boomers and the silent generation

Participation Rate (%)		
Travel Experiences Sought	Baby Boomers	Silent Generation
Bird Watching	14.2	18.1
Recreational Biking	18.6	14.3
Kayaking or Canoeing	14.7	9.1
Fishing (fresh water)	26.6	24.9
Going on picnics in park settings	46.5	38.9
Golfing	19.8	19.6
Hiking or back-packing in wilderness settings	25.5	15.0
General History or Heritage Museums	39.2	45.3
Theatre	29.6	39.1
Natural Wonders such as Niagara Falls	34.9	39.8
Gaming facility	32.1	39.5
Restaurant Dining (regional or local cooking)	80.7	83.0
Shopping/Browsing (antiques)	43.7	50.9
Staying at a lakeside resort in summer	26.2	26.6
Guided scenic tours in the countryside	12.5	18.6
Wandering around small towns and villages	50.9	61.7
Going to wineries for day visits and tasting	19.0	22.1

Courtesy of Lehto et al. (2008), page 245

Tourism as a Community Economic Development Strategy

The research of Formica and Kothari (2008), conducted over a four-year period in the tri state area of Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware identify the need for partnerships to create a cohesive and well-organized package of tourist products and services to enhance the overall experiences of visitors. They further suggest that the increasing desire of travelers who want to “experience” a destination cannot be satisfied by individual businesses. Only the destination as a whole, when all its components are directly involved and perfected orchestrated by Destination Marketing Organizations, can deliver such an experience.

Every community is unique, as are the people who live in it. (MacIntyre and Lotz, 2003) Gananoque is no exception. While the numerous articles which have been written on this topic may address a specific location or compare and contrast a few locations, they all seem to acknowledge each community’s

uniqueness. This does not mean that what may work to help revitalize one community cannot be duplicated or adapted to be successfully implemented in another place thousands of miles away. Understanding a community’s character is built up by an accumulation of experiences and growth stages over time, many things that occurred in the past, though diminished by time or even forgotten, may still have relevance and be the source of new inspiration. (Gananoque Cultural Plan, 2010). Many tourism sites or activities in depleted communities are based on historical events. In the summer of 2012, Gananoque and other border towns held various events to re-enact the events of the War of 1812. How unique for a community whose border line with its neighbor and former enemy is now part of the longest undefended border in the world. This example illustrates how the nature of communities or specific sites can change over time and become focal points for tourists. Alcatraz in California and Auschwitz in Poland provide other evidence as to how former places

of death and despair can be transformed into places where people will actually pay to visit.

Nel and Binns (2002) argue that the post industrial world has been characterized by fundamental shifts in the location and function of capital, and the reality of economic crises has, in many areas, provoked a search for locally driven and innovative alternatives, which are frequently referred to in the literature as Local Economic Development. (LED) Their research, conducted in post-Apartheid South Africa, in a community known as Still Bay, supports the work of others such as MacIntyre and Lotz, by illustrating, step-by-step, how a community can be transformed. Fundamental to the success of such endeavours is the degree to which a local place can sell itself through place marketing to potential investors and tourists to achieve a tourism-based economic renaissance. (Hall and Hubbard, 1996) The reality of people assuming responsibility for their own developmental future through LED is a notable focus in academic literature. (Stohr, 1990) This local aspect clearly links what Harvey (1989) refers to as urban entrepreneurialism and the notion of bottom-up development.

As is the case in many tourist destinations, Gananoque's tourism season is limited to approximately five months, mid-May through mid-October. Extending the season and reducing the impact of seasonality have recently become the objectives in many similar communities, and the work of Baum and Hagen (1999) concentrates on addressing such issues in communities in northern Europe and Canada, while analyzing the various local responses to the challenge of seasonality in the tourism industry. Their goal was to identify practices that worked in one location which may be duplicated or modified in other locations to either extend the existing season or develop opportunities at different times of the year; I believe they succeeded.

When studying peripheral, cold-water regions, Baum and Hagen (1999) concluded that tackling seasonality is one of the most common aspirations and objectives of tourism development strategy plans in these environments, whereby many of the underlying structural problems facing the sector are interpreted in demand-cycle terms. In Canada, the Canadian Tourism Commission (1996)

acknowledges that one of the biggest challenges faced by the Canadian tourism industry is seasonal variations. A good part of the industry is operating at near or full capacity during the peak summer season, with facilities and services less used or lying idle at other times of the year. Although the authors of this article offer a few main causes of seasonality, Gananoque could clearly be identified as having a major cause and a minor cause; those causes being climate/weather and social customs/holidays. The main tourism attraction in the Gananoque area is the 1000 Islands, usually accessed by tourists on board a commercial vessel, a "tour boat." With recent climate changes attributed to global warming, the season has been stretched to begin in early April and extended to early November, leaving the town with no major tourist attraction for approximately half of the year. As could be expected, other businesses gear their seasons to coincide with that of the boat tour companies. For example, the 1000 Islands Playhouse, the Skydeck Tower and 1000 Islands Kayak Tours all operate on similar seasonal schedules. The second, less rigid, cause of seasonality in the 1000 Islands is that of the social custom of the traditional school year and vacation schedules being based on the calendar of the former agriculturally dominant societies of North America, and schools being closed in July and August.

Baum and Hagen do an excellent job of providing various pieces of evidence which support their theories. They recognize that the uniqueness of communities and their circumstances are related to the impact of the seasonal variations. They go beyond some of the more basic research and "drill down" to the lesser known or less obvious causes of seasonal variation. They also acknowledge that due to seasonality, there can be benefits to both tourism resources and the host community, allowing a form of rejuvenation to occur before the commencement of the new season. The underlying question as to what circumstances and to what extent a program that is effective in one place can be transferred to another captures the essence of their article.

Despite the uniqueness of communities, other economic characteristics of peripheral areas seeking to develop tourism are identified by Wanhill (1997), whose research is concentrated

on islands or seaside locations. He identifies some of the key obstacles faced by depleted communities such as Gananoque, where agricultural and industrial influences have been waning, and the local tourism economy has not adapted to changing circumstances. It could be said that many of the local tourism businesses have “rested on their laurels” for many years. They seemed to lack the vision or foresight, or chose to simply ignore the possibility of neighboring Canadian communities such as Ivy Lea, Rockport, Brockville or Kingston, serving as bases for boat tours, not to mention communities on the south shore of the St. Lawrence River, namely Alexandria Bay and Clayton, in upstate New York, from where tours of the islands can also be operated.

Wanhill further describes communities such as Gananoque, by arguing that the product strengths of many peripheral areas lie in their strong natural environments and remoteness which make them increasingly attractive for tourism development at a time when ‘green tourism’ is in vogue. His pragmatic approach includes the weaknesses or the downside of limited tourism infrastructure and the environmental threat to the very resources that visitors are attracted to in the first place. It would seem that most communities have some form of uniqueness, which can be positive or negative factors in attracting tourists. There are no simple or pat answers to the challenges faced by depleted communities worldwide. Research does indicate, however, that similar strategies can be successfully implemented in quite diverse communities to enhance their success in returning to a more vibrant state. It would seem that many of the most successful strategies are sprung from grassroots organizations or local entrepreneurs who have a vision and the financial means to take a risk. In their work, Johnstone and Lionais (2004) argue that depleted communities can act as hosts to a unique form of enterprise that combines good business practices with community goals. Moreover, the entrepreneurial process can be modified to pursue community goals, thereby creating new opportunities and making new forms of development possible.

The Gananoque Cultural Plan (2010) commissioned by the Town to provide an overview of what could be done to help

revitalize the community provided an exceptional document which outlined short-term, medium-term and longer-term projects to enhance the community. Many of the projects suggested in the document reflect the rich history of the community and their potential to contribute to the community’s revitalization.

A Visitor Tracking study completed for The Great Waterway Regional Tourism Organization in the summer of 2012 identified outdoor experiences such as enjoying nature, boat cruises, swimming, visiting provincial parks and hiking as the most frequently enjoyed activities cited by tourists while visiting this region, of which Gananoque and the 1000 Islands are a part of.

All of the research examined for this paper was focused on individual communities or regions, many far away from the small community of Gananoque and the 1000 Islands. All of the research celebrated the unique characteristics of each community, its attributes as well as the negative factors which needed to overcome in order to make the community as tourist destination. The Cultural Plan for Gananoque, commissioned in late 2010 provided an excellent overview of how the community had evolved over time, what drew tourists to the region in the past and what could possibly draw tourists to the community in the future. It does not, however, mention the fact that package tours could play a role in attracting tourists to the community and/or enticing tourists who would otherwise stay in the community for only a day or two to stay one week. The study will help fill that gap. What assets does the community of Gananoque and the 1000 Islands possess that would be of interest to someone purchasing a one-week guided tour package? The remainder of this paper will be devoted to answering this question.

RESEARCH METHOD

Due to the purpose of the research, time constraints, and the season at the time of conducting the research, (winter), it was decided that a simple Non-Experimental Fixed Research Design questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale for 17 possible aspects of a luxury vacation in the 1000 Islands would be the best choice of research design to use.

It was hoped that this research design would yield descriptive and explanatory information required to answer the research question. Specifically, this design was expected to document the characteristics of the target market and predict and test the likelihood of the compatibility of the local tourism assets with tourist preferences.

It was decided that the survey would be conducted by telephone, and the researcher would attempt to contact the Chairs of the various chapters of the Canadian Association of Retired Persons. (CARP) The survey could have been conducted via email, but it was expected that some of the participants would provide valuable anecdotal comments. It was hoped that the researcher would be able to contact at least ten Chapter Chairs, with a goal of speaking to half of the 51 CARP Chapter Chairs.

Once the Telephone Survey was fine-tuned, a short script was prepared to introduce the researcher to the various CARP Chairs. A

separate sheet was used for each contact who answered the phone, and the Chapter number was recorded at the top of the page.

All 51 Chapters were contacted and when there was no answer or an answering machine was reached, one further attempt was made to reach each Chair. As a result, a total of 15 Surveys were completed by CARP Chairs from across Canada. The pre-determined goal of reaching at least ten Chapter Chairs was surpassed.

As for data analysis, the data was entered into a very simple spreadsheet, with the Chapter numbers being used to identify each Survey at the top of table 4. The 17 items, ranging from Luxury Waterfront Accommodation to Shopping were listed on the left side of the table. Table 4 was populated with the numbers 1 through 5, based on the numbers assigned to each item by each respondent. Subsequently, the data was cleaned and all numbers entered on the spreadsheet were checked for accuracy.

Table 4: Telephone survey results

	22	32	47	46	12	01	48	15	05	52	50	20	37	11	07
Luxury Waterfront Accommodation	3	5	2	4	2	2	5	4	5	5	4	5	2	5	5
Fine Dining Establishments	4	4	2	4	1	4	3	4	5	4	4	5	4	5	5
Boat Tour to a Castle on an Island	4	3	3	3	4	4	5	5	3	4	5	3	4	5	5
Nature Hikes	3	5	1	4	4	4	3	3	5	4	3	3	3	2	3
Historic Sites	5	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5	4	4	2	4	4
UNESCO World Heritage Sites	5	2	2	2	4	4	4	4	5	4	3	5	3	5	5
Leisure Time	4	5	3	5	5	4	5	3	3	5	5	4	4	3	5
Cycling	2	4	1	3	3	2	2	1	3	3	2	3	2	1	3
Live Theatre Performance	5	4	4	4	4	3	5	4	4	5	4	3	2	4	4
Visiting a National Park	3	5	4	4	2	3	3	2	5	4	3	3	4	3	2
Guided Fishing	2	1	1	2	1	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	3
Guided Kayak Tours	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	3	2	3	2	1	3
Golfing	4	4	1	3	1	3	1	2	5	5	3	4	3	1	1
Visiting a Spa	3	5	1	2	1	2	5	2	4	4	4	1	3	5	3
Self-Guided Walking Tours	4	5	2	4	4	3	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	2	4
Gaming facility	4	1	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	3	5	1	2	2	1
Shopping	4	5	2	4	4	2	4	3	3	3	4	1	4	2	4
Other	Wine Tour, Horseback Riding Trails, Dinner Cruise														

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The total number of points that were assigned by each of the survey respondents, ranging from highest to lowest, are illustrated in tables 5 and 6. With a high of 67 points to a low of 35 points being assigned by respondents, the median of 54 and average of 54.7 points were calculated. If the highest and lowest scores were eliminated, the median remained at 54 and the average was raised to 55.3 points. These calculations help put the individual scores in perspective, and also underscore the point that was borne out in the literature review; CARP members may be very active 50 year olds or 70 year olds who have varied interests and would not hesitate to try something new.

The purpose of the survey was to determine which items from a pre-determined list of 17 items would be of greatest interest to potential luxury tourists visiting the 1000 Islands so that an appealing bundle of special offerings could be packaged and offered to consumers. To put things into perspective, the average score for the 17 items was 48 points, with a median of 50 points, with scores ranging from a high of 63 points for Leisure Time to a low of 25 points.

The top ranked item was Leisure Time which scored a total of 63 points. This would indicate that many tourists like to have the free time to do as they please while they are on vacation. The vision of being herded onto a bus, moving from hotel to hotel, packing and unpacking, and being told when and where to eat, is obviously not the ideal vacation package, in the opinion of the majority of those individuals surveyed. People today tend to lead very busy lives and it would appear that the idea of having some leisure time while on vacation is very appealing. When designing the bundle of tourism offerings, it will be imperative to keep this fact in mind, and ensure that the schedule allows customers ample free time to see and do some of the things that may be of special interest to them or simply relax.

The next three most popular items from the list of 17 items, being a Boat Tour to a Castle on an Island, Visiting Historic Sites and Attending a Live Theatre Performance, happen to be three of the major tourist attractions in Gananoque and the 1000 Islands area. Each of these items could also be considered unique to the local area. Certainly, most visitors to the 1000 Islands,

whether they have driven to the area from a few hundred miles away or travelled thousands of miles from Europe or Southeast Asia, enjoy a boat tour offered by a Canadian operator in Kingston, Gananoque, Ivy Lea, Rockport or Brockville or a tour offered by an American operator, located in Alexandria Bay or Clayton, New York. As mentioned earlier, the area has a very rich history. The most popular historic site in the region is Fort Henry, located in Kingston, Ontario, a city steeped in history and known as Canada's First Capital. The local 1000 Islands Playhouse, located on the banks of the St. Lawrence River in Gananoque, has an excellent reputation for its live theatre performances.

Luxury Waterfront Accommodation and Fine Dining Establishments each garnered 58 points and tied for fourth place. There is only one establishment within the Town of Gananoque which offers waterfront accommodation. There are a few other properties which offer waterfront accommodation outside the town, but they would be considered fishing lodges or average accommodation rather than ones offering luxury accommodation. However, Gananoque is blessed with several fine dining venues located in and near the community. These establishments, many of which have a rich history in their own right, will help meet the needs of guests who value the fine-dining experience, especially when coupled with some local history.

Another anticipated question, which was not raised by any of the respondents, related to the term UNESCO, which is defined as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Visiting a UNESCO World Heritage Site garnered 57 points followed by Walking Tours, Nature Hikes, and visiting a National Park. This would indicate that outdoor activities were ranked above average by the majority of survey respondents. However, it should be noted that the level of activity required to actively participate in such activities is considered to be low to medium.

Shopping, which ranked 8th, received 49 points. Unlike some of the charming neighboring communities such as Picton and Merrickville, Gananoque has relatively few quaint shops which might appeal to the luxury tourist, and both the quantity and variety of shopping found within the community would most likely

disappoint the seasoned shopper. Downtown Kingston, however, as well as the nearby village of Westport, provide ample opportunity for the shopping enthusiast to purchase gifts and mementos from both Canadian and local craftspeople.

Visiting a Spa received 45 points. Spa services are offered at The Gananoque Inn and Spa, the only waterfront accommodation located within the community. (Some hair salons also offer limited spa services.) Of the 15 survey respondents, seven were male and eight were female. Analyzing the preferences of males and females separately would be an area to explore in further studies.

The remaining items, Golfing, Cycling, Visiting a gaming facility, Kayaking and Guided Fishing rounded out the last few spots. There are three golf courses located within a few minutes of Gananoque. Cycling is popular on the Bicycle Path which is actually a paved Bell Canada easement just north of the 1000 Islands Parkway, which runs from Gananoque to just west of Brockville, Ontario. Bicycles are rented to guests at The Gananoque Inn and Spa.

The 1000 Islands gaming facility is located at

the confluence of Highways 401 and 2, and the westernmost point of the 1000 Islands Parkway. The gaming facility is presently a controversial topic in the local area, as the neighboring community of Kingston, Ontario, is lobbying to be the site selected for a new gaming facility, which would most likely result in the closure of the 1000 Islands gaming facility. In the depleted communities of Gananoque and the neighboring Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands, the local gaming facility is not only a major employer, it is also a major source of revenue. Table 7 shows the Historical gaming facility Commission Revenue (Quarterly) for the Town of Gananoque since 2003. The same amounts were distributed to the neighboring Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands.

Despite the popularity of adventure tourism and ecotourism, kayaking only received 26 points. A relatively new business in Gananoque, 1000 Islands Kayaking, has received excellent reviews from those who have taken a tour. As a result, it would be listed as a recommended activity, which the more active boomers could enjoy during their built-in leisure time, when no activities would be planned.

Table 5: Overall scores from survey (by chapters)

Chapter	Total Score
52	67
05	64
32	62
22	61
50	60
07	60
48	57
46	54
20	53
15	52
11	51
37	50
01	49
12	46
47	35
Average	54.7
Median	54

Table 6: Overall scores and ranking of each item surveyed

Survey Item	Points	Rank
Leisure Time	63	1
Boat Tour to a Castle on an Island	60	2
Historic Sites	59	3
Live Theatre Performance	59	3
Luxury Waterfront Accommodation	58	4
Fine Dining Establishments	58	4
UNESCO World Heritage Sites	57	5
Self-Guided Walking Tours	56	6
Nature Hikes	50	7
Visiting a National Park	50	7
Shopping	49	8
Visiting a Spa	45	9
Golfing	41	10
Cycling	35	11
Gaming facility	30	12
Guided Kayak Tours	26	13
Guided Fishing	25	14
Average	48	
Median	50	
Other: Wine Tour, Horseback Riding Trails, Picnic, Dinner Cruise		

Table 7: Dollars of revenue per quarter

	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter	TOTAL
2003	342,243	415,140	472,954	421,904	1,652,241
2004	411,604	480,342	562,413	458,589	1,912,948
2005	444,861	496,861	536,471	439,145	1,917,338
2006	418,231	458,426	457,115	383,720	1,717,492
2007	354,690	413,543	467,779	380,455	1,616,467
2008	382,639	443,740	483,334	405,037	1,714,750
2009	397,162	443,617	461,763	380,600	1,683,142
2010	377,222	426,604	465,456	387,396	1,656,678
2011	358,111	414,729	465,799	392,061	1,630,700
2012	387,344	424,723			812,067

Historical Gaming Facility Commission Revenue for each of the Town of Gananoque and the Township of Leeds and the 1000 Islands

Source: <http://www.gananoque.ca/sites/gananoque.ca/files/gamingfaciltiy%20Revenue%20Statement.pdf>

It was discovered that one of the advantages of conducting the research for this paper via a telephone survey rather than an email survey was that some respondents offered their comments and opinions, and provided suggestions for other activities that they felt would be important to include in such a vacation package. The following four activities were suggested: taking a wine tour, horseback riding, having a picnic, and having dinner on a boat as part of a dinner cruise.

Fortunately, all of the suggested activities are possible. Eagle Point Winery, located on the Escott-Rockport Road, north of the village of Rockport, Ontario, is very active on the local tourism scene, offering tours and tastings. This relatively new operation has recently been purchased by an investor from China, who hopes further expand and develop the rural property.

Horseback Riding Tours are available from "From Another Time Trail Riding," located near Lansdowne, Ontario. Given that strenuous activities received relatively low scores from the survey respondents, it would be expected that few guests would avail themselves of this opportunity. However, for the horseback enthusiast or guest who has never had the opportunity to ride a horse, this could also be a recommended activity for the leisure days.

The idea of having a picnic is something which the researcher had considered as part of the luxury tourism package. "Everybody loves a good picnic," stated one survey respondent. Hiring a local caterer to provide a sumptuous luncheon at a picnic site located at the water's edge in the Ivy Lea Provincial Park, complete with linen tablecloths, fine china and fresh flowers to provide an element of class to the typical "outdoorsy" activity, is one which could be easily included in the luxury tour package of local dining experiences. Weather permitting, it would likely be a unique experience, and a welcome change from traditional restaurant settings.

The final suggestion made by a few of the survey respondents regarding a dinner cruise requires further investigation. Presently, there is such an offering available from a Kingston-based tour operation.

In conclusion, the findings garnered from the research conducted for this paper provide an invaluable insight into the travel preferences of

the luxury tourism market. The literature review and the findings derived from the site-specific research conducted for this paper will prove to be very helpful when designing the actual bundle of local tourism offerings which will appeal to the luxury tourism market.

Although the relatively small size of the sample surveyed is acknowledged as a major limitation to this research, valuable current Canadian information was gathered related to the preferences of luxury travelers to the site-specific region of Gananoque and the 1000 Islands. As such, this research helped address a previously existing gap in research.

When the research was being conducted, an interesting observation was made regarding the diverse interest levels of the research sample. This observation was supported by the literature reviewed for this paper, as well as some of the anecdotal comments made by the survey respondents themselves. As discussed in the literature review, some individuals displayed apathy and a lack of interest in the majority of the 17 items surveyed, while others enthusiastically embraced the majority of the items.

Of the 17 items that were scored by the 15 research participants, Leisure Time proved to be the most popular item surveyed. This finding was consistent with the evidence uncovered in the research that was discussed in the literature review relative to the travel preferences of luxury tourists. Not only is some "down time" highly desirable for relaxation purposes, it also allows individuals the opportunity to indulge their personal preferences, such as horseback riding, kayaking, fishing, visiting a spa, or golfing; such individual preferences may not be appealing to the majority of luxury travelers.

The following most popular items revealed by the survey are, in fact, some of the most popular tourist attractions in the 1000 Islands region, namely a boat tour to a castle on one of the islands, historic sites, and live theatre. Not surprisingly, the luxury tourist appreciates luxury waterfront accommodation and fine-dining experiences.

The least popular items surveyed by participants in this research were, generally, the more physically demanding activities such as golfing cycling, kayaking, and fishing. While these activities were of great interest to a few of

the survey participants, garnering scores of 4 and 5 by some, they proved to be unpopular with the majority of those surveyed. Once again, the results of the survey conducted by the author reinforced the findings of other research studies, whereby the Baby Boomer Tourists were found to have varied preferences, and individual tastes for the many travel offerings.

CONCLUSION

The Cultural Plan for the Town of Gananoque (2010) recommended that when adopting a Community Economic Development strategy, Gananoque should look for ways to celebrate its unique geographical location, heritage, and natural beauty. It was also noted that Gananoque should not attempt to become something similar to other communities that have found ways to re-invent themselves after suffering economic hardship. Instead, it should celebrate its uniqueness.

Visitor Tracking 2012 research conducted in the summer of 2012 and published in December, 2012, by The Great Waterway Regional Tourism Organization (RTO), stated that, traditionally, visitors have not looked to Eastern Ontario as a place to go for packaged vacations. It was suggested that it should be made easy to envisage a vacation that includes exceptional experiences throughout the region. Packages should include unique and compelling experiences and target specific visitor markets, and quite possibly new markets, and consideration should be given to flexible packages. (The Great Waterway, 2012).

By giving consideration to the local research which has been conducted by The Great Waterway RTO, the findings outlined in the Cultural Plan for the Town of Gananoque, as well as peer-reviewed academic research from various corners of the globe with respect to luxury travel, baby boomer tourists, and tourism as a CED strategy in depleted communities, and research conducted by the author of this paper, various conclusions could be drawn.

With respect to the preferences of luxury tourists, it would seem that Gananoque and the 1000 Islands region provide ample opportunities for visitors to enjoy unique experiences, some of which cannot be duplicated elsewhere. There is an abundance of historical sites, cultural activities, and outdoor activities of various levels

for luxury tourists to enjoy while visiting the region.

The author believes that the idea of providing luxury tourists with the option of purchasing a leisurely-paced, one-week, guided tour package in the 1000 Islands is long overdue.

It is sincerely hoped by the author of this paper that the goal of contributing to the economic development and rejuvenation of the depleted community of Gananoque and the surrounding 1000 Islands region is aided by the implementation of the outcomes derived from the research conducted for this paper.

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