

CULTURE, HERITAGE AND TOURISM DESTINATION CHOICES

Achana Francis

Ph. D. Candidate in Heritage and Natural Resource
Tourism, Purdue University, 1200 Forest Products
Building, West Lafayette, IN 47907

Joseph T. O'Leary

Professor of Outdoor Recreation, Purdue University, 1200
Forest Products Building, West Lafayette, IN 47907

Alastair Morrison

Professor of Tourism Marketing, Purdue University, Stone
Building, West Lafayette, IN 47907

Abstract: An important question often asked in trying to develop information for marketing activities is whether it is necessary to develop separate programs for the customers, clients, or visitors you are involved with. In other words, are there any differences that we should be aware of? This is particularly true in the area of tourism where we observe all types of marketing approaches, some of which seem to suggest homogeneity, while others show a sensitivity to diversity.

In the 12 years that the Pleasure Travel Markets to North America surveys have been in place, this question has become a critical one for action. A substantive way that these data have been used to examine travelers has been to separate out the tourist groups by destination (for example U.S. and Canada bound groups), and then describe and compare them. This paper extends that analysis and examines what happens in comparing destination based travelers from the United Kingdom that have an interest in culture and heritage based opportunities.

Factor analysis revealed that three categories of cultural and heritage attributes are important considerations in the choice of the US and Canada as destinations, by UK travelers:

Historic and natural heritage attractions (natural ecological sites, and cultural and historic sites); experiencing cultural lifestyles (meeting people of different ethnicities, trying new foods, and experiencing different lifestyles); and learning new/exotic things about the destination (educational component). The implications of these results are presented.

Introduction

The concepts of heritage and cultural tourist attractions as motivation factors for travel have been the focus of a number of research studies (World Tourism Organization, 1986; Swarbrooke, 1994; Tighe, 1986; Makens, 1987; Formica and Uysal, 1998). Heritage tourism attractions encompass tourist assets of historic significance such as

archaeological, military, or religious sites, monuments, buildings and cradles of civilizations (Tuly, 1997; Stevens, 1989; Vanhove, 1984). These may have played important roles in creating the identity of the destination (Prentice, 1993; Fowler, 1992), by defining its perennial and unique characteristics. On the subject of cultural tourism, a society's culture may be described as the way of life that has largely been passed down to the present generation from the past (Fragola, 1986). The cultural tourism attractions of a destination would therefore refer to the less tangible elements of the lifestyles of the people, such as values, customs, music, language, traditional folklore, artifacts, gastronomy and pageantry that the people use to express their world view (Sharpley, 1994). The institutions that serve as custodians of the unique cultural practices and lifestyles of the area, such as museums and political or religious organs would also form a part of the cultural attractions of a destination (Evans and Leslie, 1995). These lifestyle characteristics which tend to arouse the curiosity of strangers to the area, constitute its cultural attractions (Hall and Zeppel, 1990; Formica and Uysal, 1998).

Cultural and Heritage Tourism Today: Culture and heritage are major 'pull' factors in international tourism (Cossons, 1989), attracting tourists to cultural and heritage sites and events. These aspects of tourism have seen an increase in demand by tourists in the last few decades (Hitchcock et al., 1997). Some of the possible explanations for the continued growth of heritage and cultural tourism include the higher levels of education of the general public; media representations (especially on television) of worldwide heritage and cultural themes such as monuments, lifestyles and special events; the status-symbol value of heritage tourism; and the growing desire of tourists to make their holiday experience also a learning experience (Swarbrooke, 1994).

Consequently, the late 1980's and the 1990's have seen a shift in tourism tastes from a more materialistic market-driven mass tourism toward a quest for tourism products of an experiential nature (Swarbrooke, 1994). The attraction of heritage objects and 'exotic' cultural experiences have tended to play a major role in satisfying some of these changing tourism tastes.

Beside the educational and entertainment value that cultural and heritage attractions provide to visitors, they are also often valued by destinations as less finite economic resources. In some economically depressed areas, cultural entertainment, archaeological attractions, and historic buildings have been used in development schemes aimed at regenerating run down neighborhoods (Cohen, 1991; Lanfant, 1995; Worden, 1996). Rural traditions, cultures and gastronomy have become tourist attractions for urban dwellers trying to escape momentarily the tumultuous lifestyle of the cities.

There has been criticism that in these roles, heritage and cultural attractions are sometimes misused to validate myths and articulate 'masculinized' notions of place and identity that are male and elite-dominated versions of past and present 'pseudo-reality', but which bear little

resemblance to fact (Ranger, 1989; Kinnaird and Hall, 1994; Worden, 1996). However, another significant development in modern heritage and cultural tourism is the growth of interest in the heritage of 'the Common Man', in addition to that attributed to Kings and Queens (Swarbrooke, 1994).

Research Problem

The long tradition in Europe of interest in foreign cultures and historic attractions has been evident among UK travelers to the North American continent as well. While UK visitors to the southern and western parts of the U.S. were more interested in personally active pursuits like beach and warm weather activities, amusement/theme parks, shopping, access to large modern cities, nightlife and entertainment; it was the desire for educational experiences connected with cultural, heritage and natural experiences that were the major attractions to those visiting the central parts of the country (PTAMS UK 1989). Historical sites, native peoples, the great outdoors and wildlife appeared to be the principal attractions for these latter visitors to the U.S.

The interest of some of these visitors in the cultural and heritage aspects of the attractions of the continent therefore make an examination of these factors of the market a necessity.

Objectives of the Study: The principal objective of this study was to determine the importance of cultural and heritage attractions and activities in the trips of UK visitors to Canada and the U.S. The U.K. visitors to the two destinations would be compared to determine the differences and similarities that may exist on the cultural and heritage dimensions of tourism between them. The results of the study could be helpful in planning complementary and/or competitive marketing strategies for cultural and heritage attractions and activities in Canada and the U.S.

Methodology

The PTAMS Data: Since 1986, the PTAMS data have been gathered on tourism flows from important international travel markets to North America, and most recently, this has been done by Coopers & Lybrand Consulting, as part of a research program sponsored by the governments of Canada, the United States and Mexico. The visitors to the two destinations was statistically significant.

part of the data set that had information on the destination choice factors and trip activities for the most recent trip by UK visitors to either the United States or Canada was examined.

Factor analysis was performed on a motivational scale which contained variables or destination attributes that may have been important influences on respondents in planning and selecting the destination of their most recent long-haul trip. Factors which suggested preference for cultural/heritage activities during the most recent long-haul trip of respondents were extracted.

Once the cultural and heritage-oriented factors were identified, t-tests were done on their constituent variables in order to find out the extent to which their means differed between UK visitors to Canada and the U.S. T-tests were also done on a number of other salient variables, including demographics, length of stay, important sources of pre-trip information, expenditures and main purpose of the trip. The variables which showed significant differences between UK visitors to the two destinations were then crosstabulated with cultural and heritage variables to determine the importance of various cultural and heritage variables in different categories of demographic and other important variables. For example, since the variables representing both 'age categories' and the cultural motivation of 'experiencing a simpler lifestyle' were significantly different among UK visitors to Canada and the U.S., a crosstabulation of the two variables could shed some light on whether the difference in the mean age of the two groups of visitors was a factor in the disparity between their preference for, or aversion to 'experiencing a simpler lifestyle'.

Analysis of the Study

Characteristics of U.K. Cultural/Heritage Visitors to the U.S. and Canada: Among U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to the U.S., pleasure and vacation were found to be the principal motivations for the trip (Table 1). The next most important reason for their trip was to visit friends and relatives.

With U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to Canada, the most important purpose for the trip was to visit friends and relatives, followed by pleasure and vacation. A chi-square test indicates that the difference in main purpose for the trip between the cultural/heritage

Table 1.
Purpose of Trip Among Cultural/Heritage U.K.
Visitors to Canada and the U.S.

	Pleasure or Vacation Travel purpose	Visiting Friends and Relatives
U.S. Cultural/ Heritage	61.9%	22.0%
Canada Cultural/ Heritage	39.2%	51.4%

Source: PTAMS, U.K. (1996)

Canada: N=181

U.S.: N=236

Chi-Square Significance for both: .000

Comparing the results in Table 1 to the trend data in Figure 1, one discovers that the percentage of U.K. visitors to the U.S. whose main purpose for the trip was vacation was high throughout the decade studied, in spite of some fluctuations during the period.

The trend data presented in Figure 1 also suggests an inverse relationship between vacations as the main purpose

of trips and the amount of air travel undertaken within the U.S. destination. It appears that when the proportion of vacations grows as compared to other purposes of trips, then the amount of air travels within the destination drops. A similar relationship occurs between package tours and business as the main purpose of the trip. Again, as business trips increase, the package tour trip-type declines.

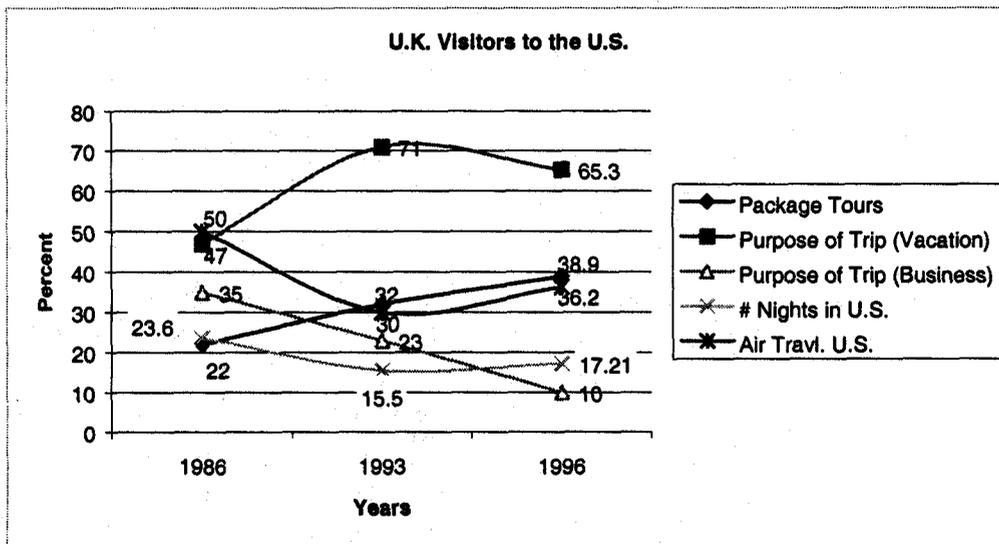


Figure 1. Trends in the U.K. Tourism Market to the U.S.

PTAMS U.K. (1996)

Source: United States Travel and Tourism Administration, (1993) and

Differences in Cultural and Heritage Activity Participation Among U.K. Visitors to North America

According to the "In-Flight Survey" data (1993), 'Visiting historical places' was one of the more popular activities for U.K. visitors to the U.S. in 1993, with 35% of visitors participating. By 1996, 42.9% were participating in this activity (Table 2). Seven of the activities identified through

factor analysis as being associated with cultural and heritage activities had significantly different participation levels among U.K. visitors to Canada and the U.S. (in bold in Table 2).

Participation in Cultural Activities: Eight activities were considered to represent cultural activities. They were: Sampling local foods, getting to know local people, interest in local crafts and handiwork, seeing or experiencing

people from a number of different ethnic backgrounds or nationalities such as Spanish and French-speaking North Americans, seeing or experiencing unique or different native groups such as Native Americans, enjoying ethnic culture and events such as music and neighborhoods, visiting museums and galleries, and experiencing the arts and cultural manifestations like live theatre, ballet and opera.

Since the composite cultural activity variable was a combination of 8 of the original variables on the activity scale, participation in three cultural activities during a single trip was subjectively chosen as the threshold,

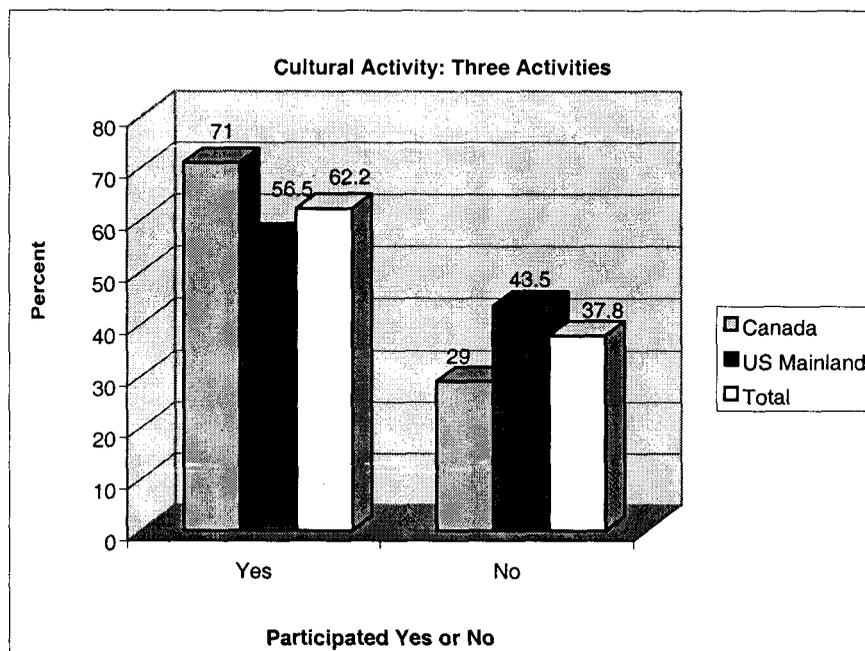
indicating a commitment to cultural activity. Considering visitor participation in three or more of the listed cultural activities, 71% of visitors to Canada and 56.5% of the visitors to the US were committed cultural tourists. This difference was statistically significant. Figure 2 illustrates the participation levels in the aggregate cultural activity variable among U.K. visitors to Canada and the U.S. It shows that, generally speaking, cultural tourists to Canada (those who participated in three or more cultural activities), participated in more cultural activities than cultural tourists who visited the U.S.

Table 2. Cultural and Heritage Activities in which U.K. visitors participated on their trip to Canada or the U.S.

Activities in which U.K. visitors participated on their trip	1996 U.S. Mainland % of Participation	1996 Canada % of Participation
Local crafts and handiwork ^{ab}	40.7	57.5
Getting to know local people ^{ab}	56.5	71.5
See or experience people from a number of different ethnic backgrounds or nationalities ^{ab}	34.3	40.7
Enjoying ethnic culture/events ^{ab}	33.4	41.6
Visiting museums/galleries ^{ab}	39.5	46.7
Attending local festivals/fairs/other special events ^{ac}	33.4	29.0
Visiting small towns and villages ^a	49.8	69.2
Visits to appreciate natural ecological sites ^a	38.9	45.3
Sampling local foods ^b	78.4	77.1
See or experience unique or different native groups ^b	16.4	19.6
Arts and cultural attractions ^b	25.2	22.4
Visiting places of historic interest ^c	42.9	47.2
Visiting places of military significance ^c	14.6	14.5
Visiting sites commemorating important people ^c	24.0	17.3
Visiting places with religious significance ^c	19.8	20.1
Visiting places of archaeological interest ^c	16.4	16.8
Visiting friends or relatives ^a	42.2	70.1

*Participation levels in activities in bold were significantly different among U.K. visitors to the U.S. and Canada. ^bCultural variables. ^cHeritage variables.

Figure 2. Trips Involving Participation in at Least Three Cultural Activities



Source: PTAMS, 1996. Significance: .002 (two-tail)

The cultural activity variables of interest in 'Local crafts and handiwork' and 'Getting to know local people' also had statistically different participation levels between U.K. visitors to the U.S. and Canada. In each case, the U.K. visitors to Canada participated more in the activities, and the difference was significant.

Participation in Heritage Activities: The heritage activity factor extracted through factor analysis was made up of 6 component variables: Visiting places of historic interest, visiting places of military significance, visiting sites commemorating important people, visiting places with religious significance, visiting places of archaeological interest, and attending local festivals/fairs/other special events.

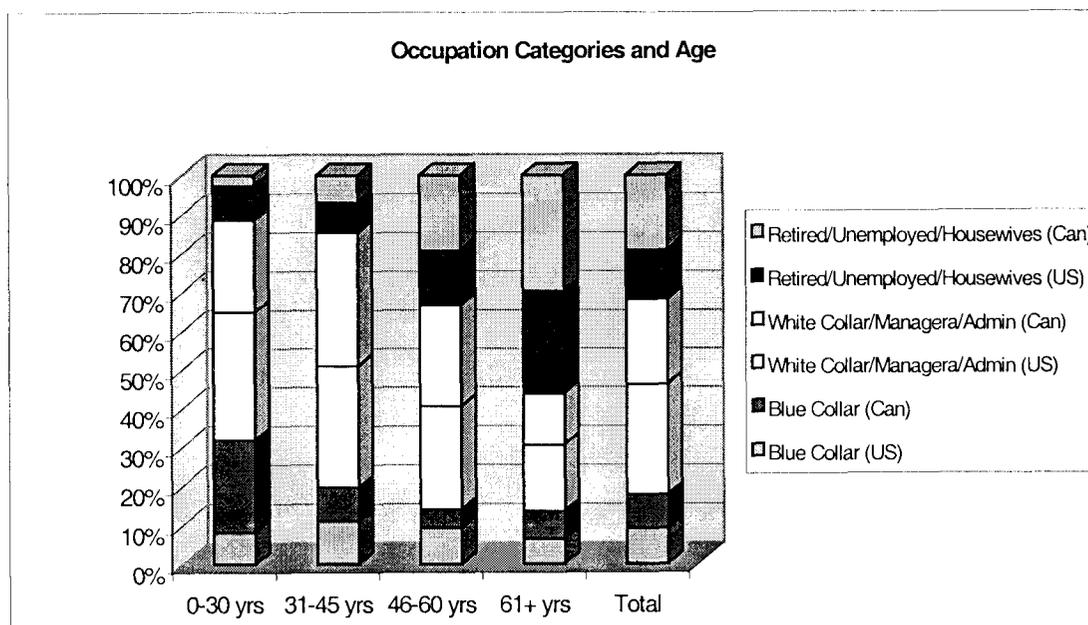
A comparison of the heritage activity factor between U.K. visitors to the U.S. and Canada did not show any significant differences in participation levels between the two destinations. Individual comparisons of the 6 component variables of the heritage factor revealed that the difference in participation levels for the heritage variable 'Attending local festivals/fairs/other special events' was significant. In this case, participation was higher among U.K. heritage tourists visiting the U.S.

Other Characteristics of Cultural/Heritage Tourists Visiting Canada and the U.S.: There were proportionally more singles among the group of U.K. visitors to the U.S. (which was younger, on average, than the group visiting Canada), and proportionally more divorced/separated/widowed visitors among those visiting Canada. These differences were statistically significant. The other marital categories were more similar between the two groups.

Among U.K. cultural/heritage tourists visiting Canada, 27.6% belonged to the category of retired/non-working housewife/unemployed, compared to 17.8% for those visiting the U.S.

There were no significant differences in gender distribution between the visitors to the two destinations. Even though it is not easy to make accurate comparisons based on different data sets using different methodologies, this shows a leveling up of the gender distribution of U.K. visitors to the U.S. between 1993 and 1996. The "In-Flight Survey" data (1993) statistics indicated that the average British visitor to the U.S. in 1992 was a male (62%).

Figure 3. Occupation Categories and Age Among Cultural/Heritage Tourists



Source: PTAMS, 1996 Significance: .000

Characteristics of U.K. Visitors Committed to Cultural and Heritage Activities

With the threshold at which visitors in this study were considered cultural and heritage tourists pegged at

participation in at least three of the activities that were identified through factor analysis as being associated with cultural/heritage tourism, the characteristics of the visitors so identified were compared with the average U.K. visitors to the U.S. or Canada, with the following results:

Table 3. Average U.K. Visitors Who Participated in Three or More Cultural or Heritage Activities

	<i>Average U.K. Visitor to Canada Who Participated in 3 or More Cultural/ Heritage Activities</i>	<i>Average U.K. Visitor to the U.S. Who Participated in 3 or More Cultural/ Heritage Activities</i>	<i>Average U.K. Visitor to the U.S.A. or Canada</i>
Age	51.34 (N=152)	42.79 (N=186)	45.70
Number of nights spent at destination	19.66 (N=152)	18.00 (N=178)	18.41
Total expenditure per traveler	£1163.11 (N=129)	£1165.49 (N=164)	£1104.73
Took a package tour	24.3% (N=181)	36.0% (N=236)	32.8% (N=543)
Party size	2.52 (N=180)	2.91 (N=236)	2.8 (N=416)
Have close friends or relatives living at the destination	74.0% (N=181)	57.7% (N=234)	*

Source: PTAMS, 1996

*Each destination was assessed separately in terms of availability of friends and relatives

U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to Canada (N=152) and the U.S. (N=178) spent a mean of slightly less than three weeks at their destinations. Table 3 shows other general differences that were statistically significant between the two groups. The average cultural/heritage U.K. tourist to Canada (N=152), was much older than his or her counterpart who visited the U.S (N=186).

Percentage-wise, Table 3 demonstrates that more than a third of the people visiting the U.S. (N=236) chose a tour package as their trip-type while slightly less than a quarter of those visiting Canada (N=181) did likewise.

Cultural/heritage travel groups to the U.S. (N=164) made significantly more total travel-party expenditures at the destination than those visiting Canada (N=129). This is not surprising since the travel-party size favored visitors to the U.S. The mean party size of 2.91 for U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to the U.S. (N=236) was significantly higher than the party size of 2.52 for those visiting Canada (N=180). This compares with the party size of 3.02 (N=329) for the

average U.K. travel group to the U.S., and 2.46 (N=213) for the average U.K. travel group to Canada (PTAMS U.K., 1996).

Table 3 also shows that the percentage of U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to the U.S. (N=234) who had friends or relatives at the destination was 57.7, compared with 74.0% for those who visited Canada (N=181). The difference was significant. The comparable percentages for average visitors to Canada and the U.S. were 74.8 (N=214) and 53.5 (N=327) respectively.

There was an indication in Table 3 that U.K. cultural/heritage tourists to both destinations spent more per trip, (approximately £1160, including airfare), than the average U.K. tourist visiting the same destinations (£1104.73).

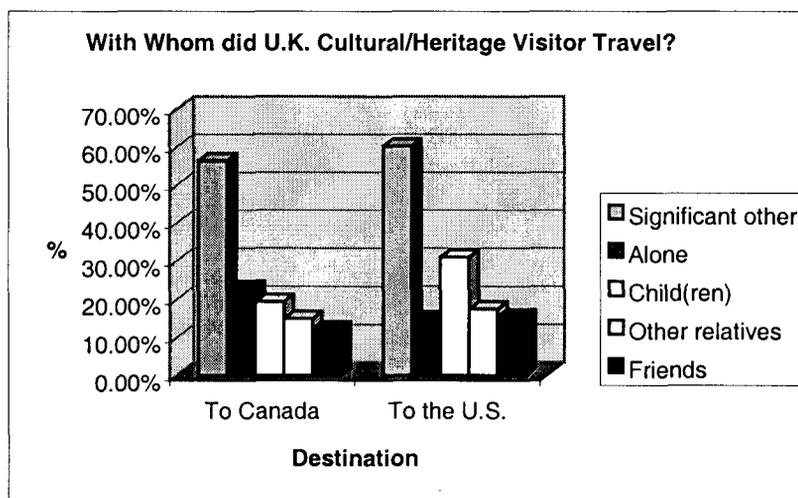
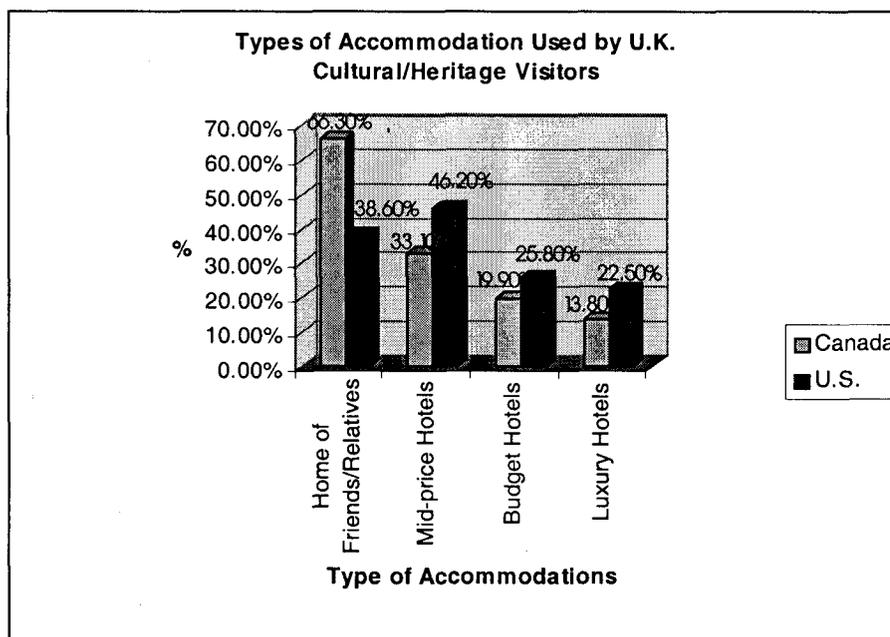


Figure 4. Travel Companions
 Source: PTAMS, 1996
 Canada: N= 181 U.S.: N= 236

More cultural/heritage U.K. visitors to Canada traveled alone (Figure 4) than those who visited the U.S., even though generally, travelers to both destinations were more likely to be accompanied. Combining travel companions who were family members or significant others, one discerns a higher family orientation among travel-parties who visited the U.S.

In Figure 5, nearly double the proportion of U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to Canada (two-thirds) spent some time in the homes of friends or relatives compared to the proportion of the visitors to the U.S. (a little over a third). Generally, the visitors to the U.S. tended to stay more often in commercial accommodations.

Figure 5. Types of Accommodations Used



Source: PTAMS, 1996
 Canada: N= 181 U.S.: N=236

Discussion

Characteristics of U.K. Cultural/Heritage Travelers to Canada and the U.S.: A major distinguishing characteristic between U.K. travelers to Canada and the U.S. is the difference in trip-types. More than half of U.K. cultural/heritage tourists go to Canada principally to visit friends and relatives, and 74% had close friends or relatives at the destination. This compares with For those visiting the U.S., 57.7% had close friends or relatives at the destination. The dominance of this trip-type at the Canadian destination appears to have had an impact on the pattern of use of commercial accommodations by U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to Canada, as two-thirds of them stayed in the homes of their friends and relatives for at least part of the time. They tended to use commercial accommodations less often.

Among cultural/heritage U.K. visitors to the U.S. on the contrary, 62% made the trip principally for pleasure and vacations. The fewer family and friends attachments that this group had at the destination is likely one of the contributing factors to their greater use of commercial accommodations and package tours.

Cultural and heritage activities such as festivals, fairs and special events need therefore to be planned in the U.S. to coincide with vacation periods in order to capture U.K. tourists. Marketing the cultural and heritage attractions of Canada to U.K. tourists, such as the opportunity to mix with the local people and to experience ethnic culture and events, should be easier than similar efforts by tourism

authorities in the U.S., because of the greater emphasis on visits to friends and relatives by U.K. visitors to Canada.

While the snapshots of three different years presented in Figure 1 may not be enough to establish a clear trend of U.K. tourist behavior in the U.S., the inverse relationship between air travel within the destination and vacations as the main purpose of the trip suggests that U.K. vacation tourists to the U.S. do not travel much by air once they arrive at their principal destination. Consequently, local airlines may have needed to target U.K. tourists with some incentives in order to benefit from that market.

Less than a quarter of the U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to Canada used package tours, compared with more than a third of those visiting the U.S. The Travel Industry Association of America (1997) study had established a pattern among U.S. adult travelers which suggested that, generally, older travelers tended to patronize package tours more than younger ones. The findings here suggest that U.K. travelers may differ from their U.S. counterparts, since the older U.K. visitors to Canada take fewer package tours than the younger visitors to the U.S. Part of the explanation for the lower appeal of package tours to U.K. visitors to Canada could be related to the fact that more of the visitors have close friends and relatives at the destination. These may serve as their local guides, making package tours less attractive.

Additionally, it has been said that the British market is a mature and sophisticated one in which travelers are more confident traveling independently and straying from the package offerings on the beaten path. Therefore, they are

said to be far less dependent on tour package travel than Asian markets for example (PTAMS, U.K. 1997). This could be part of the reason why Canada, which is quite familiar to U.K. tourists, could inspire a desire for independent exploration rather than managed package tours.

Besides, package tours to Canada are very structured and are short on flexibility, to the extent that only 6% of them include car rental, compared to 27% for the average long-haul destination (PTAMS, U.K. 1997). Consequently, the types of offerings of package tour products in Canada may help explain why its packages are not very attractive even among the most likely clients.

Business travel was also shown in Figure 1 to have an inverse relationship with the use of package tours. One would normally expect business visitors to be less likely to select package tours as a component of their trip. However, the decrease in the use of package tours in relation to an increase in business trips in this case could suggest a need for additional information about business travel for package tour operators. Is it still possible to capture the transaction of engaging in leisure activities during a business trip, or is the decline related to other changes in business travel behavior?

Developing innovative and flexible tour products that meet the needs of various types of travelers, including business travelers, may improve the tour package market in Canada for U.K. travelers. Such improvements could include greater emphasis on fly-drive packages, culture/history tours and special interest holidays. In the meantime, this is an area where the U.S. could siphon off potential visitors to Canada.

Differences in shopping expenses among cultural/heritage visitors to Canada and the U.S. were significant, with the visitors to the U.S. spending on average £150 more. The analysis showed that U.K. cultural/heritage tourists to the U.S. or Canada spend more than the average U.K. traveler to both destinations. Hence the cultural/heritage tourist is a premium client in terms of expenditure and should be targeted in marketing messages over and above the average tourist. Canada may need to include discount techniques and coupons in its advertisements targeted at cultural/heritage tourists in the U.K. in order to encourage them to spend more when they visit.

Given that the mean age of the visitors to Canada was higher than that of those going to the U.S., and that older visitors tended to value cultural/heritage attractions more than younger ones, the development of cultural/heritage programs in Canada will need to be sensitive to the needs and abilities of older travelers and retirees.

There was a significant difference in average travel-party size between U.K. cultural/heritage travelers to the U.S. (2.91, N=236), and to Canada (2.52, N=181). The travel-party size has implications for planning the capacity of tourists facilities at the destination, by managers. Additionally, the travel-party of U.K. cultural and heritage visitors to the U.S. appeared to be more family-oriented than their counterparts visiting Canada. The lower mean age of U.K. cultural/heritage visitors to the U.S. means that they were more likely to have children in their households, and their travel-parties were also more likely to be larger. U.S. tourism businesses should therefore plan

cultural/heritage programs for larger U.K. travel-groups and families. Visits to museums, festivals, fairs and special events as well as visits to small towns and villages and other family-friendly cultural/heritage activities should therefore be given close attention when creating programs for U.K. travel-parties visiting the U.S.

Business travel-parties were not an important component of the cultural and heritage visitors' activities at either destination.

Conclusion

While U.K. visitors to Canada and the U.S. have a lot in common, they also differ in substantial ways. Generally, vacations and pleasure-seeking are the main purposes of the visits of those who go to the U.S., while visits to friends and relatives tend to dominate as the principal reason for trips by U.K. visitors to Canada.

Participation in cultural and heritage activities is more widespread among the visitors to Canada, who happen to be an older group of visitors. The younger visitors to the U.S. take tours more often and they travel in larger family groups.

This analysis shows that, while the two destinations differ, they complement each other in many ways in the eyes of U.K. visitors, and could therefore constitute a single regional destination catering to a varied clientele, especially at the border regions. Competition among businesses in the two destinations for clients is inevitable, but joint targeted marketing could bring in more U.K. tourists who would travel between the two destinations to experience their varied attractions.

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