

Lake Watershed Tourists: Who They Are and How to Attract Them

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Abstract

Lakes act as both ecosystems for numerous life forms, and in many cases, tourist destinations. In order to sustain lakes as tourist destinations and protect them as ecosystems, municipalities need to understand the tourist, their demographics, motivations, satisfaction levels and the tourists' desire for sustainability initiatives. To this end, the purpose of this study was to examine lake tourists, their demographics, motivational drivers and their relation to each other. Using a sample of 475 surveys, cross-tabulations, t-tests, and ANOVA's were executed to understand differences and relationships. The results show varying differences with three key findings. First, motivations drive visitors based on their age and gender. Second, income has an influence on the importance visitors put on businesses promoting sustainability, such that the greater the income-level the lower the importance visitors placed on businesses promoting sustainability. This research builds upon past segmentation studies to show the link between sustainable types of tourism and the importance of sustainability. This adds a third key finding to the area of inquiry, demonstrating that increased awareness not only strengthens the relationship between demand and nature-based offerings, but that it can also increase satisfaction levels.

Keywords: Market segmentation; Tourist experiences; Sustainable tourism; Lake; Visitor preferences; Motivations

Introduction

It is becoming increasingly important that tourism providers have the social and environmental values of the surrounding communities match the economic benefits generated by the tourism industry. This includes preserving cultural values, historic landmarks, ecologically sensitive natural areas and promoting community wellbeing [1]. With increasing concern regarding the environmental impacts of tourism, the tourism industry continuously seeks to better understand their consumer and has begun to acknowledge the necessity to improve management so as to develop tourism for their clients in a more sustainable manner [2]. This concern also holds true for lake destinations. Lakes are not only diverse microcosms inhabited by numerous forms of wildlife, they are also popular tourist destinations, placing significant stress on the quality of the habitats and natural resources of the lakes [3,4]. In order to abate or limit the stressors that can be placed on lakes, the stakeholders who manage lakes and the tourism it draws, need to understand the tourist and find ways of attracting and marketing to environmentally conscious tourists. This research undertakes an investigation into the demographics of lake visitors, their motivations, their satisfaction levels, and their desire and promotion of sustainability, using the Lake Simcoe Watershed in Ontario, Canada as its area of analysis.

Sustainable Lake Tourism

The need for more sustainable forms of tourism has been met with both an increasing supply of, and demand for sustainable tourism that enables socio-ecological sustainable tourism and development of an area [2,5-8]. To this end, tourism providers need to develop tourism that is in line with the social and environmental values of the areas they promote [1,9]. To achieve a more sustainable destination, tourism providers and regions need to continuously evaluate and improve their sustainability initiatives [7-12]. This type of evaluation acknowledges the link between increasing competitiveness of tourist destinations with societal prosperity and environmental integrity of a host region [13-16]. As such, many regions are beginning to realize the significance of the tourism market and have started channelling their resources to develop their region and enhance their image in a way that will attract a particular type of tourist. In order to do so, understanding who

visits their area, what attractions are preferred and the motivations for visiting is increasingly important to aid in marketing.

Tourism can provide both positive and negative benefits. When locations take up the mantle of sustainable tourism in general, it can provide increased revenues [1,2,8,12]. The economic benefits from sustainable tourism are also realized by lake destinations specifically in the form of increased visitor traffic, local spending, and longevity [10,17-20]. Although tourism to lakes and their surrounding areas can derive economic benefits, recreational activities can also place significant stressors [3,4]. It is this need to mitigate or eliminate these stressors that raises the need to understand the tourist and their motivations to visit the lake, in order to better market to a more sustainable tourist.

Lake tourism consumer demographics

There are a number of studies that have examined tourists' motivations within lake regions and these studies tend to illuminate that tourists who are interested in sustainability aspects are the most lucrative [1,2,7,8,12]. These types of visitors are often described as ecotourists or sustainable tourists. Many studies have found that ecotourists have higher annual incomes than general tourists [1,2,8,12]. The results from the literature indicate that markets for ecotourism and sustainable tourism came from well-educated households with average annual incomes of greater than \$45,000 CAN. The actual trip budget was also higher in ecotourists than general tourists, \$92/day and \$64/day respectively. Tourists inclined to participate in ecotourism tended to be older than average (35-55) also indicating a positive correlation between age and desire for sustainable tourism [8,12].

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Collins-Kreiner and Israeli [8] investigated the potential to develop ecotourism at the Agmon Lake in Israel; an ecotourism site that was nominated as a UNESCO World Heritage site because of the rare species of birds that nest in and inhabit the area. This area is thought of as a seasonal tourism destination that tends to attract individuals wanting to engage in bird watching. The authors conducted a market analysis based on the socio-demographic characteristics of ecotourists (i.e., those who were visiting the lake) and general tourists (i.e., those who did not visit the lake but were visiting the surrounding region). Surveys were distributed to 961 ecotourists and 254 general tourists, and demographic findings were consistent with the majority of literature reviewed [1,5,12] in that ecotourists are largely better educated than regular tourists; 65% of ecotourists were University graduates compared to 21% of general tourists [8]. The authors suggest that the link between level of education and desire for ecotourism may be explained by the fact that individuals with higher academic education have had more exposure and opportunity to learn about the environment and sustainable travel. The study, however, did not examine whether this more sustainable form of tourism was a driver for visitation. Ecotourists were also older and had higher trip expenditures compared to general tourists, that parallels other relevant literature [5].

Lake tourism as a motivator

Wight [12] found that ecotourists tend to be more specific in activity selection in comparison to general tourists; for example ecotourists would state they wish to engage in kayaking or sailing while a general tourist would state they wish to go boating. Luzar et al. [1] surveyed 1579 tourists in Louisiana and found that a strong environmental attitude was positively correlated with desire to participate in ecotourism that corresponds with Boley and Nickerson [5] and Wight [12] findings. Luzar et al. [1] found that annual income and level of education were determinants of participation in ecotourism, and that ecotourists were willing to pay more for an ecotour than general tourists. In another study, Chen et al. [7] found that tourists who expressed a willingness to revisit generally had higher levels of satisfaction with the tourism attributes than those who were unwilling to return. This finding may be applicable to many other tourism destinations and poses a potential challenge to tourism managers on how to improve the overall experience so that tourists will be inclined to revisit. Luzar et al. [1] and Luo and Deng [21] found that stronger environmental attitudes and interest in the environment were significant predictors of participation in environmentally based actions. The results also indicate that place attachment and type of recreational activity influenced one's level of conservation commitment [2]. These studies, although providing indicators of drivers for visitation did not look at satisfaction levels versus awareness of sustainability.

Lakes as tourist attractions

Dredge and Jenkins [22] propose that tourism is place dependant, and thus it involves the production of its own identity. For rural regions, this identity can be linked directly with the lakes that fall within their boundaries. With this in mind, it is pertinent to examine the relatively few studies that specifically focus on segmentation or motivation of nature oriented visitors [5-7,23]. Curtin [6] explored the demand for nature-based tourism in Britain and revealed an independent tourism market that combines an interest in nature and the environment with traditional tourism activities such as sightseeing. Through face-to-face interviews with tourists, tourism managers and operators, the author found that more managers and operators are offering nature-based tourism activities, there is also an increased demand for such activities by tourists. Some desired attributes of tourism destination

listed by respondents were as follows: uniqueness, unspoilt landscape, special quiet places with abundant wildlife, places that can be visited spontaneously, places that have a sense of space/freedom/remoteness [6]. However, one common criticism amongst tourists was that tourism promotion and marketing within a particular sector was highly fragmented and could be more innovative. As such, it is suggested that nature-based tourism destinations may benefit from using iconic site-specific wildlife species to market the novelty of the destination to tourists. Furthermore, tourists proposed that tourism operators within the same sector work more cohesively and should provide external links to other useful and relevant information or companies on their websites [6]. On the other end of the spectrum, interviews with the tourism operators reveal that an increasing challenge in the sector of nature-based tourism is the increase in 'DIY' (Do It Yourself) nature tourists. These are tourists who do not wish to pay for the wildlife experiences and activities offered, and feel they are experienced enough to guide themselves [6]. This can create potentially adverse effects both from an economic and an environmental standpoint. It puts tourism managers in a position to receive no direct benefits from the tourists and is unsupportive of local businesses that depend on tourism. It also may cause ecological disturbances if tourists do not engage in the proper environmentally responsible behavior (i.e., trampling vegetation, noise disturbances, etc.). Overall it is evident that wildlife and nature tourism need to find a careful balance between economic prosperity and protection of the environment.

Keske and Smutko [23] examined heritage tourism within two very popular tourism destinations in Colorado, USA; one park region and one lake region. The stakeholders included community leaders, economic development professionals, tourism managers and operators, national and subnational government agency representatives, and residents of both the park and lake counties. Results of the survey highlight the fact that in both geographic locations the majority of respondents answered that expanding heritage and recreation in the area would have a positive impact on the land and community; this accounted for 75% of 'park respondents' and 67% of 'lake respondents'. Some of the recreation activities the respondents were in favor of include skiing, hiking, rock climbing, wildlife viewing, historic tourism, and bird watching. This supports findings from previous studies that indicate a demand for more nature and cultural-based forms of tourism [5,7]. In correspondence with Collins-Kreiner and Israeli [8], the majority of stakeholders felt that the quantity and quality of local shops, restaurants, hotels, and other amenities were currently inadequate to expand tourism in these areas; 90% of lake respondents agreed with this statement. Other similarities between responses from the park and lake regions were that a significant number of stakeholders felt this tourism expansion would have positive effects on economic prosperity and job opportunities, 74% and 92% respectively [23].

While many studies examine the demographic predictors for sustainable tourism [8,12], demands for sustainable tourism [5], motivators [21], and the benefits from sustainable eco-tourism [8,10,21], there is a lack of, and need to expand our understanding of the intersection between consumer demographics, motivations, and perceptions of sustainable tourism, and to what extent this impacts recreation-based activities. To this end, this paper looks to investigate not only the demographics, motivations, and satisfaction characteristics of lake tourists, and the importance that the tourist places on sustainability promotion; this paper also seeks to investigate the intersection between these four areas of focus.

Area of analysis

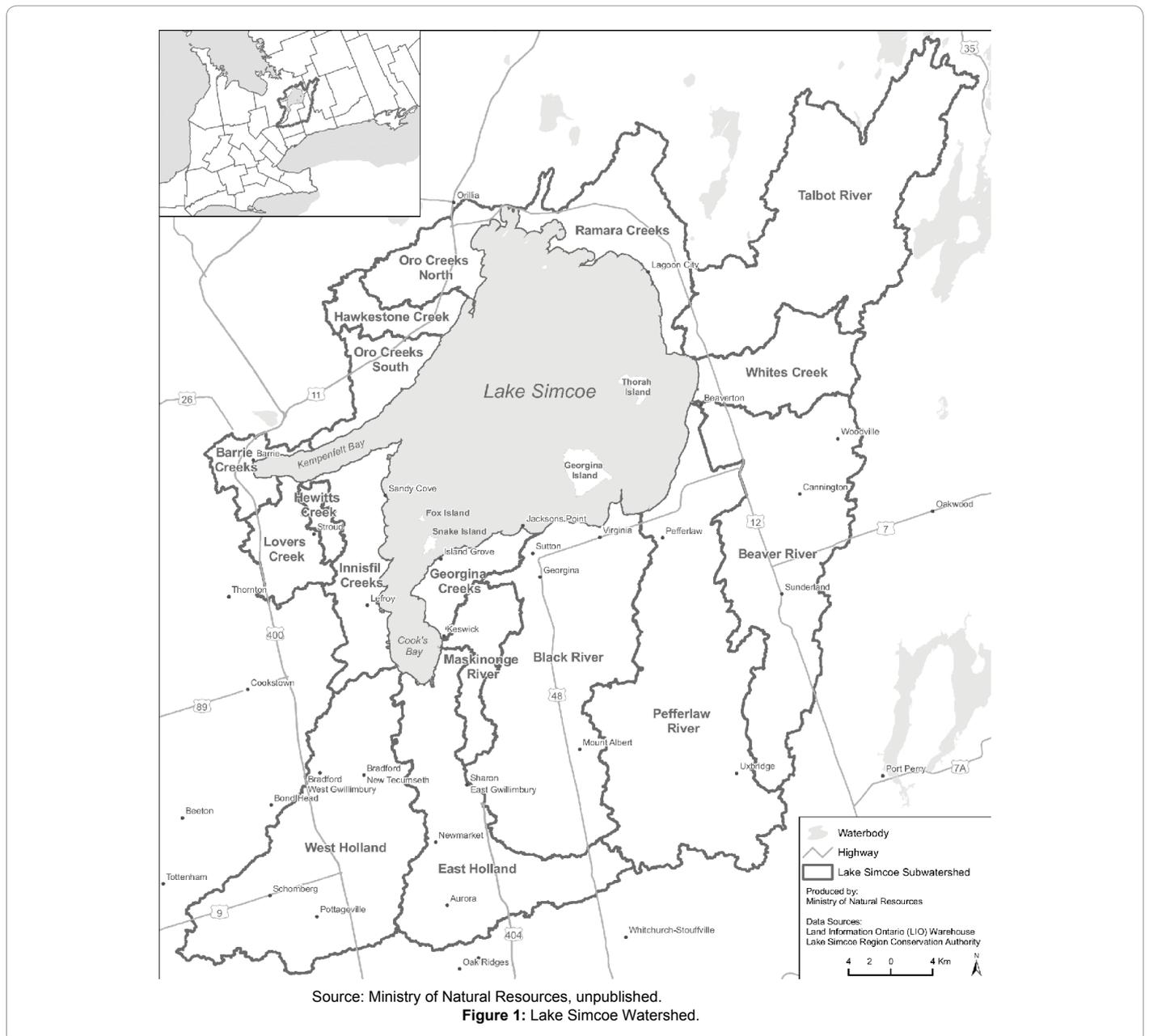
Lake Simcoe is situated in the heart of the province of Ontario in

Canada (Figure 1), and is one of the major recreational lakes in the province and within a one-hour drive for over half the population in the province. The fourth largest lake in Ontario, Lake Simcoe spans 72,278 hectares and its contributing watershed drainage area encompasses 332,400 hectares [24]. It flows through 20 municipalities, covers 3,400 square kilometres and is the primary water source for seven municipalities and is home to over 50 species of fish, 32 of which are species at risk [25]. Tourism and recreation in LSW has also been found to generate an estimated \$200 million annually. Approximately 8% of all residences are seasonal cottages, public beaches are within 10 kilometers of most settlement areas and there are 728 kilometers of trails. Recreation activities include fishing, golf, recreational boating, hiking, and cycling, as well as some self-propelled water and winter sports (canoeing, stand up paddle boarding (SUP), kayaking, snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing).

Method

Using Lake Simcoe as its area of focus, 575 recreational visitors were surveyed between October 2014 and March of 2015, using convenience sampling. Surveys were collected face-to-face at a number of consumer shows as well as at outdoor equipment venues (Mountain Equipment Co-op, Bass Pro Shop) and at the city's main train station. Consumer shows included: Cycle Show (October 2014), Cottage Life Show (October 2014), Travel Show (January 2015), Boat Show (January 2015), Outdoor Show (February 2015), Golf and Travel Show (February 2015), and Toronto Sportsman Show (February 2015).

The survey consisted of 26 questions, of which 19 were structured multiple choice (most with the option of providing open-ended comments or Likert scale questions, while seven were open-ended. Question types included ranking as well as five-point scales, asking



questions pertaining to motivations, activities preferences, travel patterns, and demographics. This study drew upon the concept of push and pull factors as discussed by Uysal and Jurowski [26], as well as the framework developed by Trauer [27].

All 575 surveys were entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), and subsequently cleaned (less than 50% response rate removed) to reach a final total of 475 usable responses (the number of responses may vary by question due to question-non-response). Frequencies were run to understand the demographic composition, motivations, satisfaction characteristics, and importance that consumers place on sustainability promotion. Subsequently, cross-tabulation, t-tests, and ANOVA's were undertaken to understand the connection between each of the four areas of focus.

Findings

Demographics

This study reached a diverse array of tourists. A representative sample of tourists from all age groups was achieved with roughly equal representation of the under 30, 30 to 41, 42 to 53, and over 53 age groups. While there were visitors captured from all income ranges, the majority of interviewees made over \$100,000 (53.9%). Similarly, a greater number of interviewees had at minimum a university education (53.3%), and were primarily male (62%). It is interesting that a higher percentage is male, however, it is representative as there was a higher attendance of males at the consumer shows.

Motivations for visiting lakes

The primary motivations for the tourists interviewed were visiting friends and relatives (VFR) (22.3%), outdoor recreation (16.6%), going to a cottage (12.4%), and fishing (12.4%). While some visitors were motivated by other factors (golfing, eating, visiting the beach, etc.), they each fell below 5% of primary motivations indicated, therefore findings show there are distinct segments of these visitors.

Motivations differ based on a visitor's age and gender. The greatest motivator for those between the age of 18 and 29 was outdoor recreation, while the greatest motivator for 30 to 41 year olds and those 54 years of age or older were visiting friends and relatives. Interesting to note, is that fishing was one of the two weakest motivators for all age groups, while being the strongest motivator for those between the age of 42 and 53. The strongest motivator for female visitors was visiting friends and relatives, while the strongest motivator for men was other (boating, festivals and events, etc.). Fishing was also in the top three motivations of men, while being the lowest motivator for women. While there also appears to be differences in motivations based on a respondents' household income and their education, they were not large enough to elicit levels of significance (Tables 1-3).

Important characteristics for visiting lakes

Overall, visitors were fairly satisfied (>3.6 out of 5) with the choice of activities, value for money, affordability, accommodations, choice/variety of food and beverages, friendliness of staff, ease of access and overall satisfaction at the lakes (Table 4).

Regardless of their age, visitors were fairly satisfied with the choice of activities, value for money, affordability, accommodations, choice/variety of food and beverages, friendliness of staff, and overall satisfaction at the lakes (Table 5). However, the older a visitor gets the more satisfied they are with the ease of access at the lakes.

Respondents' levels of satisfaction with the choice of activities, value

for money, affordability, accommodations, friendliness of people, ease of access, and overall satisfaction did not differ, regardless of their household incomes (Table 6). However, respondents' satisfaction with the choice/variety of food and beverages at the lake varied with their household income levels.

Findings also found that visitor's satisfaction with the variety of food and beverage, and their overall satisfaction, differed based on their level of education. Those with higher levels of education were less satisfied with the choice/variety of food and beverages. Those with a high school education or a masters/doctorate degree were less satisfied with the lakes offerings overall than those with a college diploma or Bachelor's degree. There were no significant differences in the characteristics of satisfaction, regardless of gender.

Those tourists who are motivated by fishing were more satisfied with the choice of activities than those motivated by going to the cottage, outdoor recreation, and those motivated by visiting friends and relatives. This trend was consistent with visitor satisfaction levels related to value for money, and affordability. However, no differences in satisfaction levels of accommodation, choice/variety of food and

Demographic Information		%	n
Age	18–29 years	20.3	473
	30–41 years	22.0	
	42–53 years	27.1	
	54–65 years	21.4	
	66 or over	9.3	
Household Income	Under \$20,000	3.2	373
	\$20,000–\$49,999	8.3	
	\$50,000–\$74,999	20.1	
	\$75,000–\$99,999	14.5	
	\$100,000–\$149,999	21.7	
	\$150,000–\$199,999	18.0	
Education	\$200,000 +	14.2	465
	High school	15.1	
	Trade certificate/diploma	3.4	
	College diploma	28.2	
	Bachelor's degree	36.8	
	Some University	4.7	
Gender	Master's degree	10.1	469
	Doctorate degree	1.7	
	Male	62.0	
	Female	37.6	

Table 1: Interviewee Demographics.

Primary Motivation	%
Visiting Friends and Relatives	22.3
Outdoor recreation (low impact: cycling, hiking, snowshoeing, etc.)	16.6
Going to a cottage	12.4
Fishing	12.2
Attending festival or event	6.5
Boating	5.7
Other (Golf, Beach, Motorized Recreation, Eating Out, Spa, Other)	24.2
N	475

Table 2: Primary Motivations.

Demographics		Motivation					n	Pearson Chi-Square Value	df	Sig.
		VFR	Outdoor Rec.	Going to Cottage	Fishing	Other				
Age	18–29 years	19%	33%	15%	12%	21%	67	48.452	16	0.000***
	30–41 years	28%	18%	23%	13%	18%	78			
	42–53 years	23%	19%	9%	29%	20%	94			
	54–65 years	35%	9%	16%	8%	31%	74			
	66 or over	47%	9%	3%	9%	31%	32			
Income	Less than \$50,000	29%	29%	16%	10%	16%	31	13.945	12	0.304
	\$50,000 to \$100,000	23%	20%	16%	22%	17%	98			
	\$100,000 to \$200,000	24%	21%	12%	15%	28%	97			
	\$200,000 or more	26%	14%	17%	7%	36%	42			
Education	High School	35%	13%	17%	15%	21%	48	18.428	12	0.103
	Trade Certificate/College Diploma	25%	16%	11%	22%	27%	109			
	Bachelor's Degree or Some University	24%	23%	16%	11%	26%	147			
	Masters or Doctorate Degree	41%	22%	16%	14%	8%	37			
Gender	Male	21%	17%	15%	20%	27%	218	24.83	8	0.000 ***
	Female	40%	23%	13%	7%	18%	124			

Cross-Tabulation conducted on motivations in relation to age, income, education, and gender respectively.

***Significance p=0.001.

Table 3: Demographics by Motivations (Cross-Tabulations).

Characteristics	Average	n
Choices of activities	3.97	449
Value for money	3.98	444
Affordability	3.94	441
Accommodation	4.13	231
Choice/Variety of food & beverage	3.61	417
Friendliness of people	4.32	460
Ease of access	4.28	470
Overall Satisfaction	4.04	473

Table 4: Satisfaction with Offerings at Lake.

Age (years)	Choice of Activities	Value for money	Affordability	Accommodation	Choice/Variety of food & beverage	Friendliness of people	Ease of access	Satisfaction
18–29	3.98	4.01	4.01	4.24	3.71	4.23	3.89	3.99
30–41	3.91	3.90	3.86	4.09	3.48	4.36	4.14	3.99
42–53	4.06	4.03	3.91	4.00	3.60	4.35	4.53	4.09
54–65	3.96	4.01	4.01	4.28	3.68	4.28	4.39	4.07
66 or over	4.00	3.97	3.95	4.11	3.67	4.53	4.59	4.16
n	447	442	440	231	416	458	468	471
df	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Mean ²	.321	.288	.427	.671	.711	.771	7.308	.380
F	.305	.328	.481	.763	.528	1.154	9.367	.878
Sig.	.874	.859	.750	.551	.715	.330	.000***	.477

ANOVA conducted on each variable in relation to satisfaction scores (0 less important to 1 important).

***Significance p=0.001.

Table 5: Satisfaction with Offerings at Lake by Age (ANOVA).

beverage, friendliness of people, ease of access, and satisfaction, when looking at differences by visitor motivations were found.

Importance of sustainability

In general, tourists place a great deal of importance on businesses and destinations promoting sustainable initiatives, with 83.5% of respondents stating that it was at least somewhat important (Table 7). Within

this section, the importance score has been modified into a binary score, with 0 representing an importance of somewhat or less, and 1 representing very to extremely important.

ANOVAs were run on visitor responses to how important they believe it is for businesses to promote sustainability initiatives and their own demographics. While there were no significant differences between

the different age groups, education attainments, and genders, there were significant differences between income ranges. The lower the household income of the survey participant, the higher the importance they place on businesses promoting sustainability initiatives (Table 8).

The importance that consumers place on businesses and destinations promoting their sustainability initiatives has little influence on the motivations that drive visitors to the area (Table 9). However, when a tourist places greater importance on the business or destination promoting sustainability initiatives, the stronger their motivation for partaking in outdoor recreational activities such as cycling, hiking, snowshoeing, etc. is.

The satisfaction that visitors place on their choice of activities, value for money, affordability, choice/variety of food, and overall satisfaction are significantly higher when the visitor also places a greater importance on the destination/business promoting its sustainability initiatives (Table 10). This may relate to the desired attributes of tourism found by Curtin [6], whose research uncovered the tourists' desire for natural, unspoiled landscapes. If tourism locations or destinations can showcase their sustainability initiatives and promote the natural landscape, they may be able to improve the satisfaction levels of their patrons, only if they can meet or exceed expectations.

Household Income	Choice of Activities	Value for money	Affordability	Accommodation	Choice/Variety of food and beverage	Friendliness of people	Ease of access	Satisfaction
Less than \$50,000	3.9268	3.95	3.95	4.55	3.63	4.27	4.10	4.03
\$50,000 to \$100,000	4.1532	4.02	3.94	4.25	3.66	4.38	4.38	4.12
\$100,000 to \$200,000	3.8768	3.96	3.91	4.11	3.78	4.35	4.23	4.04
\$200,000 or more	3.8431	4.04	3.94	3.86	3.16	4.12	4.43	3.94
n	354	350	347	189	327	362	368	371
df	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Mean ²	2.084	.163	.036	1.956	4.415	.950	1.417	.445
F	1.937	.180	.040	2.622	3.344	1.339	1.683	1.019
Sig.	.123	.910	.989	.052	.019*	.262	.170	.384

ANOVA conducted on each variable in relation to satisfaction scores (0 less important to 1 important).

***Significance p=0.001.

Table 6: Satisfaction with Offerings at Lake by Household Income (ANOVA).

Importance that a destination or business showcases its sustainability initiatives.	%	Group %
Not at all	9.9	38.9
A little	6.6	
Somewhat	22.4	
Very	39.3	61.1
Extremely	21.8	
n	473	100

Table 7: Importance of Sustainability Initiative Promotion.

Demographics	Mean Importance Score	N	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	18–29 years	372	4	.196	.823	.511
	30–41 years					
	42–53 years					
	54–65 years					
	66 or over					
Household Income	Less than \$50,000	372	3	1.113	4.865	.002**
	\$50,000 to \$100,000					
	\$100,000 to \$200,000					
	\$200,000 or more					
Education	High School	463	3	.193	.814	.487
	Trade Certificate/College Diploma					
	Bachelor's Degree or Some University					
	Masters or Doctorate Degree					
Gender	Male	467	1	.134	.565	.453
	Female					

ANOVA conducted on each variable in relation to importance of sustainability score (0 less important to 1 important).

***Significance p=0.001.

Table 8: Importance of Sustainability Initiative Promotion by Demographics (ANOVA).

Primary Motivation	Importance of destination or business showcasing its sustainability initiatives.		Sig
	Important	Less Than Important	
Attending festival or event	0.066	0.065	0.982
Beach	0.024	0.038	0.388
Boating	0.048	0.071	0.330
Eating out (restaurant or other food & beverage)	0.007	0.022	0.212
Fishing	0.138	0.092	0.120
Going to a cottage	0.111	0.141	0.324
Golf	0.045	0.022	0.154
Motorized recreation (snowmobiling, touring, ATV)	0.010	0.022	0.357
Outdoor recreation (low impact: cycling, hiking, snowshoeing, etc.)	0.194	0.120	0.027*
Spa	0.000	0.005	0.319
Visiting Friends and Relatives	0.215	0.234	0.626
n	473		

T-test conducted on each variable, comparing important to less important

*T test significance p=0.05.

Table 9: Importance of Sustainability Initiative Promotion by Primary Motivation (T-Test).

Satisfaction Characteristics	Importance of destination or business showcasing its sustainability initiatives.		Sig.	n
	Important	Less than Important		
Choices of activities	4.0842	3.8046	0.005**	447
Value for money	4.0778	3.8547	0.014*	442
Affordability	4.0223	3.8176	0.026*	439
Accommodation	4.1912	4.0532	0.273	230
Choice/Variety of food & beverage	3.7070	3.4688	0.041*	416
Friendliness of people	4.3915	4.2429	0.054	458
Ease of access	4.2902	4.2912	0.991	468
Satisfaction	4.1195	3.9370	0.003**	471

T-test conducted on each variable, comparing important to less important .

*T test significance p=0.05.

**T test significance p=0.01.

Table 10: Importance of Sustainability Initiative Promotion by Satisfaction Characteristics (T-Test).

Discussion

Parallel to Collins-Kreiner [8], Luzar et al. [1], Wight [12], and Lee [2], the average tourist interviewed was of average age, predominantly male, well-educated with a college degree or higher, and making over \$100,000. The primary motivations of those who visited the region were to visit friends and relatives, partake in outdoor recreation, go to a cottage, and fish. When going to the region, visitors were generally satisfied with the choice of activities available, the value they received for their money, affordability, accommodations, choice and variety of food and beverages, the friendliness of the people, ease of access, as well as being satisfied overall.

The motivations that drive visitors to partake in the regions lake tourism vary based on their demographics. While many tourists are motivated by visiting friends and relatives, regardless of age, those under the age of thirty are more likely to be motivated by outdoor recreation. Gender had a significant influence on motivations as well, with men being more likely to be motivated to fish, boat, and attend events, etc., while women were more likely to be motivated to visit friends and relatives. This tendency towards men being more inclined to fish than women is in line with Henry and Lyle's work in 2003.

A key finding in this research was regarding sustainability. The

importance that visitors place on businesses and destinations promoting and showcasing their sustainability initiatives has a link to the visitor's motivations and perceptions in regards to their levels of satisfaction. While the level of importance has little effect on most of the primary motivations visitors to lake regions have, this research has shown that the primary motivation to partake in outdoor recreation is significantly higher when the visitor also views sustainable initiative promotion as important. Along with other factors, the environmental dimension of competitiveness plays a major role in destination competitiveness as was also discussed by Dredge and Jenkins (2003), as features of the natural environment and landscape are significant tourism attractors. Therefore, maintaining the quality of the natural environment is vital for both consumers and marketers [28-30]. These points to a need for businesses and local municipalities to promote their sustainable initiatives and strategies, in order to reach the outdoor tourist. While not a significant driver for tourists with other motivations, it would also be beneficial to promote and showcase sustainability initiatives to every market segment as the study did show that any tourist who places a higher importance on seeing destinations/businesses showcase their sustainability practices also rates a destinations choice of activities, value for money, affordability, accommodations, choice/variety of food and beverage, and overall satisfaction higher than those who place less importance on the need for promotion.

Conclusion

This paper has provided an examination of the lake tourist demographic, their motivations, satisfaction levels, and their desire to see sustainable promotion of tourism businesses. By better understanding the lake tourist, tourism managers and operators can better determine what kind of tourist they wish to attract to a particular destination and how to best go about inciting those tourists to visit their destination. This will also improve marketing and development of the location's brand image to highlight unique attributes of the area, which may also help to improve the tourists overall experience and enhance destination competitiveness.

Destinations and municipalities can also work towards influencing environmentally responsible behaviors (ERBs). As has been pointed out by Lee [2], individuals who are frequently exposed to nature are more likely to possess strong environmental attitudes and engage in ERBs. This suggests that tourism management and businesses in tourist destinations should focus on promoting nature-based recreation activities so to strengthen the relationship between tourism, recreation, and ERB. Curtin [6], also found that there was a link between an increase in nature-based tourism offerings, and the demand for such offerings. The findings in this paper take this a step further, demonstrating that increased awareness not only strengthens the relationship, but that it can also increase satisfaction levels.

In addition to the benefits derived from increased spending that comes with increased tourism, destinations can benefit from building sustainable practices into their management of the region. This can assist in enabling the region to sustain or improve its environment both today and for future generations, ensuring sustained or growing economic benefits [13,20]. By improving upon the region, not only is the benefits derived from sustainable tourism consumed by the tourist, but it also improves the offerings and environment for the local population.

While this study has provided unique insights into the lake tourists' demographics and opinions, there are some areas that could be added to future studies to build upon these findings. While this study focused on the lake tourist, other studies have examined the differences between eco-tourists and general tourists, to allow for direct comparison, future iterations of this study should ask travelers to identify if they are ecotourists. To provide more depth, future studies should also look broaden the scope of this study and take a more integrated approach, wherein various industry actors are interviewed to accompany the visitor surveys.

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