

An exploration of recreation and tourism in Brandon, Manitoba

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Introduction

Over the past few decades industrial societies have seen a dramatic increase in leisure time and disposable income resulting in an increased demand for recreation and tourism facilities. According to Krotz (1996), tourism is widely recognized as the world's largest industry. Due to the current popularity of tourism, understanding why humans engage in recreational and tourism activities is an increasingly important and complex area of research for social scientists. Historically, geographers have played a limited role in the development of literature concerning various aspects of tourism and peoples' use of leisure time, which means that recreation and tourism has only recently made an impact on the wider geographical community.

Although disposable income and leisure time have increased over the past forty years, individual social aspects such as occupation, income, material wealth, car ownership and mobility, time available, duties and obligations, social roles, and education, all have a significant impact on participation in recreational activities (Rural Development Institute 2003). More specifically, those with skilled occupations, high incomes, ready access to private transport and higher education tend to lead more active lives involving more leisure activities. Hall and Page (1999) indicate that 53% of those surveyed in their study stated money to be the number one constraint on recreation. Clearly socio-economic status is a powerful determinant in the volume and pattern of current recreation and tourism activity. An indicator of increased travel in Canada is the growth of average disposable income by 4.7% in the year 2000 and 3.2% in 2001 (The

Conference Board of Canada n.d.). As incomes continue to grow travel should increase as well.

The World Tourism Organization provides the main source of data for international tourism and their statistics show that travel rates have consistently increased over the past forty years. The recreation and tourism industry's "age of discovery" took place during the 1960s as travel steadily grew for many developed nations. As new technology in air travel developed in the late 1960s, international travel expanded tremendously. "International travel has maintained strong growth rates, often in excess of 5% per annum" (Hall and Page 1999). Aside from improvements in transportation technology, global media and communication development have also led to an increase in travelers. Growing use of the Internet has remarkably affected the amount of information available to tourists regarding travel destinations, accommodations, and the availability of entertainment (The Conference Board of Canada n.d.). According to the Canadian Tourism Commission (2002a) 25% of Canadians use the Internet to research and/or book travel and these people have been appropriately classified as "iTravellers". Although Canadian iTravellers use the Internet predominantly for research and planning purposes at present, it is suggested that its role within the tourism industry will become increasingly important. As the total amount of time spent on the Internet each week increases and as the Internet comes to be understood as a reliable source, it is clear that its importance within the tourism industry will be noticed (Canadian Tourism Commission 2002a).

This research project has four main objectives. The primary focus of this study is to understand the leisure behaviour of Brandon, Manitoba residents: the destinations and activities they are selecting to meet their recreational needs on local, regional, national, and international scales. The second objective is to measure the supply and demand for recreational facilities and tourism events in Brandon and the surrounding area. By understanding the relationship between supply and demand, predictions can be made about Brandon's recreational future. Thirdly, this project compares results of "Outdoor Recreational Participation Rates and Destinations of the Population of Brandon, Manitoba" (Costanza 1981) to explore the similarities and differences in Brandon residents' recreation and tourism habits today from twenty years ago. The fourth focus of this study is to investigate whether the Internet plays a role in the planning and booking of recreational experiences by Brandon residents.

Recreation and Tourism in Manitoba and the City of Brandon

Tourism is an important industry to Manitoba and a potential future growth generator. The industry is composed of thousands of small and large enterprises spread widely across the province. Manitoba residents make up the largest percentage of travelers and are the source of the majority of tourist expenditures. Tourists from other parts of Canada, primarily from Ontario and Saskatchewan make up the next largest share of travelers followed by Americans and foreign visitors. "Manitoba's tourism industry is a major contributor to the provincial economy, generating approximately \$1.13 billion in annual tourism expenditures, or approximately 3% of Manitoba's Gross Domestic Product. The industry creates some 60 000 jobs with employment primarily within the sectors of accommodation, transportation, food and beverage. Thus, about one in ten people employed in Manitoba work in a tourism-related job" (2001/02 Marketing and Opportunities Guide n.d.).

The city of Brandon, nestled in the Assiniboine River Valley in southwestern Manitoba, is surrounded by flat landscapes, rolling hills and enormous skies. Brandon is Manitoba's second largest city with nearly 40,000 inhabitants (Statistics Canada 2001) and is central to the surrounding towns with ample parks, festivals, sporting events, historic sites, and shopping. It has also been named one of the top 10 cities in Canada in which to live (Manitoba Tour Manual: An Adventure in Nature n.d.). There are many activities in Brandon, ranging from botanical garden tours to spending a night out on the town at one of the city's bars. Brandon has earned an outstanding reputation for organizing and hosting world-class events such as the World Curling Championships, Canada's 1998 Olympic Curling Trials, and Canada's 1997 Summer Games.

The city has many appealing services for the outdoor recreation enthusiast with the Assiniboine Riverbank walking trails, golf courses, tennis courts, recreation parks and the newly developed beach volleyball courts. One of the most prominent attractions in Brandon is the 17 kilometres of paved walking and cycling paths (Brandon Riverbank Discovery Centre). The city of Brandon offers a wide variety of special events that are aimed towards entertaining the general public. Some of the city's arts and entertainment events include: Brandon's Folk Music and Art Festival, Brandon Wheat Kings hockey, Manitoba Fall Fair, Manitoba Summer Fair, Royal Manitoba Winter Fair, Canada Day Celebrations, the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba and Prairie Showcase.

Brandon's streets and avenues are laid out in a grid like pattern making it relatively easy for people to navigate the city. The city-operated transit bus service provides service to most points in the city within forty minutes

driving time. There is also transportation service for those with special needs. Greyhound and Grey Goose bus lines serve Brandon along with Via Rail train passenger service. There are 19 hotels and motels in Brandon ranging from economy to family to luxury. Bed and breakfast homes are also available. There are more than 100 restaurants to choose from, with a range of ethnic specialty, family fare, fast food and fine dining. Recreation and convention facilities also exist: Brandon University, Keystone Centre, Riverbank Discovery Centre, Western Manitoba Centennial Auditorium, Brandon Sportsplex, The Victoria Inn and The Royal Oak Inn are Brandon's leading centres for hosting large events (Manitoba Tour Manual: An Adventure in Nature n.d.). Brandon is located within an hour's drive of some of Manitoba's most scenic areas including Riding Mountain National Park, the International Peace Gardens, Spruce Woods Provincial Park and the Souris Swinging Bridge.

In terms of regional tourist attractions, Brandon is central to a wide variety of travel destinations within the province of Manitoba. The Brandon Hills Wildlife Management Area is one of the most popular destinations for Brandon residents to visit for recreational purposes. In general, southwestern Manitoba is a region that has an interesting mix of relief, topographic features and vegetation cover. These physical aspects combined create focal points for tourism and outdoor recreation in the province (Wardrop et al 1980). The area surrounding Brandon offers excellent opportunities for camping, cross-country skiing, fishing, and hunting. The region has an abundance of facilities providing tourist services. Southwestern Manitoba is home to numerous provincial parks, such as Clearwater, Duck Mountain, Spruce Woods, Turtle Mountain, and Riding Mountain National Park.

Methodology

Very little information pertaining to Brandon's recreational facilities and tourist events exists. More specifically, literature concerning how Brandon residents are spending their leisure time and where they are going to meet their recreational needs on a local, regional, national, and international level is not readily available. As a result, a questionnaire was designed to elicit the required information. Using Costanza's (1981) and the City of Brandon (2003) studies as guidelines, "Brandon's Recreation and Tourism Assessment Survey" was developed (herein referred to as 'the survey'). The questionnaire consisted of six major areas of concern: 1) local, 2) regional, 3) provincial, and 4) international recreational interests,

5) socio-economic make-up of the household, and 6) the relationship between the Internet and travel.

The section of the survey that dealt with Brandon's local recreational activities consisted of questions regarding: frequency of dining out, types of dining establishments visited, the usage of the city's various modes of transportation, familiarity, participation and satisfaction rates for Brandon's arts and entertainment events, museums, recreation/convention facilities, and sporting facilities. An open-ended question was designed to discover if there were any specific types of attractions or events that the participant thought were needed in the city of Brandon. Questions pertaining to the participant's local tourism interests were created so it would be possible to analyze the supply and demand of Brandon's recreational facilities.

The second section of the survey focused on the participant's regional recreational interests. The idea behind this section was to discover what people were doing for pleasure outside of Brandon yet within Manitoba's limits. Questions dealing with the availability of vacation residences (i.e., cabins or trailers), winter and summer single day, over-night, or multi-day trips to outdoor recreation sites (e.g., Brandon Hills, Riding Mountain National Park) were also asked. For the latter of these questions, the respondents were provided with a list of 14 commonly used outdoor recreation sites as well as three time periods with varying lengths of day, over-night, or vacation of a week or longer. Another sub-component of this section was concerned with the frequency of participation in selected summer and winter outdoor recreational activities (e.g., berry picking, snowmobiling, swimming). Respondents were given six frequencies of participation and asked to indicate which category most suited their participation in each of the 23 activities listed. In order to allow a respondent the freedom to select any activity or area, a section entitled "other" was added at the end of each list of questions. The types of outdoor recreational activities used in this study as well as the outdoor recreation areas were based on Costanza's (1981) study to allow for comparison tests to be made.

Another section of the questionnaire dealt with recreation and tourism on a provincial level. Respondents were asked whether or not any of their household members had traveled outside of Manitoba yet within Canada throughout the past three years. The resident that went, the purpose of the trip (i.e., pleasure, work, or visiting family and friends), length of holiday, and the provinces that were visited were the points of interest. The fourth section was concerned with obtaining information on who, where, why, and how long the members of a household had traveled to foreign countries within the past three years. Discovering tourism interests on an

international scale was especially important, as statistics have proven that more younger people are traveling on a global scale than ever before.

To obtain background information on the socio-economic parameters of the household questions pertaining to: the length of stay in Brandon, age, gender, marital status, number of people in household unit, ownership of residence, and levels of education were asked. These personal questions were primarily situated at the end of the survey so as not to discourage respondents from answering the questionnaire (Kitchin and Tate 2000). Lastly, two questions dealing with the role of the Internet in researching potential travel destinations and booking plane flights, accommodations, or tickets to a particular event or show were asked. The idea behind this section was to observe whether or not the Internet had any influence in peoples' recreational and travel habits. In order to obtain a representative picture of the recreational behavior of Brandon's 40,000 residents, five different groups of people were investigated. Brandon's north and west regions represent residents' with higher socio-economic status as compared to the average standing of Brandon. The "average value of dwelling" in Brandon's north and west dissemination areas are \$153,222 and \$184,406 respectively. These values are considerably higher than the "average value of dwelling" in Brandon, which is \$100,892. The "percentage of the population 20 years and over holding university graduate certificates" is also much higher in the city's north and west ends as compared to Brandon's overall average. The south represents the general population of Brandon reasonably well. Its "average value of dwelling" and "percentage of the population 20 years and over holding university graduate certificates" are comparable to those of Brandon. The city's downtown and east dissemination areas are regions of Brandon with slightly lower socio-economic status. The "average value of dwelling" in the east end and downtown are \$73,219 and \$84,129 respectively. These values are considerably lower as compared to the "average value of dwelling" for Brandon. The "percentage of the population 20 years and over holding university graduate certificates" in these two dissemination areas is also lower than the percentage for Brandon (Census Data 2001). Surveying two enumeration areas with higher, two of lower, and one similar to the socio-economic standing of Brandon, Manitoba, suggests that overall, a representative sample of Brandon's population was achieved. One hundred fifty households in each of Brandon's north, south, east, west, and downtown regions were surveyed throughout June and July 2004 (Figure 1).

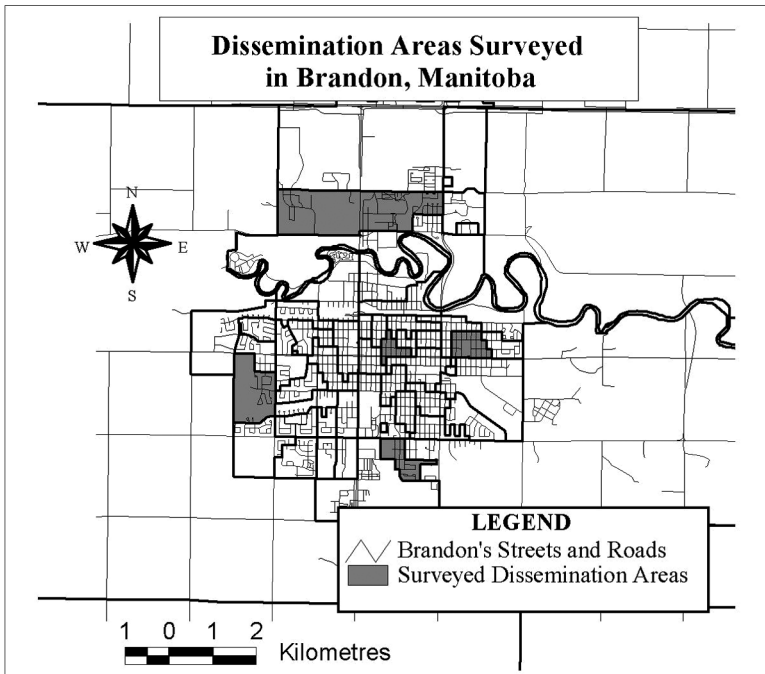


Figure 1: Dissemination areas surveyed in Brandon, Manitoba.

Results and Discussion

Brandon residents' dining habits:

Table 1 shows the response rate for each region surveyed. Brandon's north and west enumeration areas were areas of relatively high response rates as compared to the other three dissemination areas. This was to be expected because Brandon's north and west dissemination areas consist of well-educated upper-class residents. These residents are likely to complete a university student's questionnaire because at one time they were attending university and so they understand the importance of survey participation (Mosset 2005a). A less co-operative attitude exists from those living in the city's south, east and downtown areas where income and education levels are much lower than levels in Brandon's north end and west end.

"Brandon's Recreation and Tourism Assessment Survey" dealt primarily with the recreation patterns that exist within the city of Brandon

Table 1: Survey response rate

Dissemination Area	Response Rate (%)
North End	49
South End	51
East End	44
West End	55
Downtown	33

and one question dealt with the types of restaurants most frequently visited by Brandon residents (Figure 2). The most common type of restaurant that participants' visit (44%) are those eating establishments that fit under the category heading "Family Fare". Some examples of Brandon's "Family Fare" restaurant chains include "Applebees", "Gullivers", "Pizza Hut", and "O'Kelley's". (Manitoba Group Tour Manual: An Adventure in Nature n.d.). These types of restaurants are geared towards families who desire an upbeat atmosphere, good food and reasonable prices. The second most popular types of eating-place are Brandon's "Fast-Food" restaurants. Examples include "Wendy's", "A&W", "Burger King" and the most popular of them all, "McDonalds". The results show that 37% of respondents most often choose fast-food restaurants when they decide to eat out. Fast-food restaurants provide low prices and quick service. The fact that they serve millions of people in the world every day shows how familiar these sorts of places are to the general public.

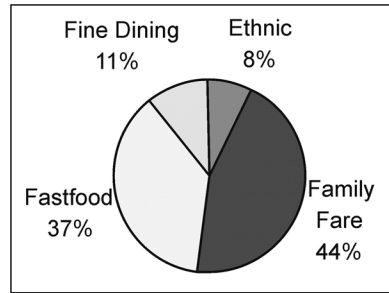


Figure 2: Types of restaurants most frequently visited by Brandon residents.

Eleven per cent of respondents indicated that they most frequently visited Brandon's "Fine Dining" facilities. Three of Brandon's fanciest restaurants are "Remingtons" the "34th Street Bar & Grill" and "Rhapsody Grill" located in downtown Brandon. These dining facilities are relatively expensive in comparison to other types of restaurants, a formal atmosphere is apparent at these eating-places and generally the food is prepared by the finest of cooks. The least frequented type of restaurant according to Brandon's general public is "Ethnic Dining" facilities. Only 8% of those surveyed indicated that they most frequently visited this type of eating-

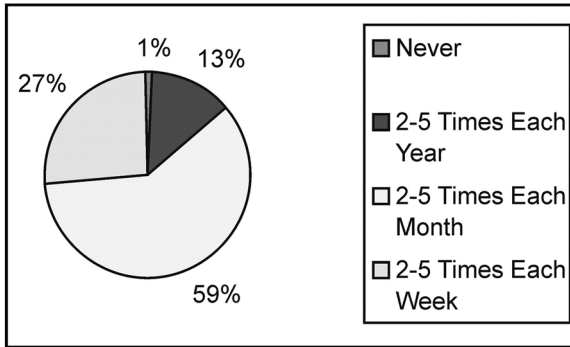


Figure 3: Eating out habits.

place. Examples of Ethnic Restaurants in Brandon include “Kam-Lung’s”, “Albert’s” and “Kim’s Chinese Restaurant”. The city of Brandon does not host a lot of ethnic restaurant variety, which could in part be the reason why so few people eat out at these sorts of dining facilities. In fact, one of the questions in the survey asked if there were any specific types of attractions or events that the respondents’ believed were needed in the city of Brandon and many replied saying they wished there were more ethnic restaurants. This suggests that although “Ethnic Restaurants” are less frequented by Brandon residents, if the quality and quantity of these eating places were to improve, some people would be willing to try out these new dining establishments. The frequency of the general population in Brandon that is eating out (Figure 3) was also researched. More than half the population of Brandon eats out between two and five times each month. Twenty seven per cent of respondents dine two to five times each week and 13% eat out between two and five times each year. One per cent stated that they never eat out and no respondents indicated they eat out daily.

The affects of socio-economic status on recreational habits of Brandon residents:

As previously mentioned, one of the initial hypotheses of this study was that a resident’s socio-economic status would determine his/her participation in recreation and tourism activities. Throughout most recreation literature, cost is recognized to be one of the main recreational constraints (Mosset 2005b). Hall and Page (1999) state that “those with more skilled and responsive occupations, with higher incomes, with ready access to private transport and with a longer period spent in full-time

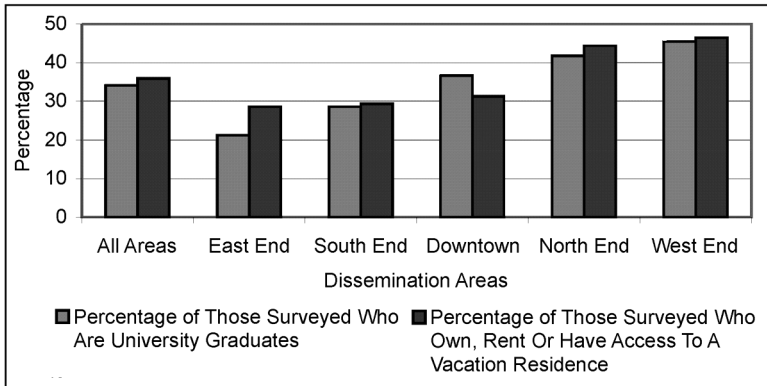


Figure 4: Level of education vs. owning a vacation residence.

education tend to lead a more active and varied leisure life, with less emphasis on passive recreations both within and beyond the home.”

For some recreational activities, such as walking on the city’s paved bike paths, cost is negligible. In these instances money or disposable income has little impact on recreation participation. On the other hand, cost can be a significant barrier to undertaking those activities that are major consumers of money, such as owning, renting or having access to a vacation residence, whether it be a cottage, cabin, or trailer (Everitt 2002). Results showed a strong correlation between those who hold a university degree and those who have access to a vacation residence (Figure 4). With respect to Brandon residents, the highly educated and more wealthy north and west end citizens of Brandon have greater access to vacation residences than those with less education and lower incomes residing in Brandon’s east and south ends.

Comparing Brandon residents’ recreation rates from 1981 to 2004:

As the tourism industry has grown to become the world’s largest industry, the actual number of people travelling has also dramatically increased. To measure the rate of recreation increase of Brandon residents over time, results from this study were compared to a similar undergraduate study by Costanza (1981). Figure 5 presents a comparison of outdoor recreation use between 1981 and 2004. It is evident that the percentage of respondents making day trips to recreation areas in the Brandon regions has dramatically increased. For some recreation areas such as Riding Mountain National Park, Minnedosa Beach, Spruce Woods Provincial

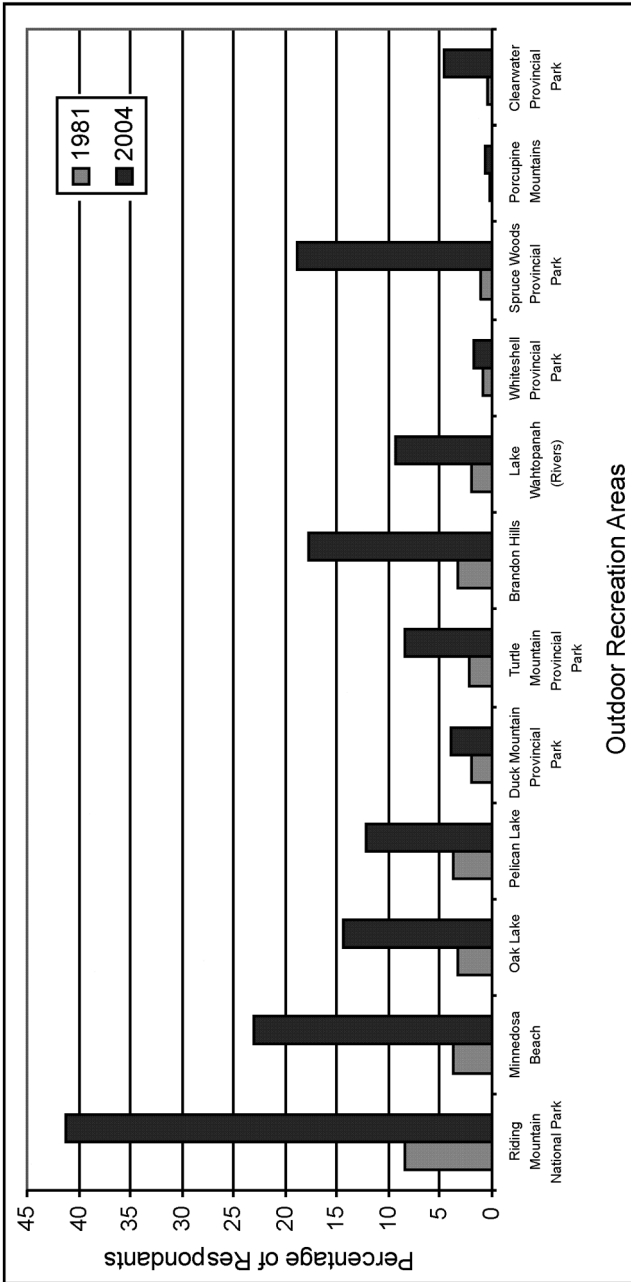


Figure 5: Residents going to select outdoor recreation areas in 1981 vs. 2004.

Park, and the Brandon Hills, 2004 percentages triple and in some instances quadruple the 1981 percentages of residents going to recreation areas.

There are many reasons that could explain this augmentation in leisure participation. Primarily, as our standard of living has improved and people have had more disposable income and leisure time available to them, it is possible for more people to take time out of their lives to visit these parklands. Mobility and transportation greatly affect the rate of tourist participation so as more people have access to their own car, more people have been able to drive to these recreation areas. Also, in the past twenty years these recreation areas have undergone massive development. More walking, biking and ski trails have been cleared, more campsites have been allotted and parking lots, restaurants, accommodation and entertainment facilities have also expanded. This improvement in the quality and quantity of facilities has dramatically increased the percentage of people who travel to these sorts of outdoor recreation areas (*Tourism in Canada: Past, Present, Future* n.d.).

As these tourist locations continue to grow and become more attractive, it is reasonable to assume that recreation participation rates will continue to rise. In the year 2000, Manitobans made more than 5.26 million personal visits within Manitoba and spent \$607.3 million in tourism expenditures. This represents 53.8% of total expenditures. More than half the trips taken by Manitobans' in-province are same-day trips and three-quarters of the remaining overnight trips are for one or two-night-stays only. Therefore, Manitobans' per trip expenditure is \$116. These trips remain vital to tourism, supporting many festivals, events, attractions, shops and restaurants (2001/02 Marketing and Opportunities Guide n.d.).

Influence of the internet:

Another development that has dramatically affected the tourism industry is the Internet. Internet use in Canada has grown from 29% of households in 1997 to 42% in 1999 (*The Conference Board of Canada* n.d.). Canadians use a wide range of information sources when planning a vacation trip but according to a study conducted by the Conference Board of Canada (n.d.) "the advice of friends and family and the Internet are most important." The Internet and its power to access global information and entertainment opportunities has affected the decisions of tourists regarding places to travel, methods of travel, and booking accommodations and entertainment while on vacation. "The Internet is now the main source of information for Canadians planning an outbound trip" (*The Conference Board of Canada* n.d.).

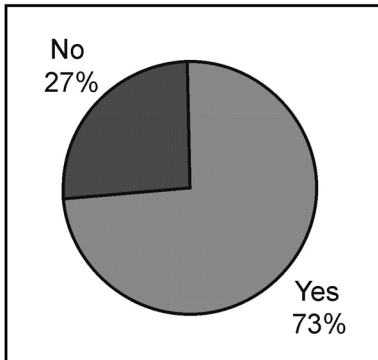


Figure 6: Percentage of residents who use the internet to research potential travel destinations.

Seventy-three per cent of respondents in this study indicated that they used the Internet to research potential travel destinations (Figure 6). Only 60% indicated that they booked plane tickets, accommodations, or tickets to particular shows or events over the Internet (Figure 7). Clearly the Internet is playing an important role when Brandon residents are researching and planning their recreation and tourism activities. These findings coincide with those of the Canadian Tourism Commission (2002a), which states, “the Internet continues to be a medium for gathering information as opposed to buying a travel product.” Nine per cent of Internet users actually made a purchase of a travel product on the Internet in the year 2000; this percentage rose to 14% in 2001 (The Conference Board of Canada n.d.). Clearly we are observing a shift in website use from content-only use to booking on websites that also have content. As Canadians become more comfortable with booking on-line, it is reasonable to assume that booking sites may have an edge over destination sites without booking capability.

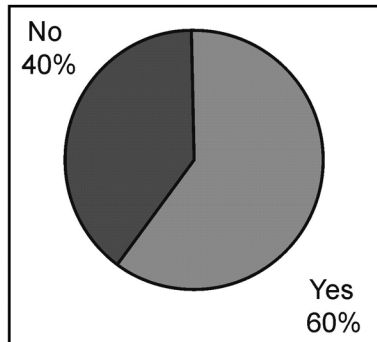


Figure 7: Percentage of residents using the internet to book plane tickets, accommodations and/or show tickets

Provincial recreational habits:

Eighty-six per cent of Brandon residents indicated they had traveled outside of Manitoba but within Canada over the past three years. Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and British Columbia were the top four provinces that were visited by respondents. In terms of “Time-Distance Decay” (Hall and Page 1999) it seems reasonable that the provinces closest to Manitoba are the provinces that most Brandon residents choose to visit

while on vacation. These findings match closely to those of the Canadian Tourism Commission's "Domestic Tourism Market Research Study of Manitoba and Saskatchewan" (1996). The only difference was that the CTC states the province of British Columbia is more frequently visited than Ontario. The majority of Brandon respondents indicated that the length of their trip was less than one week and the primary purpose of the trip was for pleasure as well as visiting family and friends. In terms of who went on the trip, 70% of those surveyed stated that those travelling in their party were only adults. Thirty per cent of respondents stated that those vacationing out of province were adults and children.

International recreational habits:

Over the past few decades more people have begun travelling the world for business purposes, to visit family members who live in foreign countries, and for personal enjoyment. A section of "Brandon's Recreation and Tourism Assessment Survey" dealt specifically with international travel destinations, namely: United States, Mexico, Caribbean, Central America, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. Seventy-two per cent of those surveyed indicated that the purpose of their trip was for personal enjoyment. After the data was analyzed it became obvious that the majority (65%) of Brandon residents who are travelling outside of the country are vacationing in the U.S. This coincides with the Canadian Tourism Commission's Manitoba/Saskatchewan Regional Report, which states that the vast majority of trips that are taken to international destinations are to the U.S. (Domestic Tourism Market Research Study Manitoba and Saskatchewan Report 1996).

Another country that many "Brandonites" are visiting is Mexico. In fact, more generally, the Caribbean as a whole seems to be an attractive place for Brandon residents (19%) to travel. This could, in part, be due to the high value of our Canadian dollar as well as the "cheap get-a-way Caribbean vacation" packages that travel agencies are currently selling to customers. It is also interesting that 75% of all Mexican travelers have a strong interest in visiting Canada (Tourism: Canada's Tourism Monthly 2003). This emerging Mexican market demonstrates the potential to evolve into one of Canada's tourism growth markets in the future.

Brandon's recreational future:

The city of Brandon is currently undergoing massive expansion as new hotels, restaurants, shopping places and businesses are being established in Manitoba's second largest city. A lot of people believe Brandon to be on the verge of an economic explosion and this gives way to much opportunity for the recreation and tourism industry. With the

aging baby boomer generation, Brandon's tourism industry is also heading toward expanded long-term market opportunities. "It is estimated that, over the next twenty years, baby boomers will retire from the workplace at an average rate of 500,000 per year (in Canada)" (Canadian Tourism Commission 2002b). The resulting increase in leisure time and discretionary income will lead to an even larger market than currently exists. The challenge facing Canada's tourism industry will be to entice baby boomers to travel within the country.

Some of the reoccurring suggestions respondents made in "Brandon's Recreation and Tourism Assessment Survey" in terms of specific types of attractions or events needed in the city of Brandon were as follows. Many respondents wish the city would book comedians, singers, and famous entertainers on a more regular basis. Secondly, a lot of people wrote how they felt the city needed a new swimming pool or wave pool along with more zero-entry children pools operating during the summer months. Ethnic restaurants, bars, casinos, fairs, festivals, skateboard parks, and gatherings for teenagers were also programs and facilities that were requested. Many respondents gave praise towards the walking paths around the Riverbank Discovery Centre but stated they hoped that there would be more paths created in the future.

The Brandon Riverbank's strategic plan has been put into motion and recreational development in the City is currently taking place. Pathway construction has continued as promised alongside 1st Street North pleasing many residents and lights have been placed along some of the walking paths that currently exist. The Riverbank's Strategic Plan also includes a building expansion along with a new restaurant facility that has not yet been constructed (Brandon Riverbank Discovery Centre 2004). In terms of other recent developments in the city, a new "Home Depot", "Future Shop" and "Mark's Work Wear House" just moved into the corner of 18th Street North and Kirkcaldy Avenue. Businesses and restaurants such as Safeway, Montana's, Subway and Starbuck's are also scheduled to be constructed in this area in the future. This past summer the city funded a beach volleyball court situated on Lorne Avenue. In terms of hotel accommodations, a Canad Inn has just recently been erected on the Keystone Centre grounds and within this new hotel a family restaurant called "Altos" along with a piano bar, a pub (The Tavern) and a new nightclub (The Country Roadhouse) have opened.

Manitoba's recreational future:

The Canadian Tourism Commission is committed to increasing awareness of and interest in Canada as a four-season tourist destination. One of the Canadian Tourism Commission's main objectives is to sustain

a vibrant and profitable tourism industry by marketing Canada as a desirable tourist destination (Canadian Tourism Commission 2002b). In recent years Manitoba has been showing steady growth in tourism. Based on the greater number of people paying visits to Manitoba's travel destinations each year, the province's tourism industry has good future growth potential (Welsted et al 1996). It is an industry that can provide employment and development opportunities in areas which, because of their location or limited resource base, have few economic development alternatives. Tourism is an industry that can benefit residents of Manitoba by providing attractions, facilities, services and infrastructure that meet the resident recreation needs while generally increasing economic activity by attracting non-residents (Wardrop et al 1982).

Given the fact that Manitoba has one of the lower populations in Canada, its primary Canadian target market should not remain its own residents as "there is extremely large market potential in the rest of Canada that must not be ignored" (Domestic Tourism Market Research Study Manitoba and Saskatchewan Report 1996). However Manitoba seems to have problems attracting those who have never visited the province because while "nearly half (47%) of non-visitors to Manitoba regard Manitoba as a destination option among many, nearly as many (43%) have little interest in ever visiting this province" (Manitoba Travel Market Survey Final Report 2000). A mere 10% of those surveyed regarded Manitoba as a likely future destination. This information tells us that if the province of Manitoba wishes to increase its total number of visitors, it must come up with a management strategy that will not only keep Manitoba residents travelling, but will also attract people from other provinces, states and countries to vacation in Canada's prairie region. By attracting these non-residents, Manitoba's tourism industry has even greater potential to grow. New money will be introduced rather than simply circulating "old-money" around the province (2001/02 Marketing and Opportunities Guide n.d.).

A general consensus of survey respondents agreed that Manitoba has beautiful scenery, has abundant natural lakes, has lots of things for families to see and do, is very clean and well cared for, has mild summertime weather, and is a very safe place for visitors (Manitoba Travel Market Survey Final Report 2000). These positive qualities of Manitoba need to be better publicized and expanded on so more people learn of the features and amenities associated with the province. A strong awareness campaign and partnership with industry will ensure continued success. The government has been working on a tourism development strategy for Manitoba and a host of marketing techniques have been researched in an attempt to attract more visitors to the area. It is important for the province to expand its traveling audience by attracting non-residents so they can

see for themselves what sort of natural beauty and unique recreational experiences can be had while traveling Manitoba.

Conclusion

Clearly Brandon residents are choosing a wide variety of destinations and activities to meet their recreational needs on local, regional, national, and international scales. Within the city of Brandon it was discovered that ethnic and fine dining facilities are not as popular as family fare and fast-food restaurants. It was also determined that the majority of the population ate out between two and five times each month. Our study shows that socio-economic status plays an important role in peoples' recreational lives as a much larger percentage of residents from Brandon's wealthy north and west ends have access to vacation residences as compared to those people living in the city's south, east, and downtown areas. The study also shows that as the tourism industry has grown over time so have the participation rates of Brandon residents traveling within the province. Comparing our study to Costanza's study, it is clear that present tourism participation rates are higher than what they were twenty years ago. Many reasons can be given for this increase. Certainly improvements in industrial standard of living have contributed to this increase in recreation. Another contributing factor is the Internet and the influence the World Wide Web has had on assisting travelers in their research as well as booking entertainment, transportation and accommodation services. Comparing these results to Costanza's (1981) it was concluded that (i) recreational demand and opportunities have increased both within and outside the City; (ii) there are spatial variations in the recreational behaviour of Brandon residents, and (iii) that facilities and programs should take account of these variations.

In terms of provincial recreational habits, Brandon residents visit the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Ontario most when they travel within Canada. Hall and Page's (1999) "Time-Distance Decay" model corresponds well to these results as "Brandonites" most frequently visit the provinces closest to Manitoba. With regards to international recreational habits, the United States is the country most often visited by Brandon residents. Due to the connectedness between Canada and the U.S. this result is not surprising. Mexico is also a very popular travel destination according to the survey results. In fact, the Caribbean in general attracts 19% of Brandon residents who are traveling internationally.

Brandon's recreational future looks bright as the city's economy is progressing and the population is growing. With the development of the Riverbank Discovery Centre in 1999, the city of Brandon now has an established tourist information facility (Brandon Riverbank Discovery Centre). This building also serves as a starting point for the trail system and the interpretive programming events that go on in the area. Survey respondents indicated the attractions and events they felt were needed in the city of Brandon. Recurring suggestions included more arts and musical entertainment, a new swimming pool, more fairs, festivals, parks, restaurants and socializing facilities. The Brandon Riverbank Discovery Centre's strategic plan involves funding and expanding the city's recreational base. More of the city's money is being spent to develop new restaurants, hotels, shopping places and recreational facilities. The province of Manitoba could become a more popular travel destination if the province instigated better marketing strategies and if more advertising and public funds were made available. Manitoba is scenic with diverse physical landscapes and the abundance of lakes, streams and rivers. The existence of several provincial parks and one national park provide a strong basis for the recreation and tourism industry. The provincial government is currently working on a tourism development strategy for Manitoba in order to make the province more attractive to travelers.

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