

Travel decisions: Factors affecting choice  
of rural Iowa senior citizens

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## INTRODUCTION

“Two-thirds of all the people in the world who have ever lived beyond the age of 65 are alive today” (Cockerell, 1993). The senior market, consumers 55 and older, is emerging as one of the fastest growing segments of the United States (US) population. Terms such as “mature” market (Lager, 1985), “older” market (Allan, 1981), and “graying” market have been vicariously applied to this group. Regardless of the name, the senior market is proving to be a complex and diverse group of individuals with growing importance to the travel and tourism industry.

The importance of the senior market is reflected in both its market size and market potential. There are approximately 64 million individuals 55 years of age and older in the US today. The market is expected to increase 12.0% by the year 2000 and 27.0% by 2010 (Gustin and Weaver, 1992). The average per capita discretionary annual income of individuals age 55 years and older is \$10,599 (Shoemaker, 1989). The group accounts for 40.0% of all consumer demands (Doka, 1992). According to Javalgi, Thomas, and Rao (1992), Americans 65 years of age and older are the second richest age group in the US population; only the 55-64 year olds are better off. Assets of those over 65 years of age are nearly twice the median for the nation (Javalgi et al., 1992).

The 65 and older age group is growing at twice the rate of the general population (Javalgi et al., 1992). According to Lago and Poffley (1993), between the present and the year 2010, the elderly segment of the population will be the only segment of the life span that will show a percentage increase. After the year 2030 the number of “young elderly”, 65-

74 years of age, will start to drop, while the number of “old elderly”, 85 years of age and older, will continue to show steady increases through 2050.

In 1990, approximately 50.0% of the elderly lived in eight states: California, Florida, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan. The projected growth states will be in the southern and southwestern regions. While the northeast and central regions will show a slower growth rate of “young elderly”, those between 65 years of age and 84, a larger percentage of the population will be “old elderly”, 85 years of age and older (Gilford, 1988). Local and regional differences will be important to the hospitality industry in defining opportunities and challenges both today and in the future.

Market size and market potential forecast the important role the travel and tourism industry can play in understanding and addressing the needs of the senior market. The senior market is not homogeneous, but rather a diverse blend possessing some common characteristics that wind through the age span. Income, health status, and family structure are three important commonalities that the senior market shares, and understanding these variables as well as the differences is the key to effectively prepare hospitality services for the aging population (Lago and Poffley, 1993). People over 55 years of age account for approximately 80.0% of all vacation dollars spent in the US (Shoemaker, 1989). “Older Americans travel more frequently, go greater distances, stay away longer, and rely more on travel agents than any other segment of the population” (Zimmer, Brayley, and Searle, 1995; Badinelli, Davis, and Gustin, 1991).

The purpose of this study was to identify travel characteristics of rural Iowa senior travelers, aged 55 years and older. The study also determined the impact of demographic

variables on travel characteristics, both one-day and overnight trips, of rural Iowa senior travel markets.

Specific objectives of the study were to 1) examine rural Iowa senior travelers' travel patterns and preferences for one-day trips, 2) determine rural Iowa senior travelers' travel patterns and preferences for overnight trips, 3) determine rural Iowa senior travelers' lodging characteristics, 4) identify rural Iowa senior travelers' demographic characteristics, and 5) identify factors influencing rural Iowa senior travelers' travel plans.

The study will be divided into five sections and will contain a literature review of the subject, to be followed by the research methodology employed. Results, along with discussion and conclusion of the findings are next, concluding with a summary of the paper. References cited in the thesis are listed at the end.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The elderly population, aged 55 years of age and older, will continue its rapid growth well into the first decade of the 21st century. Researchers in the hospitality industry are being afforded a final opportunity to probe for answers about this heterogenic segment of the population (Lago and Poffley, 1993). Ananth, DeMicco, Moreo, and Howey (1992) concluded that some segments of the hospitality industry have not responded quickly to the growing importance to the industry of the senior market; while Penalta and Uysal (1992) noted that the industry is slowly recognizing that the market is not homogeneous. The variability of the subgroups makes it important to identify hospitality needs of consumers and predict opportunities for the industry. The literature review is organized into four sections: trends in the aging population, senior travel research, market segmentation, and rural Iowa senior travelers.

### Trends in the Aging Population

Lago and Poffley's (1993) study focused on three important variables among the elderly; health status, family structure, and income. More elderly have chronic and health-related disabilities. However, due to advances in health care, fatal chronic conditions will be replaced by non-fatal conditions resulting in longer periods of disability. On the other hand, the number of healthy, vigorous individuals also will increase dramatically. The young elderly will have two valuable commodities, more leisure time and good health to enjoy it, and 40.0% of the advanced age group (85 and over) will retain a high level of mobility.

According to Lago and Poffley (1993), three elderly subgroups will emerge, those with severe chronic impairment, those with mild impairments, and those who retain a high level of good health. They also stated that “functional health status, not age, determines the kind of hospitality products that will be of interest to a given elder” (Lago and Poffley, 1993, p. 34).

Family structure is important in two areas. First, women’s lifespans continue to increase ahead of men, producing a rapid growth in one-person female households; and second, there is an increasing emphasis on intergenerational communication within families. As the number of one-person female households increase, the hospitality industry must find ways to be responsive to the needs of people who live alone and do not travel with a set social group. There will be a need to create social groups of unrelated persons as well as market to existing groups to counter loneliness. The purpose of intergenerational communication within families is to maintain family solidarity and transmit family culture, resulting in increased intergenerational family gatherings. The impact on the hospitality industry will be to provide services that support intergenerational communications and gatherings (Lago and Poffley, 1993). Shoemaker (1989) suggested programs and promotions building on this reason for travel, including “family reunions” and “take your grandchild” weekends.

Poverty gradually declined to 12.6% in 1990 for all persons over the age of 65, although the income of the majority of elderly is of moderate means. Many older people seek supplemental employment to maintain their standard of living. While some individuals will be able to afford higher-priced hospitality services, the elderly, regardless of income level, will be value-conscious consumers (Lago and Poffley, 1993). Another researcher, Blazey



(1987), studied both travel characteristics and constraints for the 55 year-old and over age group. Major constraints found included health, energy, disability, and perception of age. All of these variables are critical to the understanding of the elderly. Hospitality marketers must take these variables into consideration when developing services and opportunities for these subgroups.

### **Senior Travel Research**

#### **Descriptive Studies**

The descriptive approach to senior travel research addresses travel-related behaviors including travel modes and distances, lodging decisions, lodging characteristics, expenditures, information search, travel preferences, and length of stay. Three research studies, Badinelli et al. (1991); Harper and Perdue (1991); and Shoemaker (1989) used the descriptive approach to senior travel.

Badinelli et al. (1991) focused on pleasure travel preferences and habits of senior citizens 55 years of age and older. A questionnaire was sent to a random nation-wide sample of 3,000 US citizens, with a response rate of 33.0%. Among the findings: the average age of senior travelers was 62 years and 47.0% were retired; the median household income was \$35,001-50,000; and, senior travelers paid an average of \$51.10 for a room. The study also showed that respondents' lodging choice was related to three factors: services/amenities provided by the facility, the income level of the traveler, and the price of the room. Cleanliness (99.4%), convenient location (96.8%), and room price (96.2%) were the top three reasons why seniors stayed at the chosen lodging operations. Seniors preferred to travel with

either their spouse or another person. While 83.0% preferred to travel in pairs, only 2.7% preferred to travel in organized groups, such as tour groups. Seniors traveled approximately three times a year and stayed an average of nine days; they primarily (86.1%) traveled to visit new places. Value and convenience were important to senior travelers. Over one-half (55.0%) of senior travelers preferred to dine in the hotel if eating facilities were available. Overall, seniors, more frequently than any other age group, traveled more, traveled greater distances, stayed away longer, were vibrant, and highly mobile (Badinelli et al., 1991).

Similar conclusions were drawn by Harper and Perdue (1991) in their study of visitors to North Carolina. The study population consisted of non-residents who visited North Carolina between April 1 and December 31, 1989. Successful contacts were made with 10,768 senior visitors, both at selected interview sites along North Carolina highways and the Raleigh-Durham and Charlotte-Douglas International Airports. Of those contacted, 98.0% agreed to participate in the study and were given a copy of an eight-page questionnaire. The response rate was 55.3% (n=5,956). Seniors were divided into three age groups, 60-69 years of age (72.9%), 70-79 years of age (24.7%), and 80 years of age and older (2.4%). Retired seniors accounted for 74.9% of the respondents. The average trip planning time was one month (56.9%); with state highway maps (47.9%), previous experience in North Carolina (39.7%), and automobile clubs (31.0%) being the top sources of travel information. The primary purpose of the trip was to visit friends and relatives (39.6%), followed by sightseeing (24.4%), outdoor recreation (11.8%), business (4.0%), shopping (2.8%), and entertainment (1.6%). The average length of stay in the hotel/motel/resort was three nights. The mean expenditure for hotels and motels per person per night was \$44.71. Mean group size was two

people, with family members (81.2%) being the most prevalent traveling companions. The most popular activities were visiting a scenic area (66.1%), historic site (57.7%), beach (31.9%), museum (30.4%), and camping or hiking (23.9%). The average number of vacation trips lasting 6 or more days during the preceding 5 years was 7.2 times, 6.0 times for get-aways lasting 3 to 5 days, and 5.9 times for overnight weekend pleasure trips.

Shoemaker (1989) also did a descriptive analysis of the senior travel market. The samples consisted of 5,000 randomly selected residents age, 55 or older, in Pennsylvania. Of 5,000 questionnaires mailed, 4,785 were deliverable. The first mailing generated a response rate of 8.0%. A follow-up letter and second questionnaire to 160 selected non-respondents elected a 53.0% usable response rate. Altogether, the total number of useable questionnaires was 407, or an overall adjusted response rate of 9.3%. The study probed travel patterns, travel attitudes and behaviors, and the motivation. The sample was almost equally divided between males (53.2%) and females (46.8%), with 49.3% aged 55-64 and 50.6% 65 years of age and older. Automobile was the favored mode of transportation. Approximately three-quarters of the seniors listed "visit new places", and "escape the everyday routine" as important reasons for pleasure travel. Over one-half of the travelers included get rest and relaxation, experience new things, spend time with immediate family, and visit museums and historical sights as important reasons for travel. Three-quarters of the seniors traveled at least once a year, and 60.0% traveled two to three times a year. The average length of travel was 1-3 nights and the most popular price ranges for trips were \$1-150 and \$301-450.

Respondents were grouped into three clusters, Family Travelers, Active Resters, and Older Set, using cluster analysis of attitudes toward pleasure travel, benefits sought from

travel, and travel behaviors. Cluster I, Family Travelers, primarily traveled to spend time with their immediate families; they enjoyed playing golf and shopping. They also enjoyed shorter trips and preferred to return to a destination rather than to visit a new one. Over one-half of the members were 64 years old or younger (60.0%) and male (55.0%). The primary reason Active Resters engaged in pleasure travel was to seek spiritual and intellectual enrichment; to meet people, socialize, rest, and relax; to escape the everyday routine; to engage in physical activities; and to visit historic sights. Over one-half of the Cluster II members were 64 years old or younger (53.0%) and male (52.0%). Cluster II members liked their trips filled with activities including visiting historic sights; attending plays, concerts, special events, and attractions; and engaging in physical activities. Cluster III, the Older Set, liked to stay in resorts where everything is included; they liked to visit historic sights, and preferred to return to a destination rather than seeking a new one. Close to two-thirds (61.1%) of members were older than 64 years of age. Results of this study indicated that various marketing strategies can be developed for the senior market, and the market can be segmented according to the wants and needs of its members. Programs must be developed for specific target groups rather than one to fit all the wants and needs of the senior market (Shoemaker, 1989).

European senior travel market was the focus of research for Cockerell (1993). The European senior travel market grew by 10.0% from 1988 to 1991, approaching 200 million trips a year. About 50 million of the 200 million trips were international. International travel among the 55 plus age group is forecast to increase by 35.0% from 1990 to 1995 and another 78.0% from 1995 to 2000. European baby boomers, those born after World War II, have

greater disposable time and income than did their parents, and many are fairly experienced travelers. Europe's senior population, 55-64 years of age, is projected to grow by 10.0% between 1990 and 2000; the over 60 age group will increase by 13.0%; and the 65 and over age group by 22.0%.

The Aviation and Tourism Industry (ATI) indicated that two major factors will determine the size of the European senior travel market. First, demographic changes will continue to increase the number of people in the older age bands; and second, the frequency level of trip taking by the mature market in general will increase. Female travelers are a very important and neglected sector of the European senior market as in the US (Lago and Poffley, 1993). Many are widowed or divorced and reluctant to go on holiday alone, despite having the desire and means to travel. The share of female travelers hardly approaches their share of the population. "The female to male ratio of the European population is 58:42, the average ratio of female to male travelers in the 55-plus age group is 51:49 for combined domestic and international travel but only about 40:60 for international travel" (Cockerell, 1993, p. 53).

Senior travelers have created a "dream" market for the travel industry because many seniors do not travel during the peak travel season. On the average, seniors took 1.57 domestic and 0.46 international trips per year. The European senior market generated as much as 80.0% of all European international trips with the highest length of trip of 10.4 nights. Of all holiday trips, 83.0% were for four nights or more and 17.0% for short breaks of one to three nights. About three-fourths (74.0%) of seniors opted for partly or fully booked package tours (Cockerell, 1993).

The most important means of transportation for European senior travelers was the airplane, split between charters and scheduled flights. Car travel was next, followed by motorcoach and bus, then train. Two-thirds of European senior travelers preferred to stay in hotels, with middle grade or three-star equivalent accommodations receiving the highest percentage (64.0%), followed by holiday homes (13.0%). Overall, 42.0% of European senior travelers opted for inclusive package tours when they traveled abroad.

Cockerell (1993) concluded the study by discussing common characteristics of Europe's senior market: Europe's seniors were more physically active than their parents, travel was an essential part of their lifestyle, and a significant number of seniors were fairly adventurous. A key finding was that Europe's senior travelers were heterogeneous, rejected age labels, and were not interested in age specific products. Seniors wanted a better understanding of their needs, including specialized tour programs for those with physical disabilities as well as those who had no specific health handicaps. The travel industry needs a better understanding of special services and facilities for senior travelers. Finally, price sensitivity is a key characteristic of many Europeans, marketers should offer price discounts for off-peak senior travel.

### **Comparative Studies**

Comparative studies on similarities and differences between senior and non-senior groups were reviewed. Javalgi et al. (1992) and Zimmer et al. (1995) used comparative studies to determine perceptions, preferences, and travel planning behaviors of various age groups of US pleasure travel market.

The study by Javalgi et al. (1992) involved 9,000 personal interviews with respondents 16 years of age and older who had taken at least one pleasure trip during the three years preceding the study. Pleasure trips was defined as “a trip that required the respondent to travel more than 100 miles away, spend at least one night away from home and use commercial accommodations and/or transportation” (Javalgi et al., 1992, p. 15). The number of useable interviews was 4,465 (49.61%). Interviewees were divided into 3 age groups under 55 years of age (73.4%, n=3,277), 55-64 years of age (13.5%, n=601), and 65 years of age and older (13.1%, n=587). Other demographic characteristics collected were education, income, and occupation.

Members of the under 55 age group appeared to be more highly educated. Close to one-half (47.0%) of non-seniors indicated they had completed some college or beyond. Among seniors the figures were approximately 35.0% for 55-64 year olds, and 30.0% for those aged 65 and over. This will most likely change as baby boomers move into the senior age groups. The annual household income of 60.0% of seniors 65 years of age and older was lower than \$20,000, compared to 28.5% for 55-64 year olds and 24.3% for those under 55 years of age. On the other hand, 75.7% of respondents under 55 years of age fell in high income ranges: \$20,000-\$29,999 (25.9%), \$30,000-\$39,999 (26.3%), and \$40,000 and more (23.5%). The employment status indicated that 72.0% of the 65 years of age and over were retired, compared to 32.0% for the 55-64 year olds and 1.4% for those under 55 years of age. Close to two-thirds (61.6%) of respondents under 55 years of age, and 36.8% of respondents 55-64 years of age were employed full-time. The figure fell to 4.2% for those respondents 65

years of age and older. Part-time employment was lower for the under 55 years of age group (13.5%) compared to seniors 55-64 years of age and 65 years of age and older (15.4%).

The majority of travelers, senior and non-senior, listed visiting friends/relatives as the most important type of pleasure trip. The under 55 group was most likely to have taken a close-to-home pleasure trip (36.5%), an outdoor vacation (24.1%), a city trip (22.0%), a resort vacation (20.2%), and a trip to a theme park (14.4%). The senior groups, 55-64 years and 65 years and older, were more likely to visit friends/relatives (61.1% and 64.5%, respectively) followed by touring vacation (26.9% and 29.1%) and a cruise (4.5% and 6.5%).

The preferred means of transportation was car, followed by plane. While bus travel overall was not popular, as the age increased, the usage also increased. The use of a packaged trip including both transportation and accommodations was low for all groups; 11.0% for those under 55, 16.8% for those aged 55-64, and 23.9% for those 65 and older. Although few of the trips taken by respondents were packaged trips, the 65 year old and over group preferred packaged trips more than the other groups. The use of a travel agent to book accommodations or any part of a trip also was low, 14.4% for the under 55 group, 20.1% for the 55-64 group, and 26.1% for the 65 and over group. In terms of accommodations, 40.0% of seniors stayed in hotels while 30.0% non-seniors did.

Javalgi et al. (1992) concluded that seniors were price-sensitive and would spend time shopping for travel-related products and services. Marketers were recommended to develop a package mix that emphasizes discount pricing, and involves travel for longer periods of time and for greater distances. They also recommended that travel agents should target senior travelers, using informative advertising designed to make them aware of services provided by



travel agents, and the fact that such services do not carry direct cost to the customers (Javalgi et al., 1992).

Zimmer et al. (1995) also approached senior travel by studying differences between senior travelers and non-travelers. One purpose of the study was to “identify those variables that influence the decisions to and opportunities for pleasure travel by seniors and to ascertain the relative importance of those variables in discriminating between travelers and non-travelers” (Zimmer et al., 1995, p. 3). The study was conducted in nine cities in Canada. A random sample of Manitoba seniors was selected from a list of Medicare recipients at the designated sites. Personal interviews were conducted with 1,406 individuals, half were residents of Winnipeg, the other half were residents of eight smaller communities throughout Manitoba, with populations between 2,000 and 10,000. Of all seniors surveyed, 82.9% of those under 75 years of age and 65.4% of those 75 years of age and older traveled. Of those who traveled, over one-half reported at least four trips in the previous two years. The average number of persons per household was 1.7, and 40.0% lived alone. Over one-half of the respondents (55.0%) were married. Over one-fourth (28.0%) of respondents reported monthly income of less than \$1,000 Canadian, 45.0% reported \$1,000 to \$2,000, while 27.0% reported over \$2,000.

Five factors found to influence the choice of destination were income, education, rural residency, willingness to spend money on recreation, and health status. Two types of travelers were defined according to results of the study. Near, those who traveled in Canada, and far, those who traveled outside of Canada. Three variables that had the greatest influence in distinguishing between the two types of travelers were rural residency, education, and

health problems. Residents of the urban community were more apt to travel farther distances than rural residents, more educated respondents traveled to farther destinations, and those with health problems traveled to nearer destinations as did those as age increased. Household income level also influenced whether a senior was classified as a traveler or non-traveler. More than one-half the respondents could not be classified, either as traveler or non-traveler, using discriminate analysis, indicating there may be other variables that would be better predictors of senior travel. The study identified travel niches for the senior population. Because the level of education was an important predictor characteristic, education can be used to segment the senior travel market. Increasing the perceived income of the market or establishing a sense of value to the senior travelers also have a positive influence on their decision to travel. Finally, due to the fact that many seniors have chronic health problems, marketers must determine the kinds of products and services that will facilitate travel for seniors (Zimmer et al., 1995).

### **Market Segmentation**

Market segmentation breaks down the total market into smaller markets that share common characteristics. Haws (1988) segmented the female senior travel market into five age categories. Each of the submarkets has its own travel-related lifestyle pattern. Blazey (1991) did a comparative segmentation of travelers and non-travelers based on age and VALS, a psychographic segment technique. Gustin and Weaver (1992) and Ananth et al. (1992) segmented the senior population based on their lodging needs and wants and demographic characteristics. Becker-Suttle, Weaver, and Crawford-Welch (1994) researched

age-based segmentation strategies in the full service restaurant market. Lago and Poffley (1993) segmented seniors according to restaurant choices, and Chacko and Nebill III. (1993) and Penalta and Uysal (1992) explored motorcoach tour groups.

## **Travel**

Haws (1988) segmented the senior female travel market by age and attitudes, interests, and opinions (AIO). The purpose of the survey was to classify travel-related lifestyles of women over 50 years of age. Questionnaires were mailed to 1,650 female household heads with a response rate of 66.0%. Respondents were divided into five age groups, 50-54 years of age, 55-59 years of age, 60-64 years of age, 65-69 years of age, and 70 years of age and over. Heads of unmarried households accounted for 78.0% of the respondents. Cluster analysis determined three AIO classifications: traveler, laid back, and dreamer. One-third of the travelers were predisposed to non-domestic travel and liked excitement and adventure; one-third were laid back and preferred predictability. The laid back travelers might be induced to broaden travel horizons if the destination can be portrayed as a location for quiet, tranquillity, rest and relaxation, and away from big-city and high tech accouterments. One-fifth of the travelers were dreamers, content with vicarious experiences and fantasizing with television.

The general profile of women senior travelers was high education and income levels, small household size, and activeness and acceptance of uncertainty involved in travel. Haws (1988) concluded that big-city vacations and/or travels held less appeal than alternatives to women in all age groups; three of the five age groups did not support the notion of travel

now, pay later; women in the 55-59 age group had high interest in traveling overseas; and three of the five age groups, including the 70 years of age and over, were not primarily interested in rest and relaxation. Television was not the appropriate medium to reach two of the traveler groups, traveler and laid back, but specific media such as newspaper and magazine were effective.

The findings suggested that many older women, even over 70 years of age, have the energy and desire to do active things. Older women describe themselves in positive terms and marketers “should treat these people in advertising and marketing as useful, competent, confident, coping individuals with a zest for life and a choice to be self sufficient and active” (Haws, 1988, p. 31).

Segmentation by age and VALS types was done by Blazey in 1991. A nationwide survey was conducted of 1,350 individuals, ages 50 and over. The response rate was 88.0%. All respondents had spent four or more nights, during the past year, away from home on travel. Respondents were age classified into four groups: 50-54 years of age, 55-59 years of age, 60-64 years of age, and 65 years of age and over. The four VALS types were survivor, believer, achiever, and societally conscious.

There was no significant relationship between age group and travel frequency. A significant relationship was found between age and respondents' reasons for travel, the number of nights away from home, the type of lodging selected, and the number of persons in the travel party. Most often, the 65 years of age and older group (54.2%) traveled to visit friends and/or relatives. About two-thirds (65.8%) of 60-64 year olds and 65 years of age and older groups traveled for vacation only. Business, or combined business and vacation, was

the primary reason the 50-54 and 55-59 year olds traveled. Approximately two-thirds (60.0%) of all travelers spent four to seven nights away from home while traveling. The 65 years of age and over group comprised 55.0% of all travelers taking trips in excess of three week; while those 62 years of age and younger, under the age of retirement, took shorter vacations. The types of lodging most often chosen by the 65 years of age and older group were camping and stays with friends or relatives. Hotels and motels were the major choice of the 55-59 year old group. The younger group, 50-54 years of age, traveled in groups of 3 to 4 people; while the older groups, 60-64 and 65 years and over traveled in larger groups.

The VALS classification had significant relationships with the number of trips taken. Survivors and belongers averaged one to two trips per year; achievers averaged three or more. Non-travelers tend to be survivors and belongers, while the achievers and societally conscious traveled. Belongers most often traveled in groups of five or more, achievers in groups of two to four, and societally conscious traveled alone. Survivors were comprised of mostly widowed individuals, and traveled in odd-sized parties. Survivors and belongers were primarily 65 years of age and older; achievers and societally conscious were 50-59 years of age. Survivors stayed with friends and relatives; belongers stayed in campgrounds; achievers stayed in hotels, motels, and resorts; and achievers and the societally conscious stayed in condominiums and second homes. Family reasons for travel were primarily found in survivors and belongers, and achievers and societally conscious traveled for business only or business and pleasure. Survivors preferred to travel by bus rather than by air, and belongers preferred to travel by bus or recreational vehicles rather than by air. Survivors and belongers

spent one month planning the longest trip, while achievers and the societally conscious spent one to more than six months planning the longest trip taken in the previous year.

Results of the study showed a significant relationship between VALS types and travel-related characteristics of senior travelers. However, VALS typing identified segments that are difficult to assess. Therefore, a predictive tool based on attitudes, interest, opinions, and demographic characteristics must be created to assess who in any given sample will fall into a particular market segment. In addition, marketers should promote travel-related services to meet the needs of various VALS types (Blazey, 1991).

### **Hotel and Lodging**

The primary research purpose for Gustin and Weaver (1992) was to determine “underlying dimensions that exist for the mature traveler when deciding where to stay while traveling for pleasure” (Gustin and Weaver, 1991, p. 50). The underlying dimensions were price yet quality, reputation, security, and little things (amenities). The dimensions were tested against age, gender, and retirement status. Females rated reputation and travel agent recommendation (reputation dimension), and security systems (security dimension) more important than males rating. Price yet quality was more important to the lower income segment of the market. Gustin and Weaver (1992) concluded that the mature group is not homogeneous, but gives hotel operators the opportunity to target segments within the mature market. In order to meet the needs and expectations of the mature market, it is necessary for hotel marketers to recognize the heterogeneity of this group.

Ananth et al. (1992) sought to 1) identify attributes mature travelers seek when choosing a hotel, 2) assess the relative importance of these attributes, and 3) determine significant differences between mature and younger travelers on attributes sought. A stratified random sample of 510 adults were selected from Pennsylvania State University Alumni Association. The response rate was 43.5%, n=222. Demographic data indicated that 48.6% of respondents were under 59 years of age, and 51.4% were 59 years of age and older (the mature group). The mature group comprised of 62.3% males, 37.7% females; of which 14.0% full-time employed, 4.4% part-time employed, and 72.8% retired. The under 59 group comprised of 56.5% males, 43.5% females; 81.5% full-time employed, 6.5% part-time employed, and 0.9% retired. Approximately three-quarters of both groups were married. The majority of the mature group had reported an annual household income of \$20,001-\$40,000 (37.7%) and \$40,001-\$60,000 (22.8%). The primary annual household income for the under 59 group was \$20,001-\$40,000 (32.4%) and \$40,001-\$60,000 (37.8%). Over three-quarters (87.4%) of all respondents had taken at least one trip during the previous 12 months. Over one-half (54.4%) of mature travelers took one to four trips a year. The majority (70.0%) of mature travelers stayed overnight in a hotel or motel while on pleasure trips, whereas few younger travelers stayed overnight in a hotel or motel on business (26.0%) or pleasure (22.0%) trips.

The five most important attributes in selecting a hotel for mature travelers were services and convenience; security and price; general amenities; mature specific attributes including supports in bathrooms, night lights in bathrooms, low-pile carpets, legible signs in hallways, public areas, and restaurants; and room amenities. The mature specific attributes

were significantly more important to the mature group. General amenities were primarily desired by business travelers. However, while mature business travelers may desire these same amenities, this study suggested these features do not carry much weight when the mature group makes lodging choices. Room amenities, bathroom amenities, and large size beds were more important to younger travelers. Security and price was the only variable not significantly different between the two age groups. The study concluded that for practical purposes, mature travelers have wants and needs that may influence them to ignore certain marketing promotions that will be successful with younger travelers, and many attributes important to mature travelers were not promoted in lodging marketing campaigns (Ananth et al., 1992).

### **Restaurants**

Restaurants are appreciably affected by the growing senior population. Questions facing the restaurant industry involve changing marketing direction away from the 18-49 year olds to the older markets. Research by Lago and Poffley (1993) addressed the future of the restaurant industry as it relates to the mature market. "Older consumers are not monolithic in their dining out patters", (Lago and Poffley, 1993, p. 44) but their patterns are very distinctive in both service and food preferences. Between 1983 and 1988, consumers in the 65-69 age bracket and those in the 70 plus age bracket increased the use of quick service restaurants from 41.0 to 45.0% and from 46.0 to 50.0%, respectively. "Baby boomers", the next wave of seniors, raised on certain types of food will probably not change those habits. Nutritious meals have always been an important concept for older individuals, and now, the general



population is moving closer to healthy eating. Older restaurant users do give higher importance to certain foods such as salads, non-fried potatoes, hot vegetables, and non-fried fish and chicken entrees. Despite definite attitudes about food and nutrition, older patrons still give above-average shares of their restaurant eating to fried foods. Patronage and brand loyalty also are common characteristics of the older population, therefore they are as important to restaurants as new customers.

Some of the conclusions Lago and Poffley drew from the research included: “1) fast-food companies may hold onto a larger percentage of tomorrow’s aging consumers; 2) older consumers are looking for meals that deliver the nutrients using cooking methods that they know will produce the kind of foods they prefer; 3) the full service, casual-dining segment may be in the best position to deliver this combination of taste, variety, and nutrition; 4) restaurants that can provide rapid and focused response to consumer preferences will flourish; and 5) the seamless integration of nutrition information and menu compliance into the fabric of a restaurant’s service profile will be treated with increased travel, lodging, and dining preferences” (Lago and Poffley, 1993, p. 44-45).

Becker-Suttle et al. (1994) researched the effectiveness of using age as a grouping criterion in the development of market segments in the full service restaurant market. Seniors, 55 years of age and over, and non-seniors, under 55 years of age, were studied in terms of their restaurant selection criteria, such as nutritional quality, menu variety, portion size, and menu focus. The study found that both age groups wanted food that is high in nutritional value, while menu focus was more important to seniors. Non-seniors wanted a large number of items on the menu, however, for seniors it was not an important attribute.

Seniors wanted smaller portions, non-seniors wanted larger portions and probably would not go to a restaurant with smaller portions. Seniors were more flexible than non-seniors with regard to portion size, but preferred medium-size portions, and probably avoided restaurants offering other sizes (Becker-Suttle et al., 1994).

### **Motorcoach Tour**

Escorted motorcoach tours are one of the options available to senior travelers, regardless of market sub-segment. According to the National Tour Association (NTA), escorted motorcoach group tours had shown a steady increase in the last five years. The number of trips rose 28% from 1985 to 1989, and involved over 56 million passengers with an estimated economic impact of \$13 billion in 1989 (NTA, 1989). The purpose of the NTA study was to present descriptive statistics of important operational aspects of NTA member organizations. Operational variables included market segments served, modes of transportation, organization of tours, hotel accommodations used, seasonality of business, methods of promotion, and kinds of tours offered. Marketing strategies and implications for the aging US population also were discussed. The study concluded that nearly 55.0% of motorcoach group tours were derived from the senior market and 70.0% of motorcoach riders used it as the primary transportation mode. Motorcoach group tours serve both the low-budget seniors as well as the luxury-oriented seniors. The business was fairly constant all year with summer as the highest (30.6%) period, winter as the lowest (13.4%) period, and spring (28.0%) and fall (28.0%) in between. The study recommended the senior market be segmented by criteria such as age, income, life stage, retirement status, and travel interest.

The motorcoach group tour industry has some of the finest opportunities as well as some of the greatest challenges in satisfying the diverse needs of the senior market now and in the future (Chacko and Nebill III, 1993).

Although researchers are beginning to realize the tremendous impact the senior travel market has and will continue to have into the next millennium, Penalta and Uysal (1992) listed ten areas concerning this market that must be addressed by researchers. Four of the areas have been touched on in this paper and are important to the study: 1) determine the impact of intergenerational programs and provide opportunities for intergenerational travel, 2) identify and alleviate barriers to travel for elderly travelers and non-travelers, 3) determine the extent of travel as part of the older American's lifestyle, and 4) identify segments of the elderly population that can be generalized to more groups and situations than that of a specific study (Penalta and Uysal, 1992).

### **Rural Iowa Senior Travelers**

The estimated Iowa population of 2,812,000 in 1992 showed an increase from 1990 (Figure 1). The outmigration trend has reversed itself, and in the next 15 years, the population is expected to increase to approximately 2.9 million (Iowa Department of Economic Development, 1994).

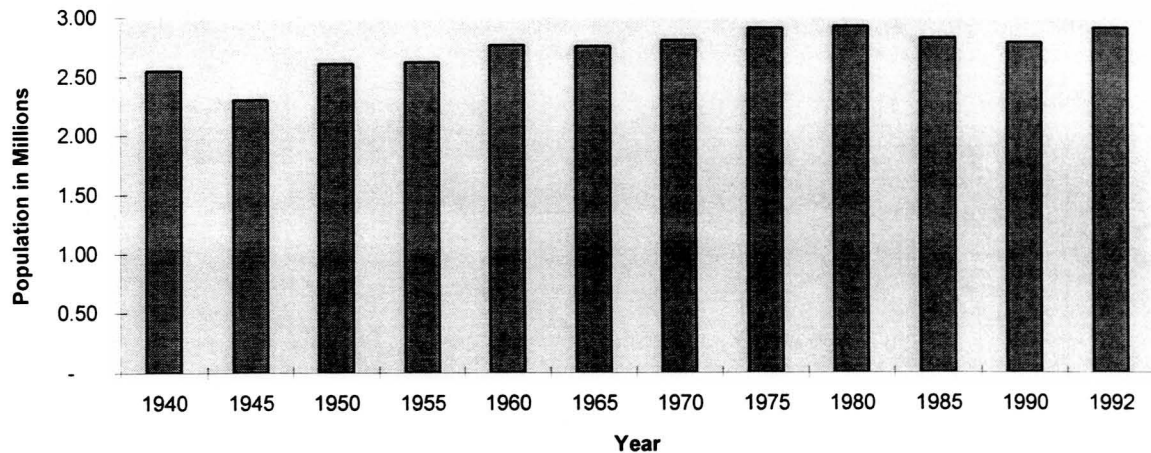


Figure 1. Iowa Population Trend 1940-1992. Source: Iowa Department of Economic Development.

The US Bureau of the Census defines rural population as nearly all residents of incorporated places with fewer than 2,500 residents, plus people living outside of such places on farms and other acreages (Goudy and Burke, 1992). Rural population in the US in 1990 was 61,656,000, representing 24.8% of the total population (Faminghetti, 1995). Iowa's rural population was 1,091,000, 39.3% of the total population. A chart of Iowa counties of rural residents as a percent of total residents (Figure 2) reveals that for 19 counties, 100.0% of the population is rural; for 51 counties, 50.0-99.9% of the population is rural; and for 29 counties,  $\leq 49.9\%$  of the population is rural (Goudy & Burke, 1992).

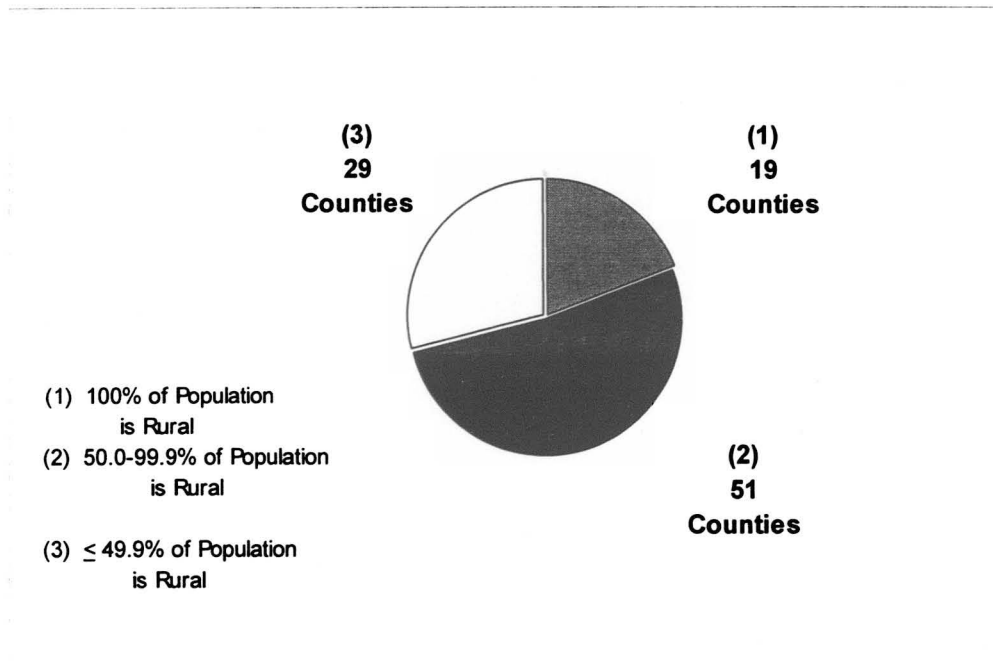


Figure 2. Iowa Counties of Rural Residents as a Percent of Total Resident.  
Source: Goudy & Burke, 1992.

The median age for general rural US citizens was 28.9 years; seniors 55 years of age and older accounted for 21.1% of the general population; and 19.9% of all rural residents were 55 years of age and older (US Census Bureau, 1990). Iowa's median age was 35.8 years; seniors 55 years of age and older accounted for 24.3% of the general population; and 26.1% of all Iowa rural residents were 55 years of age and older (US Census Bureau, 1990).

Iowa's economic base is diversified. Principal industries in Iowa (Figure 3) include services; manufacturing; wholesale and retail trade; government; agriculture; transportation and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and construction and mining (Faminghetti, 1995).

Iowa has a rich agricultural heritage. Agriculture, including food processing, food distribution, trade, and manufacturing account for 14.0% of the total number of business establishments in Iowa, 20.6% of all employees, and 17.2% of the state's total payroll. Iowa is second of the top 10 states in agricultural exports, and one of the top 10 states in agricultural production (Iowa Department of Economic Development, 1994).

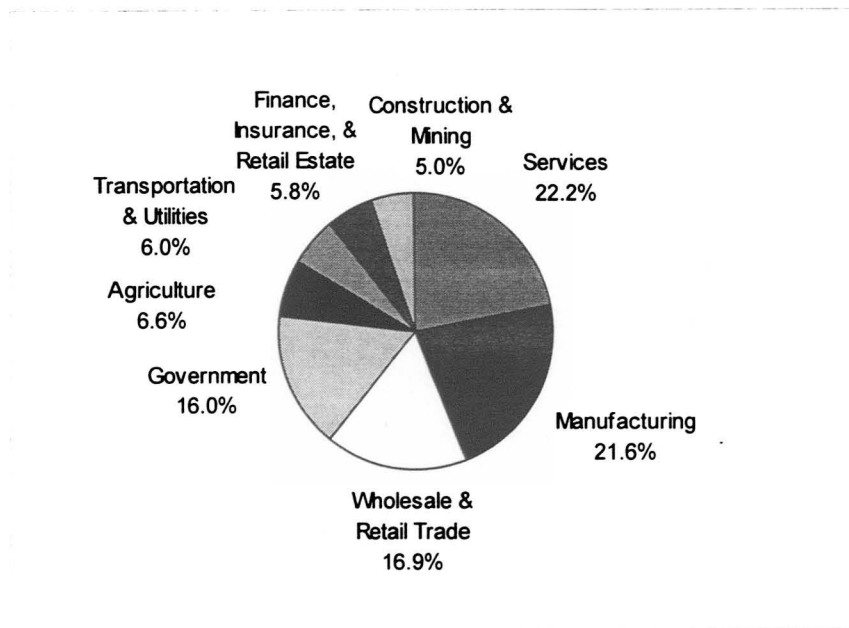


Figure 3. Percent Income Earned by Industry in Iowa, 1991. Source: Iowa Department of Economic Development, 1994.

Travel and tourism in Iowa is a growing industry. In 1980, only 22.0% of visitors to Iowa had destinations in Iowa. According to a 1992 study conducted at the interstate welcome centers, the percent of visitors with destinations in Iowa increased to 36.0%, the average number of days spent on a trip was 16.0, the average days spent in Iowa was 3.1, the average travel party of 2.9 persons spent \$111.98 each day they were in the state, compared to 1980 when the average travel party of 3.0 persons spent \$57.12 per day. Total travel

expenditures spent in Iowa in 1992 were \$2.3 million, travel generated payroll was \$358.84 million, and travel generated employment was 43,000. Tourists spent \$6.8 billion in the state in 1994 (Faminghetti, 1995).

All these figures represent a major potential market for the tourism industry in Iowa. Marketing and management strategies must be developed recognizing the diversity of the senior population, as well as the shared interests, needs, and constraints that make it such a strong and powerful travel market (Penalta and Uysal, 1992). It is the intent of this study to identify factors affecting travel and vacation patterns of rural Iowa senior travelers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify travel characteristics of rural Iowa senior travelers, aged 55 years of age and older. The study also determined the impact of demographic variables on travel characteristics, both one-day and overnight trips, of rural Iowa senior travel markets.

Specific objectives of the study were to 1) examine rural Iowa senior travelers' travel patterns and preferences for one-day trips, 2) determine rural Iowa senior travelers' travel patterns and preferences for overnight trips, 3) determine rural Iowa senior travelers' lodging characteristics, 4) identify rural Iowa senior travelers' demographic characteristics, and 5) identify factors influencing rural Iowa senior travelers' travel plans.

### Hypothesis Statement

Hypotheses for the study were 1) there are significant differences on travel companion preference among seniors with demographic variants, 2) there are significant differences on individual(s) responsible for trip planning among seniors with demographic variants, 3) there are significant differences on information sources for trip planning among seniors with demographic variants, 4) there are significant differences on benefits sought among seniors with demographic variants, 5) there are significant differences on restaurant preference among seniors with demographic variants, 6) there are significant differences on lodging choice among seniors with demographic variants, and 7) there are significant differences on lodging characteristics among seniors with demographic variants.



### **Questionnaire Development**

A review of literature was completed to determine travel characteristics of the senior market. A questionnaire was developed based on the literature review and a questionnaire developed by Badinelli et al. (1991). The purpose of their study was to ascertain travel preferences and habits of senior citizens age 55 and over. The questionnaire was chosen because the purpose of their study was similar to this study, although the population was different. Questions addressing rural senior travel characteristics and dining patterns from Badinelli et al. were adapted. Dr. Pamela Weaver, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, was of great assistance in providing information and materials pertaining to the Badinelli et al. study.

The ten-page questionnaire consisted of four major sections. Sections one and two contained questions on one-day and overnight pleasure trips, respectively, in the format of short answers. Questions in section three related to travel characteristics. Section three was subdivided into seven parts. Questions on 1) travel companions, 2) benefits sought, 3) individual responsible for trip planning, 4) information source for trip planning, and 5) restaurant preference when traveling, using a 5-point scale with 5=very likely, 4=likely, 3=somewhat likely, 2=unlikely, and 1=very unlikely. Lodging choices were rated with 5=almost always; 4=frequently, 3=sometimes, 2=seldom, and 1=never. Lodging characteristics were rated with 1=very important, 2=moderately important, 3=important, 4=minor importance, and 5=not important. Section four collected the demographic information in the form of short answers or checking the correct response. The study was

approved by the Iowa State University Human Subjects in Research Committee (Appendix A). A copy of the questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

The questionnaire was evaluated by a panel of experts from the Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management, and the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Education and Studies, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. A pilot test, to determine the clarity of the questionnaire as well as length of time needed to complete it, was conducted in March, 1995 at Heartland Senior Services, Ames, Iowa. During the first session with the seniors at Heartland Senior Services, information was given concerning who was administering the survey, the purpose of the survey, the institution associated with the survey, and the guarantee of confidentiality regarding respondents' answers. An invitation was given to 10 senior volunteers, 55 years and older. At a second session the following week, the questionnaire was administered to 10 volunteers. The researcher remained in the room with respondents in order to answer any questions, comments, or concerns that arose. The major concerns were the length of the questionnaire (too long), and difficulty in understanding the Likert-type scales. Most respondents failed to answer every question in section three, by only circling the ones they felt as important.

The questionnaire was revised in response to their concerns. Although the length of the questionnaire could not be shortened without losing vital information, some lodging characteristics were combined. The Likert-type scales were made more visible and easier to follow to help reduce confusion regarding the instruction. The font size also was increased from 12 point to 16 point for higher readability.

### **Sample Selection**

The population of the study consisted of Iowa residents age 55 years and older, residing in towns with population <2,500 residents. The size of town was based on the US Government's (US Census Bureau, 1990) definition of rural residents: "Rural population includes nearly all residents of incorporated places with fewer than 2,500 residents plus people living outside such places on farms and other acreages" (US Census Bureau, 1990, p. 23). To be included in the study, respondents had to have been at least 55 years of age or older, and have taken at least one trip for pleasure in the past year. A pleasure traveler was defined as any individual who was a temporary visitor traveling with the expectation of pleasure, and engaging in the exchange of money. Three central Iowa towns, Ogden, Boxholm, and Gowrie, were selected to draw samples for the study due to geographic proximity and population size. Because of data collection difficulties, selected senior citizens from Ogden, Boxholm, Dayton, Panora, and Guthrie became samples of the study.

A statement on the cover page on the front of the questionnaire explained that the study was being conducted as part of a master's thesis in the Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management at Iowa State University, and defined the purpose and benefits of the study. The confidentiality of respondents' answers was guaranteed, and respondents were informed that they were free to discontinue participation at any time.

### **Data Collection**

The original method for data collection was to recruit volunteers at the Senior Citizen Centers in each of the three towns. In June, 1995, the researcher telephoned and spoke in

person with the individual(s) in charge of the Senior Citizen Centers, requesting volunteers for the survey. Response at all three centers was negative. Follow-up communication indicated an unwillingness of seniors to fill out “another survey”, regardless of the purpose. The researcher then contacted two independent bus tour organizers from Ogden and Boxholm, Iowa. Both tour operators draw clients from rural towns in Iowa, including Ogden, Boxholm, Dayton, Panora, and Guthrie. The two tour operators agreed to administer the questionnaires on scheduled tours in June and July. Directions were given to tour directors, and a total of 85 questionnaires were distributed. Participants on each tour bus were asked by tour operators for willingness to complete the survey, and the survey was administered during the course of the trip. All questionnaires were returned by the end of July. The number of useable questionnaires was 60, with a response rate of 70.59%.

### Data Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using the Graduate Statistical Package Standard Version (SPSS, 1995). Descriptive statistics were calculated for all survey items. Significant differences on travel characteristics between respondents with different demographic characteristics were determined using t-tests, chi-square tests, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Gender was divided into male and female; marital status into married and single, widowed, or divorced; household income into  $< \$40,000$  and  $\geq \$40,000$ ; and retirement status into retired and semi- or non-retired. Age was categorized into three groups, 55-64 years, 65-74 years, and 75 years and over.

## RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to identify travel characteristics of rural Iowa senior travelers, aged 55 years of age and older. The study also determined the impact of demographic variables on travel characteristics, both one-day and overnight trips, of rural Iowa senior travel markets.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Rural Senior Travelers**

Demographic data indicate that females represented over three-quarters (78.3%) and males close to one-quarter (21.7%) of respondents. The average age of all respondents (Table 1) was 66 years, and three categories were derived: 55-64 years of age (31.5%), 65-74 years of age (42.1%), and 75 years of age and over (26.3%). The majority (60.0%) of respondents were married, while 40.0% were single, widowed, or divorced. Over half the respondents (62.0%) reported a household size of two persons, while 33.0% reported a household size of one person. Approximately three-quarters (78.0%) of respondents were retired, 20.0% non-retired, and the remainder (2.0%) semi-retired. An annual household income of \$0-\$40,000 was reported by close to two-thirds (62.0%) of the respondents; the remainder (38.0%) reported an annual household income of over \$40,000. The primary occupation or past occupation of respondents was education (28.8%), followed by homemaker (20.30%), secretarial/clerical (16.9%), and agriculture (10.2%).

**Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%
<b>Age</b>			
55 - 64 years	31.5	<b>Household Income</b>	
65 - 74 years	42.1	under \$10,000	7.0
75 years & over	26.3	\$10,001 - \$25,000	32.0
Range: 55-89		\$25,001 - \$40,000	23.0
Mean: 66.50		\$40,001 - \$55,000	18.0
		\$55,001 - \$70,000	13.0
		over \$70,000	7.0
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Married	60.0	<b>Occupation/Former Occupation</b>	
Single, widowed, divorced	40.0	Education	28.8
<b>Household Size</b>			
1 person	33.0	Homemaker	20.3
2 persons	62.0	Secretarial/clerical	16.9
more than 2 persons	5.0	Agriculture	10.2
		Health services	6.8
		Business	6.8
<b>Retirement Status</b>			
Non-retired	20.0	Blue collar	1.7
Semi-retired	2.0	Sales	1.7
Retired	78.0	Service	1.7
		Transportation	1.7
		Finance	1.7
		Insurance	1.7

### Relationship of Demographic Variables

Chi-square analysis was used to determine statistically significant differences among five demographic variables; age, gender, income, marital status, and retirement status. Only chi-square values significant at probability  $\leq 0.05$  are presented in the tables. Tables 2 through 4 compare marital status and income, marital status and gender, and retirement status and age.

*Marital Status and Income* Married respondents accounted for over half (60.0%) of the total respondents (Table 1), and were almost equally divided between an annual income

**Table 2. Marital Status by Income**

Marital Status	Income		Chi-square
	<\$40,000	≥\$40,000	
Married	45.7%	54.3%	11.22032 (p = .00081)
Single, widowed, or divorced	95.8%	4.2%	

**Table 3. Marital Status by Gender**

Marital Status	Gender		Chi-square
	Males	Females	
Married	33.3%	66.7%	7.21768 (p=.00722)
Single, widowed, or divorced	4.2%	95.8%	

**Table 4. Retirement Status by Age**

Retirement Status	Age			Chi-square
	55-64	65-74	75 +	
Semi- or non-retired	66.7%	0.0%	6.7%	28.32391 (p = .00000)
Retired	33.3%	100.0%	93.3%	

<\$40,000 (45.7%) and ≥\$40,000 (54.3%) (Table 2). Of the total respondents 40% were single, widowed, or divorced (Table 1), almost all (95.8%) had an annual income <\$40,000, while only 4.2% had an annual income ≥\$40,000 (Table 2).

*Marital Status and Gender* Table 3 shows that 66.7% of married respondents were female, and almost all (95.8%) single, widowed, or divorced respondents were female.

*Retirement Status by Age* Significant differences were found among various age groups regarding their retirement status (Table 4). The three age groups were 55-64 years, 65-74 years, and 75 years and older. Retirees accounted for one-third in the first age group, while semi- or non-retirees accounted for two-thirds. All respondents in the second age group were retired. The majority (93.3%) of respondents 75 years and older were retired, 6.7% were semi- or non-retired.

### **Descriptive Trip Characteristics of Rural Senior Travelers**

#### **One-Day Pleasure Trips**

Respondents took an average of 6 one-day trips, including 1.65 prepaid package trips, during the previous year and traveled 151 miles per trip (Table 5). The majority (66.7%) of respondents spent between \$6.00 and \$20.00 for meals, per person per day.

#### **Overnight Pleasure Trips**

Data on overnight travel patterns (Table 6) indicated the average number of pleasure trips taken over the past 12 months was 4 and the average number of miles traveled, 580.5. The majority (61.4%) of respondents traveled by automobile, followed by bus (36.8%). Pre-



**Table 5. Travel Patterns of Respondents for One-Day Trips**

<b>Pattern</b>	<b>Pattern</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Frequency of trips in past 12 months</b>	<b>Meal cost per person per day</b>	
range: 0-30 trips	\$0	2.0
mean: 6.07 trips	\$1 - \$5	13.7
median: 4.00 trips	\$6 - \$10	23.5
	\$11 - \$15	19.6
<b>Pre-paid package trips</b>	\$16 - \$20	23.5
range: 0-12 trips	\$21 - \$25	13.7
mean: 1.65 trips	more than \$25	3.9
median: 1.00 trips	mean: \$15.10	
<b>Average number miles traveled</b>	<b>Common mode of transportation</b>	
range: 50-225 miles	Automobile	57.6
mean: 151.19 miles	Bus	40.7
median: 150.00 miles	Other	1.7

paid package tours accounted for 1.39 of the 4 overnight pleasure trips. Over two-thirds (68.0%) of respondents stayed away 1-5 days when traveling overnight for pleasure. Over half (56.6%) of respondents spent \$41-\$60 on lodging per person per day, over one-fourth (28.3%) spent \$21-\$40. Meal costs per person per day were fairly equally distributed among \$16-\$20 (24.1%), \$11-\$15 (20.4%), and \$6-\$10 (20.4%).

### Travel Planning Characteristics of Rural Senior Travelers

Data summarized in Tables 7-13 indicated travel planning and characteristics for one-day and overnight pleasure trips. Travel planning and characteristic variables include travel companion preference, trip planning individual(s), information sources, benefits sought, restaurant preference, lodging preference, and lodging characteristics sought.

**Table 6. Travel Patterns of Respondents for Overnight Trips**

Pattern	%	Pattern	%
<b>Frequency of trips in past 12 months</b>		<b>Length of stay</b>	
range: 0-18 trips		1-5 days	68.0
mean: 4.10 trips		6-10 days	17.0
median: 3.00 trips		11-15 days	10.0
		16-20 days	5.0
		mean: 5.35 days	
<b>Average number miles raveled</b>		<b>Lodging cost per person per day</b>	
range: 100-2,900 miles		\$0 - \$10	6.5
mean: 580.50 miles		\$11 - \$20	4.4
median: 350.00 miles		\$21 - \$30	13.1
		\$31 - \$40	15.2
		\$41 - \$50	34.8
		\$51 - \$60	21.7
		more than \$60	4.4
		mean: \$42.63	
<b>Common mode of transportation</b>		<b>Meal cost per person per day</b>	
Automobile	61.4	\$0	
Bus	36.8	\$1 - \$5	3.7
Other	1.8	\$6 - \$10	20.4
		\$11 - \$15	20.4
		\$16 - \$20	24.1
		\$21 - \$25	14.2
		more than \$25	16.7
		mean: \$19.58	
<b>Pre-paid package trips</b>			
range: 0-15 trips			
mean: 1.39 trips			
median: .00 trips			

### Travel Companion

The question on travel companion (Table 7) identified respondents' likelihood of traveling with specific individual(s) or group(s) for one-day and overnight pleasure trips. Respondents were asked to use a Likert-type scale with 5=very likely and 1=very unlikely. For both one-day and overnight trips, respondents were *somewhat likely* to travel with a spouse, organized groups, friends, and a family member other than a spouse.

**Table 7. Travel Companion**

One-day trips	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Overnight trips	Mean
Spouse	3.424	Spouse	3.424
Organized group	3.390	Organized group	3.271
Friends	3.068	Friends	2.864
Family member/not spouse	2.576	Family member/not spouse	2.559
Alone	2.271	Companion	1.966
Companion	1.814	Alone	1.763

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5 = very likely

4 = likely

3 = somewhat likely

2 = unlikely

1 = very unlikely

### **Trip Planning**

Data on trip planning (Table 8) indicated who respondents relied on to plan both one-day and overnight trips. For both one-day and overnight pleasure trips, respondents were *likely* to plan the trips themselves, and *somewhat likely* to have a group/organization, travel agent/tour company, or spouse to plan a trip.

### **Information Source**

The information source (Table 9) for trip planning was defined as the individual(s) or group(s) responsible for providing information in planning one-day and overnight trips. For one-day pleasure trips, none of the information sources were likely to be used. For overnight pleasure trips travel agents and travel clubs were *somewhat likely* to be seniors' information

**Table 8. Trip Planning**

<b>One-day trips</b>	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Overnight trips</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Yourself	4.085	Yourself	3.864
Group/organization	3.390	Travel agent/tour company	3.439
Spouse	2.932	Group/organization	3.439
Travel agent/tour company	2.579	Spouse	2.780
Family member/not spouse	2.441	Family member/not spouse	2.407
Companion	1.862	Companion	1.897

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5 = very likely

4 = likely

3 = somewhat likely

2 = unlikely

1 = very Unlikely

**Table 9. Information Source**

<b>One-day trips</b>	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Overnight trips</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Friends/relatives	2.421	Travel agents	3.190
Travel clubs (i.e., AAA)	2.263	Travel clubs (i.e., AAA)	2.517
Travel agents	2.175	State tourist information centers	2.345
Newspapers	2.107	Friends/relatives	2.310
Magazines	2.070	Magazines	2.034
State tourist information centers	1.877	Convention Bureaus/destinations	2.000
Convention Bureaus/destinations	1.869	Newspapers	1.947
Chambers of Commerce	1.351	Chambers of Commerce	1.379

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5 = very likely

4 = likely

3 = somewhat likely

2 = unlikely

1 = very unlikely

sources. Chambers of Commerce were *very unlikely* to be used as an information source for both one-day and overnight pleasure trips.

### **Benefits Sought**

Trip benefits sought (Table 10) indicated why seniors traveled for one-day and overnight trips. Respondents were asked to indicate their likelihood of seeking the benefits listed for both one-day and overnight trips using a 5-point scale with 5=very likely and 1=very unlikely. For one-day pleasure trips, respondents were *likely* to visit new places, visit family, visit historical sights, and engage in physical activities. Visiting a casino operation and attending festivals or special events were *unlikely* and *very unlikely* benefits sought, respectively.

Four additional benefits were included for overnight trips, escape cold weather, seek cold weather activities, escape warm weather, and seek warm weather activities. Three of the four variables, escape warm weather, seek warm weather activities, and seek cold weather activities were *very unlikely* benefits sought, along with engaging in physical activities. Visiting new places, visiting historical sights, visiting family, and attending festivals or special events fell in the *likely* category.

### **Restaurant Preference**

Restaurant preference for one-day and overnight pleasure trips shown in Table 11 was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 5=very likely and 1=very unlikely. The *likely* restaurant of choice for one-day trips was a family style full service restaurant such as Perkins

**Table 10. Benefits Sought**

<b>One-day trips</b>	<b>Mean<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Overnight trips</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Visit new places	4.288	Visit new places	4.153
Visit family	4.000	Visit historical sights	3.831
Visit historical sights	3.763	Visit family	3.810
Engage in physical activities	3.729	Attend festivals/special events	3.559
Visit friends	3.220	Rest and relaxation	3.492
Experience new things	3.220	Experience new things	3.169
Meet people and socialize	3.017	Meet people and socialize	2.915
Shop	2.966	Visit friends	2.746
Rest and relaxation	2.814	Seek intellectual enrichment	2.661
Seek intellectual enrichment	2.780	Escape daily routine	2.542
Escape daily routine	2.717	Shop	2.441
Visit a casino operation	2.475	Escape cold weather	2.228
Attend festivals/special events	1.421	Visit a casino operation	1.983
		Escape warm weather	1.441
		Engage in physical activities	1.368
		Seek warm weather activities	1.263
		Seek cold weather activities	1.103

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5 = very likely

4 = likely

3 = somewhat likely

2 = unlikely

1 = very unlikely

**Table 11. Restaurant Preference**

One-day trips	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Overnight trips	Mean
Family/full service (e.g., Perkins)	3.500	Family cafe (e.g., Bishops)	3.621
Family cafe (e.g., Bishops)	3.259	Family/full service (e.g., Perkins)	3.517
Fast service (e.g., McDonalds)	2.860	At hotel/motel	2.927
Fine dining	2.000	Fast service (e.g., McDonalds)	2.649
Self-prepared	1.556	Fine dining	2.316
		Self-prepared	1.444

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5 = very likely

4 = likely

3 = somewhat likely

2 = unlikely

1 = very unlikely

Family Restaurants. Family style restaurants, both full and partial service, was the *likely* restaurant choice for overnight trips. Senior travelers were *very unlikely* to have self-prepared meals on overnight trips.

### Lodging Preference

Lodging choice for pleasure trips shown in Table 12 was measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 5=almost always and 1=never. Respondents *frequently* stayed at budget/economy and mid-priced properties and *never* stayed at upscale/luxury operations.

### Lodging Characteristics

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of 55 lodging characteristics on a 5-point Likert-type scale with 1=very important and 5=not important (Table 13). Character-

**Table 12. Lodging Preference**

Variable	Mean <sup>a</sup>
Budget/economy (e.g., Motel 6, Red Roof Inn)	3.814
Mid-priced (e.g., Holiday Inn)	3.576
Family-owned independent motel	1.807
Bed & Breakfast or Country Inn	1.627
Upscale/luxury (e.g., Hilton, Ritz Carlton)	1.407

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5 = almost always

4 = frequently

3 = sometimes

2 = seldom

1 = never

istics ranged from reasons for lodging selection, such as recommendations, toll-free reservation number, and past experience with facility to hotel/motel attributes such as room lighting, golf course, and safety bars in the bathroom. None of the characteristics were rated as *very important*. Travel agent recommendation was rated as *moderately important*. All other characteristics fell in the *important* category.

### **Comparative Trip Characteristics of Rural Senior Travelers**

T-tests and ANOVAs were used to determine statistically significant differences of travel patterns and characteristics of respondents against five different demographic variables, gender, marital status, annual income, retirement status, and age (Tables 14-21). Only t-values and f-values significant at probability  $\leq 0.05$  are presented in the tables.



**Table 13. Lodging Characteristics**

Variable	Mean <sup>a</sup>	Variable	Mean
Travel agent recommendation	2.333	Advertising slogans	3.050
Well-lit rooms	2.650	Ground floor rooms	3.050
Security	2.667	Convenient location	3.067
Cleanliness of facility	2.667	Desk or worktable in room	3.068
Parking lot lighting	2.667		
		Two beds per room	3.133
Phone	2.683	Cable TV	3.133
Friends/relatives recommendations	2.700	In-room refrigerator	3.133
Simple check-in	2.717	Name recognition	3.167
Restaurant	2.717		
Remote control TV	2.767	1-800 reservation number	3.200
		Swimming pool	3.200
		Room service	3.233
Facility design, decor, landscaping	2.780	Walking trails	3.267
AAA recommendation	2.783	Handicap accessibility features	3.271
Easy access from main roads	2.833		
Familiarity with geographic area	2.833	Cocktail lounge	3.283
Senior discount	2.833	Health spa	3.283
		Hotel/motel cooking facilities	3.283
		Physical fitness equipment	3.300
		Dancing facilities	3.300
Frequent traveler program	2.850		
Non-smoking rooms	2.850	In-room safe	3.317
Nightlight in room	2.867	Golf course	3.317
Area surrounding hotel/motel	2.917	Age of property	3.317
Past experience with hotel	2.917	In-room mini bar	3.367
		Personal care items (e.g. shampoo, mouthwash)	3.367
Room price	2.950		
Safety bars in bathroom	2.967	Room bill review on TV	3.383
Pet allowance	2.983	In-room cooking facilities	3.400
Automated check-out	2.983	Discount for grandchildren	3.400
Free morning paper	3.000	Social commons area	3.400
		Bicycling trail	3.450
Comfort of room furniture	3.033		
Free continental breakfast	3.033		

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

1 = very important

2 = moderately important

3 = important

4 = minor importance

5 = not important

### Travel Companion by Demographic Variables

Significant differences on travel companion (Table 14) were found among demographic groups for one-day and overnight pleasure trips.

*Gender* Females were more likely to travel alone and males were more likely to travel with a spouse on one-day pleasure trips.

**Table 14. Travel Companion by Demographic Group**

Variable	Trip Type	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Alone	one-day	Male	1.3846	0.961	13	-2.41*
		Female	2.5217	1.616	46	
Spouse	one-day	Male	3.7692	1.423	13	2.03*
		Female	2.6957	1.750	46	
Spouse	one-day	Married	4.7500	0.500	36	15.62***
		Single <sup>b</sup>	1.3478	1.152	23	
Alone	overnight	Married	1.3330	0.894	36	-2.51*
		Single	2.4848	2.390	23	
Spouse	overnight	Married	4.7500	0.500	36	15.62***
		Single	1.3478	1.152	23	
Spouse	one-day	<\$40,000	2.9142	1.906	34	-3.30**
		≥\$40,000	4.4762	1.209	21	
Spouse	overnight	<\$40,000	2.9412	1.906	34	-3.30**
		≥\$40,000	4.4762	1.209	21	

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

5=very likely

4=likely

3=somewhat likely

2=unlikely

1=very unlikely

<sup>b</sup>Including widowed and divorced

\*p ≤ .05

\*\* p ≤ .01

\*\*\*p ≤ .001

*Marital Status* Married respondents, compared to single, widowed, or divorced respondents, were more likely to travel with a spouse for one-day and overnight pleasure trips; while single, widowed, or divorced were more likely to travel alone for overnight pleasure trips.

*Household Income* Respondents with annual household income  $\geq$  \$40,000 were more likely to travel with a spouse for one-day and overnight pleasure trips, compared to respondents with annual household income  $<$  \$40,000.

### **Individual(s) Responsible for Trip Planning by Demographic Groups**

There were significant differences (Table 15) found on individual(s) responsible for trip planning among demographic groups for one-day and overnight pleasure trips.

*Gender* Male respondents, when compared to females, were more likely to plan trips with a spouse. Females, however, were more likely to plan a trip with a companion for one-day trips, and a group or organization and companion for overnight trips because more females were single.

*Marital Status* When compared to single, widowed, or divorced respondents, married respondents were more likely to plan one-day and overnight trips with a spouse.

*Household Income* Respondents with an annual household income  $<$ \$40,000 were more likely to use a travel agent or tour provider when planning one-day pleasure trips.

On the other hand, respondents with an annual household income  $\geq$ \$40,000 were more likely to plan an overnight trip alone, when compared to respondents with an annual household income  $<$ \$40,000.

**Table 15. Individuals Responsible for Trip Planning by Demographic Group**

Variable	Trip Type	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Spouse	one-day	Male	3.7692	1.423	13	2.03*
		Female	2.6957	1.750	46	
Companion	one-day	Male	1.1667	0.389	12	-2.50*
		Female	2.0435	1.460	46	
Group/organization	overnight	Male	2.1538	1.519	13	-2.40*
		Female	3.6304	2.037	46	
Companion	overnight	Male	1.0833	0.289	12	-2.31*
		Female	2.1087	1.524	46	
Spouse	one-day	Married	3.9444	1.264	36	8.26***
		Single <sup>b</sup>	1.3478	1.027	23	
Spouse	overnight	Married	3.6944	1.451	36	6.74***
		Single	1.3478	1.027	23	
Travel agent/tour company	one-day	<\$40,000	2.9091	1.588	33	2.07*
		≥\$40,000	2.0000	1.487	20	
Self	overnight	<\$40,000	3.5588	1.541	34	-2.18*
		≥\$40,000	4.4286	1.248	21	

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

5=very likely

4=likely

3=somewhat likely

2=unlikely

1=very unlikely

<sup>b</sup>Including widowed or divorced

\*p ≤ .05

\*\*\*p ≤ .001

### **Information Sources by Demographic Variables**

The information sources for one-day and overnight pleasure trips were significantly different (Table 16) among seniors with different demographic characteristics.

*Marital Status* Married respondents, compared to single, widowed, or divorced respondents, were more likely to seek information before travel. Specifically, married respondents were more likely to use magazines and state tourist information centers at the destination as information sources for one-day and overnight pleasure trips. For overnight pleasure trips, married respondents also were more likely to use newspapers as an information source.

*Household Income* Respondents with an annual household income  $\geq$ \$40,000 were more likely to use magazines as information sources for one-day pleasure trips than respondents with annual household income  $<$ \$40,000. Travel agents recommendations were a more likely information source for respondents with an annual household income  $<$ \$40,000 for one-day pleasure trips. There were no significant differences found between the two income groups for overnight pleasure trips.

*Retirement Status* Information sources for semi- or non-retired respondents were significantly different from retirees for one-day and overnight pleasure trips. For both types of trips, semi-retirees and non-retirees were more likely to use recommendations of friends/relatives as information sources.

**Table 16. Information Source by Demographic Group**

Variable	Trip Type	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Magazines	one-day	Married	2.3429	1.083	35	2.51*
		Single <sup>b</sup>	1.6364	0.953	22	
State tourist information centers	one-day	Married	2.1429	1.353	35	2.18*
		Single	1.4545	0.739	22	
Magazines	overnight	Married	2.2857	1.126	35	2.24*
		Single	1.6522	0.935	22	
Newspapers	overnight	Married	2.2059	1.175	34	2.18*
		Single	1.5652	0.945	23	
State tourist Information centers	overnight	Married	2.8571	1.396	35	3.80***
		Single	1.5652	1.037	23	
Magazines	one-day	<\$40,000	1.8125	0.998	32	-2.29*
		≥\$40,000	2.4762	1.078	21	
Agent recommendations	one-day	<\$40,000	2.5313	1.704	32	2.15*
		≥\$40,000	1.6190	1.161	21	
Friends/relatives recommendations	one-day	Retired	2.1860	1.332	43	2.33*
		Semi/non-retired	3.2308	1.691	13	
Friends/relatives recommendations	overnight	Retired	2.0455	1.311	44	2.68**
		Semi/non-retired	3.2308	1.691	13	

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

5=very likely

4=likely

3=somewhat likely

2=unlikely

1=very unlikely

<sup>b</sup>Including widowed and divorced

\*p ≤ .05

\*\* p ≤ .01

\*\*\*p ≤ .001

### **Benefits Sought by Demographic Variables**

There were significant differences (Table 17) on benefits sought among various demographic groups, for one-day and overnight pleasure trips, especially for retirees and semi-retirees or non-retirees.

*Gender* Male respondents, when compared to female respondents, were more likely to travel to meet people and socialize while on one-day pleasure trips.

*Household Income* Respondents with an annual household income <\$40,000 were more likely to travel on one-day and overnight trips to meet people and socialize. On overnight trips, they also were more likely to visit friends, when compared to those respondents with annual household income  $\geq$ \$40,000.

*Retirement Status* Semi- and non-retired respondents were more likely to seek benefits while traveling on one-day and overnight trips. Semi- and non-retirees were more likely to travel to escape daily routine, to seek intellectual enrichment, and to shop, on one-day and overnight trips. In addition, semi- and non-retirees were more likely to attend festivals and special events on overnight pleasure trips.

### **Restaurant Preference by Demographic Variables**

Significant differences (Table 18) were found on restaurant preference between the two gender and marital status groups, while traveling.

*Gender* Female respondents were more likely than male respondents to choose family style partial service restaurants such as Bishops Cafeterias when traveling for pleasure overnight.

**Table 17. Trip Benefits Sought by Demographic Group**

Variable	Trip Type	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Meet people and socialize	one-day	Male	3.7692	1.423	13	2.03*
		Female	2.6957	1.750	46	
Meet people and socialize	one-day	<\$40,000	3.4118	1.373	34	2.17*
		≥\$40,000	2.5717	1.434	21	
Meet people and socialize	overnight	<\$40,000	3.3824	1.256	34	2.61*
		≥\$40,000	2.3810	1.564	21	
Visit friends	overnight	<\$40,000	3.1176	1.591	34	2.28*
		≥\$40,000	2.1429	1.459	21	
Escape daily routine	one-day	Retired	2.6000	1.452	45	2.07*
		Semi/non-retired	3.5385	1.391	13	
Seek intellectual enrichment	one-day	Retired	2.5111	1.424	45	2.83**
		Semi/non-retired	3.7692	1.363	13	
Shop	one-day	Retired	2.6818	1.522	45	2.70**
		Semi/non-retired	3.9321	1.188	13	
Escape daily routine	overnight	Retired	2.6670	1.437	45	2.73**
		Semi/non-retired	3.4615	1.198	13	
Attend festivals/ special events	overnight	Retired	3.3333	1.581	45	2.27*
		Semi/non-retired	4.3846	0.961	13	
Seek intellectual enrichment	overnight	Retired	2.3556	1.464	45	3.11**
		Semi/non-retired	3.7692	1.363	13	
Shop	overnight	Retired	2.1556	1.296	45	2.82**
		Semi/non-retired	3.3846	1.660	13	

<sup>a</sup> Scale:

5=very likely

4=likely

3=somewhat likely

2=unlikely

1=very unlikely

\* p ≤ .05

\*\*p ≤ .01



**Table 18. Restaurant Preference by Demographic Group**

Variable	Trip Type	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Family style Partial service (e.g., Bishops)	overnight	Male Female	2.9231 3.8222	1.115 1.170	13 45	-2.46*
Family style Full service (e.g., Perkins)	one-day	Married Single <sup>b</sup>	3.7778 3.0455	0.959 1.397	36 23	2.37*
Family style Full service (e.g., Perkins)	overnight	Married Single	3.7888 3.0909	0.989 1.444	36 23	2.15*

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

5=very likely

4=likely

3=somewhat likely

2=unlikely

1=very unlikely

<sup>b</sup>Including widowed and divorced

\* $p \leq .05$

*Marital Status* Married respondents, when compared to single, widowed, or divorced respondents, were more likely to choose family style full service restaurants while traveling, such as Perkins Family Restaurants.

### Lodging Preference by Demographic Variables

Significant differences (Table 19) were found on lodging preference among demographic groups when traveling for pleasure.

*Gender* Budget/economy lodging (e.g., Motel 6) was the preference of female respondents when compared to male respondents.

**Table 19. Lodging Preference by Demographic Group**

Variable	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Budget/economy (e.g., Motel 6)	Male	3.0000	1.414	13	-2.74**
	Female	4.0435	1.154	46	
Family owned independent motel	<\$40,000	2.1212	1.219	33	2.11*
	≥\$40,000	1.4500	0.945	20	
Budget/economy (e.g., Motel 6)	Retired	3.6000	1.338	45	2.21*
	Semi/non-retired	4.4615	0.776	13	

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

5=almost always

4=frequently

3=sometimes

2=seldom

1=never

\* p ≤ .05

\*\*p ≤ .01

*Household Income* Respondents with an annual household income <\$40,000 were more likely to stay at a family owned independent motel, than respondents with annual household income ≥\$40,000.

*Retirement Status* Retirees were less likely to select budget/economy (e.g., Motel 6) lodging than semi- or non-retirees.

### Lodging Characteristics and Demographic Variables

There were significant differences (Table 20) on lodging characteristics among demographic groups. Respondents with different incomes had the most differences, followed by retirement status.

**Table 20. Lodging Characteristics Sought by Demographic Group**

Variable	Group Classification	Mean <sup>a</sup>	SD	N	t-value
Safety bars in bathrooms	<\$40,000	3.3143	1.471	35	2.10*
	≥\$40,000	2.4762	1.401	21	
Remote control TV	<\$40,000	3.1714	1.424	35	2.72**
	≥\$40,000	2.0952	1.446	21	
Friends/relatives recommendations	<\$40,000	3.1714	1.248	35	3.12**
	≥\$40,000	2.1905	0.928	21	
Familiarity with geographic area	<\$40,000	3.2571	1.291	35	3.22**
	≥\$40,000	2.0952	1.338	21	
Automatic check-in	<\$40,000	3.4000	1.557	35	2.35*
	≥\$40,000	2.3810	1.596	21	
Travel agent recommendations	<\$40,000	2.6280	1.215	35	3.33**
	≥\$40,000	1.5714	1.028	21	
AAA rating	<\$40,000	3.0286	1.339	35	2.05*
	≥\$40,000	2.2857	1.271	21	
Senior discount	Retired	2.6087	1.437	46	2.67**
	Semi/non-retired	3.7692	1.660	13	
Simple check-in	Retired	2.4348	1.440	46	3.04**
	Semi/non-retired	3.7692	1.235	13	
Discount for grandchildren	Retired	3.1522	1.725	46	2.15*
	Semi/non-retired	4.1538	1.405	13	
Safety bars in bathrooms	Retired	2.4762	1.401	46	2.10*
	Semi/non-retired	3.3143	1.471	13	

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

1=very important

2=moderately important

3=important

4=minor importance

5=not important

\* p ≤ .05

\*\*p ≤ .01

*Household Income* Respondents with  $\geq$ \$40,000 annual income seem to be more demanding on lodging characteristics. Characteristics more important to respondents with higher income were safety bars in bathrooms, remote control TV, friends/relatives recommendations, familiarity with geographic area, automatic check-in, travel agent recommendations, and AAA rating.

*Retirement Status* Four lodging characteristics—senior discount, simple check-in, discount for grandchildren, and safety bars in bathrooms—were more important to retired respondents compared to semi- or non-retired respondents.

### **All Travel Patterns and Characteristics by Age Classification**

Age classification, 55-64 years, 65-74 years, and 75 years and older, was used as an independent variable to compare travel patterns and characteristics using ANOVA. There were significant differences (Table 21) among age groups in benefits sought and lodging characteristics. The significant differences for benefits sought were to attend festivals and special events, and rest and relaxation. Attending festivals and special events was more likely to be the benefits sought by the 75 years and older age group than by the other two groups, while rest and relaxation was more likely to be sought by the 55-64 year old group. For lodging characteristics, significant differences were found on familiarity with geographical area, health spa, and walking trails. These three benefits were more important to the 65-74 year old group. Health spa and walking trails were least important for the >74 group.

**Table 21. All Travel Patterns and Characteristics by Age Classification**

Group and Variable	Trip Type	Age Classification	N	Mean	SD	f-value
<b>Benefit Sought<sup>a</sup></b>						
Attend festivals and special events	overnight	55-64 years	18	3.1597	2.580	3.712*
		65-74 years	24	3.1818	2.580	
		>74 years	15	3.2308	3.660	
Rest and relaxation	overnight	55-64 years	18	3.8947	2.580	5.367**
		65-74 years	24	3.8636	2.580	
		>74 years	15	3.7692	3.660	
<b>Lodging Characteristic<sup>b</sup></b>						
Familiarity with geographical area	overnight	55-64 years	18	3.0500	2.580	5.888*
		65-74 years	24	2.9565	2.580	
		>74 years	15	3.0500	3.660	
Health spa	overnight	55-64 years	18	3.2500	2.580	3.564*
		65-74 years	24	3.1739	2.580	
		>74 years	15	3.5000	3.660	
Walking trails	overnight	55-64 years	18	3.9000	2.580	5.121*
		65-74 years	24	3.7391	2.580	
		>74 years	15	4.0714	3.660	

<sup>a</sup>Scale:

5=very likely

4=likely

3=somewhat likely

2=unlikely

1=very unlikely

\*p ≤ .05

\*\*p ≤ .01

<sup>b</sup>Scale:

5=not important

4=minor importance

3=important

2=moderately important

1=very important

### Demographic Variables and Travel Characteristic Groups

Of the five demographic variables studied, income had a significant impact on six of the seven travel characteristics, travel companion, individual(s) responsible for trip planning, information sources for trip planning, benefits sought, lodging preference, and lodging

characteristics. Gender was next, having significant influence on five of the seven characteristics. Retirement status and marital status had significant impact on four of the seven characteristics. Age significantly influenced to only two travel characteristics (Figure 4).

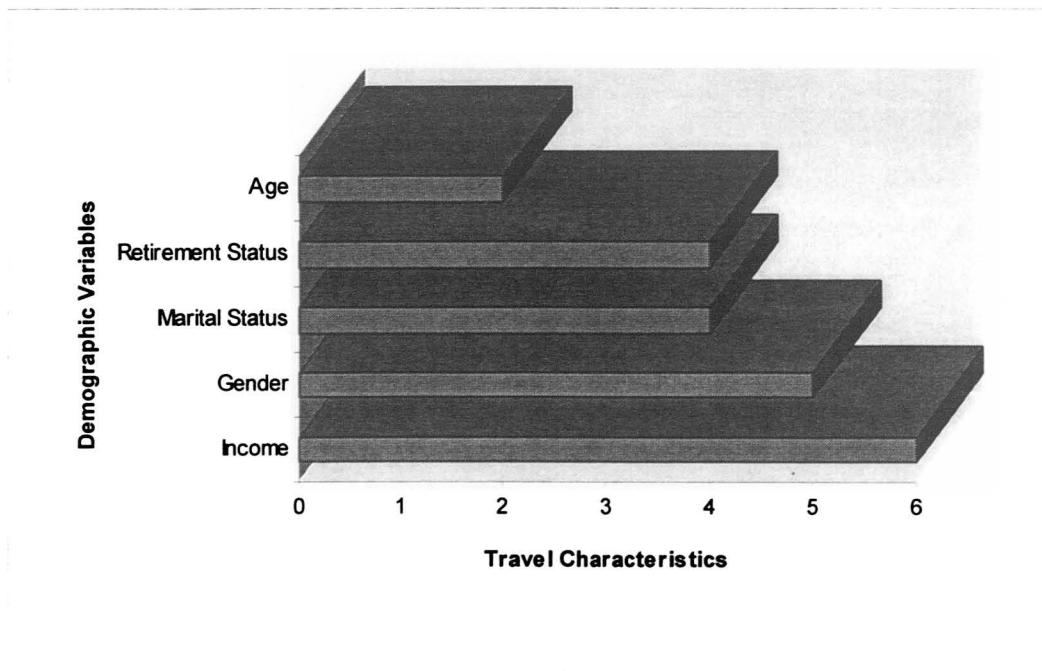


Figure 4. Demographic Variables and Travel Characteristic Groups

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Results of the analysis identified travel characteristics and factors affecting travel choice of rural Iowa senior travelers. The rural senior travel segment appears to be as diverse as other segments of the senior travel market. The findings support much of the prior research that has been done in the area (Badinelli et al., 1991; Shoemaker, 1989; Harper and Purdue, 1991; Ananth et al., 1992; Gustin and Weaver, 1992).

Data indicated that respondents were *unlikely* or *very unlikely* to use any of the information sources for one-day pleasure trip planning. The response may indicate that one-day trips are more spontaneous, with little planning involved. One-day pleasure trips are most likely within the state, and seniors may be more familiar with local attractions, therefore less likely to seek or consult information sources when planning those trips. On the other hand, respondents may have taken a one-day trip because they had heard or read about a specific destination in the past, but did not make the connection when the trip was actually taken. The trip may have been a sub-conscious decision to go to a specific destination not realizing or remembering hearing or reading about the destination previously. It is important that the Iowa Department of Economic Development, Division of Tourism actively promotes trips within the state targeting senior travelers even if short-term effect is not readily available or measurable. Senior travel promotions, through the Division of Tourism, should be made available through organizations, travel agents, newspapers, and magazines targeted to senior travelers.

Respondents of the survey did not rate any of the lodging characteristics as *very important*, and only one characteristic, travel agent recommendation, was rated as *moderately important*. All other characteristics fell in the *important to not important* classification. The question arises as to why there was the apparent "indifference" by respondents regarding lodging characteristics. One explanation may be that respondents of this study lack experience, and are less critical and demanding of various lodging amenities than senior travelers in other regions of the country. While certain characteristics may be important, they are not the determining factors in lodging choice. The other explanation would be the number of missing data. Despite both written and oral instructions regarding responses on the questionnaire, respondents may not have answered every question in all sections, especially those based on the Likert-type scale. Data do indicate there are significant differences on lodging characteristics with income and retirement status, but these differences were on items rated as *important*.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

Hypothesis one states there are significant differences on travel companion preference among seniors with demographic variants. Significant differences were found between the travel companion variable and gender, income, and marital status. Results of the study support this hypothesis and confirm the findings of prior studies (Badinelli et al., 1991; Harper and Perdue, 1991). The differences suggest that destinations and tour providers could target either single females or married couples through their preferred sources of information.



Hypothesis two states there are significant differences on individual(s) responsible for trip planning among seniors with demographic variants. Significant differences were found between the individual(s) responsible for trip planning and gender, income, and marital status. Married males preferred to plan trips with a spouse, while single females preferred to plan trips by themselves. Gender neutral senior-oriented media can be used to target couples, where as media targeted toward single female seniors could be used to reach the single travelers. Respondents with higher income,  $\geq \$40,000$ , preferred to plan trips by themselves. High income groups may also have higher levels of education and more travel experience; therefore, they are more aware of the different sources of information and comfortable in planning trips themselves.

Hypothesis three states there are significant differences on the information source for trip planning among seniors with demographic variants. Respondents with different income, marital status, and retirement status used significantly different information sources for trip planning. For information sources, all rural senior travelers used travel agents and travel clubs most often. Seniors with lower income particularly rely on travel agents for information. Travel agents and travel clubs should develop informative brochures designed to attract senior travelers in general, and seniors with lower income in particular. Married respondents were more likely to use print media, magazines and newspapers, and state tourist information centers for information sources. Therefore, state tourist information centers could develop informative brochures promoting events targeted to senior couples.

Hypothesis four states there are significant differences on benefits sought among seniors and demographic variants. Results of the study confirmed significant differences on

trip benefits sought depending on respondents' age, gender, income, marital status, and retirement status. Prior studies (Badinelli et al., 1991; Shoemaker, 1989; Harper and Purdue, 1991) support the findings. Rural senior travelers traveled primarily to visit new places, visit family, visit historical sights, attend festivals/special events, and engage in physical activities. Married males were more likely to travel to meet people and socialize. Print media and travel agents should promote events involving social interaction, targeting the senior couples market segment. According to differences found among age groups, festivals and special events should be promoted to the young old, while rest and relaxation can be emphasized to the old group. Travel destination points and travel agents should design informative brochures and advertising to promote destinations with benefits sought by senior travelers.

Hypotheses five and six state there are significant differences on restaurant and lodging choice among seniors with demographic variants. Respondents with different gender, income, marital status, and retirement status preferred different restaurants and lodging types. However, no generalizations can be made for any specific demographic groups. In general, rural senior travelers preferred to dine in family style restaurants and stay overnight in budget/economy lodging. Results of the study confirm results of prior studies (Becker-Suttle et al., 1994; Lago and Poffley, 1993). Results on lodging choice also confirms a study by Gustin and Weaver (1992). Lodging marketers can attract senior travelers through advance purchase discount room rates, special off-season packages, as well as promotions targeting senior travelers and their families for intergenerational activities.

Hypothesis seven states there are significant differences on lodging characteristics among seniors with demographic variants. Respondents with significantly different age,

income, and retirement status sought different lodging characteristics. Prior studies (Ananth et al., 1992; Gustin and Weaver, 1992) confirmed results of the study. Rural senior travelers indicated travel agent recommendations as the most important lodging characteristic, followed by well-lit rooms, security, cleanliness of facility, parking lot lighting, and phone. Respondents with  $\geq$ \$40,000 annual income seem to be more demanding regarding lodging characteristics. While seniors with higher incomes are more demanding, they may also be willing to spend money for lodging that meets their needs. Lodging facilities targeted to seniors with higher income should promote characteristics important to this segment of senior travelers. For retired senior travelers, promotions and advertising should emphasize lodging characteristics such as senior discount, simple check-in, discount for grandchildren, and safety bars in bathrooms. The lodging industry should consider lodging characteristics that are important to senior travelers when designing facilities targeted to this market.

Of the five demographic variables studied, income had the most significant impact on travel characteristics, followed by gender, marital status, and retirement status. Age appears to have been the least influential demographic variable and probably would not be useful in identifying the wants, needs, and interests of senior travelers. Income, gender, and marital status could be useful factors to consider when targeting specific segments of the senior travel market. Results of the study also indicate that significant relationships were found between demographic variables such as marital status and gender, and marital status and income. Based on results of the study, demographic variables and specific variables in the seven travel characteristic groups were used to build two profiles of rural senior travelers.

### **Female Profile**

Women's life spans continue to increase ahead of men (Lago and Poffley, 1993). As a result, there will be more single, widowed, or divorced females than males. A senior female traveler is typically single, widowed, or divorced; with an annual household income <\$40,000. Female travelers primarily travel alone and make plans for a trip with a companion or group/organization. The primary information source for this group is travel agents, and trip benefits sought were to meet people and socialize and visit friends. Females prefer to dine at family style, full service (e.g., Perkins) restaurants; and stay in budget/economy (e.g., Motel 6) motels. Important lodging characteristics sought by this group were safety bars in bathrooms, remote TV, friends/relatives recommendations, familiarity with geographic area, automatic check-in, travel agent recommendations, and AAA rating.

### **Male Profile**

In many ways, the male profile is close to the overall characteristics of rural senior travelers. The male profile also was developed using statistically significant differences found on travel characteristics based on demographic variables.

The typical male senior traveler is married, retired, with an annual household income ≥\$40,000. Males primarily travel with their spouses and trip planning is done with the spouse. Magazines, newspapers, and state tourist information centers are more important information sources to married couples for trip planning. Meeting people and socializing are more important to this group. Restaurant preference is family style, partial service (e.g.,

Bishops), and lodging is budget/economy motels. Important lodging characteristics this group seeks are senior discount, simple check-in, discount for grandchildren, and safety bars in bathrooms.

Respondents of the survey represent one segment of the senior travel market. Rural senior travelers, like other segments of the senior travel market, are a heterogeneous group with different travel needs, wants, and desires. If marketers are to successfully market to senior travelers, they have to tailor marketing activities to specific segment characteristics. Gender, income, marital status, and retirement status should be considered when developing marketing strategies.

As indicated earlier, travel characteristics of single female senior travelers are significantly different from males. Previous studies (Cockerell, 1993; and Lago and Poffley, 1993) indicated that the female market segment is a neglected segment of the senior travel market. Single women often have the means to travel, but are reluctant to do so alone. It is recommended that tour organizers arrange tours specifically targeted to single senior travelers, providing them with a homogeneous traveling group. In addition, marketers should promote social interaction among travel group members and encourage single travelers to participate in travel activities. Marketers need to develop package trips targeted to single female seniors, offering package discounts and activities specifically targeted to this segment. Activities could include shopping, cultural activities, as well as opportunities to visit friends and family. Travelers' income should be a major consideration. Therefore, restaurants and lodging packages should be reasonably priced.

Marketing to males should follow general recommendations for rural senior travelers as a group. State tourist centers as well as travel magazines and newspapers targeted to senior travelers should promote travel sites and activities specific to retired couples, including social events, festivals and special events, and cultural activities. The lodging industry should develop discount packages and activities for retired, married couples. Lodging characteristics including safety bars in bathrooms, simple check-in, and discount for grandchildren are important to this segment, and should be promoted in advertising targeted to senior travelers.

## SUMMARY AND LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify travel characteristics of the rural Iowa senior travelers. The study also determined the significance of demographic variables on the travel characteristics, both one-day and overnight trips, of rural Iowa senior travelers.

Specific objectives of the study were to 1) examine rural Iowa senior travelers' travel patterns and preferences for one-day trips; 2) determine rural Iowa senior travelers' travel patterns and preferences for overnight trips; 3) determine rural Iowa senior travelers' lodging characteristics; 4) identify rural Iowa senior travelers' demographic characteristics, and 5) identify factors influencing rural Iowa senior travelers' travel plans.

The population for the study consisted of Iowa residents age 55 years and older, residing in towns with population <2,500 residents. A traveler was defined as any individual who was a temporary visitor traveling with the expectation of pleasure, and engaging in the exchange of money. Participants of the study had to have taken at least one trip for pleasure in the past year.

A questionnaire was developed consisting of four major sections: section one and two contained characteristics for one-day and overnight pleasure trips. Questions in section three identified the importance of various travel characteristics, using Likert-type scales. Section four collected demographic information.

Participants on three bus tours originating in central Iowa were selected for the study. Participants represented the towns of Ogden, Boxholm, Dayton, Panora, and Guthrie, Iowa. Data collection was accomplished by distributing a 10-page self-administered questionnaire.

Of the 85 questionnaires distributed, 60 useable questionnaires were returned, with a response rate of 70.6%.

Travel characteristics and demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVAs, and chi-square analyses. Travel characteristics were divided into seven groups, and were tested against five demographic variables, to determine significant differences. Travel characteristic groups were travel companion, individual(s) responsible for trip planning, trip planning information sources, benefits sought, restaurant preference, lodging preference, and lodging characteristics. Demographic variables used for the study were age, gender, income, marital status, and retirement status.

Results of the study indicated that income, gender, and marital status contributed the most to travel characteristics. Age contributed the least, and was not a good predictor of travel characteristics for rural senior travelers. Travel characteristics of the respondents were similar to those found in prior studies of senior citizens in other regions of the country. Data showed the average age of respondents was 66 years, the majority were female (78.3%), married (60.0%), retired (78.0%), with an annual household income <\$40,000 (62.0%). On an average, rural senior travelers took six one-day pleasure trips and four overnight pleasure trips in the last year. The length of time spent away from home for overnight pleasure trips was five days, and the common mode of transportation was the automobile, with 57.6% and 61.4%, respectively, for one-day and overnight pleasure trips. Respondents spent an average of \$15 per person per day for meals for one-day trips, and \$20 per person per day for overnight trips. Lodging costs averaged \$43 per person per day.



Two profiles, male and female senior travelers, emerged from the study. A visual examination of the data indicated that while the group as a whole were heterogeneous, travel characteristics of male and female travelers were somewhat homogeneous. Marketers should develop products targeted to each group. Females are a neglected segment of the senior travel market and the travel industry must develop products and services to meet their needs and wants better. Tours should be organized specifically targeting single senior travelers. Marketers should promote social interaction among travel group members and encourage single travelers to participate in travel activities. Package trips targeted to single female travelers offering package discounts and group specific activities should also be developed by travel marketers. Marketing to males should include promotion of travel sites specific to retired couples, including social events, festivals and special events, and cultural activities. Promotions should be placed in magazines and newspapers directly targeting senior retired couples. Lodging operators should target this senior travel market through discount packages and activities targeted to senior couples. Important lodging characteristics should include safety bars in bathrooms and automatic check-in. Travel agents, tour organizers, and lodging providers are just a few the many involved in the travel industry, and all must address the needs of senior consumers. Marketers can more effectively design their marketing programs, including communications strategies and product mix offerings, to target these segments.

One of the limitations of the study was that research information was limited to rural senior travelers, and not generalizable to all senior travelers. The research information also was limited to rural Iowa senior travelers and was not generalizable to all rural senior

travelers. In addition, respondents were selected from bus tours, and may not be generalizable to all rural Iowa senior travelers.

Findings suggested that further study can be conducted segmenting the senior market into smaller homogeneous groups. Respondents for the study were selected from bus tours, and no previous studies are available to compare results of this study with. Therefore, motorcoach tours is one area that can be explored further to study usage among senior travelers as well as their travel and demographic characteristics. The senior travel market is made up of many subsegments, and further study of the relationship between demographic variables and travel characteristics is needed. While the survey was long, deleting any of the sections would not be recommended as it could eliminate needed information. However, additional questions could be included in future surveys. The education level and health status of respondents were not measured, and may be important factors affecting senior travel choice and decisions. During the pilot test, several respondents seem to have difficulty in understanding questions based on the Likert-type scale. Revisions were made to clarify the questions but the survey appears to indicate respondents may have had the same type of problems. It is therefore recommended that future surveys be conducted through personal interviews, with individuals, couples, or small focus groups. This method should eliminate unanswered or misunderstanding of survey questions. The resulting information may be more concise, and the researcher may be able to elicit more direct and useful information through this method. Limitations for the personal interview method are time and money. The researcher will spend more time using the interview method, as well as money, should additional interviewers be required to conduct the sessions.

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Sincere thanks are extended to friends and faculty for their support and encouragement to pursue my studies at Iowa State University. A special thanks to Margaret and Cyril Roberts, dear friends who shared the peaks and valleys of my educational experience at Iowa State University.

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**APPENDIX A.**

**HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW COMMITTEE APPROVAL**

**Information for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects**  
**Iowa State University**

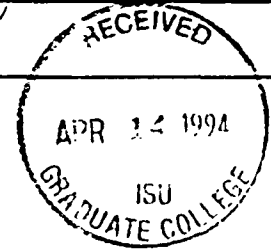
(Please type and use the attached instructions for completing this form)

1. Title of Project Travel & vacation decisions: Factors affecting choice among rural senior citizens
2. I agree to provide the proper surveillance of this project to insure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any adverse reactions to the committee. Additions to or changes in research procedures after the project has been approved will be submitted to the committee for review. I agree: / /  
 renewal of approval for any project continuing more than one year.

Sharon L. Carson 4/10/94  
 Typed Name of Principal Investigator Date Signature of Principal Investigator

HRIM 7W MacKay Hall  
 Department Campus Address Campus Telephone

3. Signatures of other investigators Date Relationship to Principal Investigator.
- / 4/13/94 Major Professor



4. Principal Investigator(s) (check all that apply)  
 Faculty  Staff  Graduate Student  Undergraduate Student
5. Project (check all that apply)  
 Research  Thesis or dissertation  Class project  Independent Study (490, 590, Honors project)
6. Number of subjects (complete all that apply)  
 200 # Adults, non-students \_\_\_ # ISU student \_\_\_ # minors under 14 \_\_\_ other (explain)  
 \_\_\_ # minors 14 - 17
7. Brief description of proposed research involving human subjects: (See instructions, Item 7. Use an additional page if needed.)

See attached.

(Please do not send research, thesis, or dissertation proposals.)

8. Informed Consent:  Signed informed consent will be obtained. (Attach a copy of your form.)  
 Modified informed consent will be obtained. (See instructions, item 8.)  
 Not applicable to this project.

Last Name of Principal Investigator Carson

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

- 12.  Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
  - a) purpose of the research
  - b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
  - c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
  - d) if applicable, location of the research activity
  - e) how you will ensure confidentiality
  - f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
  - g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject
- 13.  Consent form (if applicable)
- 14.  Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)
- 15.  Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

First Contact

Last Contact

May 1994

August 1994

Month / Day / Year

Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer

Date

Department or Administrative Unit

10-13-94

HRIM

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

Project Approved

Project Not Approved

No Action Required

Patricia M. Keith

5-11-94

Name of Committee Chairperson

Date

Signature of Committee Chairperson



**APPENDIX B.**

**QUESTIONNAIRE WITH COVER LETTER**

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**<sup>79</sup>  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

College of Family and Consumer Sciences  
Department of Hotel, Restaurant, and  
Institution Management  
11 Mackay Hall  
Ames, Iowa 50011-1120  
515 294-1730  
FAX 515 294-8551

Dear Senior Traveler:

I am conducting a research study as part of the masters program in the department of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institution Management at Iowa State University, concerning factors affecting travel decisions of rural senior citizens. Results of the study could help individuals involved in the hospitality industry understand the factors that influence travel decisions and needs of rural senior citizens, and enable them to market their products while better satisfying your needs.

The information collected will be kept confidential, group results only will be used to report findings. The code on the questionnaire, for calculating response rates only, will be removed when all the questionnaires are received. All demographic data will be used only for statistical purposes. You are free to discontinue your participation at any time.

Thank you very much for your cooperation with this project. If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharon L. Carson  
Graduate Student, ISU  
P.O. Box 569  
Ogden, Iowa 50212  
(515)275-4259

Cathy H.C. Hsu, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor  
Research Advisor  
(515)294-9945

<b>Survey of Senior Travelers</b>
-----------------------------------

Please read each question carefully, and follow the directions. If you have any questions, please direct them to me. Thank you.

**Section I.** Please respond to the following questions about **one-day** pleasure trips.

1. During the past 12 months, approximately how many pleasure trips did you take that did **NOT** require an overnight stay?  
\_\_\_\_\_trips
2. How many of these trips were pre-paid package tours?  
\_\_\_\_\_trips
3. On one day pleasure trips, what is the most common mode of transportation? (Check only one)  
  
\_\_\_\_\_Automobile  
\_\_\_\_\_Bus  
\_\_\_\_\_Plane  
\_\_\_\_\_Other (Please specify)
4. What is the average number of miles you travel for one day pleasure trips?  
\_\_\_\_\_miles.  
\_\_\_\_\_Do not know.

5. When not traveling with a tour group (pre-paid), what is the average amount of money you spend **per person per day** for meals on one-day trips?

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Not applicable (pre-paid tour)

**Section II.** Please respond to the following question about **overnight(s)** pleasure trips.

1. During the past 12 months, approximately how many pleasure trips have you taken that required you to stay overnight at someplace other than your home?

\_\_\_\_\_ trips.

2. How many of these trips were pre-paid package tours?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. On overnight pleasure trips, what is the most common mode of transportation? (Check only one)

\_\_\_\_\_ Automobile

\_\_\_\_\_ Plane

\_\_\_\_\_ Train

\_\_\_\_\_ Bus

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify)

4. What is the average number of miles you travel for overnight pleasure trips?

\_\_\_\_\_ miles.

\_\_\_\_\_ do not know.

5. What is the average number of nights you spend away from home on overnight pleasure trips?

\_\_\_\_\_ nights.

6. When not traveling with a tour group (pre-paid), on the average, how much do you spend **per person per night** for your hotel room when traveling overnight for pleasure?  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per night.  
 \_\_\_\_\_ not applicable (pre-paid tour)
7. When not traveling with a tour group (pre-paid) what is the average amount of money you spend **per person per day** for meals when traveling overnight?  
 \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ not applicable (pre-paid tour)

**Section III. Attitude.** The following statements do not represent right or wrong answers. Please indicate the degree of agreement by circling the appropriate number.

- 5.....Very likely  
 4.....Likely  
 3.....Somewhat likely  
 2.....Unlikely  
 1.....Very unlikely

1. What is the likelihood of traveling with the following group for?

**One-day Trips?**

**Overnight Trips?**

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Alone

Spouse

Companion

Family member other than spouse

Friends

5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Organized group
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Other (please specify)

---

2. What is the most likely reason for choosing a trip destination for?

**One-day Trips?**

**Overnight Trips?**

5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Attend festivals/special events
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Experience new things
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Visit a casino operation
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Engage in physical activities
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Escape daily routine
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Seek intellectual enrichment
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Visit new places
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Rest and relaxation
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Visit family
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Visit friends
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Meet people and socialize
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Visit historical sights
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Shop
		N/A			5	4	3	2	1	Escape cold weather
		N/A			5	4	3	2	1	Seek cold weather activities
		N/A			5	4	3	2	1	Escape warm weather
		N/A			5	4	3	2	1	Seek warm weather activities
5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	2	1	Other (please specify)

---

## 3. How likely are the following individuals responsible for planning?

One-day Trips?Overnight Trips?

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Yourself

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Spouse

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Companion

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Family member other than spouse

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Group/organization

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Travel agent/tour company

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Other (please specify)

## 4. How often do you consult the following information sources when planning a trip?

One-day Trips?Overnight Trips?

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

State tourist information center

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Travel agent

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Friends/relatives

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Chambers of Commerce

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau at destination

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Travel clubs (e.g., AAA)

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Magazines

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Newspapers

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Other (please specify)

5. What type of restaurant do you prefer when traveling?

One-day Trips?

Overnight Trips?

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

N/A

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

5 4 3 2 1

Fast service (e.g., McDonalds)

Family style-partial service  
(e.g., Bishops)

Family style-full service  
(e.g., Perkins)

Fine dining

In the hotel/motel if available

Self prepared

**Section IV. Lodging Characteristics.**

1. How often do you select the following type of lodging accommodation when traveling for pleasure? Please circle the appropriate number for **each** question.

5.....Almost always

4.....Frequently

3.....Sometimes

2.....Seldom

1.....Never

5 4 3 2 1

Budget/Economy

(e.g., Motel 6, Red Roof Inn)

5 4 3 2 1

Mid-priced (e.g., Holiday Inn)

5 4 3 2 1

Upscale/Luxury

(e.g., Hilton, Ritz Carlton)

5 4 3 2 1

Bed & Breakfast or Country Inn

5 4 3 2 1

Family-owned independent motel

5 4 3 2 1

Other (Please specify)

---



**Part II.** Please indicate your degree of agreement by circling the appropriate number.

- 1.....Very important  
 2.....Moderately important  
 3.....Important  
 4.....Minor importance  
 5.....Not important

What is the importance of the following lodging characteristics when deciding where to stay when you are traveling for pleasure?

5	4	3	2	1	Name recognition
5	4	3	2	1	Room price
5	4	3	2	1	Convenient location
5	4	3	2	1	1-800 reservation number
5	4	3	2	1	Past experience with hotel
5	4	3	2	1	Friends/relatives recommendations
5	4	3	2	1	Travel agent recommendations
5	4	3	2	1	AAA rating
5	4	3	2	1	Senior discounts
5	4	3	2	1	Discount for grandchildren
5	4	3	2	1	Pet allowance
5	4	3	2	1	Advertising slogans
5	4	3	2	1	Free continental breakfast
5	4	3	2	1	Familiarity with geographic area
5	4	3	2	1	Simple check-in

5	4	3	2	1	Frequent traveler programs
5	4	3	2	1	Cleanliness of facility
5	4	3	2	1	Handicapped accessibility features
5	4	3	2	1	Facility design, decor, landscaping
5	4	3	2	1	Non-smoking rooms
5	4	3	2	1	Area surrounding hotel/motel
5	4	3	2	1	Easy access from main roads
5	4	3	2	1	Ground floor rooms
5	4	3	2	1	Two beds per room
5	4	3	2	1	Well-lit rooms
5	4	3	2	1	Security systems
5	4	3	2	1	Safety bars in bathroom
5	4	3	2	1	Nightlight in room
5	4	3	2	1	Comfort of room furniture
5	4	3	2	1	Desk or worktable in room
5	4	3	2	1	Parking lot lighting
5	4	3	2	1	Remote control TV
5	4	3	2	1	Free morning paper
5	4	3	2	1	In-room safe
5	4	3	2	1	In-room mini bar
5	4	3	2	1	Cable TV
5	4	3	2	1	Free local telephone calls
5	4	3	2	1	Automated check out
5	4	3	2	1	Room bill review on TV
5	4	3	2	1	Room service
5	4	3	2	1	Personal care items (shampoo,

					mouthwash, etc.)
5	4	3	2	1	Health spa
5	4	3	2	1	Physical fitness equipment
5	4	3	2	1	Walking trails
5	4	3	2	1	Swimming pool
5	4	3	2	1	Golf course
5	4	3	2	1	Bicycling trail
5	4	3	2	1	Cocktail lounge
5	4	3	2	1	Social commons area
5	4	3	2	1	Dancing facilities
5	4	3	2	1	In-room refrigerator
5	4	3	2	1	In-room cooking facilities
5	4	3	2	1	Restaurant
5	4	3	2	1	Hotel/motel cooking facilities
5	4	3	2	1	Age of property
5	4	3	2	1	Other (Please specify)

**Section IV. Demographic Information.** Please answer the following questions.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ What is your age?

2. Gender

\_\_\_\_\_ Male

\_\_\_\_\_ Female

3. Marital status  
\_\_\_\_\_ Married  
\_\_\_\_\_ Single, never been married  
\_\_\_\_\_ Widowed  
\_\_\_\_\_ Divorced
4. Retirement status  
\_\_\_\_\_ not retired (go to question #5)  
\_\_\_\_\_ semi-retired  
\_\_\_\_\_ retired (go to question #6)
5. \_\_\_\_\_ What is your occupation?  
(go to question #7)
6. \_\_\_\_\_ What was your occupation?
7. \_\_\_\_\_ What is the number of people in your household?
8. Approximately, what was your total household income in 1994?  
(Include interest earnings, social security, retirement, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ under \$10,000  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$10,001 - 25,000  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$25,001 - 40,000  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$40,001 - 55,000  
\_\_\_\_\_ \$55,001 - 70,000  
\_\_\_\_\_ over \$70,000

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.