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# Predicting Tourist Attachment to Selected Destinations: An Application of Place Attachment

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**Abstract**

Tourists develop emotional associations with destinations they visit. However, very limited research has been conducted to determine the meanings tourists attach to the places they visit and experience. The purpose of this study was to predict tourist attachment to coastal destinations in South Carolina by using selected travel behavior variables. Using a systematic random sampling process, 1,008 residents of the Greater Seneca-Clemson area in South Carolina were selected. The results of this study, with a response rate of 48.5%, suggested a strong predictive model for destination attachment -- with an explanatory power of 51% for the city of Charleston and 50% for the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area. A significant predictive model was found for Hilton Head Island, however, because of the small number of respondents visiting this tourism destination, none of the predictor variables were found to make a independent contribution to the model. The study revealed that tourist attachment to both the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area and the City of Charleston was highly related to traditional travel behavior variables such as destination attractiveness and the perception of traveling to a destination as a family tradition. In addition, there were factors contributing to tourist attachment, which proves unique to the type of destination. Implications for destination marketing and future research were also discussed.

**Keywords**

Place attachment Tourist attachment Destination attractiveness
Travel as a family tradition

People feel attached to places such as homes, communities, parks, and even countries. This concept of place attachment also can be applied to tourism since tourists interact with a destination environment, attaching meanings to the places they visit and experience. Tourists may form an attachment to a destination just as residents form strong feelings toward their residential communities (McCool and Martin, 1992; Um and Crompton, 1987).

## CONCEPTUAL UNDERPINNING

The connection between tourists and the tourism environment is influenced by tourists' perception of the destination. For instance, tourists may attach symbolic meanings to destinations. It is widely accepted that national parks enjoy a special status in America that is especially rich in meaning (Brown, 1990). They are considered as an important part of American heritage as places of cultural history are to European countries. Likewise, Disneyland, which is said to reflect modern American culture, has been treated as a modern utopia, a playground for adults and children (Maanen, 1992). Some people, especially those with younger children, may believe that it is a parental obligation to make at least one trip to Disneyland since most younger children are familiar with Disney movies, video, and products. These symbolic meanings of place can be captured by investigating an individual's attachment to place (Williams, Patterson, and Roggenbuck, 1992).

Although there have been some efforts to clarify place attachment in the leisure and tourism literature, the study of tourist attachment to a destination is very limited (Brown, 1990). Traditionally, tourist perception about a destination has used a multi-attribute approach, identifying a destination as a collection of features appealing to

tourists (Hu and Ritchie, 1993). This type of approach has failed to capture the emotional meaning that tourists associate with a place they visit and experience. The understanding of a tourism destination needs to be expanded to include not just an aggregate of attributes but rather an assessment of the entity as it is experienced. As Williams, et al., (1992) suggested, place is probably best understood by focusing on its symbolic meaning rather than on the sum of its physical attributes. Similarly, Lee, Backman, and Backman (1997) emphasized that psychological attachment to a destination is important in understanding tourist behavior including continued visitation to a destination. Further, the focus of place attachment research in the field of tourism has been based almost exclusively on individual attachment to residential communities as opposed to tourist attachment to destinations. This line of research has been conducted from the perspective of residents, addressing their attachment to their communities in relation to the length of residence and the perceived impact of tourism (Um and Crompton, 1987; McCool and Martin, 1994).

Regardless of the recent interest in the topic from other research paradigms, current studies on place attachment from a tourist perspective are only an exploratory step; much remains to be done to understand and measure the meaning that tourists associate with a place. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to further the understanding of attachment in a tourism setting by investigating an individual's attachment to a tourism destination based on selected travel behavior variables. Two research objectives were identified to address this purpose:

1. To identify the consistency of destination attachment and other travel behaviors including attractiveness of a destination, satisfaction with a

destination, past experience with a destination and other potential variables, across the three study destinations, and

2. To determine if tourist attachment to a destination can be predicted using selected travel behavior variables, including satisfaction with a destination, past experience with a destination, attractiveness of a destination, and other potential predictor variables.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Area

The study area for this research included three coastal South Carolina tourism destinations: the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area, the city of Charleston and Hilton Head Island. These are extremely popular destinations attracting tourists from South Carolina and the Eastern United States; this popularity might be a manifestation of tourist attachment to a destination (Moore and Graefe, 1994). These destinations were chosen in order to examine place attachment for a variety of coastal destination types. The Myrtle Beach area represents a coastal destination based on an attractive beach with its sports, recreational facilities, and entertainment facilities, while Hilton Head Island also represents a coastal destination but focused more on upscale tourists with its golf and tennis resorts. Charleston is an excellent example of a destination based on centuries of southern history.

### Instrumentation

Research in the area of place attachment from a tourist's perspective has yet to generate substantial findings to demonstrate its utility in a tourism context. To assess tourists' attachment to a destination, past literature was reviewed to identify instruments

used with studies having similar objectives (Williams et al., 1992; Moore and Graefe, 1994).

Using the work of Williams, et al. (1992) and Moore and Graefe (1994), a draft instrument was developed to assess individuals' attachment to the three coastal tourism destinations. During the instrument development phase, academics at a university in the Southeastern United States were asked to review the initial draft of the instrument for content and phrasing of each item. Following this review, a pilot study utilizing residents of the sample area revealed that the instrument and cover letter were unambiguous and understandable, and that the respondents had the knowledge base necessary to respond to the questions.

The final survey instrument consisted of two primary parts. Part one sought the respondents' socio-demographic information such as gender, age, marital status, formal education and household income. Then, the respondents were asked to identify which of the South Carolina destinations – either the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area, Hilton Head Island, or the City of Charleston – they had visited most recently as a tourist.

Part two sought information about respondents' travel behavior variables such as travel purpose; past experience, satisfaction, familiarity with the chosen destination; travel to a destination as a family tradition; destination attractiveness; and individual attachment to the chosen destination. Past experience was measured by asking respondents to indicate the number of vacation trips they had taken to the chosen destination between the years 1993 and 1997. Travel purpose, satisfaction, familiarity, and travel to a destination as a family tradition were measured by using a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree).

The evaluation of destination attractiveness was achieved through the use of 14 destination attributes identified from study conducted by Hu and Ritchie (1993). Respondents were asked to identify the importance of each attribute in selecting the chosen destination and to identify the perceived quality of each attribute. Then, the attractiveness score was established by multiplying the importance scores with the perceived satisfaction scores for each item. Both assessments were measured using a 9-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree), yielding a final score between 0 and 81. Three measures of internal consistency, using Cronbach's alpha, were calculated for each of the three destinations. The alpha coefficients were: .92 for Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area, .85 for the City of Charleston, and .80 for Hilton Head Island.

Lastly, an 18-item scale was used to determine respondents' perceptions of tourist attachment to a destination, again using a 9-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 9 (strongly agree). This scale was primarily based upon the work of Williams, et al (1992). Alpha coefficients, for each destination, also were calculated for this scale. The coefficients were as follows: .96 for Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area, .97 for the City of Charleston, and .96 for Hilton Head Island.

**Sample**

Residents of the Greater Seneca-Clemson area were selected as the population for the study because they represented a socio-demographic mix of residents of South Carolina. Using a systematic random sampling, 1,008 residents were selected from the White pages of the 1998 telephone directory of the Greater Seneca-Clemson area, eliminating businesses.

Data were collected from June to August 1998 through a self-administered mail survey. A total of 65 surveys were undeliverable; therefore, the sample had an effective base of 943 individuals. The initial mailing, follow-up postcards, and telephone calls resulted in 458 surveys being returned for a final response rate of 48.5 percent.

An assessment of nonresponse bias revealed that there was no difference between the respondents and non-respondents for selected travel behavior variables. Only two selected variables -- education level and the most recently visited destination area -- were found to be significantly different, revealing that respondents were more highly educated and had taken significantly more vacation trips to the study destinations than non-respondents. Since the purpose of the study was to address attachment to tourism destinations, these differences did not pose a bias for the study.

**Data Analysis**

The first analysis involved a series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures to determine if there were any significant differences across the three destinations in the study variables to merit investigating the proposed relationship independently for each destination.

Then, to initially explore the relationship between attachment and tourism behavior, bivariate correlations between an individual's attachment to a destination and a series of travel behavior variables were calculated. A correlation coefficient of .30 or higher was used as a criterion for selecting the predictor variables to be included in the final model to predict tourism attachment.

Lastly, multiple regression analysis was utilized to predict tourist attachment to a destination based upon changes in selected independent variables. Initially, three

independent variables were conceptualized to predict attachment. In addition, by using the results of the correlation analysis, three additional variables were included in the regression analysis as potential predictor variables. Therefore, the six potential predictor variables utilized in the regression analysis included: attractiveness of a destination, past experience with a destination, satisfaction with a destination, familiarity with a destination, age of tourists during their first visit, and travel to a destination as a family travel.

## RESULTS

### Consistency Across Destinations

In addressing the first research objective, ANOVA with a LSD post hoc test revealed that there were significant differences in travel behavior variables across the three study areas. The results are presented in Table 1. First, three of the six travel purposes were found to be significantly different across the three destinations: family get-together ($F= 4.32$, $p\leq.01$), getting away from work ($F= 3.03$, $p\leq.04$), and meeting new people ($F= 8.94$, $p\leq.01$). Even though there were significantly differences, the rankings of the mean scores across the destinations were quite consistent.

Insert Table 1 about Here

Second, the age of the tourist during his first visit to a destination was significantly different across the areas ($F=8.72$, $p\leq.01$). Satisfaction with a destination ($F=12.75$, $p\leq.01$) and past trips to a destination ($F=9.04$, $p\leq.01$) were significantly different across the areas. Further, tourist attachment to a destination ($F=10.89$,

df=2,339, p≤.05) revealed a significant difference across the study areas. Tourist attractiveness to a destination (F=2.90, df=2,361,p≤.06), familiarity with a destination (F=.44, p≤64), and travel a family tradition (F=.20, p≤.82) were not found to be significantly different across the study areas. Since the preliminary ANOVA revealed that several significant differences across the study areas existed, indicating that there is an interaction among the destinations and the study variables -- it was determined that the final predictive models should be analyzed for each destination separately.

**Correlations Among the Study Variables**

A correlation coefficient of |.30| or higher between the travel behavior variables and destination attachment was used as a criterion for selecting additional potential predictor variables to be included in the standard multiple regression analysis (Tabachnick and Fidell, 1996). Table 2 reveals that six of the twelve independent variables analyzed demonstrated a consistent correlation, ranging from a minimum of -.30 to a maximum of .57., with destination attachment.

Insert Table 2 about Here

The age of tourist during his/her first visit and past travel to a destination had a significant relationship with destination attachment across all destinations with a correlation of -.30 and .32, respectively. Further, travel to the destination as a family tradition, familiarity and satisfaction with a destination, and attractiveness to a destination were all found to have a significant relationship with the attachment to a destination with a correlation of .56, .45, .52, and .57, respectively. None of the travel purposes revealed a significant relationship with tourism attachment consistently across the three destinations.

In all, the correlation analysis revealed that six independent variables showed significant relationships with destination attachment, thus these were investigated as potential predictor variables in regression model development phase of the study.

**Predicting Tourist Attachment for each Destination**

In order to address the second research objective standard multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the unique contribution of each independent variable in explaining destination attachment. This study utilized standard regression analysis as a conservative application where all independent variables were entered simultaneously because neither past research nor theoretical justification has suggested an *a priori* ranking for these variables. Tables 3A through 3C present the results of the regression analysis separately for each study.

First, the destination specific analysis involving only the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area (Table 3A) demonstrated that the relationship between destination attachment and the explanatory variables produced an adjusted R-squared of 0.50. The model was significant at the 0.01 level, with an F-value of 30.92 and degrees freedom of 6, 173. The variables in their order of importance, based upon beta coefficients ($\beta$), were (1) travel to a destination as a family tradition ($\beta$=.30), (2) attractiveness toward a destination ($\beta$=.28), (3) satisfaction with a destination ($\beta$=.18), (4) past experience with a destination ($\beta$=.13), and (5) age of the first visit ($\beta$=.11). Familiarity with a destination did not contribute to the model.

Insert Table 3A about Here

The destination-specific analysis for the City of Charleston (Table 3B) produced an adjusted R-squared of 0.51. The model was significant at the 0.01 level, with an F-value of 22.02 and degrees of freedom of 6, 117. However, only two variables made a significant contribution to the model. The two variables in order of their importance were (1) attractiveness toward a destination ($\beta$=.54) and (2) travel to a destination as a family tradition ($\beta$=.22). The variables of past experience with a destination ($\beta$=.10), familiarity with a destination ($\beta$=.03), satisfaction with a destination ($\beta$=.07), and age of the first visit ($\beta$=.05) did not significantly contribute to the Charleston model.

Insert Table 3B about Here

The destination-specific regression analysis involving the Hilton Head Island area (Table 3C) demonstrated that the relationship between destination attachment and the explanatory variables produced an adjusted R-squared of 0.37. The model was significant at 0.01 level, with an F-value of 4.64 and degrees of freedom of 6, 31. However, it is important to note that none of the predictor variables were found to make a significant independent contribution in explaining destination attachment. When examining the beta coefficients for the Hilton Head Island-specific model, the standard errors in the model were quite high which may explain the lack of significance for the independent variables. In addition, the small sample size (N=38) may have contributed to the failure of any independent variable significantly contributing to the model.

Insert Table 3C about here

Based upon the destination-specific multiple regression models, Table 4 presents the significant standardized regression coefficients (beta coefficients) to summarize the contribution of the six variables in predicting destination attachment across the study destinations. However, since none of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the Hilton Head model, this model was not considered in the discussion.

Using the following T-test formula,

$$\text{Reg.Coeff 1} - \text{Reg. Coeff 2} \;/\; \sqrt{(SE_1)^2 + (SE_2)^2} \;=\; \text{T–Test},$$

pairwise comparisons involving the six independent variables across the two destinations (Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area and the City of Charleston) were conducted. Table 4 presents these comparisons as well as a summary of the beta coefficients for the two destinations.

Insert Table 4 about Here

There was a significant difference in attractiveness to a destination when comparing Myrtle Beach with Charleston ($t=20.64$, $p\leq0.01$). Past experience with a destination and travel to a destination as a family tradition, however, demonstrated no significant differences across the two study destinations. For familiarity with a destination, a difference existed between tourists visiting the two destinations ($t=2.68$, $p\leq0.01$). Satisfaction with a destination, on the other hand, was equally important across the study destinations. Finally, there was a significant difference in age of the first visit when comparing Myrtle Beach with Charleston ($t=14.31$, $p\leq0.01$).

As one reviews that beta coefficients, one sees that attractiveness toward a destination was approximately twice as important for Charleston ($\beta=.54$) as for Myrtle

Beach (β=.28) in predicting attachment. Second, travel to a destination as a family tradition as a predictor of attachment was about one and one-half times as important for Myrtle Beach (β=.30) as for Charleston (β=.22). Further, past experience with a destination (β=.13), satisfaction with a destination (β=.18), and age of the first visit (β= -.11) were variables that significantly, but with less importance than the preceding two variables, influenced tourist attachment for only the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area. In contrast, familiarity with a destination did not have a significant contribution in predicting destination attachment for either of these destinations.

Since the three regression models yielded different results for each destination, further analysis of the respondents was undertaken to determine any significant differences among the three groups (respondents) (see Table 5). There was no significant difference in the gender and age distribution of respondents across the three tourism destinations. There was a significant difference in marital status across the three destinations. It appears that respondents who vacationed on Hilton Head Island were more frequently either single (14.3%) or widowed (14.3%) than were respondents who vacationed at either of the other destinations. Those who vacationed on Hilton Head Island also revealed the highest level of education with 90.5% having either a college degree or above. Myrtle Beach revealed the lowest educational level with 25.2% of the respondents having less than a college education. Further, 57.1 % of the respondents who vacationed on Hilton Head Island had an income of $40,000 to $80,000 while only 26.7% and 18.8% of the respondents vacationing at the City of Charleston or the Myrtle Beach area, respectively, achieved this level of income.

Insert Table 5 about Here

Lastly, Hilton Head Island had the largest percentage of respondents either traveling alone or specifically with their immediate family; whereas, the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area revealed the highest percentage of respondents traveling with family and friends or with organized groups. The City of Charleston revealed the highest percentage of respondents traveling only with friends (see Table 5).

**Destination Attractiveness**

Since destination attractiveness was a strong predictor for attachment, it was deemed appropriate to analyze the specific attributes for each destination. Table 6 presents the attractiveness scores for the three tourism destinations with an analysis of any significant differences among the scores. The top five destination attributes for the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area in descending order of importance were scenery, food, climate, lodging and price, whereas the top five attributes for the City of Charleston involved culture/history, scenery, food, lodging and climate. The top five attributes for Hilton Head Island were climate, scenery, food, lodging and sports/recreation. Although scenery, food, lodging, and climate remained among the top four for the three destinations, there was some variation in the importance of each as identified by the significant differences across the destinations found for each of these except for lodging. Further, the uniqueness of each destination was also captured. For vacationers to the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area, price was an important attribute; for Charleston, culture and history were very important attributes; for Hilton Head Island, sports and recreational opportunities were very important attributes. Therefore, tourism destinations appear to

have some common attributes that are important, but they also have other attributes that are unique and, thus, separate them for other destinations.

Insert Table 6 about Here

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggested that a strong predictive model for destination attachment could be identified using the six variables involved with this research. The regression models revealed that the adjusted R-Square values were .51 for Charleston, .50 for Myrtle Beach, and .37 for Hilton Head Island, respectively. However, although the overall model was significant for Hilton Head Island, the individual variables did not make significant contributions to the model. This may have been due to the small sample size.

Two primary conclusions can be drawn from the results of this study. One, tourist attachment is highly related to traditional travel behavior variables. The two variables that have the strongest relationship with attachment are attractiveness of the various attributes of a destination and the perception of traveling to a destination as a family tradition. These two items were dominant for both the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area and the City of Charleston although their order of importance was reversed for the two destinations.

Second, although there appears to be some factors that are common to tourism attachment, such as attractiveness of tourism attributes and travel as a family tradition, there appear to be other factors that contribute to tourist attachment that are unique to the

type of destination. For example, satisfaction and past experience with a destination, and age of the first visit to destination were significant in explaining one's attachment to the more traditional sun, sea, and sand destination, i.e., Myrtle Beach area. These three factors, however, were not important to explaining tourism attachment to a cultural/ historical-based destination, such as the City of Charleston. In all, the findings of this study support that there are universal and unique characteristics that influence tourist attachment to a destination. These findings are consistent with the Hu and Ritchie study (1993) on tourist perception of tourism destination.

Further, the results of this study re-enforce the influence of family, in addition to perception of attractiveness of the destination, in shaping tourist behavior. It is believed that a sense of attachment to the destination may be the greatest when family is involved. And lastly, the results also support the notion that childhood travel with family members positively influence an individual's attachment to the traditional sun and beach destination like the Myrtle Beach area (Brown, 1990).

## IMPLICATIONS

### Practical Implications

The conclusions of this study suggest several implications for destination marketers and tourism researchers for each type of destination. For tourists traveling to the City of Charleston and other cities similar in history and culture, the physical attractiveness of the city and family travel experience are important factors that influence tourist attachment. Since tourists visit the Charleston area for its cultural/historical attributes, destination planners in the area need to preserve its southern cultural assets as well as maintain its scenery/climate/food/lodging aspects. At the same time, marketers

need to promote family-oriented experiences, such as festivals/events, which would appeal to a family travel market. Developers should preserve Southern heritage/culture in their designs, whether in hotels, restaurants, or other attractions, to sustain tourist attachment to the area. Tour packages that include hotels, restaurants, and shops that highlight the area's southern history/culture for tourists with their families would be particularly appealing. These same factors may be valuable to other marketers responsible for tourism destinations with similar character and physical and cultural amenities.

Tourism professionals working in the Myrtle Beach/ Grand Strand area or other destinations with the more traditional sand, sea, sun and entertainment amenities may need a different approach. Since the Myrtle Beach area has such a strong link with tradition, it needs to continue its emphasis on family attributes or entertainment features. At the same time, the attractiveness of destination attributes and satisfaction with these attributes were very important for promoting tourist attachment to the area. Marketers in the area need to maintain its scenery, climate, food, lodging aspects that have strong appeals to tourists visiting the area. Recognizing that the earlier individuals first visited Myrtle Beach as a vacation destination the stronger their attachment to the destination, destination managers especially need to develop promotional campaigns and attractions that appeal to the young tourists.

**Research Implications**

This study has begun to explore the value of tourist attachment in explaining travel behavior. However, further research is needed to completely understand this

concept. The following recommendations for future research should assist in advancing our understanding of tourist attachment to a destination.

First, there needs to be further clarification of the role of family tradition in travel decision-making. For instance, what types of experiences do families perceive as preserving vacation traditions and what role do these experiences play in influencing travel decisions about where to vacation? Moreover, who plays the key role in travel decision-making within the family? Traditionally, these decisions, in part, focus on the spouse or children. Realizing the importance of the age of the first visit in predicting destination attachment, as shown in the Myrtle Beach/Grand Strand area, the influence of children in travel decision-making takes on greater credence and, therefore, needs further investigation. It has been suggested that children learn their consumer behavior at a very young age within the family itself, usually from their parents; their attitudes appear to be long lasting (Lackman and Lanasa, 1993). This further re-enforces the need to investigate travel decision making in younger family members.

Second, familiarity with a destination was not found to be related to tourism attachment. Since novelty and change are important aspects of tourism motivation, this may help explain why familiarity was not a major factor in predicting tourist attachment. Possibly, tourists are seeking novelty within the context of stability. This apparent paradox has been explained in the context of leisure experiences and tourism motivations by Iso-Ahola (1989) but needs further exploration and refinement as it relates to tourism attachment.

Third, researchers need to investigate the relationship between tourism attachment and intention to revisit a destination. Repeat visitation to a destination is an

important issue for tourism marketers and researchers. Destinations rely on repeat visitation for survival. Tourists who are highly attached to a destination may reveal a greater propensity to revisit a destination than those who are less attached.

Another area of research may involve further clarification of the tourist who is not attached to a destination. Understanding the detached tourist may be as valuable to destination management as knowledge of the attached. As Moore and Graefe (1994) implied, different levels of attachment may be used for targeting specific groups of people who visit a place. Likewise, Lee (1998) proposed a conceptual framework for segmenting tourists based on their level of attachment, i.e., high attachment to low attachment. Understanding the characteristics of the continuum of attachment may shed further light on tourist behavior and attitudes and help expand the body of literature in the field of tourism.

This exploratory study applied the concept of place attachment to a tourism destination and investigated its relationship with selected variables of travel behavior. The research identified two important predictor variables – destination attractiveness and travel to a destination as a family tradition – that had the strongest relationship with tourist attachment to a destination. In addition, other factors may be significant in explaining tourist attachment based upon the unique characteristics of a destination. Thus, destination attractiveness and travel as a family tradition were at the core of tourist attachment, but they do not prove sufficient in explaining the totality of attachment. Obviously, further research is needed to expand the knowledge of this concept based on the results and implications of this study. Hopefully, this research can serve as

groundwork of the area of tourist attachment to a destination and assist in expanding the knowledge of tourist behavior.

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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Comparison of Tourists' Travel Purpose and Tourist Characteristics across the Study Area using ANOVA and LSD test

| Travel Behavior | Destination Area | | | F-Ratio | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Myrtle Beach Area | City of Charleston | Hilton Head Island | | |
| Travel Purpose | Means (Ranking)* | | | | |
| Enjoy Scenery | 7.37(1) [a] | 7.24(2) [a] | 7.95(1) | 2.66 | .07 |
| Enjoy activity/Events | 7.11(2) | 7.35(1) | 7.43(3) | .99 | .37 |
| Family Get-Together | 6.27(3) [a] | 6.45(3) [a] | 7.75(2) | 4.32 | .01 |
| Get Away from Work | 6.15(4) [a] | 5.81(4) [a] | 7.00(4) | 3.03 | .04 |
| Get Away from People | 4.39(5) | 4.09(5) | 3.85(5) | .76 | .46 |
| Meet Other People | 2.86(6) [a] | 3.77(6) | 2.35(6) [a] | 8.94 | .01 |
| | Means* | | | | |
| Age of the First Visit To a Destination | 23.96 [a] | 25.67 [a] | 36.65 | 8.72 | .01 |
| Satisfaction with a Destination | 7.11 [a] | 7.90 | 7.27 [a] | 12.75 | .01 |
| Destination Attractiveness | 41.77 | 45.14 [a] | 47.72 [a] | 2.90 | .056 |
| Destination Attachment | 4.20 [a] | 5.08 | 4.10 [a] | 10.89 | .05 |
| Past Trips to a Destination | 4.50 [a] | 6.95 | 4.23 [a] | 9.04 | .01 |
| Familiarity with a Destination | 6.36 | 6.54 | 6.24 | .44 | .64 |
| Travel as a Family Tradition | 4.85 | 4.95 | 5.14 | .20 | .82 |

* All means were calculated using a nine point Likert scale (range of scores was from 1 to 9: 1=strongly disagree, 9=strongly agree) except for age of first visit to a destination and number of past trips to a destination.

[a] Mean scores with the same letters are not significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis for the Destination Attachment and Selected Travel Behavior Variables across the Study Areas

| Travel Characteristics | Destination Areas | Correlation | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age of the First Visit | Total Areas | -.30 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | -.35 | .01 |
| | Charleston | -.33 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | -.12 | .48 |
| Travel to the Destination As a Family Tradition | Total Areas | .56 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .61 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .55 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | .52 | .01 |
| Familiarity with a Destination | Total Areas | .45 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .52 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .36 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | .53 | .01 |
| Satisfaction with a Destination | Total Areas | .52 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .51 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .48 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | .55 | .01 |
| Attractiveness to a Destination | Total Areas | .57 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .52 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .67 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | .39 | .01 |
| Past Trip to a Destination (total number of trips from 1993 to 1997) | Total Areas | .32 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .43 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .29 | .02 |
| | Hilton Head | .52 | .01 |

Table 2 (continued)

| Travel Characteristics | Destination Areas | Correlation | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|
| Travel to Meet People | Total Areas | .18 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .09 | .08 |
| | Charleston | .13 | .12 |
| | Hilton Head | .58 | .01 |
| Travel for Scenery/Climate | Total Areas | .19 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .19 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .27 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | -.17 | .29 |
| Travel for Activity/Events | Total Areas | .18 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .24 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .09 | .25 |
| | Hilton Head | .22 | .16 |
| Travel to Get Away from People | Total Areas | .14 | .01 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .20 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .06 | .49 |
| | Hilton Head | .25 | .11 |
| Travel to Get Together With Family | Total Areas | .02 | .75 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .20 | .01 |
| | Charleston | -.20 | .01 |
| | Hilton Head | .19 | .25 |
| Travel to Get Away from Daily Life | Total Areas | .08 | .09 |
| | Myrtle Beach | .18 | .01 |
| | Charleston | .04 | .59 |
| | Hilton Head | .04 | .81 |

Table 3A. Predicting Tourist Attachment to Myrtle Beach Area

| Variables | Beta | SE B | T-value | Prob | Tolerance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attractiveness Toward a Destination | .2814 | .0081 | 4.448 | .01 | .7091 |
| Past Experience With a Destination | .1259 | .0296 | 1.944 | .05 | .6638 |
| Satisfaction With a Destination | .1778 | .0662 | 2.842 | .01 | .7121 |
| Travel to a Destination As a Family Tradition | .3046 | .0484 | 3.833 | .01 | .4415 |
| Familiarity With a Destination | .0510 | .0597 | .669 | .50 | .4774 |
| Age of the First Visit | -.1125 | .0070 | -2.051 | .04 | .9262 |

Multiple Regression for Myrtle Beach only: R-square=.5174;
Adjusted R-square=.5007; F=30.92; df=6, 173; model significance≤0.01.

Table 3B. Predicting Tourist Attachment to Charleston Area

| Variables | Beta | SE B | T-value | Prob | Tolerance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attractiveness Toward a Destination | .5394 | .0125 | 7.048 | .01 | .6819 |
| Past Experience With a Destination | .0993 | .0173 | 1.392 | .16 | .7829 |
| Satisfaction With a Destination | .0673 | .1309 | .809 | .42 | .5762 |
| Travel to a Destination As a Family Tradition | .2195 | .0651 | 2.474 | .01 | .5071 |
| Familiarity With a Destination | .0307 | .0748 | .384 | .70 | .6228 |
| Age of the First Visit | .0484 | .0088 | .727 | .46 | .8997 |

Multiple Regression for Myrtle Beach only: R-square=.5326;
Adjusted R-square=.5087; F=22.22; df=6, 117; model significance≤0.01.

Table 3C. Predicting Tourist Attachment to Hilton Head Island Area

| Variables | Beta | SE B | T-value | Prob | Tolerance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attractiveness Toward a Destination | .1572 | .0299 | .833 | .41 | .4765 |
| Past Experience With a Destination | .0990 | .0978 | .464 | .64 | .3731 |
| Satisfaction With a Destination | .2912 | .1668 | 1.651 | .10 | .5460 |
| Travel to a Destination As a Family Tradition | .1852 | .1398 | .764 | .45 | .2888 |
| Familiarity With a Destination | .2230 | .1741 | 1.120 | .27 | .4282 |
| Age of the First Visit | .1388 | .0129 | 1.005 | .32 | .8905 |

Multiple Regression for Hilton Head Island only: R-square=.4732; Adjusted R-square=.3712; F=4.64; df=6, 31; model significance≤0.01.

Table 4. Comparing Differences of Regression Coefficients (Betas) of Independent Variables using T-test across the Study Areas

| Variables | Myrtle Beach (Beta) | Charleston (Beta) | Myrtle Beach vs Charleston (T-values) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attractiveness Toward a Destination | .28 | .54 | 20.64* |
| Past Experience With a Destination | .13 | ns | .80 |
| Satisfaction with a Destination | .18 | ns | .75 |
| Travel to a Destination As a Family Tradition | .30 | .22 | 1.04 |
| Familiarity With a Destination | ns | ns | 2.68* |
| Age of the First Visit | -.11 | ns | 14.31* |

n.s.= non-significant

T-Values with* are significantly different at p≤ 0.01.

Table 5. Comparison of Demographic Information across the Study Areas using Chi-Square Test and ANOVA

| Variables | Category | Destination Area | | | Chi-Square | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Myrtle Beach Area (N=206) | City of Charleston (N=156) | Hilton Head Island (N=42) | | |
| Gender | Male | 112(54.3%) | 72(46.1%) | 18(42.8%) | 4.60 | .20 |
| | Female | 94(45.7%) | 84(53.9%) | 24(57.2%) | | |
| Marital Status | Single | 24(11.7%) | 20(12.8%) | 6(14.3%) | 66.81 | .01 |
| | Married | 160(77.7%) | 124(79.5%) | 30(71.4%) | | |
| | Widowed | 22(10.6%) | 12( 7.7%) | 6(14.3%) | | |
| Education | Less than College | 52(25.2%) | 16(10.3%) | 4( 9.5%) | 58.16 | .01 |
| | College and Above | 154(74.8%) | 140(89.7%) | 38(90.5%) | | |
| Income | Less than $40,000 | 76(37.6%) | 36(24.0%) | 4(9.6%) | 48.08 | .01 |
| | $40,000 – $80,000 | 88(43.6%) | 74(49.3%) | 24(57.1%) | | |
| | More than $80,000 | 38(18.8%) | 40(26.7%) | 14(33.3%) | | |
| Travel Companion | Alone | 4( 1.9%) | 6( 3.7%) | 4( 9.5%) | 15.41 | .05 |
| | Family | 116(55.8%) | 98(61.3%) | 28(66.7%) | | |
| | Friends | 30(14.5%) | 26(16.3%) | 4( 9.5%) | | |
| | Family & Friends | 48(23.0%) | 28(17.5%) | 6(14.3%) | | |
| | Organized Groups | 10( 4.8%) | 2( 1.2%) | 0( 0.0%) | | |
| | | Mean | | | F-Ratio | Sig. |
| Age of Tourist | | 46.99 | 47.33 | 48.81 | 1.32 | .27 |

Table 6. Comparison of the Attributes of Destination Attractiveness across the Study Areas using ANOVA Post Hoc (LSD) test

| Destination Attributes | Destination Area | | | F-Ratio | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Myrtle Beach Area | City of Charleston | Hilton Head Island | | |
| | Means (Ranking) | | | | |
| Scenery | 56.38(1) | 62.77(2)[a] | 60.48(2)[a] | 6.04 | .03 |
| Food | 54.89(2)[a] | 61.88(3) | 52.67(3)[a] | 7.48 | .01 |
| Climate | 54.25(3)[a] | 52.30(5)[a] | 62.43(1) | 4.77 | .01 |
| Lodging | 52.59(4) | 52.64(4) | 51.90(4) | .02 | .98 |
| Price | 48.56(5) | 43.31(8)[a] | 46.30(6)[a] | 3.52 | .03 |
| Entertainment | 45.01(6) | 40.00(10)[a] | 32.95(12)[a] | 6.31 | .01 |
| Sports/Recreation | 43.37(7)[a] | 36.64(13) | 49.90(5)[a] | 6.99 | .01 |
| Shopping | 39.03(8) | 39.80(11) | 37.90(7) | .11 | .90 |
| Accessibility | 37.38(9) | 38.16(12) | 36.60(8) | .11 | .90 |
| Attitudes of local people | 35.22(10)[a] | 40.83(9)[a] | 35.95(9)[a] | 3.38 | .03 |
| Culture/History | 34.03(11)[a] | 63.29(1) | 34.81(11)[a] | 115.19 | .01 |
| Local Life Uniqueness | 32.66(12)[a] | 51.80(6) | 35.55(10)[a] | 38.63 | .01 |
| Festival/Events | 32.38(13)[a] | 46.32(7) | 30.14(13)[a] | 21.23 | .01 |
| Transportation | 21.79(14) | 24.51(14) | 21.50(14) | 0.88 | .42 |

[a]Mean scores with the same letters are not significantly different at the $p \leq .05$ level.
Attractiveness scores range from 1(strongly disagree) to 81 (strongly agree).