

TIMESHARE OWNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND PREFERENCES FOR PARTICIPATION  
IN TOURISM PLANNING

By

CHENCHEN HUANG

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2007

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank my advisory committee. I thank my advisor and committee chair, Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray, for guiding me through this process. Without her constant encouragement and full-hearted support, I would not be where I am. I thank Dr. Brijesh Thapa for his quick responses to my questions and critical review of my work. I thank Dr. Stephen Holland for all the help that he gave me, from the start of my doctoral program. I thank Dr. Rhonda Phillips for introducing me to the field of Urban and Regional Planning, which was vital to my dissertation research.

I am grateful to the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management for all the support I received during my doctoral study. The Alumni Fellowship that I was awarded is the most generous and valuable gift that I have ever received. Thanks to the fellowship, I was free to concentrate on my academic pursuit for over four years. I thank the Graduate Student Council at the University of Florida for partially funding my dissertation research through the Mentorship Opportunity Program Research Grant.

I thank those timeshare owners who participated in my research. Their voluntary input made my research possible. I sincerely appreciate their help and hope that findings and suggestions from my research can benefit them in the future.

Finally, I thank my parents for their selfless love and support. To write a dissertation was a daunting task; their encouragement and tolerance propelled me through it. I am also thankful to my friends in Gainesville, in Shanghai, and in other places. Wherever they are, their friendship and company are an important part of my life.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School  
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Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Chenchen Huang

December 2007

Chair: Lori Pennington-Gray  
Major: Health and Human Performance

Tourism development generates benefits and costs to the destination community. Tourism planning is suggested as a way to promote sustainable tourism development. Tourism planning is incomplete and impractical without the input from all four stakeholder groups including tourists. Tourists have been overlooked by researchers and practitioners as a group of stakeholders.

Since few studies have been conducted to investigate tourists' perceptions of participation in tourism planning, this study is an exploratory effort. Timeshare owners are a special group of tourists who have additional connections with the tourism destination through their timeshare. Timeshare owners are chosen as the target population for this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate timeshare owner's perceptions of and preferences for participation in tourism planning.

The theoretical foundation of this study is composed of three levels of analysis. Timeshare owner's perceptions of participation in tourism planning are investigated at the rational level, the affective level, and the behavioral level. Rational choice theory is used as the theoretical foundation for guiding the investigation of the effects of perceived benefits and costs of participation in tourism planning on timeshare owner's perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Theories about sense of place provide foundations for exploring the relationships

between timeshare owner's attachment to the timeshare and to the city where the timeshare is located and perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Research on citizen participation in political and civic activities is utilized to understand the effects of timeshare owners' past experience of political and civic participation on their perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

This study was based on an Internet-based website questionnaire survey. The total sample size was 375. A two-stage structural equation modeling approach was applied in data analysis. Results from the measurement model suggested that the model fit the data quite well. Results from the structural model identified four significant relationships among the latent structures. Perceived benefits of participation in tourism planning positively affected perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Perceived costs of participation in tourism planning negatively affected perceptions of participation in tourism planning. There was a positive relationship between timeshare owner's attachment to the timeshare and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Timeshare owner's past experience of political participation positively impacted timeshare owner's perception of participation in tourism planning.

About one third of respondents indicated that they were willing to participate in tourism planning. Most of them were reluctant to participate in tourism planning in person. Instead, timeshare owners preferred Internet-based participation methods. Timeshare owners also indicated that they would prefer to authorize their timeshare management company to represent them in tourism planning processes.

Based on the findings of the model analysis, a series of suggestions were proposed to tourism planners, the timeshare industry, and the local government. Tourism planners should take a lead role in the shift toward communicative approach in tourism planning, which is aimed

to reach consensus among participants. Both the timeshare industry and local governments need to take substantial steps to facilitate timeshare owners participate in tourism planning process.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Tourism and travel-related industries are an important economic sector for many countries. The World Tourism Organization (2006) reported that there are over 800 million international tourism arrivals per annum. The tourism industry alone is estimated to account for 10.3% of the global Gross Domestic Product and more than 234 million jobs. The tourism industry generates jobs, tax revenues, and foreign exchange earnings for many countries (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006). However, research on tourism development suggests that tourism might not be a panacea for economic development (Honey, 1999; Keith, Fawson, & Chang, 1996; Law, 1992; Zurick, 1992). There are various indicators of negative economic impacts from tourism development, such as economic leakage, increase in prices, and infrastructure costs (Ap & Crompton, 1998). Further, tourism development might impose potent social and environmental impacts on destination communities, given the tremendous scale of the tourism industry (Gunn & Var, 2002). The negative social and environmental effects of tourism development pose a great threat on the future of destinations and industry (Kavallinis & Pizam, 1994; Pizam, 1978; Zeiger & Caneday, 1991). The scope and scale of tourism impacts call for a comprehensive understanding of the effects of tourism development that could be generally classified into economic, social, and environmental impact.

Historically, researchers' perceptions of tourism effects have evolved from exclusively concentrating on the bright side to a more balanced view. Jafari (1986, cited by McGehee and Andereck, 2004) noted that tourism related research focused on the upside of tourism effects in the 1960s, the downside in the 1970s, and a more balanced, systematic approach since the 1980s. Due to market failure or other limits of free market economies, it is generally agreed that some interventions are necessary to achieve the goals of sustainable tourism development.

The call for intervention might be an implicit reason for the emergence of tourism planning, which is similar to the start of modern urban planning about a century ago. The modern urban planning movement started in the early twentieth century, reacting to tragedies in London, New York and other big cities in Europe and the U.S. (Hall, 2002). Except for a similar starting point, urban and regional planning provides a significant theoretical foundation for tourism planning. Although tourism planning also benefits from other parent disciplines, such as sociology, political science and environmental science, urban and regional planning is the backbone of many tourism planning theories.

Another root of tourism planning lies in the practice of tourism planning at various destinations around the world. Practice in tourism planning not only provides a testing field for theories but also grants new insights and ideas for theoretical innovation. In fact, empirical studies are an important source for theory building in the field of tourism planning.

Theoretical development of tourism planning could contribute to better practice. In a market economy, ideal tourism planning involves all the stakeholders and benefits from their inputs and support, which is also the foundation for successful planning. The stakeholders of tourism planning consist of the tourism industry, the local public sector, the host community, and the tourists (Pigram, 1994). In practice, tourism planning is usually led by the local government and the tourism industry, with occasional contributions from local residents. In other words, tourists are by and large missing from tourism planning, although they might be indirectly represented by the industry. The lack of tourists' inputs in the tourism planning process might contribute to the gap between sustainable tourism development in theory and in practice.

According to Arstein's (1969) model of citizen participation, there is a continuum of citizen participation, ranging from nonparticipation to authentic participation. Although some

tourism suppliers have initiated campaigns to inform and educate their customers, most tourists are not notified of the impacts of tourism development. If tourists do not recognize their role in changing the tourism destination community, it is unlikely they will change their behavior to mitigate their impacts.

There might be two reasons to explain why tourists are not involved in tourism planning. First, tourists may not perceive themselves as stakeholders in the tourism destination. Since their temporary stay in a destination is for leisure purposes, tourists may not feel strongly connected to the local community. Similarly, most tourism suppliers may hesitate to remind tourists of their responsibilities, due to concerns related to customer satisfaction or pressures of competition. Second, tourism planning procedures might not provide convenient access for tourists. Tourists who intend to participate in tourism planning might face many constraints imposed by the current tourism planning system.

Some specific groups of tourists may have greater interest in participating in tourism planning than other tourists. It is possible that tourists who have a stronger bond to the community may be more interested in participating in tourism planning. In the academic literature, this bond is referred to as “sense of place” or “place attachment.” Place attachment may occur due to repeat visitation to the destination (Moore & Graefe, 1994). Repeat visitation may be attributed to various factors, such as property ownership in the destination or personal travel preferences.

The emotional tie between tourists and the destination is not explicit. A general survey of all tourists at a destination would not be an efficient way of identifying tourists who are attached to the tourist destination. No empirical study has been conducted to discern attached tourists from general tourists. Timeshare owners are a group of tourists who own property in tourism

destinations and thus may visit repeatedly. Timeshare owners are ideal subjects for investigating the relationship between willingness to participate in tourism planning and possible influencing variables.

### **Timeshare Industry: An Overview**

Timeshare refers to the practice of dividing accommodation units into weekly increments, usually called as intervals, and sold to consumers permanently (Suchman et al., 1999). Other names such as “vacation ownership” or “fractional ownership” have also been used for marketing purposes. Timeshare is a tourist accommodation segment that has undergone rapid growth in the U.S. and around the world. Since its U.S. debut in the late 1960s, the number of timeshare resorts in the U.S. has grown from just over 400 in 1980, to over 1000 in 1990, and to 1615 in 2007 (American Resort Development Association International Foundation [ARDA International Foundation], 2007). In 2006, there were 176,232 timeshare units in the U.S. with an average resort size of 109 units (ARDA International Foundation, 2007). Timeshare development in the U.S. has highly concentrated in primary tourism destinations. Among the 46 states in the U.S. that have timeshare resorts, the top five states with most timeshare units were Florida, California, South Carolina, Hawaii and Tennessee (Table 1-1).

The sales volume of U.S. timeshare properties has grown rapidly recently (1996-2005) at an average annual rate of 17% (ARDA International Foundation, 2006). Sales volume grew tremendously in the first 10 years of inception (33% annual rate) from 1976 to 1985. There was a flat period from 1986 to 1995 when the sales revenue increased at an 8% annualized growth rate.

The number of U.S. timeshare owners reached 1 million in 1989. There were more than 2 million U.S. timeshare owners in 1999 and more than 3 million in 2003. There were about 4.4 million U.S. households owned timeshares at the beginning of 2007 (ARDA International Foundation, 2007). The occupancy rate of at U.S. timeshare resorts averaged about 80.9% in

2006, while the occupancy rate in 2006 for U.S. hotels was 63.4% (ARDA International Foundation, 2007). Owners, their guests and exchange guests accounted for almost 70% of resort units occupied (ARDA International Foundation, 2007).

There are different legal formats of timeshare interest, and the most popular forms are deeded ownership (fee simple) and right-to-use (Suchman et al., 1999). The legal structure through which accommodation units are subdivided into periods of time is called the timeshare plan. Timeshare estates are treated as real estate properties while timeshare licenses are seen as personal property in most jurisdictions (Suchman et al., 1999). If a timeshare owner buys his or her timeshare in the form of deeded ownership, the owner will have the same owner-rights as other forms of real estate by receiving a deed of trust for a fixed week in a specific unit at a specific resort. The owner can sell, transfer, or bequeath the ownership. If the purchase is in the form of right-to-use through a vacation lease, vacation license or membership in a vacation club, the purchaser will have the right to use the accommodation for a designated period of time (usually 10-50 years) while the developer (or the club) maintains legal title to be the owner. Although there are other forms of legal structure, deeded ownership and right-to-use are the most popular forms (ARDA International Foundation, 2006; Suchman et al., 1999).

Timeshare developers face challenges both as individual developers and as an industry. In a 2000 survey of U.S. timeshare executives, industry and company reputation were reported as the most important challenges (Woods, 2001). Similarly, based on a 1999 national survey of the general public, Upchurch (2000) reported that most respondents held a neutral opinion about the timeshare industry, and their interest in purchasing timeshare was “moderate” at the best. This neutral perception might be attributed to the lack of information about the industry (Upchurch, 2000).

In order to mitigate a negative image and promote a favorable environment for the industry, timeshare developers formed an industry association. The American Resort Development Association (ARDA) is a Washington D.C. based professional association representing the timeshare industry. ARDA has nearly 1,000 corporate members. Its membership also includes timeshare owner associations, resort management companies, and owners through the ARDA Resort Owners Coalition (ARDA, 2007a).

Most researchers connect the negative reputation of the industry with high-pressure marketing and sales techniques employed by the industry in the 1980s. However, successful marketing is still crucial for a viable timeshare project. Data from the industry shows that marketing accounts for about a half of the sales revenue (Bornstein, 2002). It is possible that the negative reputation of the industry is partially caused by its marketing and sales efforts, and vice versa. However, marketing might only be part of the reason for the unfavorable reputation. It might be too simplistic to argue that marketing practices are the sole reason for the poor image of the industry. Two other related issues might be consumer protection and negative impacts on the host community. Timeshare development might exert significant impacts on the local community. Compared with mass tourism accommodations, timeshare resorts might have greater impacts due to (1) higher occupancy rates, (2) longer occupancy periods (Rezak, 2002), and (3) development by large scale multi-nationals who are usually housed outside the community. Although the public has little information about the merits and shortcomings of timesharing (Upchurch, 2000), their perceptions of the industry may be influenced by reports about consumer protection issues and impacts of timeshares from the media.

Studies of timeshare customers demonstrate that most customers are satisfied (between 85% and 87%) with their timeshare experience (ARDA International Foundation, 2006; Rezak,

2002). The disparity between satisfied customers and the suspicious public provides an important opportunity for the timeshare industry to mitigate the negative image. Further, more input from timeshare owners may also help minimize negative impacts of timeshare development.

Mobilizing customers and involving them in the tourism planning process may be one crucial step to alleviate negative impacts from the timeshare industry. From a pluralist perspective, planning is a political process that provides an arena for different interest groups to compete with each other (Klosterman, 1985). The pluralist paradigm is implicit in many citizen participation processes in planning (Day, 1997). If timeshare owners are not involved in planning, their interests might be neglected. Without their customers' input, timeshare developers are not much different from any other business interest groups and hence might be marginalized in the planning process.

It is important for timeshare owners to participate in the tourism planning process, because their contribution will help the local community, the timeshare industry, and their own experience. The destination community will benefit from the insights of repeat tourists. Since timeshare owners may be regular visitors, it is reasonable to believe that they are a group of tourists who may know the community better and would like to see the community develop in a sustainable way. For example, timeshare owners who are involved in tourism planning might have a better chance to understand the impacts of tourism development and support the procedures or methods that address the negative impacts. For the timeshare industry, to mobilize their customers and get them involved in tourism planning is an important channel to get the industry's voice heard. And ultimately, a better tourism destination based on sound tourism planning will engender more satisfactory tourism experiences to timeshare owners.

However, existing literature on timeshares is mostly from the perspectives of marketing and real estate development, and the issue of timeshare owners' participation in the tourism planning process is by and large overlooked by researchers. Many timeshare owners usually stay in the timeshare resort for only one week every year and are transient residents in tourism destination communities. In order to get timeshare owners involved, the first step is to examine their willingness to participate.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study is an exploratory effort to investigate timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in the tourism planning process. The research questions which will guide the research are: (1) Are timeshare owners willing to participate in tourism planning? (2) Are timeshare owner's perceptions of participating in tourism planning related to the owners' perceptions of tourism planning, perceived benefits and costs of participating, level of attachment to the timeshare and to the city where the timeshare is located, and past history of political and civic participation? (3) What are timeshare owners' preferred ways of participating in tourism planning?

The dependent latent variable of this study is timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in tourism planning. Independent latent variables are timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning, perceived benefits and costs of participation, their attachment to the timeshare and to the city, their experience in civic engagement, and demographics. The relationships among these variables are described in the theoretical model (Figure 1-1).

### **Research Questions**

Research question 1: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning for the city where they own their timeshare and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 2: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' perceived benefits of participation in tourism planning and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 3: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' perceived costs of participation in tourism planning and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 4: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' attachment to their timeshare and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 5: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' attachment to the city where they own their timeshare and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 6: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' past experience of political participation and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 7: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' past experience of civic participation and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 8: Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' demographic background and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning for the city?

Research question 9: What are timeshare owners' preferred ways of getting involved if they are willing to participate in tourism planning?

Timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning are predicted to be closely related to their perceptions of participating in tourism planning. If timeshare owners view tourism planning for the city as beneficial and important, they are likely to have a positive attitude toward participation in tourism planning.

Hypothesis 1: the more important timeshare owners perceive tourism planning, the more likely they are going to participate in tourism planning.

According to rational choice theory, those timeshare owners perceiving that the benefits outweigh the costs of participating in tourism planning are likely to participate. The premise of the approach is that timeshare owners recognize both the benefits and costs of participating and evaluate the two sides rationally. Consequently, there are two hypotheses that are drawn on this basis.

Hypothesis 2: The more timeshare owners perceive the benefits of participating in tourism planning, the more likely they are going to get involved in tourism planning.

Hypothesis 3: The more timeshare owners perceive the costs of participating in tourism planning, the less likely they are going to get involved in tourism planning.

The attachment that timeshare owners have toward their timeshares could be divided into two levels according to the target of the sentiment (Figure 1-2). First, many timeshare owners own their timeshares, especially in a deeded legal structure. Almost all timeshare resorts are managed and maintained by professional resort management companies, with obvious boundaries separating the timeshare resorts from the outside community. It is possible that they develop sentiments toward their timeshare in a way similar to their year-round residence. Second, timeshare resorts are mostly built in primary tourism destinations in the U.S. Timeshare owners' decision of purchasing the timeshare and their travel behaviors are inevitably related to the attractiveness of the tourism destination. Timeshare owners' attachment toward the tourism destination could play an important role in their reactions to the planning efforts for the destination. As a result, there are two hypotheses regarding the relationships between timeshare

owners' attachment to the timeshare and to the city and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning.

Hypothesis 4: Timeshare owners who are more attached to the timeshare will be more willing to participate in tourism planning for the destination.

Hypothesis 5: Timeshare owners who are more attached to the city where they own their timeshare will be more willing to participate in tourism planning for the destination.

Civic engagement is a multi-faceted construct. Political participation and civic participation are the two major components of civic engagement (Putnam, 1995; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). Willingness to participate in tourism planning could be associated with both political and civic involvement, because tourism planning is conducted within the power structures and institutions of the society for the public interest. The relationships between past behavioral civic engagement and willingness to participation in future tourism planning are investigated by the following two hypotheses.

Hypothesis 6: Timeshare owners who have an active history of political participation are more likely to participate in tourism planning.

Hypothesis 7: Timeshare owners who have an active history of civic participation are more likely to participate in tourism planning.

Although some demographic variables, such as length of residence, age, and gender have been found to be associated with residents' attitudes toward tourism development (Girard and Gartner, 1993; Mason and Cheyne, 2000; Tomljenovic and Faulkner, 1999), whether those demographic variables are relevant in the context of timeshare owners remains unclear. However, these variables could be promising in this explorative study. For example, a recent national study by Zukin et al. (2006) indicated that different generations of American citizens

had significantly different patterns in civic engagement. It is possible that timeshare owners in different age groups differ in their willingness to participate in tourism planning.

Hypothesis 8: Demographic variables are indicators of potential participants in tourism planning.

### **Definitions**

Timeshare: the practice of dividing accommodation units into increments and selling those increments to customers permanently (Suchman et al., 1999).

Timeshare owner: individuals who own timeshare property or right in the form of a deeded contract or points.

Tourism planning: any effort or activity aimed at managing and/or planning for tourism in the tourism destination.

Table 1-1. U.S. states with most timeshare units in 2006

	Number of timeshare units	Share of U.S.
FL	53,575	30.4%
CA	11,808	6.7%
SC	11,455	6.5%
HI	9,869	5.6%
TN	7,930	4.5%
U.S. total	176,232	100.0%

Source: ARDA International Foundation, 2007.

Table 1-2. US timeshare resort sales volume

Sales statistics	2006	2005	2004
New sales (billion)	\$10.0	\$8.6	\$ 7.9
Intervals sold	538,000.0	529,031.0	498,168.0
Average price	\$18,502.0	\$16,278.0	\$15,789.0

Source: ARDA International Foundation, 2007.

Table 1-3. Timeshare resort occupancy in 2006

Timeshare occupant	Percent of time available
Owner or owner's guest	47.6%
Exchange guest	19.8%
Renter	10.6%
Marketing guest	2.8%
Vacant	19.1%
Total	100.0%

Source: ARDA International Foundation, 2007.

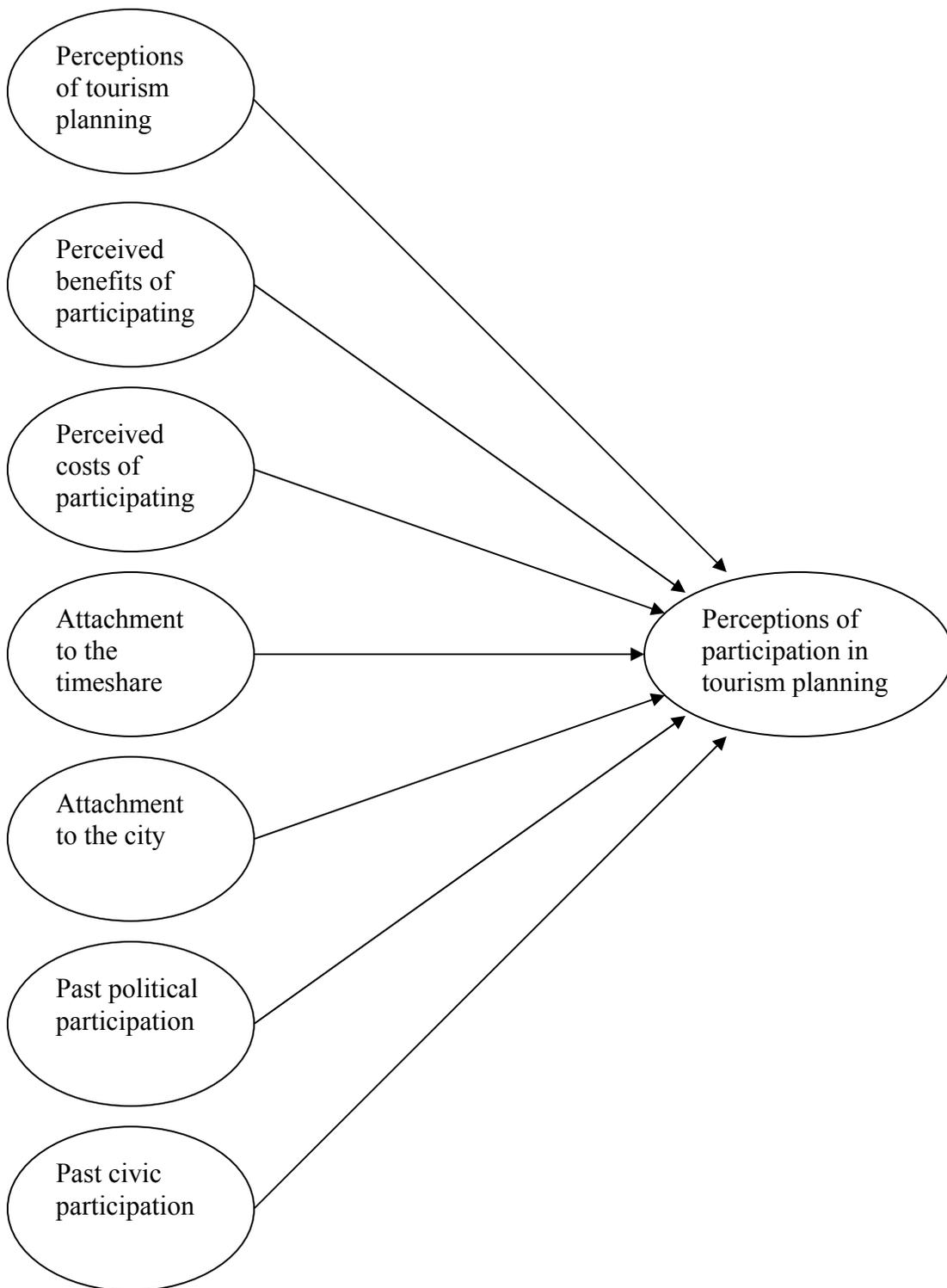


Figure 1-1. The proposed model

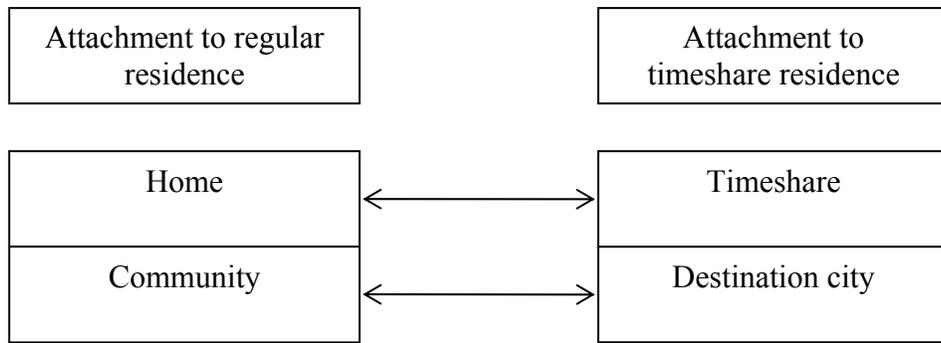


Figure 1-2. Attachment to regular residence and to timeshare residence

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Related literature will be reviewed in this chapter in the following sequence. First, a communicative approach in tourism planning that emphasizes stakeholder involvement and consensus building is suggested. Theories and models of participatory planning will also be employed to provide a theoretical and practical evaluation of timeshare owners' participation. Although planning is constrained by the capitalist political economy (Campbell & Feinstein, 2003) and its implementation faces special challenges in the United States (Fainstein, 2000), citizen participation in planning is important not only for better planning, but also for its intrinsic value. Communicative planning (Forester, 1987) might be a relevant model for the involvement of timeshare owners and act as a vehicle to achieve consensus or the "ideal speech situation" (Habermas, 1990).

Second, a literature review on studies of resident attitudes toward tourism development will provide a basis for understanding timeshare owners' rational choice of participating in the tourism planning process or not. There is a rich body of literature on residents' attitudes toward tourism development. Some evidence suggests that residents' reaction could be predicted based on their evaluation of the benefits and costs of tourism development. If the perceived benefits outweigh or equate to the perceived costs, the residents will support the tourism development (Ap, 1992). If the perceived costs surpass the perceived benefits, the residents will oppose the tourism development.

Tourism planning is part of the efforts to develop tourism. Tourism planning provides a platform for the decision-making in tourism development. Tourism planning generates guidelines for tourism development. For residents, tourists and other members of the public, to participate in tourism planning is a good opportunity to have their voice heard and to influence

tourism development decisions. It is possible that timeshare owners' reactions toward tourism development in the timeshare resort community will influence their intentions to participate in the tourism planning process.

Third, an analysis of the literature on sense of place and its application in the tourism planning context will establish the theoretical basis for investigating the effects of timeshare owners' sense of place on their willingness to participate. The study of place investigates the bond between people and place, from different disciplinary perspectives. In the tourism context, sense of place or place attachment has been employed to explain tourist behaviors and destination images. For timeshare owners, their attachment toward their timeshares and the destination city is proposed to be important in predicting their reaction toward tourism planning.

Fourth, a study of the literature on civic engagement is also part of the theoretical background of the study. Different political powers exert their influence over the tourism industry through tourism planning. Timeshare owners' participation in tourism planning is part of their overall engagement in political and civic affairs. It is possible that timeshare owners' past experience of political and civic involvement will affect their intentions to get involved in tourism planning for the city where their timeshare resorts are located.

Besides the rational analysis, affective bonding, and experience of civic engagement, demographic variables will be investigated as factors potentially associated with timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Although timeshare owners are mostly from middle or higher middle class backgrounds, their other demographic features are diverse. For example, more young people become patrons of timeshare products (Crottes & Ragatz, 2002). It is worthwhile examining demographic variables as a potential source of predicting

timeshare owners' perceptions because this study is exploratory and lacks empirical evidence from previous studies.

### **A Communicative Approach in Tourism Planning**

Although tourism planning benefits from different parent disciplines, many aspects of tourism planning remain underdeveloped, especially in theory building and in the implementation of tourism plans. Tourism planning theories lag behind theoretical development in urban and regional planning and remain fragmented. The disconnection between tourism planning theories and practice hinders theoretical development.

It is advisable to briefly investigate the social environment of tourism planning before analyzing the merits and shortcomings of existing tourism planning approaches. Tourism is a highly fragmented industry, including major sectors such as transportation, accommodation, attractions, and services (Gunn & Var, 2002). Tourism is integrated into and constrained by the overall political, cultural and economic environment of society. As a result, tourism planning theories and practice are often an answer to a blend of complicated and disjointed challenges in a certain society. In order to dismantle the complexity of tourism planning, it is necessary to identify a specific perspective to understand challenges that tourism planners face.

The purpose of planning is to serve the public interest by reasoned intervention in the form of planning. In the same vein, the central argument for tourism planning is to generate better results for the public by promoting tourism development while minimizing its negative effects. This primary task of tourism planning is related to the conflict between tourism planning as a technocratic process versus tourism planning as a democratic process (Albrechts, 2002). Some scholars label the tension in different ways, for example, the conflict between a normative approach and a positivist approach (Treuren & Lane, 2003). The conflict is pivotal to the theoretical discussion as well as choices in practice (Saarikoski, 2002), because different

approaches have different answers to these questions: (1) What is the public interest in tourism planning? (2) What is the best way to serve the public interest? (3) What is the role of tourism planners? One perspective of understanding the conflict is to investigate the issue of citizen participation in planning. The following section will provide a brief review of the literature on citizen participation in planning. Due to the broad scope of citizen participation, the review will primarily focus on theoretical discussions and empirical studies in the U.S.

Citizen participation in the planning process is an integral part of citizen involvement in public affairs in the United States. Citizen participation is not only part of the philosophical and political tradition, but also integrated into U.S. governmental and judicial structures (Day, 1997). However, the implementation of citizen participation in planning is controversial. Citizen participation experienced ebb and flow since the 1950s and its effects varied at different levels of planning. The nature and effects of public participation at the national level varied in the U.S. According to Grant (1994), citizen participation was entrenched in government decisions the 1960s, legislated in the 1970s, and retrenched in the 1980s. However, citizen participation has remained important at the local government level (Burby, 2003). More importantly, although citizen participation in planning is often shadowed by strategic planning and economic development (Maier, 2001), it remains “central to contemporary planning ideology” (Lowry, Adler, & Milner, 1997).

Although there are many theoretical and practical studies on citizen participation, there is no generally accepted definition of citizen participation. While the literature is ambiguous about approaches and impacts of citizen participation in different contexts, theoretical discussions of citizen participation are often guided by different paradigms. For example, Arnstein (1969, p.216) defines participation as “the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens,

presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to the deliberately included in the future.” Other researchers from a procedural democratic perspective do not agree with her substantive democratic approach. They argue that the masses are incapable of constructively contributing to decision-making and a feasible way to achieve democracy is representative democracy (Friedmann, 1987).

Although there are various perceptions of and attitudes toward citizen participation, citizen participation is an essential part of political theory and practice in the U.S. On the one hand, citizen participation is believed to be intrinsically valuable in many canonical democratic theories, such as in Rousseau’s (1948) and Mill’s (1965) works (Pateman, 1975). According to Pateman, Rousseau emphasized individual citizen participation in political decision making and Mill’s participatory democratic theory viewed the participatory political system as self-sustaining because participation was an educational process for citizens. On the other hand, citizen participation is viewed as a matter of right in the U.S. political practice (Burke, 1979) and institutionalized in the political system. For example, “access point” or “veto points” (Johnson, 1984) in the political system grant opportunities for citizens to participate. From a practical perspective, planners have two extra reasons for advocating citizen participation besides mandated participation by law (Carp, 2004). First, to get citizens involved is part of planners’ ethical standards. Second, citizen participation is a valuable tool for dealing with controversy.

The benefits of citizen participation in governance are multi-faceted. Irvin and Stansbury (2004) suggested that there are two aspects of the benefits: benefits from the process and benefits from the outcomes, enjoyed by both government and citizens. The process of citizen participation is alleged to be a process for mutual education and trust building. At the government level, citizen participation is constructive for more representative government and

better informed government decisions. At the citizen level, it is an educational process for individual citizens. Other researchers caution that there are negative impacts of citizen participation. For example, Stivers (1990) argued that substantial citizen involvement is unworkable because contemporary society is too complex. During the participation process, the relationship between experts and average citizens might be strained. From the perspective of results, the outcomes of participatory process might not necessarily reflect the public interest.

Most of the arguments for and against direct citizen participation in general public affairs are applicable in discussions about citizen participation in planning. Citizen participation could be a salient issue because of the unique characteristics of planning as a profession. Planning is an established profession with its technocratic processes; however, the democratic political system requires forms of citizen participation in the planning process. As a result, citizen participation is viewed as one of the dilemmas of planning (Benevise, 1989). For supporters of citizen participation, there are four rationales for citizen participation, as summarized by Sanoff (2000). First, citizen participation is of inherent good and part of the democratic system. Second, citizen participation is a source of wisdom and information about the community and its needs. Third, citizen participation will not only contribute to better decision making but also facilitate the implementation of the plan due to the increased trust between citizens and planners which is built during the participation process. Fourth, participation is good for participants because of the increased sense of having influenced decision making, which might promote a sense of community. However, there are two potential problematic aspects of citizen participation in planning (Abram, 2000). First, the representativeness of participants is questionable. Participants from a heterogeneous community might not represent the majority of its residents. Second, participation in planning processes does not necessarily imply influence over outcomes

(Lane, 2003). If the whole planning process is skewed to special interest groups, citizen participation alone may not change the results.

Despite the diverse views of citizen participation in planning, the consensus is that citizen participation is intrinsically beneficial but difficult to implement. There are different schools of thought about how to involve individual citizens in the planning process. One potential model for citizen participation is the communicative approach (Fainstein, 2000).

Although some forms of citizen participation have been implicitly or explicitly employed in planning practice for decades (Hibbard & Lurie, 2000) and the terms communication, collaboration, and participation are frequently used in the planning literature (Abram, 2000), the “communicative turn” (Healey, 1996) did not obtain its popularity until 1990s. An emerging body of literature (e.g., the special volume of *Planning Theory*, 17, 1997) on the communicative approach has formed a new communicative planning paradigm (Innes, 1995). A meta-analysis of empirical research in major planning journals by Lauria and Wagner (2006) indicated that communicative planning theory has provided a theoretical basis for many empirical studies since 1980s.

Since Forester’s (1989) *Planning in the Face of Power*, the growing body of literature on communicative planning might suggest that the communicative planning paradigm is heterogeneous. The themes regarding the communicative planning paradigm are concentrated on “the idea of the planner, and the practice of planning, as facilitating communicative interchange between interested parties . . . , over matters of common concern” (Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000, p. 333). One approach to classifying communicative planning approaches is to divide them by their respective theoretical foundations. Communicative planning theory mainly draws on two philosophical schools: pragmatism and Habermasian communicative rationality (Fainstein, 2000;

Foley & Lauria, 2000; Huxley & Yiftachel, 2000), as well as other schools of social science (Neuman, 2000).

The main doctrines of communicative planning theory could be summarized from four perspectives. First, the goal of communicative planning is to achieve consensus among involved participants. Second, related to the consensus-building goal, the epistemological basis of the communicative approach lies in the argument that knowledge is socially constructed and different people have different perspectives (Healey, 1997). Third, in the process of communicative planning, the planner is a facilitator and learner instead of an expert and leader (Fainstein, 2000), although communicative planning theory also recognizes the significance of planners' behaviors and their roles in selecting planning participants and subjects (Carp, 2004). Fourth, the vehicle for communication is verbal and text-based communication (Carp, 2004; Healey, 1997; Innes, 1998).

Communicative planning theory is not without its critics, mainly those who are from other theoretical camps, especially rational theory and political economy (Fischler, 2000). Scholars, who side with a political economy theory, argue that communicative approaches are naive. For example, the idea of communicative rationality is too ideal (Lauria, 2000) and neglects the role of societal institutions, such as power relations (Huxley, 2000). Rational theorists allege that communicative theorists ignore social structures, such as procedures and political frameworks (Fischler, 2000). Other scholars also posit critiques about the communicative approach from a practical perspective. For example, it might be counterproductive to assume that involved parties can set aside their own interests for consensus building in practice (Abram, 2000). Communicative theorists concentrate on talk as the main communication channel, which might result in neglecting other important communicative methods, such as image (Neuman, 2000).

The communicative planning paradigm provides a new foundation for theory building in tourism planning. Although concepts such as collaborative planning, community-based tourism planning, and participative planning have been employed by theorists and practitioners in tourism planning, there is no systematic investigation about the connection between communicative planning approaches and tourism planning, which partially reflects the reality that tourism planning theories remain fragmented in general. Although there are books about tourism planning, such as Gunn and Var (2000) and Inskip (1991), they are basically textbook-oriented and lack theoretical depth. In tourism journals, scholarly papers about tourism planning are scant and are often case studies or empirical reports. The next part will review the major historical developments in tourism planning and suggest directions for further development.

### **Tourism Planning Literature**

Tourism planning emerged as a reaction to the negative impacts of tourism development. In developing countries as well as in developed countries, tourism often falls short of the promised economic benefits, and contributes to environmental and social problems. Tourism planning evolved over time, accompanying the development of the tourism industry. Burns (1999) summarized the evolution of tourism planning over the past half century. In the 1950s, there was no effort devoted to tourism planning. In the 1960s, government priority was on investment incentives and operations, which led to the increasing employment of the master planning approach. However, the implementation of plans received little attention. In the 1970s, there was recognition of the role of professional planners and the necessity of community involvement. In the 1980s, the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism development were scrutinized and recognized. There was a petition for comprehensive and integrated tourism planning. In North America there was an acknowledgment of the need for community involvement (Murphy, 1985). In the 1990s, the impacts of tourism development were

more explicit and understood. Total destination management was suggested as the way to successfully implement tourism plans.

Parallel to the evolution of practice in tourism planning, theoretical approaches of tourism planning have also developed. According to Getz (1987, cited by Simpson, 2001), there are four traditions in tourism planning approaches: the boosterism approach, the economic approach, the physical/spatial approach, and the community approach. More recently there were a variety of new approaches in the literature (Harill & Potts, 2003), such as sustainable tourism planning, community-based planning, incremental planning, collaborative planning, and comprehensive planning (Timothy, 1998).

The general trend of theoretical development in tourism planning is to evolve from a narrow physical approach to a more balanced planning approach, with more emphasis on community involvement and environmental sensitivity (Timothy, 1999). One important development in tourism planning is the increasing recognition of the importance of citizen participation. According to Harill and Potts (2003), tourism planning in the 1970s began to acknowledge the need for a participatory approach. Since the late 1980s, the terms cooperation and collaboration have been frequently used in the tourism planning literature (Jamal & Getz, 1995). In the 1990s community-driven tourism became a major research theme (Harill & Potts, 2003).

Although theoretical development in tourism planning is substantive and fruitful, there are shortcomings in tourism planning theories that inhibit further development. The literature on tourism planning theories remains unclear, divided between normative and positivist approaches, and between the assumption of theories and the practice of compromise (Treuren & Lane, 2003). The communicative approach in tourism planning remains underdeveloped. Almost 20 years

after Inskip's (1988) judgment that tourism planning was among planning's emerging specializations, tourism is still almost unseen to planners and tourism planning is often left to practitioners (Harill & Potts, 2003).

The hurdles for propelling tourism planning might be classified into four groups: lack of theory building, the unclear role of tourism planner, the confusion between theory and practice, and between process and outcomes, and problems in the practice. The lack of theory building (Simpson, 2001) is reflected in more than one aspect, such as the lack of a meaningful definition of tourism planning, the free "borrowing" from other disciplines, and the gap between goals and theoretical approaches. The lack of conceptual definition of tourism planning stymies meaningful theoretical discussions since concepts are the building bricks for theoretical development. Discussions of tourism planning at the operationalizational level might also be negatively affected. The idea that tourism planning should be integrated into the overall planning for a community might become more difficult to implement without a clear definition of tourism planning.

The lack of definition is part of the confusion. In the tourism planning literature, it is generally accepted that the goal of tourism planning is to maximize the benefits of tourism and minimize its negative impacts. However, the definition of tourism planning remains vague and simplistic. For example, tourism planning is proposed as the efforts to develop tourism "in an orderly manner and toward desirable goals" (Gunn & Var, 2002, p.132). In fact, tourism planning utilizes relevant planning concepts in the context of tourism development for tourism development purposes (Inskip, 1991). In other words, tourism planning is conceptually understood as planning for better tourism. However, tourism development and tourism planning are always interwoven with the social, political, economics, and cultural structures of the tourism

destination. There might be multiple, conflicting goals for tourism development within a community. In fact, those goals of economic development and social and environmental preservation may be beyond the reach of the available planning approaches and resources.

To add to the confusion, scholars often “borrow” freely from other disciplines. Although to take advantage of development in other disciplines has always been crucial to the theoretical development of tourism studies, new ideas and approaches from other disciplines often function as new labels in tourism planning literature. Different concepts and ideas from other disciplines are often isolated and attached to particular contexts because there is no common theoretical basis for cross-pollination in tourism planning. Merely putting old wine in new bottle is not productive for theory building.

There is little discussion of the role of tourism planner in the tourism planning literature. Although some researchers (Sautter & Leisen, 1999) propose that tourism planners hold a central position in the planning process, it might only be an ideal situation. Planners work for the public interest (Campbell & Marshall, 2002; Friedmann, 1987), but in reality they also work for their clients. In many developing countries, tourism planning is dominated by foreign investors, such as transnational organizations (Brohman, 1996; Gunn & Var, 2002). Sometimes tourism planners could be representatives of these foreign investors. In developed countries, tourism planners might be less influential and constrained by various economic and political institutions (Burns, 2004).

There is some confusion between tourism planning theories, the planning process, tourism plans and the implementation of tourism plans. This confusion might be attributable to the underdevelopment of tourism planning theories and the complexity associated with implementing tourism plans in reality. For example, tourism plans for some developing

destinations may become documents on the shelf and not implemented (Gunn & Var, 2002).

The disconnection between tourism planning theory and practice posits yet another challenge for the development of tourism planning theories. Generally, most empirical studies are isolated case studies. There is little, if any, effort to systematically summarize empirical studies and provide a base for theory development. For example, little empirical evidence could be employed to support or disprove the potential for collaborative tourism planning (Simpson, 2001). Theoretical development in tourism planning is often detached from reality. The ambition to provide a universal solution for all tourism planners is frequently constrained by the reality in various communities.

There is a need for separating discussions about implications of tourism planning theories in developing countries and in developed countries (Burns, 1999), because planning in developing countries is different from planning in developed countries (Timothy, 1998). However, there is little research on tourism planning in developing countries (Timothy, 1998). The lack of research leads to the gap between western planning theories and the reality in developing countries (Sautter & Leisen, 1999). For example, cooperative planning between the public sector, the private sector and the local community is a western perspective (Timothy, 1998) and is applicable in a western context. For example, community tourism planning is grounded in the community politics of North America (Murphy, 1985); their residents have the political power to resist development, whether it is from local governments or external investors. For residents in developing countries, the pressure for development does not leave many alternatives (Treuren & Lane, 2003).

The mismatch between a western perspective and realities in tourism planning in developing countries led to an ironic situation. In the developing world, residents do not really

have an option to reject tourism development, at least in the short term, and do not have mature social and political infrastructures (Burns, 2004), but tourism planners emphasize local involvement. Although developed countries have the political and social infrastructures, their citizens are mostly involved as ritual participants and tourists are neglected in the tourism planning process. Researchers frequently discuss attitudes of local residents in developed countries toward tourism development, but they rarely discuss the implications of these attitudes for planning (Harill & Potts, 2003).

Tourism planning has a short history of a few decades (Pearce, 1989). The problems with tourism planning discussed above clearly indicate that there is plenty room for further theoretical development. The emerging approach of communicative planning has the potential to develop into a new paradigm in tourism planning. The communicative approach would not only provide a new approach to tourism planning theory, but also present a practical way of engaging stakeholders.

The communicative approach will broaden the basis for theory building in tourism planning from various perspectives. First, it will help identify the goals of tourism planning, which should be based on the consensus of stakeholders. Second, the communicative approach clarifies the roles of tourism planners. Tourism planners should be a facilitator of the consensus building process and a student learning local knowledge and needs. Third, the communicative approach might provide new tools for theoretical development. Fourth, communicative tourism planning might be an answer to the call of customizing appropriate models for different communities (Simpson, 2001).

There are four groups of stakeholders in tourism development: tourists, tourism developers, government planning and control agencies, and the local populace (Pigram, 1994).

Representatives from all the stakeholder groups should be involved in the planning process (Jamal & Getz, 1995). While government agencies and the private sector are usually represented in the planning process, residents and tourists are rare. However, tourism planners in developing countries and developed countries face different challenges in getting underrepresented participants involved. In developing countries, there are systematic and perceived constraints (Ladkin & Bertramini, 2002) for indigenous people to participate in the planning process, such as negative political and cultural traditions, deprived economic conditions, and lack of knowledge and expertise (Timothy, 1999). Communicative tourism planning in developing countries might play a role of social mobilization (Friedmann, 1987) and change the balance of power (Abram, 2000) for the indigenous people. In developed countries, there are more advanced political and social institutions for citizen participation. However, citizen participation is often superficial and residents and tourists are not interested in participation. Communicative tourism planning might provide an approach to getting residents and tourists involved.

The communicative approach in tourism planning entails authentic participation of tourists and residents. Although currently there is no research investigating tourists' willingness to participate in the tourism planning process, research on residents' attitudes toward tourism development has been an important topic in the tourism literature for decades. Tourism planning is an important part of the decision making process of tourism development. In fact, tourism planning is also the platform for involved parties to express their support and concerns toward tourism development. Timeshare owners are transient residents of the timeshare community. Studies investigating residents support for tourism development should shed some light on timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

## **Resident's Attitudes toward Tourism**

Research on resident attitudes toward tourism development originated from the recognition of the negative impacts of tourism development. While the impacts of tourism development are diverse and far-reaching, the local community usually burdens an unfair share of the costs (Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997). Those negative impacts not only affect the satisfaction of the tourists, but also threaten the very foundation upon which the tourism industry is based. After decades' of research, studies on residents' perceptions of tourism development have reached some common ground. Scholars have concluded that the impacts of tourism development can be classified into three broad categories: economic impacts, social impacts, and environmental impacts. All three categories of impacts might consist of both positive and negative components. Communities and residents might differ in their various perceptions of the nature and magnitude of these tourism impacts.

Researchers have tested a series of factors, such as demographic characteristics, spatial factors, economic dependence, and personal benefits in order to predict resident attitudes toward tourism development. The literature suggests that socioeconomic factors play a minor, and sometimes ambiguous, role in explaining resident attitudes toward tourism development (McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Perdue, Long, & Allen, 1990). Among the demographic characteristics investigated, length of residency (Girard & Gartner, 1993; McCool & Martin, 1994), age (Cavus & Tanrisevdi, 2002; Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 1999) and gender (Harrill & Potts, 2003; Mason & Cheyne, 2000) are found to be related to resident attitudes in some studies.

Tourism researchers have proposed that residents living closer to concentrations of tourism activity will perceive the impacts of tourism development more negatively than tourists who live farther away from tourism (Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004). Pizam (1978) proposed that large amount of tourism facilities and services in a destination leads to residents' negative attitudes toward

tourism development. Subsequent research found that the relationship was more complicated. While some studies (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004) found that local, heavy users of the tourism concentration area have more negative perceptions of tourism than users living further away, Pearce (1980) reported that distance from city centers is related to negative perceptions of tourists.

The hypothesis of a positive relationship between economic dependence on tourism and support for tourism has been supported in the literature (Pizam, 1978), although researchers have found variations in the relationship. Unsurprisingly, most individuals and communities who do not benefit economically from tourism growth will not support further tourism development, as reported by Martin, McGuire and Allen (1998). Further, most studies demonstrate that residents can recognize both positive and negative aspects of economic dependency on tourism (Lankford, 1994).

Research on resident attitudes entered a new era when social exchange theory was introduced into the area in the early 1990s (Ap, 1990). The main doctrines of social exchange theory could be traced back to the works of Homans (1958), Blau (1964), and Emerson (1976). Social exchange theory suggests that the relationships between individuals and groups are based on subjective evaluation of benefits and costs and comparison of alternatives. Based on the assumption of rational choice, individuals or groups will favor the exchange with other parties if the perceived benefits outweigh or equate to the perceived costs.

Ap (1992) adopted the ideas of equal exchanges from social exchange theory and applied them in the context of community tourism development. From the residents' perspective, the primary benefit for them to gain is the improvement of the economic and social well-being brought out by tourism development. The costs of the exchange are the negative impacts of

tourism development. Ap also proposed that residents will support tourism development if the perceived benefits surpass or equate to the perceived costs. Social exchange theory has been suggested as a useful model for mapping residents' tradeoffs between perceived benefits and perceived costs and explaining their support for tourism development.

A series of empirical studies have been conducted on the basis of social exchange theory. For example, Perdue, Long, and Allen (1987, 1990) reported that support for additional tourism development is positively or negatively related to perceived positive or negative impacts of tourism. Similarly, Jurowski, Uysal and Williams (1997) found in a study in Virginia that the potential for economic gain as an exchange item has a direct and positive effect on resident support.

Although there is some evidence for the relationship between perceived benefits and costs and resident support for tourism, findings from other studies are not conclusive when other factors are also found to be important predictors of residents' support (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Lindberg & Johnson, 1997). While the implication of social exchange theory has propelled studies on resident attitudes into a new stage of investigation, the very purpose of attitude studies could be missed if researchers fail to make the connection between social exchange theory, resident attitudes, and tourism planning. Lankford (2001) pointed out:

Tourism impact research is (or should be) designed to provide planners with a database with which to develop a planning process aimed at addressing local concerns and issues. Specifically, the data from a community environmental scan (via survey or series of meetings) become the starting point in developing a citizen involvement process (which may take many years) to discuss impacts, to suggest mitigating strategies, and to decide on the scope and density of tourism developments.

It is clear that the primary purpose of resident attitude studies is to contribute to tourism planning and eventually the sustainable tourism development in the local community. A step forward is to investigate the relationship between residents' personal benefits and costs and

support for tourism planning. In other words, even though many empirical studies have indicated that most residents support tourism development as an economic development tool, it is unclear whether their support for tourism development will lead to their behavioral contribution to the tourism planning process.

The gap between personal benefit and support for tourism planning has been recognized in the literature. In their survey of residents at 12 Arizona communities, McGehee and Andereck (2004) reported a positive relationship between personal benefit from tourism and support for tourism development, but there is no significant relationship between personal benefit and support for tourism planning. While perceived positive impacts do not predict support for tourism planning, perceived negative impacts are positively related to support for tourism planning. Overall, support for tourism development is strongly associated with support for tourism planning.

McGehee and Andereck (2004) argued that the part of their findings regarding support for tourism planning do not support the research hypothesis derived from social exchange theory, which states that if residents recognize their benefits in tourism and the positive impacts of tourism development, they should support the efforts of tourism planning. The authors offer two explanations for this: (1) Residents have limited confidence in the ability of the community to plan for tourism. (2) Regardless of personal benefits, all residents recognize the importance of tourism planning. These two explanations are drawn from two important critiques of social exchange theory. The first is the role of trust. As a party in exchange, residents may not trust the other party, who is in charge of tourism planning. The second one is the role of sense of collective interests and social norms in shaping individual's behavior.

McGehee and Andereck's (2004) work not only stated the importance of future research on resident support for tourism planning, but also suggested that social exchange theory alone might not explain the support for tourism planning. One interesting and alarming issue in the application of social exchange theory in resident attitudes studies is that social exchange theory is often taken for granted, while it has evoked plenty of critiques outside the tourism literature. The most relevant comment regarding the application of social exchange theory in resident attitudes studies is the scope of its application. When the costs and benefits of a social action are qualitative in nature, it is difficult for an individual to calculate the net benefit or cost (Sciulli, 1992). In other words, some tourism researchers might have stretched the limits of the scope of social exchange theory.

Besides personal benefits, there might be many factors influencing residents' support for tourism planning, such as personal emotional attachment, the sense of collective benefits, and social norms. However, self-interest is suggested as the main motivation of mankind (Mansbridge, 1990; Monroe, 1991). Rational choice theory is based on the premise that human motivation is largely self-interested (Petracca, 1991) and its application in social interaction is social exchange theory (Scott, 2000). Rational choice theory states that human actions are rational and people calculate the possible costs and benefits of any action before they decide what to do (Lawler, 2001; Macy & Flache, 1995).

Rational choice theory is the theoretical foundation for explaining the rational component in timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in the tourism planning process for two reasons. First, social exchange theory has been misused in some resident attitude studies as a tool to explain all social relations related to tourism development. The careless application of social exchange theory in the current literature is misleading and counter-productive. In order to avoid

potential vagueness and ambiguity, this article employs rational choice theory in a more rigid and precise way that constrains its application to the domain of personal interests and costs on a rational basis. Second, rational choice theory is closely related to behavior psychology, which might be more appropriate for predicting behavioral support of tourism planning.

### **Sense of Place and Tourism Planning**

The emotional bonding between people and place has attracted attention from researchers from various disciplines for decades. Since the seminal works of Relph (1976) and Tuan (1974, 1975), there has been an emerging and diverse body of literature on the affective connections between people and place. Accompanying the growth of the literature, a series of terms have been minted to describe the connection. For example, Low and Altman (1992, p.3 ) claimed that place attachment is related to “a variety of analogous ideas, including topophilia (Tuan, 1974), place identity (Proshansky et al., 1983), insideness (Rowles, 1980), genres of place (Hufford, 1992), sense of place or rootedness (Chawla, 1992), environmental embeddedness, community sentiment and identity (Hummon, 1992).” Despite the obvious common ground among these terms, there are variations and nuances that are context sensitive and deserve scrutiny while employed across the line between disciplines.

In spite of the fragmented status of the existing literature and the lack of understanding of the relationships among those concepts (Stedman, 2000), few efforts have been devoted to standardize the terminology of the study of place, which might be attributed to the recognition that the study of place is essentially multidimensional and multidisciplinary. In fact, some researchers caution the danger of inappropriately simplifying the meanings of those concepts to measurable variables in the pursuit of a quantitative approach (Stedman, 2000). Similarly, Low and Altman (1992) argued that place researchers need to move beyond the first stage of

assuming the consensus among different concepts to the second stage of investigating the relationships among different concepts.

Given the multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature of the study of place, an exhaustive review of the existing literature is beyond the purpose of this study. Instead, this study aims at investigating and organizing the theoretical and practical findings in a way that will benefit the study of tourism planning. As a result, the main findings in the literature on place will be summarized, followed by discussions about the application of study of place in tourism and in planning.

Among the various terms describing the emotional connections between people and place, sense of place has emerged as an overarching concept (Farnum, Hall, & Kruger, 2005; Stedman, 2002). Humanistic geographers, such as Tuan (1974) argue that place is the central concept of geographic study and space is converted to place after people attach meanings to it. The meanings that people attach to place include cognitive, affective, and emotional attributes (Altman & Low, 1992; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000; Farnum et al., 2005). Environmental psychologists (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1995; Feimer & Geller, 1993) often use the phrase place attachment. Place attachment is part of human attachment and primarily about affective bonding with place. Since there is a consensus among researchers (Bott, Cantrill, & Myers, 2003; Cheng, Kruger, & Daniels, 2003; Stedman, 2000) that humanistic geography and environmental psychology are the two disciplinary origins of the study of place, sense of place describes the broad boundary of the study of place and is employed as the basic concept in this study.

The conceptual discussion of sense of place might be organized by three topics: place, origins of sense of place, and different paradigms of research. Place is closely related to the concept space and the starting point of understanding place is the dualism of space and place. As

Tuan (1977, p.6) pointed out: “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value...” Tuan defined place by comparing place with space.

The ideas ‘space’ and ‘place’ require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore, if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place (Tuan, 1977, p.6).

Similarly, Relph (1976, p.8) also compared place with space: “...space provides the context for places but derives its meaning from particular places.” His understanding of place could be described as a continuum with place at one end and space at the other (Cresswell, 2004).

Unlike humanistic geographers like Tuan and Relph, other researchers proposed a broad definition of place. Some researchers (Agnew, 1987, cited by Cresswell, 2004; Gieryn, 2000) argued that there are three dimensions of place: location, locale and sense of place. Location refers to the geographical position. Locale summarizes the material form of a place, which provides the setting for social relations and interactions. Sense of place describes the emotional attachment people have to place. Similarly, Stedman (2000) argued that place includes three intertwining parts: the physical places, human activities, and human social and psychological processes that happen in the setting.

The meaning of place is constructed by experience (Tuan, 1975). According to different types of experience that places are associated with, Tuan (1974) divided places to two types: places as public symbols and places as fields of care. Public symbols are places that yield their meanings to the eye, such as sacred places and public squares. Fields of care are places that can only be known after extended experience. Fields of care include home, neighborhood, drugstore, etc.

While the meanings of place are multidimensional: physical, social, and psychological (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001), there are also different dimensions of sense of place. Sense of

place is a categorical concept of the “symbolic meanings, attachment, and satisfaction with a spatial setting held by an individual or group” (Stedman, 2002), with both symbolic and emotional attributes (Eisenhauer, Krannich, & Blahna, 2000). As suggested by its multidisciplinary origin and its broad application in disciplines such as tourism and outdoor recreation, environmental protection and education, and urban and regional planning, there are diversified discussions and topics in the study of sense of place.

Humanistic geographers such as Tuan and Relph pay more attention to built places, because their definition of place is based on human experience. However, some researchers argued that there is a distinction between built places and natural places and the concept of place should not only apply to built or natural environments (Bott, Cantrill, & Myers, 2003). For example, in the context of outdoor recreation and tourism, natural environments could be important targets and settings for people’s emotional bonding. Although there might not be an absolute distinction between built and natural environments, a broader scope including both built and natural places better reflects the diverse research in different areas.

Views on the origins of sense of place depend on the disciplinary perspective. The potential factors that affect sense of place might be divided into three levels: personal experience, socio/cultural factors, and biological/evolutionary factors (Farnum et al., 2005). Individual experience is at the center of humanistic geographers’ explanation of sense of place. For example, Tuan (1974) emphasized the temporal dimension of place (in his term *pause*) and the role of personal experience in the forming of sense of place. Based on the argument of the importance of long-time residency and individual experience, Relph (1976) argued that the high mobility of American society caused by “mass culture” and modern travel/tourism are responsible for the placelessness in America. The mobility of Americans makes families stay

shorter at a house and decreases the significance of home, while tourism only brings superficial and inauthentic experience to tourists (Cresswell, 2004). Similarly, Relph's mourning of the loss of place is echoed by other terms used by different researchers, such as the "transcendence of place" (Coleman, 1993), and "phantasmagoric" (Giddens, 1990).

Social and cultural origins of sense of place are the factors that beyond individual experience; in other words, direct personal experience is not necessary for sense of place (Moore & Graefe, 1994). Proponents (Blake, 2002; Gieryn, 2000) of the sociocultural perspective argue that places could have common symbolic or cultural meanings to members of a group, regardless of the members' personal visiting experience. "Contact" with a place could be a psychological process instead of a physical experience (Farnum et al., 2005), which might help explain why people are attached to places unrealistically representing the actual landscape in Schroeder's (2004) study. Empirical evidence supports the broader view that origins of sense of place consist of direct experience and social and cultural factors (Hammit, Backlund, & Bixler, 2004; Stedman, 2002).

Some other scholars propose that there is a biological/evolutionary component of sense of place. Riley (1992) argued that attachment to the environment is inherent in the human species. As a result of evolution, humans develop attachment to environments that are similar to critical evolutionary settings. However, it is hard to evaluate this proposal directly (Farnum et al., 2005). Although there is inferential evidence by some studies (e.g. cross-culture studies of preference of types of landscapes) and psychoevolutionary theories (attention restoration theory and prospect refuge theory) explaining human sentiments toward certain types of environments, biological/evolutionary components are generally neglected in tourism studies of sense of place (Farnum et al., 2005).

The views guiding intellectual investigations of place consist of both explanatory and normative approaches (Castree, 2004). The social and behavioral approaches view place theory as explanatory, emphasizing on what and why; while the environmental design and planning disciplines regard place theory as normative, aiming at deciding what should be the case (Zube, Sell, & Taylor, 1982, cited by Bott, Cantrill, & Myers, 2003).

At the operationalizational level, places are often treated as commerce or settings. Researchers tend to identify place in terms of geographical location and political boundaries. Participants in empirical studies are likely to interpret place in terms of administrative units or political jurisdictions, such as county or city boundaries, because many social functions and individual activities, such as voting and local taxes happen within political boundaries (EPA, 2002). Besides political boundaries, there are other units of places, such as natural boundaries (EPA, 2002).

There are different scales of “place” as the target of sense of place. For example, Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) classified the target of the attachment to three levels: house, neighborhood, and city. In the arena of outdoor recreation, the scale of attachment has also been investigated. For example, Moore and Scott (2003) treated users’ attachments to a specific trail and to the larger park separately and compared them. A related but separated question is whether outdoor recreationists are attached to a particular setting or a type of settings.

There are also different levels of unit of analysis of the people factor in sense of place. The basic dimension is individual sense of place and collective sense of place. Although this difference is not totally exclusive and could have overlaps, individual sense of place is more from a psychological perspective, and collective sense of place is from a social and cultural perspective.

The concept of sense of place has been widely applied in outdoor recreation. Many researchers in outdoor recreation follow an environmental psychological tradition of study of place, especially about recreational uses of public lands and recreational users' place attachment to these lands. There is a consensus that place attachment has two underlying dimensions: place dependency and place identity (Williams, Anderson, McDonald, & Patterson, 1995; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992; Williams & Roggenbuck, 1989). Place identity describes the emotional dimension of place attachment, while place dependency portrays the functional dimension of place identity.

The application of the term place identity in recreation and tourism is often traced to Proshansky (Proshansky, 1978; Proshansky & Fabian, 1987; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Proshansky (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983, p.63-64) theorizes place identity as a "complex cognitive structure" that includes the "norms, behaviors, rules, and regulations that are inherent in the use of these places and spaces" (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000). Place identity is described as the "combination of attitudes, values, thoughts, beliefs, meanings, and behavior tendencies, reaching for beyond emotional attachment and belonging to particular places" (Proshansky, Fabian & Kaminoff, 1983, p.61). Place dependence describes the functional attachment that individual users possess towards places (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981) and "how well a setting facilitates users' particular activities" (Moore & Graefe, 1994, p.27).

Although some studies suggest place attachment as a unidimensional construct, based on their findings that measures of place identity and place dependence correlate highly and even do not distinguish (Johnson, 1998; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Moore & Scott, 2003), most empirical studies (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002) support the two-dimension approach of place

attachment in recreation and the measurements have showed consistent validity and reliability (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005; Williams & Vaske, 2003).

While place attachment is a complicated construct (Altman & Low, 1992), research on place attachment in the recreational context is narrowly focused on individual sentiments toward natural environments from the psychological perspective. The focus on natural environments not only reflects the disciplinary characteristics of recreation research, but also suggests that research on place attachment in recreational settings pays more attention to the material form of places and less attention to the geographic location of places and human relationships and emotions related to places. For example, places are frequently only viewed as settings for outdoor recreation activities. The missing of social and cultural factors in place attachment in the recreation context might lead to some theoretical and measurement issues.

As an interdisciplinary subject, tourism study has incorporated the study of place and concepts such as place attachment and community attachment have been applied. The application of sense of place in tourism research could be divided into to two areas. One category is about tourists' attachment to tourism destinations (Brown, 1990). The other area is the role of residents' community attachment in shaping their attitudes toward tourism development in their community.

There are conflicting views of tourists' destination attachment. While some researchers argue that tourists spend a short time in a destination in a commercialized manner and such superficial experience could not facilitate forming the meaning of that place, others respond that direct personal experience is not necessary for forming sentiments toward places and tourists might have collective destination attachment due to social and cultural reasons. For example, potential tourists may feel attached to the Great Wall in China before they ever have a chance to

visit it in person. It is reasonable to believe that destination attachment is multi-faceted and includes both psychological factors and social cultural components. Tuan (1974) suggested that there are two kinds of place attachment, one is attached to home through long period of residence; the other is attached to selected places. Destination attachment could be interpreted as attachment to selected places (Stedman, 2006).

Researchers and practitioners have been interested in investigating the emotional connection between tourists and their tourism destinations, in order to understand tourists' travel decision-making and travel behavior. Empirical studies (Lee, Backman, & Backman, 1997, cited by Lee, 2001) suggest that psychological attachment is very important in understanding tourist behavior, including repeat visitations. On the other hand, attractiveness of the destination and travel to the destination as family tradition are found to be important predictors of tourists' destination attachment (Brown, 1990; Lee, 2001).

Similar to the research of sense of place in the context of recreation, research about destination attachment is more about the emotional bonding tourists have toward the destination than the physical characteristics of the place (Williams et al, 1992). Unlike in the recreation context, research of sense on place in the tourism context also includes a sociocultural dimension. Sense of place at the collective level has also been given attention in the tourism context, particularly from the sociocultural perspective. However, there are fewer studies on tourist place attachment, which might be attributed to the argument that destination attachment is only one of many variables influencing travel decisions.

Recently, Stedman (2002, 2003) suggested that there is another independent attitude dimension of sense of place, different from place identity and place dependency that deserves attention from researchers in the recreation and tourism disciplines. Place satisfaction is “a

multidimensional summary judgment of the perceived quality of a setting” (Stedman, 2002, p. 564). Following the practice of distinguishing community attachment and community satisfaction in community sociology, Stedman (2002) argued that place satisfaction is an important dimension, especially in predicting behaviors. In a mail survey of home owners in a Wisconsin county with over 57% houses classified as for seasonal or recreational use, place identity and place satisfaction were found to have independent effects on willingness to engage in activities that protected the natural environment. Respondents with strong place attachment but low place satisfaction were most likely to act for environmental protection purposes.

Sense of place is also investigated in the planning literature, especially in the area of citizen participation and community building. A variety of concepts related to sense of place have been implemented in the relevant literature, such as place attachment, place identity, and sense of community. These different aspects of sense of place could be classified into two groups: individual-level place attachment and community-level place attachment, since citizen participation in community planning consists of both individual and community level contributions from the residents. There is a two-way relationship between sense of place and citizen participation (Julian & Reischl, 1997). As a reaction to the mourning of the loss of communal and public life, planners, especially urban planners have devoted to restoring sense of community and broader civic life through planning tools and efforts (Talen, 2000). However, both individual-level place attachment and community-level place attachment play an important role in citizen participation and empowerment, which are crucial to community building (Lund, 2002; Manzo & Perkins, 2006). Obviously, sense of place and citizen participation and community building are closely correlated. For the purpose of this article, the role of sense of place in influencing citizen participation is more important and relevant.

There is ample evidence for the active role that sense of place and place attachment play in citizen participation in the literature. Although it might seem intuitive, stronger sense of place has been found to associate with more socially and environmentally responsible behaviors and more civic engagement. For example, Chavis and Wandersman (1990) reported that sense of community has a direct and an indirect effect on participation based on a casual model analyzing neighborhood block associations. Brown, Perkins and Brown (2003) found that place attachments and sense of community play a significant role in neighborhood revitalization efforts.

Since the use of space is essentially political (Hayden, 1995), people's emotional relationships to places are inevitably related to the larger sociopolitical reality. As Tuan (1974) pointed out, one of the main usages of place in lay language is a metaphor for social status. Sociopolitical relations are frequently expressed in spatial terms, such as "position" in society and "insider" and "outsider" (Cresswell, 1996). The meaning and sense of place could evoke political actions if people feel owning a place or having a right to a place and that place is the objective of a community plan. These political actions include citizen participation in the planning process.

Sense of place could also relate to conflicts in citizen participation. From a participatory planning perspective, citizen involvement is crucial. To understand residents' place attachment is crucial for both consensus building and for involving community members. Various place attachments among different members of a community could be a source for conflicts. Compared with conflicts over economic or environmental issue, this conflict could be more subtle and implicit. Understanding place attachment and meanings could be the first step for consensus building.

## **Civic Engagement and Tourism Planning**

The concept of civil society was discussed by Aristotle and other Greek philosophers and was prominent among modern writers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Alexis de Tocqueville (Brewer, 2003). Although there are different versions of definitions of civil society, it could be loosely defined as “the realm of private voluntary association” (Foley & Edwards, 1996). This association is called as mediating structures in modern society by Berger and Neuhaus (1977) and plays a crucial role in democracy. Many researchers (Putnam, 1995a) argue that democracy is based on the interaction between civil society, the state sector, and the private sector. The emerging democracies in Latin America and Eastern Europe also accentuate the importance of civil society toward democratization (Foley & Edwards, 1996).

The American society is characterized as a civil society. The most famous account might be traced to De Tocqueville and his *Democracy in America*. After spending 9 months traveling in the U.S. during 1831 and 1832, De Tocqueville (1835/2001, p. 513-517) described his reaction to American’s “associational life” as “nothing, in my view, deserves more attention than the intellectual and moral associations in America.” According to Tocqueville, “Americans...are forever forming associations. There are not only commercial and industrial associations in which all take part, but others of a thousand different types--religious, moral, serious, futile, very general and very limited, immensely large and very minute...” Tocqueville viewed the civic association as the most important factor for the success of democracy in the U.S. (Putnam, 1995a).

While the concept of civil society remains relevant, it is loosely defined and hard to measure. The concept of social capital was coined from the perspective of civil society and generated interest not only in academia but also in mass media. After years’ development and diversification, social capital has become a broad concept and has developed to various forms.

There are various intellectual roots and different definitions of social capital. According to Portes (1998), contemporary pioneers in defining social capital are Bourdieu (1985), Loury (1977), and Coleman (1988). Social capital is intellectually related to the concept of capital and could be generally conceptualized as “resources embedded in a social structure which are accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions” (Lin, 1999, p. 35). As a concept developed in sociology, social capital has been applied across disciplines, especially in political sciences by Putnam (1995a, 1995b). Putnam (1993a, p.35) defined social capital as “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit.” Social capital depends on the social network of associations and civic participation. In fact, social trust and civic participation are at the heart of Putnam’s (1995b) argument for the declining social capital in the American society.

While social capital is often viewed as an aggregation of social networks and norms, civic engagement is the foundation and the direct measure of social capital (Brewer, 2003). Civic engagement refers to both participation in political events and involvement in social and community affairs (Putnam, 1995b; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). Civic engagement is pivotal for revitalizing American democracy (Putnam, 1993b), because civic engagement offers opportunities for people to bond, create joint accomplishments, and collectively articulate their demands (Curtis, Baer, & Grabb, 2001; Eckstein, 2001; Schofer & Fourcade-Gourinchas, 2001).

While there are different ways of classifying citizen involvement in public life, the division between political participation and civic participation is an important distinction. Political engagement refers to “activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action—either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of people who make those policies” (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady,

1995, p. 38). Voting is the most important activity within this domain, but there are also other activities. Civic involvement, on the other hand, is defined as “organized voluntary activity focused on problem solving and helping others” (Zukin et al., 2006, p.7).

While the trend of declining political participation is evident, primarily indicated by the low voting rate, the trend of civic involvement is not clear. Some researchers like Putnam (1995b) lament the lost of civic spirit and voluntarism in the American society, especially among the baby boomer generation. Putnam supported his argument by evidence like declining levels of membership in national civic associations. Other researchers challenge that Putnam’s argument is constrained to selected traditional interpersonal networks and thus does not represent the whole picture of civil participation in contemporary society (Jackman & Miller, 1998; Lin, 1999). Further, Putnam’s empirical approach faces the danger of tautology, because it is at the macro or social level where the sources and outcomes of social capital are hard to distinguish (Portes, 1998).

This study focuses on civic engagement at the individual level. Tourism planning is part of the effort for tourism development and the allover planning for the destination community. While any planning could be related to power and political relationships, tourism planning is also associated with the benefits for the community and for others. As a result, participation in tourism planning is both a political issue and a civic issue. Both political engagement and civic involvement of timeshare owners are going to be investigated.

However, the current literature on tourism planning is more about marketing, promotion (Marcouiller, 1997), and physical planning than about social mobilization and consensus building. Participatory approach in tourism planning is only an emerging paradigm. Although the role of civic engagement has garnered little attention among tourist planners, some studies have

suggested that tourism development could contribute to more civic engagement as well as economic development (Hoffman, 2003). Other researchers view the broader concept of social capital as part of the social pillar, which, together with economic and environmental domains, interacts with tourism development (Jóhannesson, Skaptadóttir, & Benediktsson, 2003; Patterson, Gulden, Cousins, & Kraev, 2003)

Participation in tourism planning is part of civic engagement activities of an individual. The individual's past history should be a good indicator of her intention of civic participation in the future. If activities of civic engagement reflect an overall level of commitment toward civic engagement, and the same level of commitment remains constant, past activities of civic engagement could be efficient in predicting willingness of participating in tourism planning in the future.

## CHAPTER 3 METHODS

### **Research Design**

As proposed in Chapter One, the research questions guiding the research are (1) Are timeshare owners willing to participate in tourism planning? (2) Are timeshare owner's perceptions of participating in tourism planning related to the owners' perceptions of tourism planning, perceived benefits and costs of participating, level of attachment to the timeshare and to the city where the timeshare is located, and past history of political and civic participation? (3) What are timeshare owners' preferred ways of participation in tourism planning?

This study followed a cross-sectional design where research participants were surveyed using a standardized questionnaire during summer, 2007. The target population of this study was U. S. timeshare owners. The accessibility of the target population is limited. Consequently, the survey population is the selection of the unit that the survey data is collected from. In the timeshare industry, a national master list of timeshare owners does not exist. The author and his advisory committee originally approached Resort Condominiums International (RCI) and Interval International (II) and asked for permission to use their U.S. member list as the survey frame. According to a recent national survey (ARDA International Foundation, 2006), nearly 94 % of all responding timeshare resorts were affiliated with RCI and/or II. Although the effort to obtain access to their member list was unsuccessful after a few months' intense and constructive communication, insights from the interaction with RCI contributed significantly to the survey questionnaire. Alternatively, the author and the advisory committee decided to cooperate with an Orlando-based marketing consulting firm that owned a list of 1.45 million U.S. timeshare owners in June, 2007.

## Web Survey

New technology is an important propelling power for innovations of alternative survey modes, from the emergence of telephone survey to the application of the Internet and computer assistance in the practice. New technology has changed every facet of the survey process. To a certain extent, the evolution of survey modes represents the process that researchers lose control of the actual interview. From face-to-face interview, to mail interview, to telephone interview, and recently to Internet-based interview, researchers gradually retreat from personal contacts with respondents. Face-to-face interview involves the interviewer in person and generates a social context for the respondents. Telephone interview only requires voice communication. Mail interview maybe only involves the researcher through their hand-signed cover letter or hand-written address lines. The Internet-based interview is generally based on the cyber world and excludes any direct personal contact between researchers and respondents. To choose a survey mode is more about evaluating trade-offs than finding the best method. The loss of control is accompanied by the dramatic improvement of survey efficiency in terms of time consumption. Although Internet-based surveys are found to bear some unique characteristics different from other traditional ways, Internet interviews may become more productive if the Internet keeps changing society and people's lives at the current speed.

The Internet has emerged as the latest frontier for applying new technology in surveys. Internet-based surveys include email surveys and web surveys. Despite the ever-growing enthusiasm about Internet-based surveys, there are drawbacks of collecting data online that cause unnecessary uneasiness and suspicion. In fact, routine survey modes such as mail survey and telephone survey were subjected to similar doubts in the 1970s when they started to replace face-to-face interviews, as commented by Dillman (1978):

Neither mail nor telephone has been considered anything more than a poor substitute for the much heralded face-to-face interview. Perhaps this view was justified, because the two methods had many deficiencies and problems (Dillman, 1978, p.1).

The coverage issue is probably the biggest challenge for Internet surveys. Although the percentage of Americans who have access to computers and to the Internet is increasing steadily, the Internet is still inaccessible to certain groups within the population. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's (2005) Current Population Survey, 54.6% of U.S. households had Internet connections in October 2003. Since then, Internet access rate has been increasing. Recent national surveys (Pew Research Center, 2004) indicate that about 66% of American families have access to the Internet at home. In April, 2006, about 74% of American adults were frequent Internet users (Pew Internet & American Life Project, 2006). According to the Pew Internet Survey (Horrigan, 2007), about 67% of the U.S. population has Internet access at home in February, 2007.

The Internet access rate is increasing. More importantly, people from higher socioeconomic backgrounds are more likely to have access to the Internet. About 85% of those who had at least a bachelor's degree had Internet access at home in 2003. Internet access has also become a basic work requirement for an increasing portion of the population (Dillman, 2000). The target population of this research is timeshare owners, who are mostly from middle to high socioeconomic backgrounds (Table 3-3 and Table 3-4). About 80% timeshare owners have bachelor's degrees or higher educational levels. Around 64% of timeshare owners have an annual household income of \$50,000 and more. The coverage issue should only be a minor concern for studies about timeshare owners.

Another potential pitfall of Internet-based surveys is the nonresponse error (Dillman, 2000). If Internet-based surveys are related to higher nonresponse rates than traditional modes, researchers need to consider the extra risk. Although research on Internet-based surveys is still at

its infancy, the existing literature suggests that web surveys generally have a lower response rate compared with traditional mail surveys (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). For example, in a meta-analysis of 68 surveys reported in some academic journals (*Public Opinion Quarterly*, *Journal of Marketing Research*, and *American Sociological Review*), Cook et al. reported that the mean response rate is 39.6%, including studies with missing data. The reported response rate of web-based survey is lower than the average 55.6% response rate of mail surveys (Baruch, 1999). Some comparative studies of web surveys and mail surveys also report that web surveys generate lower response rates than mail surveys when conducted side by side (Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001).

The reasons for the low response rate could be classified into three categories. First, all survey methods, including face-to-face interviews, are suffering from increasing nonresponse rate since 1950s (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000), and even major national surveys are having the same problem (Krosnick, 1999). Second, after decades of study, especially since Dillman's (1978) total design method, researchers have found ways to boost response rates of mail surveys, but these methods might not be applicable to web surveys (Crawford, Couper, & Limias, 2001). Third, reported response rates of mail surveys in academic journals might be an over-estimation because the standard of response rates for publishable research is relatively high (Cook, et al., 2000).

Different survey modes represent different means of communicating with survey participants. The interaction with participants could be divided into three components or stages: contact mode, response mode, and follow-up mode (Schonlau, Fricker, & Elliott, 2002). Different methods have been suggested to improve the response rate of web survey, targeting at different stages of web surveys. Those methods could be classified into two categories. The first

category aims to increase the percentage of recipients of the invitation to answer the survey questions. Those methods are mostly focused on the contact and the follow-up stage. For example, Dillman (2000) recommended multiple contacts. Cook, et al., (2000) also suggested pre-contacts and personalized contacts. The second category targets on increasing the rate of respondents who complete the survey after they begin. These methods are more from the perspective of design and administration of web surveys (Crawford, Couper, & Lamias, 2001; Couper, Traugott, & Lamias, 2001).

There are some potential benefits of using the Internet as the data collection vehicle. Some researchers (Dillman, 2000) argue that Internet-based surveys can save time and money for researchers. Since the average cost for each response is lower by Internet survey, researchers can afford a larger sample size, which will reduce sampling error in a probability survey study. In addition, Internet surveys have some advantages in term of reducing measurement error, including skip pattern automation and elimination of transcription errors (Schonlau, Fricker & Elliott, 2002). Researchers could also take advantage of the ability of the Internet to track respondent behavior, such as how long a respondent spends on answering a certain question, which is potentially beneficial for analyzing the effect of social desirability.

This study used web survey as the data collection mode, especially for the projected benefit of reaching a very large audience inexpensively with rapid response (Cook, Heath, & Thompson, 2000). The sample size was decided based on the combination of target power and correlation coefficient with .95 probability. However, research on timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in tourism planning does not exist in the literature, and the population correlation coefficient between the independent variables and dependent variables is not available. Without

a reliable estimation of the correlation coefficient, a large enough sample size is desirable because both power and accuracy are positively correlated with sample size.

The literature on structural equation modeling suggests that a rule of thumb for deciding the sample size is that there should be 10 to 20 subjects for every observed variable in the proposed model (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). The questionnaire in this study included 19 observed variables from the theoretical model, which required about 190 to 380 complete responses without missing data. The target sample size was decided to be the middle value, 285, which equated to 15 subjects per variable. Given the low response rate and the high percentage of incomplete responses of web survey, the actual response rate after deleting responses with missing data could be around 5%. Based on the predicted response rate, 6,000 timeshare members would be randomly selected and solicited to participate in the study (Table 3-5).

The survey was administered in the following steps. First, invitation emails were sent to selected timeshare owners, including a cover letter and a link to the survey website. The recipients were invited to answer the questionnaire on the survey website. Second, three rounds of reminder emails were sent out to the same recipients.

### **Instrument**

The first section of the questionnaire asked about timeshare owners' use pattern of their timeshares and their travel behaviors related to their timeshares. More specifically, numbers of timeshares owned and length of ownership were asked. Since some timeshare owners have more than one timeshare, those timeshare owners were instructed to identify the most frequently used timeshare as their primary timeshare. For timeshare owners have one timeshare, the timeshare was defined as their primary timeshare. A series of questions about the primary timeshare were asked.

### **Perception of Tourism Planning for the City**

Stakeholder participation in tourism planning is crucial for the planning process. However, there is little research about timeshare owners' and other transient residents' perceptions of tourism planning in the existing literature. This study referred to the literature on residents' perceptions of tourism planning and measured timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning for the city where their primary timeshare was located by two questions. These two questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

- I believe that successful management of tourism in the city where I own my primary timeshare requires planning (Choi & Sirakaya, 2005).
- The city should plan and manage the growth of tourism (McGehee & Andereck, 2004).

### **Perception of Participation in Tourism Planning**

Timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning were the dependent variable in the proposed theoretical model. No study on timeshare owners from the perspective of tourism planning is available. Studies about residents and tourism planning in the literature did not investigate residents' perceptions of participation in tourism planning either. In this study timeshares' perceptions of participation in tourism planning were measured by two questions. These two questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1= strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree.

- I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.

- I would like to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.

### **Preferred Ways of Participation in Tourism Planning**

There is a plethora of studies on citizen participation in urban and regional planning. Different models of citizen participation have been suggested and tested. This study measures timeshare owners' preferred ways of participating in tourism planning based on the literature on citizen participation in urban and regional planning. The literature on citizen participation in planning suggests a continuum of levels of involvement, from nonparticipation to authentic participation. For example, Arnstein's (1969) model of citizen participation consists of a ladder of participation at three levels (Figure 3-1). Arnstein's metaphor has generated many discussions and modifications (Pretty, 1995).

Other researchers also proposed similar models of citizen participation. For example, Deshler and Sock (1985) argued that citizen participation includes pseudo-participation and genuine participation. Pseudo-participation is composed of domestication and assistencialism; while genuine participation includes cooperation and citizen control. In the same vein, other researchers (Burke, 1979; Burns, 1979; Wulz, 1986) also suggested the continuum or hierarchy of citizen participation.

In this study, timeshare owners' preferred ways of participation in tourism planning were investigated by two sets of questions. The first set of questions was contingent and only directed to timeshare owners who indicated that they were willing to participate in tourism planning. This set of questions included four questions. These four questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

- I would like to participate in meetings related to tourism planning as a citizen representative.
- I would like to get information about tourism planning for the city in the form of newsletters or regular letters.
- I would be willing to authorize my timeshare management company to participate in the tourism planning process for the city.
- I am not interested in participating in tourism planning for the city.

Another question was presented to all respondents of the survey regardless of their willingness to participate in tourism planning. This question considered the effects of new communication technology on the preferred ways. The question included four optional answers that represented different levels of personal contact.

- I would like to vote on local initiatives regarding tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located \_\_\_\_ (in person; online; by mail; not interested in voting).

### **Perceived Benefits of Participating**

Tourism planning guides and promotes tourism development in a tourism destination. Sound tourism plans help maximize the benefits of tourism development and minimize its negative impacts. The positive impacts of tourism development include not only the economic, social, and environmental benefits to the local community, but also better tourism experience to tourists. Successful tourism planning and its implementation depend on stakeholders' participation. Participation in tourism planning is beneficial to timeshare owners because tourism planning brings about better tourism services and facilities that will make their tourism experience more enjoyable.

Improved services and facilities might contribute to maintaining and increasing the value of the timeshare units. One advantage of timeshare over other forms of tourism accommodations is the exchange opportunity of timeshare. In fact, about 25% of all timeshare intervals are used by exchange owners (ARDA International Foundation, 2006). Two questions were asked about timeshare owners' perceived benefits of tourism planning. Those two questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree. In addition, one open-ended question was asked about timeshare owners' perceptions of the effects of tourism planning on the exchange value of their timeshare.

- Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare creates better tourism facilities and tourism services.
- Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare contributes to the attractiveness of my primary timeshare in the timeshare exchange market.
- If you agree that tourism planning contributes to the attractiveness of your primary timeshare in the exchange market, please explain why you think so?

### **Perceived Costs of Participating**

The main cost for timeshare owners who decide to participate in tourism planning could be time. Most of timeshare owners spend only one week per year in their timeshare resorts. When they are physically in their timeshare resorts, most of their time is spent for leisure and recreational purposes. They might not have enough time to participate in tourism planning. Further, participation in tourism planning often requires that contributors have necessary knowledge and information. For those timeshare owners who want to participate, they might have to spend time in getting information about the tourism destination and learning about

tourism planning. This learning process mostly likely happens when timeshare owners are at their regular residence.

Besides the time constraint, some timeshare owners might have general negative perceptions of planning. Although no study has investigated timeshare owners' perceptions from the perspective, it is clear that some individuals view planning and planners negatively (Clifford, 2006). Particularly, some timeshare owners might view planning as a constraint on the private sector, similar to the negative perceptions suggested by Freidmann (1987). This study investigated timeshare owners' perceived costs of participating in tourism planning from two perspectives: the time that consumed in the process and the intervention that might be caused by tourism planning. Two questions were asked from these two perspectives and they were based on a five-point Liker-type scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

- If I participate in tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located, it would take too much of my valuable time. I would rather be doing other things with my free time.
- Tourism planning does not allow for free market development of the city.

### **Attachment to the Timeshare**

There are continuing efforts of measuring place attachment in the recreation and tourism literature (Hou, Lin, & Morais, 2005; Kaltenborn, 1997; Moore & Graefe, 1994; Moore & Scott, 2001; Vaske & Kobrin, 2001; Warzecha & Lime, 2001; Williams, 2000; Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992; Williams & Vaske, 2003). Based on the existing literature, this study measures both the emotional and functional dimension of timeshare owners' attachment to their timeshares and to the tourism destination.

- My primary timeshare is very special to me (Williams, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003).
- The things I do at my primary timeshare I would enjoy doing just as much at another site (Williams, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003).
- My primary timeshare means a lot to me (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Williams, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003).

### **Attachment to the City**

Timeshare owners could develop emotional bonding with the city where they own their timeshare. Timeshare owners were usually frequent visitors to the destination. Their emotional involvement with the destination would accumulate during their long-term connection with the destination. Timeshare owners' attachment to the city where the primary timeshare was located was measured by three questions in this study. These two questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

- Visiting the city where I own my primary timeshare reflects who I am as a person (i.e., laid back or fast paced) (Williams, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003).
- No other place can compare to the city where my primary timeshare is located (Williams, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003).
- I am very attached to the city where my primary timeshare is located (Moore & Graefe, 1994; Williams, 2000; Williams & Vaske, 2003).

### **Past Political Participation**

The literature suggests that political and civic participation are two different parts of civic engagement. Political and civic involvements are measured by different indicators. Measurement

of political involvement has fewer dimensions because political engagement is basically comprised of voting and nonvoting activities, with voting as the most important indicator.

The measurement of political participation in the literature was consistent, and this study followed the practice in the literature. Two questions were asked about how often the respondent participated in presidential elections and local elections. The answers to those two questions were based on a Likert-type scale: never, rarely, sometime, often, and always.

- How often have you voted in presidential elections (Brady, Verba & Schlozman, 1995; Gay, 2001)?
- How often have you voted in local elections (Brady, Verba & Schlozman, 1995; Gay, 2001)?

### **Past Civic Participation**

Unlike measuring political participation, measurement of civic engagement could include more dimensions. For example, the Civic Health Report by the National Convention on Citizenship (2006) was based on 40 indicators, which roughly belonged to nine categories. The report of 2006 Political and Civic Health of the Nation by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (Lopez et al., 2006) included five dimensions: community problem solving, regular volunteering, active membership in a group or organization, participation in fund-raising run/walk/ride, and other fund raising for charity. Similarly, Zukin et al. (2006) also investigated these five aspects of civic participation. The measurement of civic participation included variations that reflect different perspectives of the concept. As a result, this study only looked at certain perspectives of civic participation, including community problem solving, volunteering, and donating to charity. Past civic participation was measured by

three questions. Those three questions were based on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1=Strongly Disagree and 5=Strongly Agree.

- Have you ever participated in community activities, such as “pick up litter” campaigns (Shah et al., 2005; Zukin et al., 2006)?
- Have you ever donated to a charitable organization (Lopez et al., 2006; Zukin et al., 2006)?
- Have you ever volunteered for a civic organization (Shah et al., 2005; Zukin et al., 2006)?

### **Demographics**

This study surveyed participants’ demographic background. Those demographic information included participants’ gender, age, highest educational level, marital status, annual household income for 2006 and the zip code of their permanent address.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis process used both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. The descriptive statistical analysis summarized the characteristics of the sample data, such as frequency distribution of the answers. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15.0 (SPSS Inc., 2006) was employed for the descriptive section. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the fitness of the proposed model and explore the relationships among the latent constructs. SEM emerged as an important statistical tool in tourism research, especially in resident attitudes studies (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Ko & Steward, 2002). The LISREL 8.80 structural equation analysis package (Jöreskog & Sorbom, 2006) was utilized for the SEM analysis. The Weighted Least Square (WLS) method of estimation and the two-stage process were employed.

Table 3-1. Internet access at home and household income

Household income	Percentage of households with Internet connection in October, 2003
Less than \$15,000	31.2
\$15,000 - \$24,999	38.0
\$25,000 - \$34,999	48.9
\$35,000 - \$49,999	62.1
\$50,000 - \$74,999	71.8
\$75,000 & above	82.9

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005.

Table 3-2. Internet access at home and educational level

Educational level of household head	Percentage of households with internet connection in October, 2003
Less than high school	15.5
High school diploma	44.5
Some college	68.6
Bachelor's degree	84.9
Beyond bachelor's degree	88.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005.

Table 3-3. Timeshare owners' annual household income

Household income	Percent
Under 50,000	24.1
\$50,000 to 74,999	32.3
\$75,000 to \$ 99,999	20.6
\$100,000 and over	23.1

Source: Suchman, 1999.

Table 3-4. Timeshare owners' educational level

Educational attainment of household head	Percentage
High school or less	20.8
Bachelor's degree	57.1
Graduate degree	25.9

Source: Suchman, 1999.

Table 3-5. Sample size

Total timeshare owners available	Contacted timeshare owners	Target sample size
1,450,000	6,000	285

Manipulation	Nonparticipation
Therapy	
Informing	Tokenism
Consultation	
Placation	
Partnership	Degrees of actual citizen power
Delegated power	
Citizen control	

Figure 3-1. Arnstein's (1969) eight-rung ladder of citizen participation

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

### **Summary of Survey Procedures**

Two separate lists of timeshare owners were obtained from an Orlando-based consulting firm. After screening, the first list (group 1) contained 6,289 valid timeshare owners' names and corresponding email addresses. The second list included 5,778 valid timeshare owners' names and email addresses. There were four rounds of invitation emails and reminder emails sent out to each group, as suggested by Dillman (2000, 2007) (Table 4-1). In order to demonstrate the legitimacy of those emails and encourage responses, all the invitation emails and reminder emails were sent from a University of Florida (UF) server in the name of the Center for Tourism Research and Development at UF. The statement that this survey was conducted for the author's dissertation research was also included in those emails.

The first invitation emails were sent out on August 13, 2007 to timeshare owners belonging to group one and on August 31, 2007 to timeshare owners belonging to group two. By September 21, 2007, 185 responses from group one and 172 responses from group two had been received. The total responses were 357. The response rate was 3.0% (Table 4-2). Detailed information about the number of responses per diem per group during the period was presented in table 4-3 and table 4-4.

Responses were divided into immediate responses and delayed responses to investigate the possible effect of responding time. Immediate responses were from those respondents who participated in the survey after the first round of invitation emails. There were 96 immediate responses. Delayed responses were generated by respondents who did not participate in the survey until the first round of reminder emails. There were 261 delayed responses. The demographics of respondents belonged to these two groups were compared in table 4-5. A series

of Chi-square tests suggested that there were no significant difference between these two groups of respondents regarding their gender, age, annual household income, and marital status (Table 4-6). However, more respondents from the immediate-response group had a bachelor's degree; while more respondents from the delayed-response group had a graduate or professional degree or a high school degree. Further investigation suggested there was no significant difference between these two groups of respondents in terms of their perceptions of participation in tourism planning (Table 4-7). Due to time constraints, responses that were later than 5 days after the third round of reminder emails were not included in the analysis of this study. Although a longer waiting time and more rounds of reminder emails might have generated more responses and a higher response rate, the analysis reported in tables 4-5, 4-6, and 4-7 suggested that those extra responses may not contain additional information for the purpose of this study.

### **Profile of Respondents**

Most of the respondents were male (67.6%) rather than female (34.3%). Over one third of the respondents were in their 50's (38.5%). Respondents in their 60's accounted for over a quarter of the total sample (26.3%). The age distribution was skewed toward the more mature end, with only 4.2% of respondents younger than 40. All the respondents had at least a high school degree. Over 40% (43.9%) of the respondents had a graduate degree or professional degree. The next biggest segment (37.7%) was represented by respondents had a bachelor's degree. The median annual household income of the respondents was at the range between \$75,000 and \$99,999. More than a quarter (27.6%) respondents had an annual household income of more than \$125,000 in 2006, followed by 23.3% of respondents who indicated an annual household income for 2006 in the range of between \$75,000 and \$99,999. Less than 10% of the respondents reported their annual household income for 2006 as less than \$49,999. A majority (78.1%) of respondents were married or partnered, while respondents who reported to be

divorced, single and never married, and widowed accounted for 9.7%, 6.6% and 5.6%, respectively (Table 4-8). All the respondents reported to primarily live in the U.S. with the exception of one respondent from Canada. Among the 34 states that the respondents indicated that they lived in, the top five states were California (13.1%), Florida (9.4%), Georgia (6.7%), New York (6.0%), and Indiana (5.2%) (Table 4-9).

According to a national study of timeshare resorts by ARDA International Foundation (2007), 96% of the responded resorts were affiliated with one or both of the two major timeshare exchange companies, Resort Condominiums International (RCI) and Interval International (II). The profile of U.S. members of II provides a general picture of a typical U.S. timeshare owner. In 2006, the average II member was approximately 50 years old, married, and with an annual household income of \$139,800 (Simmons, 2007). About 80% of II U.S. members were married. According to Simmons, about three quarters of II U.S. members bought services and packages related to travel service using the Internet in 2006.

### **Characteristics of Primary Timeshares**

Over 44% (44.8%) of respondents reported to have one timeshare. Respondents who had 2 timeshares and 3 timeshares accounted for 26.1% and 14.8% of the total sample, respectively. About 13.7% of respondents indicated that they had 4 or more timeshares. Less than 1% (0.6%) of respondents only had points (Table 4-10). The respondents reported to have their primary timeshares located in 33 states. Over 43% (43.3%) of respondents had their primary timeshare in Florida, followed by Nevada (7.9%), California (7.6%), South Carolina (5.1%), and Arizona (4.2%) (Table 4-11).

Most of the respondents (84.8%) had deeded rights over their primary timeshares. A small fraction (7.6%) of respondents indicated that their ownership was in the right-to-use form (Table 4-12). More than a half of respondents (51.7%) were affiliated with RCI. Almost a quarter

(23.9%) of respondents were affiliated with II. About 17.8% of respondents indicated that they received service from both RCI and II (Table 4-13). Most respondents were satisfied with their timeshare exchange companies. Over a half (52.8%) of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with their timeshare exchange companies. About a quarter (24.5%) of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their timeshare exchange companies. The other (22.7%) respondents were neutral on this issue. Almost 55% (54.7%) of respondents reported that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the customer service of their timeshare exchange companies. About a quarter (24.9%) of respondents had neutral opinions about the customer service of their timeshare exchange companies. Just over one fifth (20.3%) of timeshare owners were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the customer service of their timeshare exchange companies (Table 4-14). Almost one third (31.1%) of respondents reported that the main reason for them to purchase their primary timeshare was for the exchange opportunity. Some other frequently cited reasons were that they wanted to save money on future vacation costs (18.8%), they liked the tourism destination community/city (16.8%), and they liked the resort, amenities and/or unit (15.4%) (Table 4-15).

### **Frequencies of Variables in the Survey**

#### **Perception of Participation in Tourism Planning**

Respondents' perceptions of participation in tourism planning for the city where their primary timeshare was located almost spread evenly among positive, neutral and negative territories. About 27.8% of respondents were willing to participate in tourism planning, while about 35.1% of respondents were not willing to participate and 37.1% of respondents had neutral reaction. Similarly, almost 32% (31.9%) of respondents would like to participate in tourism planning; meanwhile, 29% of participants would like to avoid participating and almost 40% (39.2%) of respondents did not take sides (Table 4-16).

### **Perception of Tourism Planning for the City**

Respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of five aspects of the city where their primary timeshare was located. Many respondents viewed social environment (41.0%), natural environment (40.8%), and resort development (40.0%) as important. Over one third of respondents believed that commercial development (37.9%) and traffic situation (36.9%) were somewhat important (Table 4-17). Respondents were also asked to identify the parties that they believed should be involved in tourism planning for the city (they could choose more than one party). Over a half of respondents suggested that the local government (69.4%), timeshare owners (63.5%), and timeshare developers (52.4%) should be involved (Table 4-18).

A majority (81.1%) of respondents agreed that successful management of tourism in the city where they owned their primary timeshare required planning, and only 7.5% of respondents disagreed with that statement. Similarly, most (80.0%) respondents agreed that the city should plan and manage the growth of tourism and much fewer (5.7%) respondents did not agree with that (Table 4-19).

### **Perceived Benefits of Participating**

Most (78.3%) respondents agreed that tourism planning for the city where they owned their primary timeshare would create better tourism facilities and tourism services, and only 4.2% of respondents did not agree. The majority (73.3%) of respondents agreed that tourism planning for the city where they owned their primary timeshare would contribute to the attractiveness of the timeshare in the timeshare exchange market. Few (7.5%) respondents did not agree with the majority (Table 4-20).

### **Perceived Costs of Participating**

About one third (33.7%) of respondents agreed that participating in tourism planning would cost them free time, while less than a quarter (23.5%) of respondents disagreed with the

statement. More (42.9%) respondents were neutral on this issue. However, more respondents took a clearer stand on the next question. Most (61.0%) respondents disagreed that tourism planning prohibited the free market development of the city, while about a third (33.2%) of respondents did not take sides on this issue. Only a small proportion (5.8%) of respondents disagreed with the majority on it (Table 4-21).

### **Attachment to the Timeshare**

Most (64.4%) respondents agreed that their primary timeshare was very special to them, and about 13.7% of respondents disagreed with that. About one quarter (24.0%) of the respondents agreed that they would not enjoy the things at another site as much as at their primary timeshare. About 57.2% of respondents indicated that they would enjoy the same at their primary timeshare or at another site. A majority (55.7%) of respondents agreed that their primary timeshare meant a lot to them. About 17% of respondents suggested that their primary timeshare did not mean a lot to them (Table 4-22).

### **Attachment to the City**

Compared with attachment to their primary timeshare, respondents were generally less attached to the city where their primary timeshare was located. About 38.5% of respondents agreed that visiting the city where they owned their primary timeshare reflected who they were as a person, whereas 33.9% of respondents were neutral on this statement and 27.5% of respondents did not agree with it. About 28.4% of respondents agreed that no other place could be compared to the city where they owned their primary timeshare. More (52.5%) respondents did not agree with this statement. When asked about whether they were attached to the city, the responses spread evenly, with 32.5% agreeing, 35.9% being neutral, and 31.6% disagreeing (Table 4-23).

### **Past Political Participation**

Except for one Canadian respondent, all respondents were legitimate to vote in the U.S. Most (87.3%) respondents indicated that they always voted in presidential elections. About 8.7% of respondents suggested that they often voted in presidential elections. Less than 2% (1.8%) of respondents said that they never or rarely voted in presidential elections. Many (60.9%) respondents reported that they always voted in local elections. Almost 30% (29.5%) of respondents suggested that they often voted in local elections (Table 4-24).

### **Past Civic Participation**

Three questions were asked about the respondents' past experience of civic participation. About 44.4% of respondents reported that they sometime participated in community activities. Just over 20% (20.7%) of respondents often participated in community activities. Over 80% (81.4%) of respondents indicated that they often or always donated to a charitable organization. About 18.0% of respondents suggested that sometimes they donated to a charitable organization. About 30.8% of respondents indicated that they sometime volunteered for a civic organization. Over a quarter (26.5%) of respondents suggested that they often volunteered for a civic organization (Table 4-25).

### **Model Testing**

A two-step approach in structural equation modeling (James, Mulaik, & Brett, 1982) is composed of the first step of testing the measuring model and the second step of testing the structural model. The rationale for this approach is to examine the measurement validity and reliability before investigating the structural relationships among latent variables (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). The two-step approach was used to test the model in this study.

There were eight latent variables in the model: perception of participation in tourism planning, perception of tourism planning, perceived benefits of participation in tourism planning,

perceived costs of participation in tourism planning, attachment to the timeshare, attachment to the city where the timeshare is located, past political participation, and past civic participation. There were 19 observed variables corresponding to these latent variables, as proposed in chapter two.

Both the measurement model and the structural model were tested by LISREL 8.80 (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2006) with PRELIS and SIMPLIS. After listwise deletion, 289 complete cases were used in those models. Jöreskog & Sörbom (1996) provided a criterion for deciding whether a variable was ordinal or interval. A variable had 15 or more distinct scale points should be treated as continuous; variables with 14 or fewer distinct scale points were ordinal variables. Asymptotically Distribution-Free (ADF) methods such as Weighted Least Square (WLS) was a more appropriate estimation method for ordinal variables than Maximum Likelihood (ML), the default estimation method in LISREL. Since all the 19 observed variables were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, they were treated as ordinal variables. WLS was used as the estimation method. As a prerequisite of employing WLS in LISREL, Polyserial correlation matrix and asymptotic covariance matrix were calculated by PRELIS. The measurement model and the structural model were based on those two matrices. Suggestions by the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2002) and researchers (Boomsma, 2000; Thompson, 2000) about reporting results of SEM modeling were referred to when the results of the SEM analysis were presented.

### **The Measurement Model**

The fitness indices of the initial measurement model suggested that the model was a moderate to well fit of the data (Table 4-26). Although the P-value ( $<0.01$ ) of Chi-Square ( $X^2$ ) suggested that the model was significantly different from the data, the small P-value could be

attributed to the relatively small sample size. Since  $X^2$  test was sensitive to sample size,  $X^2/df$  was a more reliable indicator. The value of  $X^2/df$  (3.25) suggested the model fitted the data moderately. The result of another omnibus test of overall model fit, Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) (0.088) suggested an acceptable fit. The literature stated that a RMSEA value of  $<0.05$  indicated a good fit of the model and a RMSEA value between 0.05 and 0.10 showed a moderate fit. The 90% confidence interval for RMSEA was (0.079; 0.098), which was within the acceptable level. The values of the goodness-of-fit indices Normed Fit Index (NFI), Nonnormed Fit Index (NNFI), Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Goodness-of-fit Index (GFI) were all close to 1.0 and suggested a good fit.

Although the goodness-of-fit indices suggested a good fit of the model, an examination of the estimated parameters raised one issue. The estimated variance of two observed variables (question 10: the city should plan and manage the growth of tourism, and question 19: tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare creates better tourism facilities and tourism services) were negative. Those negative estimated variances were referred to as “Heywood cases” in the literature (Bentler & Chou, 1987). Those negative variances were not plausible substantially or mathematically. They most likely represented boundary parameters (Byrne, 1998). As suggested by Byrne, those two variances were set to 0 in the specified measurement model.

The specified measurement model had the same level of fit on the data as the initial measurement model, as suggested by goodness-of-fit indices listed in table 4-27. The index for model comparison Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI) only increased by 0.01.

The reliability of the measurement of each latent variable was also tested in the confirmative factor analysis. Among the 19 observed variables, 14 had an factor loading ( $R^2$ )

bigger than the recommended value 0.7, 3 had the  $R^2$  between 0.5 and 0.7, and 2 had their variances set at 0 to avoid a negative parameter estimate. Seven of the eight latent variables had construct reliability exceeding the recommended level of 0.7 (0.96, 0.95, 0.93, 0.88, 0.91, 0.88, and 0.84) with one latent variable at 0.60 (Table 4-28). Overall, the reliability of the measurement instrument was acceptable.

### **The Structural Model**

The goodness-of-fit indices of the structural model were the same as those of the specified measurement model. The results from the structural model indicated that among the seven proposed structural relationships among latent variables, four were statistically significant (P-value <0.05). Perceived benefits of participating had a significant positive impact on perception of participation in tourism planning. Perceived costs of participating had a significantly negative impact on perception of participation in tourism planning. A significantly positive relationship existed between attachment to the timeshare and perception of participation in tourism planning. A significant positive relationship existed between past political participation and perception of participation in tourism planning. There was no significant relationship between perception of tourism planning for the city and perception of participating in tourism planning. There was no significant relationship between attachment to the city where the timeshare was located and perception of participation in tourism planning. No significant relationship existed between respondents' past civic participation and perception of participation in tourism planning (Figure 4-1).

### **Results of Research Questions Tested**

#### **Research Question 1:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning for the city and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

There was no significant relationship between respondents' perceptions of tourism planning for the city and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Although the perceptions of tourism planning for the city had a positive impact on perceptions of participation in tourism planning, which had the same direction as predicted by research hypothesis one, the relationship was insignificant.

**Research Question 2:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' perceived benefits of participation in tourism planning and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

Respondents' perceived benefits of participating in tourism planning had a significantly positive effect on their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The more important a timeshare owner is perceptive of the benefits of participation in tourism planning, the more likely the timeshare owner would be to participate in tourism planning.

**Research Question 3:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' perceived costs of participation in tourism planning and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

Respondents' perceived costs of participating in the tourism planning had a significantly negative impact on their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The more a timeshare owner perceived the cost of participating in tourism planning, the less likely the timeshare owner would like to participate in tourism planning.

**Research Question 4:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' attachment to their timeshare and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

Respondents' attachment to their timeshare had a significantly positive impact on their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Among all the four statistically significant

relationships, the impact of attachment to the timeshare on the perception of participation in tourism planning had the largest absolute regression coefficient. Since all the reported regression coefficients were standardized results, attachment to the timeshare had the biggest impact on perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

In order to investigate timeshare owners' attachment to their timeshare, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) analysis was conducted by SPSS 15.0. Answers to question #29 were used as an indicator to timeshare owners' attachment to their timeshare. The independent variables were how many times they have visited their timeshare (question # 5), how long they owned their timeshare (question # 40), and the ownership structure of their timeshare (question #7).

A General-Linear-Model (GLM) approach was taken in the analysis. The results (Table 4-30 and Table 4-31) showed that the overall R square value of the model was 0.11. The times that timeshare owners visited the timeshare was a significant indicator of their attachment to the timeshare (P-value<0.01), while effects of the ownership structure of the timeshare and how long they owned the timeshare were not significant.

#### **Research Question 5:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' attachment to the city where they own their timeshare and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

Respondents' attachment to the city where the timeshare was located did not have a significant effect on perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Interestingly, attachment to the city had an insignificant negative impact on perception of participating in tourism planning, which as contradictory to the direction of the impact predicted by research hypothesis five.

#### **Research Question 6:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' past experience of political participation and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

Respondents' past political participation had a significantly positive impact on perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The more actively the respondents participated in political activities, the more likely they would like to participate in tourism planning.

**Research Question 7:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' past experience of civil participation and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning?

Respondents' past civic participation did not have a significant impact on their perceptions of participation in tourism planning, whereas past civic participation had an insignificant positive impact on respondents' perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

**Research Question 8:**

Is there a relationship between timeshare owners' demographic background and their perceptions of participating in tourism planning?

In order to investigate the relationship between respondents' perceptions of participation in tourism planning and their gender, age, highest educational level, annual household income, and marital status, a series of cross-tab test and Chi-Square test were conducted. Answers to Question #11 in the survey instrument: "I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare" were chosen as the indicator of respondents' perception of participation in tourism planning. For the purpose of analysis, the measurement scale of question 11 was converted from five-point Likert-type scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree) to a three-point scale (Disagree, Neutral, and Agree).

**Gender and perceptions of participation in tourism planning**

The result of the Chi-Square test indicated that there was no significant correlation between gender and perceptions of participation in tourism planning among the respondents (Table 4-32 and Table 4-33).

### **Educational level and perceptions of participation in tourism planning**

The result of the Chi-Square test indicated that there was no significant correlation between the respondents' educational level and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning (Table 4-34 and Table 4-35).

### **Annual household income and perceptions of participation in tourism planning**

The result of the Chi-Square test indicated that there was no significant correlation between the respondents' annual household income and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning (Table 4-36 and Table 4-37).

### **Age and perceptions of participation in tourism planning**

The result of the Chi-Square test indicated that there was no significant correlation between the respondents' age and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning (Table 4-38 and Table 4-39).

### **Marital status and perceptions of participation in tourism planning**

The result of the Chi-Square test indicated that there was no significant correlation between the respondents' marital status and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning (Table 4-40 and Table 4-41).

### **Research Question 9:**

What are timeshare owners' preferred ways of participating in tourism planning?

When respondents were asked whether they would like to vote on local initiatives regarding tourism planning, over 30% (31.4%) of respondents were not interested in voting. Among those respondents who were interested in voting, none would prefer voting in person. Over a half (52.1%) of respondents would like to vote online, while a smaller portion (14.1%) would rather vote via regular mail (Table 4-42). A separate effort was made to identify the preferred ways for participating of those respondents who had indicated that they would like to

do so. Almost 60% (58.1%) of those respondents would like to participate in meetings related to tourism planning as a citizen representative, while 6.5% of respondents rejected the suggestion. Over 70% (70.7%) of respondents were willing to authorize their timeshare management company to participate in the tourism planning process, and only 8.7% of respondents indicated they would not do that. A vast majority (90.3%) of respondents would like to get information about tourism planning, whereas just 3.3% of respondents did not want to receive that information (Table 4-43).

There was a pattern between respondents' preferences and the level of involvement of the different options (Table 4-43). The most involved way of participating, attending conferences, was the least favored one (mean=3.65), while the least involved method of participating, merely getting information, was the most welcomed one (mean=4.12). One-way repeated measures ANOVA was employed to test the difference among these three levels by SPSS 15.0. The result of Mauchly's test of sphericity was significant (P-value <0.05), which suggested that the assumption of sphericity was violated and alternative methods should be used. Both the Greenhouse-Geisser correction (0.862) and Huynh-Feldt correction (0.877) were close to 1.0, which suggested that the data were close to being spheric (Field, 2005, p. 447). The results from all the three alternative methods suggested that there was significant difference among the three levels of involvement in participation (Table 4-44 and Table 4-45).

Table 4-1. Survey procedure

Group	Date	Action
1	August 13, 2007	First-round invitation emails sent
1	August 17, 2007	First-round reminder emails sent
1	August 24, 2007	Second-round reminder emails sent
1	September 7, 2007	Last-round reminder emails sent
2	August 31, 2007	First-round invitation emails sent
2	September 4, 2007	First-round reminder emails sent
2	September 7, 2007	Second-round reminder emails sent
2	September 14, 2007	Last-round reminder emails sent

Table 4-2. Response rate

Group	Sent-out emails	Responses	Response rate
1	6289	185	3.0%
2	5778	172	3.0%
Total	12067	357	3.0%

Table 4-3. Responses from group one

Date	Number of responses
August 13, 2007	32
August 14, 2007	10
August 15, 2007	6
August 16, 2007	3
August 17, 2007	32
August 18, 2007	9
August 19, 2007	9
August 20, 2007	2
August 21, 2007	3
August 24, 2007	33
August 25, 2007	11
August 26, 2007	7
August 27, 2007	2
August 29, 2007	2
August 30, 2007	2
September 1, 2007	1
September 2, 2007	1
September 4, 2007	2
September 7, 2007	11
September 8, 2007	4
September 9, 2007	3
September 10, 2007	1
September 11, 2007	1
September 12, 2007	1
Total	185

Table 4-4. Responses from group two

Date	Number of responses
August 31, 2007	28
September 1, 2007	13
September 2, 2007	2
September 3, 2007	4
September 4, 2007	50
September 5, 2007	7
September 6, 2007	3
September 7, 2007	21
September 8, 2007	2
September 9, 2007	2
September 10, 2007	2
September 12, 2007	3
September 13, 2007	3
September 14, 2007	20
September 15, 2007	4
September 16, 2007	3
September 17, 2007	2
September 18, 2007	2
September 20, 2007	1
Total	172

Table 4-5. Demographics of the immediate-response group and the delayed-response group

Demographic characteristics	Immediate-response group (%) (n=96)	Delayed-respondent group (%) (n=261)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	69.3	66.9
Female	30.7	33.1
<b>Age</b>		
21-30	0.0	0.4
31-40	4.5	3.6
41-50	13.6	17.4
51-60	35.2	39.7
61-70	27.3	25.9
71-80	17.0	11.6
81 and up	2.3	1.3
<b>Education</b>		
Less than high school	0.0	0.0
High school	12.6	20.5
Bachelor's degree	50.6	32.9
Graduate or professional	32.8	46.6
<b>2006 Annual household income</b>		
Less than \$49,999	11.5	8.3
\$50,000 to \$74,999	25.6	19.0
\$75,000 to \$99,999	25.6	22.4
\$100,000 to \$124,999	20.5	18.5
\$125,000 and up	16.7	31.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Divorced	12.5	7.8
Married or partnered	80.7	77.1
Single and never married	2.3	8.2
widowed	4.5	6.1

Table 4-6. P-values of Chi-Square tests between groups of responses and demographics

Chi-Square test	P-value
Groups of respondents and gender	0.685
Groups of respondents and age	0.778
Groups of respondents and educational level	0.012
Groups of respondents and household income	0.145
Groups of respondents and marital status	0.190

Table 4-7. Comparison between groups of respondents in terms of their perceptions of participation in tourism planning

	I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.	I would like to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.
Mean of immediate- response group	2.77	2.95
Mean of delayed-response group	2.89	2.98
P-vale of independent-sample t-test	0.383	0.774

Table 4-8. Demographics of respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender (n=324)		
Male	219	67.6
Female	105	32.4
Age (n=308)		
21-30	1	0.3
31-40	12	3.8
41-50	51	16.3
51-60	120	38.5
61-70	82	26.3
71-80	41	13.1
81 and up	5	1.6
Education (n=321)		
Less than high school	0	0.0
High school	59	18.4
Bachelor's degree	121	37.7
Graduate or professional	141	43.9
2006 Annual household income (n=279)		
Less than \$49,999	26	9.2
\$50,000 to \$74,999	59	20.8
\$75,000 to \$99,999	66	23.3
\$100,000 to \$124,999	54	19.1
\$125,000 and up	78	27.6
Marital status (n=315)		
Divorced	31	9.7
Married or partnered	249	78.1
Single and never married	21	6.6
widowed	18	5.6

Table 4-9. Primary residence of respondents

State	Frequency	Percentage (%)
CA	35	13.1
FL	25	9.4
GA	18	6.7
NY	16	6.0
IN	14	5.2
PA	13	4.9
AZ	12	4.5
KY	12	4.5
MD	11	4.1
IL	10	3.7
VA	10	3.7
TX	9	3.4
MN	9	3.4
NC	9	3.4
MO	7	2.6
CO	6	2.2
MI	6	2.2
OH	6	2.2
WA	5	1.9
WI	5	1.9
SC	4	1.5
TN	4	1.5
KS	3	1.1
LA	3	1.1
NV	3	1.1
DC	2	0.7
MA	2	0.7
DE	1	0.4
IA	1	0.4
MS	1	0.4
NE	1	0.4
NM	1	0.4
OK	1	0.4
AK	1	0.4
Ontario, Canada	1	0.4

Note: N=267

Table 4-10. Number of timeshares owned by respondents

Number of timeshares	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	160	44.8
2	93	26.1
3	53	14.8
4	26	7.3
5	7	2.0
6	6	1.7
7	3	0.8
8	2	0.6
9	2	0.6
10	1	0.3
11	1	0.3
16	1	0.3
Points only	2	0.6

Note: N=357

Table 4-11. Location of primary timeshare

State	Frequency	Percentage (%)
FL	153	43.3
NV	28	7.9
CA	27	7.6
SC	18	5.1
AZ	15	4.2
ID	14	4.0
VA	13	3.7
CO	10	2.8
PA	10	2.8
MA	8	2.3
MO	8	2.3
NC	6	1.7
NJ	5	1.4
TN	5	1.4
TX	5	1.4
GA	4	1.1
MD	3	0.8
AR	2	0.6
OH	2	0.6
OK	2	0.6
WA	2	0.6
WI	2	0.6
DC	1	0.3
ND	1	0.3
NE	1	0.3
NH	1	0.3
MI	1	0.3
MN	1	0.3
NY	1	0.3
OR	1	0.3
RI	1	0.3
UT	1	0.3

Note: N=357

Table 4-12. Ownership structure of primary timeshare

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Deeded	302	84.8
Right-to-use	27	7.6
Do not know	24	6.7
Other	3	0.7

Note: N=356

Table 4-13. Timeshare exchange companies that the primary timeshare is affiliated with

Item	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Resort Condominiums International (RCI)	181	51.4
Interval International (II)	84	23.9
Both RCI and II	62	17.6
Another timeshare exchange company	25	7.1

Note: N=352

Table 4-14. Satisfaction with their timeshare companies

Item	VD	D	N	S	VS	Mean	# of case
Overall, how satisfied are you with the costumer service your timeshare exchange company?	8.0	12.3	24.9	41.8	12.9	3.39	325
Overall, how satisfied are you with your timeshare exchange company?	10.2	14.3	22.7	42.2	10.6	3.29	322

Note: VD=Very Dissatisfied; D=Dissatisfied; N=Neutral; S=Satisfied; VS=Very Satisfied.

Table 4-15. Most important reason for purchasing primary timeshare

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Exchange opportunity	111	31.1
Save money on future vacation costs	67	18.8
Liked the tourism destination community/city	60	16.8
Liked resort, amenities and/or unit	55	15.4
Opportunity to own at affordable prices	20	5.6
Other	21	5.6
Certain of quality accommodations	14	3.9
Investment or resale potential	8	2.2

Note: N=357

Table 4-16. Frequency distributions (percentage) for willingness to participate in tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.	12.8	22.3	37.1	22.0	5.8	2.86	345
I would like to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.	12.6	16.4	39.2	24.9	7.0	2.77	342

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree.

Table 4-17. Frequency distributions (percentages) for importance of different factors of the city where the primary timeshare is located

Item	MI	I	SI	LI	NI	Mean	# of Cases
Traffic	4.9	23.1	36.9	15.1	20.0	3.23	350
Commercial development	6.0	23.9	37.9	17.0	15.2	3.13	348
Social environment	21.5	41.0	24.4	7.2	6.0	2.36	349
Natural environment	33.3	40.8	15.2	5.7	4.9	2.09	348
Resort development	34.3	40.0	15.7	4.6	5.4	2.08	350

Note: MI=Most Important; I=Important; SI=Somewhat Important; LI=Least Important; NI=Not Important

Table 4-18. Parties should be involved in tourism planning for the community

Party	Frequency*	Percentage*
The local government	245	69.4
Timeshare owners	224	63.5
Timeshare developers	185	52.4
Timeshare exchange companies	87	24.6
The federal government	30	8.5

Note: respondents could choose multiple answers; N=353

Table 4-19. Frequency distributions (percentage) for perceptions of tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
I believe that successful management of tourism in the city where I own my primary timeshare requires planning.	5.8	1.7	11.3	45.9	35.2	4.03	344
The city should plan and manage the growth of tourism.	3.5	2.2	13.8	50.6	29.4	4.00	340

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

Table 4-20. Frequency distributions (percentage) for perceived benefits of participating in tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare creates better tourism facilities and tourism services.	2.1	2.1	17.4	63.3	15.0	3.87	327
Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare contributes to the attractiveness of my primary timeshare in the timeshare exchange market.	3.3	4.2	19.1	51.5	21.8	3.84	330

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

Table 4-21. Frequency distributions (percentage) for perceived costs of participating in tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
If I participate in tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located, it would take too much of my valuable time. I would rather be doing other things with my free time.	3.7	19.8	42.9	24.1	9.6	3.16	324
Tourism planning does not allow for free market development of the city.	14.0	47.0	33.2	4.9	0.9	2.32	328

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree

Table 4-22. Frequency distributions (percentage) for attachment to the timeshare

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
My primary timeshare is very special to me.	5.8	7.9	22.0	41.8	22.6	3.67	328
My primary timeshare means a lot to me.	6.5	10.5	27.2	39.9	15.8	3.48	323
The things I do at my primary timeshare I would enjoy doing just as much at another site.*	12.6	44.6	18.8	19.7	4.3	2.58	325

Note: 1. SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree. 2. \* indicates reversely recoded.

Table 4-23. Frequency distributions (percentage) for attachment to the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
Visiting the city where I own my primary timeshare reflects who I am as a person (i.e., laid back or fast paced).	7.0	20.5	33.9	28.7	9.8	3.14	327
I am very attached to the city where my primary timeshare is located.	12.2	19.4	35.9	25.0	7.5	2.96	320
No other place can compare to the city where my primary timeshare is located.	14.5	38.0	19.1	21.3	7.1	2.69	324

Table 4-24. Frequency distributions (percentage) for past political participation

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
How often have you voted in presidential elections?	0.9	0.9	2.2	8.7	87.3	4.80	323
How often have you voted in local elections?	0.3	3.4	5.9	29.5	60.9	4.47	322

Note: N=Never; R=Rarely; S=Sometime; O=Often; A=Always

Table 4-25. Frequency distributions (percentage) for past civic participation

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
Have you ever donated to a charitable organization?	0.0	0.6	18.0	47.5	33.9	4.15	322
Have you ever volunteered for a civic organization?	11.8	15.0	30.8	26.5	12.5	3.13	321
Have you ever participated in community activities, such as “pick up litter” campaigns?	12.0	17.6	44.4	20.7	5.2	2.90	324

Note: N=Never; R=Rarely; S=Sometime; O=Often; A=Always

Table 4-26. Goodness-of-fit indices of the initial measurement model

$\chi^2$	P-Value	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	90% CI for RMSEA
403.01	<0.01	3.25	0.088	0.079; 0.098
ECVI	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI
1.86	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.98

Table 4-27. Goodness-of-fit indices of the specified measurement model

$\chi^2$	P-Value	$\chi^2/df$	RMSEA	90% CI for RMSEA
411.34	<0.01	3.26	0.089	0.079; 0.098
ECVI	NFI	NNFI	CFI	GFI
1.87	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.98

Table 4-28. Overall CFA for the specified measurement model

Construct and indicators	Completely standardized loading	Construct and indicator reliability	Error variance
Perceptions of participation in tourism planning		0.96**	
I would like to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.	0.98	0.96	0.04
I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare.	0.95	0.90	0.10
Perceptions of tourism planning for the city		0.95**	
The city should plan and manage the growth of tourism.*	1.00	1.00	0.00*
I believe that successful management of tourism in the city where I own my primary timeshare requires planning.	0.90	0.82	0.18
Perceived benefits of participating		0.93**	
Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare creates better tourism facilities and tourism services.*	1.00	1.00	0.00*
Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare contributes to the attractiveness of my primary timeshare in the timeshare exchange market.	0.85	0.73	0.27
Perceived costs of participating		0.60**	
If I participate in tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located, it would take too much of my valuable time. I would rather be doing other things with my free time.	0.80	0.64	0.36
Tourism planning does not allow for free market development of the city.	0.50	0.25	0.75
Attachment to timeshare		0.88**	
My primary timeshare means a lot to me.	0.97	0.94	0.06

Table 4-28. Continued

Construct and indicators	Completely standardized loading	Construct and indicator reliability	Error variance
My primary timeshare is very special to me.	0.93	0.86	0.14
The things I do at my primary timeshare I would enjoy doing just as much at another site.	0.58	0.34	0.66
Attachment to the city where the timeshare is located		0.91**	
I am very attached to the city where my primary timeshare is located.	0.94	0.89	0.11
No other place can compare to the city where my primary timeshare is located.	0.89	0.80	0.20
Visiting the city where I own my primary timeshare reflects who I am as a person (i.e., laid back or fast paced).	0.79	0.63	0.37
Past political participation		0.88**	
How often have you voted in local elections?	0.95	0.91	0.09
How often have you voted in presidential elections?	0.81	0.66	0.34
Past civil participation		0.84**	
Have you ever participated in community activities, such as “pick up litter” campaigns?	0.94	0.89	0.11
Have you ever volunteered for a civic organization?	0.87	0.76	0.24
Have you ever donated to a charitable organization?	0.56	0.31	0.69

Note: \* the variance of the observed variable was set to 0. \*\* Composite reliability of each construct.

Table 4-29. Standardized regression coefficients of latent variables

	Planning	Benefit	Cost	Attach1	Attach2	Partici1	Partici2
Coefficient	-0.05	0.27	-0.48	0.55	-0.22	0.23	0.03
Z-score	-0.64	3.37	-4.66	2.43	-0.91	2.70	0.49
P-value	>0.05	<0.01	<0.01	<0.05	>0.05	<0.01	>0.05

Note: Planning=Perception of tourism planning; Benefit=Perceived benefits of participating; Cost=Perceived costs of participating; Atch1=Attachment to the timeshare; Attach2=Attachment to the city; Partici1=Past political participation; Partici2=Past civic participation.

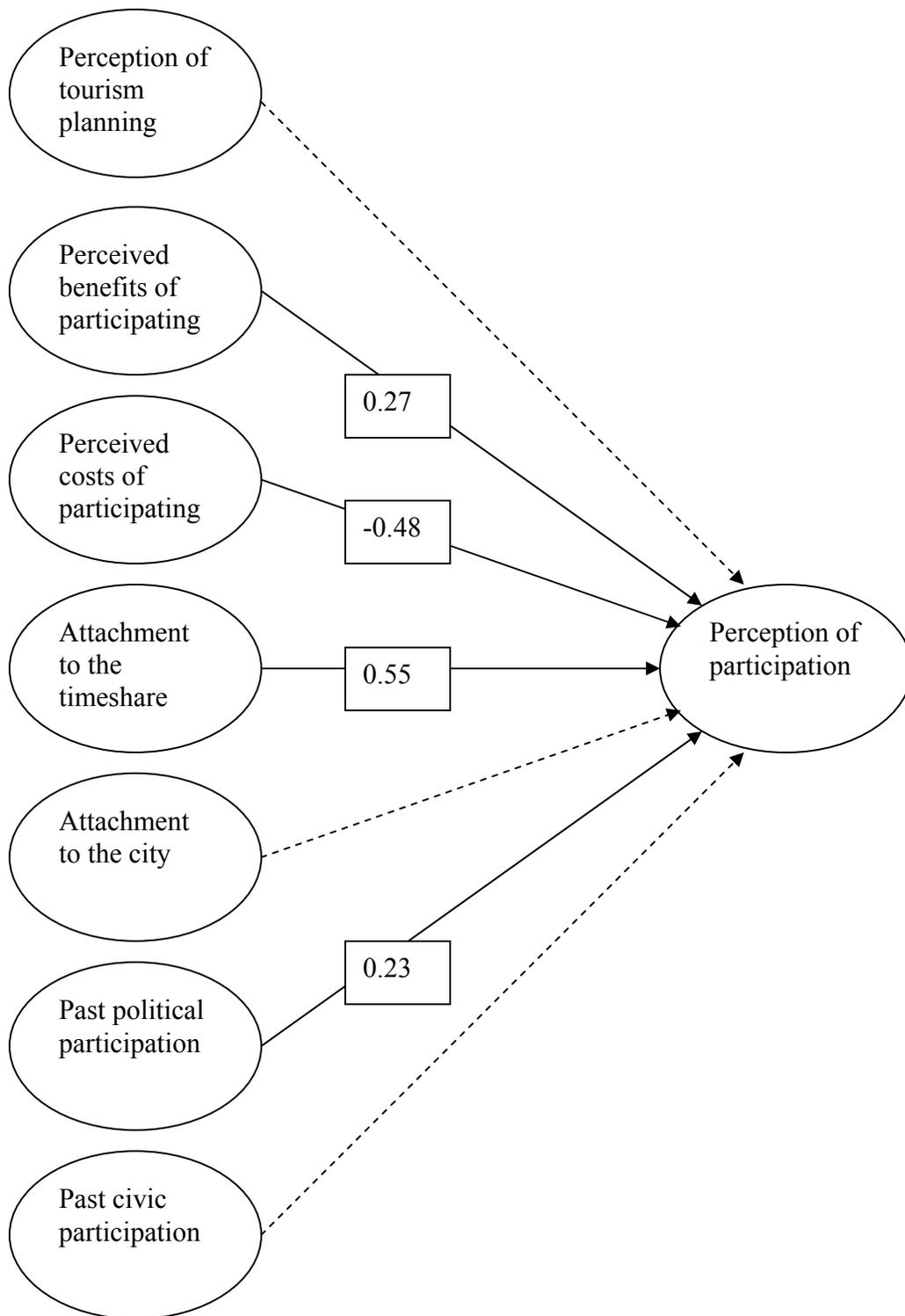


Figure 4-1. The structural model (Note: solid lines indicate statistically significant paths; dotted lines indicate statistically insignificant paths.)

Table 4-30. Model summary of the regression analysis on attachment to timeshare

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the estimate
1	0.330	0.109	0.099	1.029

Table 4-31. Regression coefficients of dependent variables in the regression analysis on attachment to timeshare

	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	T-value	Significant level
Question #5	0.327	5.327	0.000
Question #40	0.007	0.109	0.913
Question #7	0.005	0.090	0.928

Table 4-32. Crosstabulation of perception of participation and gender

		Female	Male	Total
Willing to participate in tourism planning	Disagree	41.9	31.5	34.9
	Neutral	32.4	38.8	36.7
	Agree	25.7	29.7	28.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: N=324

Table 4-33. Chi-Square test of perception of participation and gender

	Value	Degree of freedom	Significant level (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.393	2	0.183

Note: N=324

Table 4-34. Crosstabulation of perception of participation and educational level

		High school degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate or professional degree	Total
Willing to participate in tourism planning	Disagree	30.5	31.4	40.4	35.2
	Neutral	42.4	43.0	29.1	36.8
	Agree	27.1	25.6	30.5	28.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: N=321

Table 4-35. Chi-Square test of perception of participation and educational level

	Value	Degree of freedom	Significant level (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.572	4	0.160

Note: N=321

Table 4-36. Crosstabulation of perception of participation and household income

		<\$49,999	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000- \$99,999	\$100,000- \$124,999	>\$125,000	Total
Willing to participate in tourism planning	Disagree	19.2	40.7	24.2	33.3	43.6	34.3
	Neutral	46.2	28.8	39.4	40.7	30.8	35.7
	Agree	34.6	30.5	36.4	25.9	25.6	30.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: N=321

Table 4-37. Chi-Square test of perception of participation and household income

	Value	Degree of freedom	Significant level (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	10.968	8	0.203

Note: N=321

Table 4-38. Crosstabulation of perception of participation and marital status

		Married	Not married	Total
Willing to participate in tourism planning	Disagree	33.7	40.0	35.1
	Neutral	39.8	24.3	36.4
	Agree	26.5	35.7	28.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: N=319

Table 4-39. Chi-Square test of perception of participation and marital status

	Value	Degree of freedom	Significant level (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.832	2	0.054

Note: N=319

Table 4-40. Crosstabulation of perception of participation and age

		21-40	41-60	61 and older	Total
Willing to participate in tourism planning	Disagree	30.8	32.7	37.5	34.6
	Neutral	30.8	33.9	40.6	36.5
	Agree	38.5	33.3	21.9	28.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Note: N=312

Table 4-41. Chi-Square test of perception of participation and age

	Value	Degree of freedom	Significant level (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.327	4	0.255

Note: N=312

Table 4-42. Preferred ways of voting on tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Online	186	54.5
Not interested in voting	107	31.4
By mail	48	14.1
In Person	0	0.0

Note: N=341

Table 4-43. Frequency distributions (percentage) for preferred ways to participate in tourism planning for the city where the primary timeshare is located

Questionnaire Statement	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	# of Cases
I would like to get information about tourism planning for the city in the form of newsletters or regular letters.	2.2	1.1	6.5	65.6	24.7	4.12	93
I would be willing to authorize my timeshare management company to participate in the tourism planning process for the city.	2.2	6.5	20.7	51.1	19.6	3.80	92
I would like to participate in meetings related to tourism planning as a citizen representative.	1.1	5.4	35.5	44.1	14.0	3.65	93

Note: SD=Strongly Disagree; D=Disagree; N=Neutral; A=Agree; SA=Strongly Agree.

Table 4-44. Mauchly's test of sphericity

Mauchly's W	Approximate Chi-Square	df	Significant level	Greenhouse-Geisser	Huynh-Feldt	Lower-bound
0.84	15.39	2	<0.01	.862	0.877	0.50

Table 4-45. Tests of within-subject effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Degree of freedom	Mean Square	F	Significant level
Sphericity assumed	10.87	2	5.434	10.891	<0.01
Greenhouse-Geisser	10.87	1.723	6.306	10.891	<0.01
Huynh-Feldt	10.87	1.753	6.199	10.891	<0.01
Lower-bound	10.87	1.000	10.867	10.891	<0.01

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

### **Timeshare Owner's Perceptions of Participation in Tourism Planning**

One of the main purposes of this study was to investigate the missing link in tourism planning: the missing input from tourists. Since physical planning for tourism development emerged in the 1970s in the U.S. (Gunn & Varr, 2002), the local government and tourism industry have played a lead role in most tourism planning cases. Gradually, the potential of local residents' contribution to tourism planning received more and more attention from academia and practitioners. However, there is a lack of discussion about specially segmented groups of tourists and their role in tourism planning. As an exploratory effort, this study focused on timeshare owners, a special group of tourists who have a different connection to the tourism destination than typical tourists. More specifically, this study investigated timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

Findings from this study were encouraging. Most timeshare owners supported tourism planning for the destination city. A substantial proportion of timeshare owners were willing to participate in tourism planning for the city. Because many studies were conducted to investigate long-term residents' participation in tourism planning, findings from those studies could be employed to propel our understanding of timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

Since Perdue, Long and Allen's (1990) study, many studies have been conducted to investigate resident attitudes toward tourism development in the community. A non-exhaustive review of the literature found few studies that reported findings about residents' support for tourism planning. McGehee and Andereck (2004) found that 86.3% of the residents in 12 rural Arizona communities supported tourism planning. In a study about urban residents' support for

tourism planning, Madrigal (1995) reported that the mean score (five-point Likert-type scale with 1= Strongly Disagree and 5= Strongly Agree) for support for tourism planning among residents in Sedona, Arizona was 3.75 and among residents in York, UK was 3.47. Findings from this study suggested that timeshare owners had similar levels of support for tourism planning as local residents. About 80% of respondents in this study supported tourism planning. In this study, the mean value for support of tourism planning was 4.0, higher than that of the urban residents in Madrigal's study.

Timeshare owners and local residents have similar reasons for supporting tourism planning. Timeshare owners are tourists patronizing a special form of accommodation. They mostly stay in their timeshare when they visit the tourism destination. The parallel support for tourism planning among residents and timeshare owners are attributed to three reasons. First, both residents and timeshare owners own or rent properties in the community, and planning for the community mostly positively affects these properties. Second, both residents and timeshare owners are emotionally connected to the community. The emotional connection, described as sense of place, is an important common factor. Third, even though timeshare owners stay a much shorter period of time in the community than residents do, the quality of tourism services and facilities in the community is equally important to timeshare owners. Timeshare owners are often repeat visitors and the quality of tourism amenities in the community is central to their experience.

Timeshare owners have a similar level of support for tourism planning as residents do; meanwhile, timeshare owners are more likely to support tourism planning than mass tourists. Although few studies have been undertaken to investigate mass tourists' support for tourism planning, some characteristics of mass tourists might indicate that they are less interested in

tourism planning. Many mass tourists stay at a destination for a very short period of time, often in the range of a few hours to a few days. Mass tourists are less likely to return to the same tourism destination. Instead, mass tourists are more likely to pursue the best deal in the market and visit different tourism destinations. Mass tourists' temporary contact with the destination and their leisure experience in the destination may not be sufficient to urge them to be interested in tourism planning for the community. The relationship between mass tourists, timeshare owners, and residents and the destination community could be expressed in figure 5-1.

There is a continuum from mass tourists to local residents in terms of how long each group may stay in the community, with some overlap among the groups. Mass tourists stay a short period of time in the community, usually no more than a few days. Timeshare owners are more likely to return to the same destination and stay longer than tourists who do not own timeshare in the community (Rezak, 2002). Residents live in the community and hence they spend most of their time in the community. On the one hand, timeshare owners are one group of transient residents in the community, although they stay longer in the community than mass tourists. On the other hand, timeshare owners are more like residents because they own property in the community, while mass tourists usually do not.

The demographic background of timeshare owners was not correlated with their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. One possible reason is that timeshare owners are a homogeneous group with fairly similar backgrounds. However, timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning were associated with other factors.

Timeshare owners are distinctive transient residents. They stay a short time in the community but own property there. The dichotomy of timeshare owners might shed some light on timeshare owners' perceptions of tourism planning and participation in tourism planning.

Most timeshare owners support tourism planning for the community, however, findings from this study suggest that only about one third of timeshare owners are willing to participate in tourism planning. In fact, support for tourism planning did not have a significant impact on perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The disparity between perceptions of tourism planning and perceptions of participation in tourism planning echoed the theme of this study, to investigate timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning and the reasons behind their perceptions.

It is debatable that whether one third of timeshare owners are willing to participate in tourism planning is positive or negative. The judgment depends on the perspective. On the one hand, most timeshare owners are well-educated, middle- and upper-middle-class citizens, who are typically the most active participants in planning and other political and social causes (Hillier, 2000). On the other hand, many individual citizens are skeptical of the participation opportunities in planning processes (Davies, 2001). Furthermore, there is little data available in the literature about the percentage of residents or tourists who are willing to participate in tourism planning. As a result, it is impractical to compare timeshare owners and residents and mass tourists in their willingness to participate in tourism planning.

A logical next step was to investigate why some timeshare owners were willing to participate in tourism planning. According to the tested theoretical model, perceived benefits of participation in tourism planning, perceived costs of participation in tourism planning, attachment to the timeshare, and past experience of political participation were significant indicators of participation, among the seven exogenous variables.

The effects of perceived benefits and costs of participation were hypothesized by the tenets of rational choice. The results from the data analysis supported these effects. Timeshare owners

who perceived more benefits of participation in tourism planning were more likely to participate in tourism planning. Timeshare owners who perceived more costs of participation in tourism planning were less likely to participate in tourism planning. It is plausible that timeshare owners made rational choices based on the balance of benefits and costs in terms of making decisions about participating in tourism planning. Therefore, timeshare owners need to be educated on the benefits of participation and on multiple methods of getting involved.

The tenets of rational choice have been extensively applied to many studies investigating residents' attitude toward tourism development (Ap, 1992; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997; McGehee & Andereck, 2004). Many studies applying social exchange theory have supported the connection between perceived benefits and costs of tourism development and residents' support for tourism development. In this study, the rational decision-making process seems to have also contributed to timeshare owners' decision-making. For example, when asked about the primary reason for purchasing their timeshare, most timeshare owners responded that they wanted to enjoy exchange opportunities and to save money on future vacation costs; those timeshare owners accounted for 50% of the respondents. Rational reasons about value and costs played an important role in timeshare owners' purchase decision. In the same vein, timeshare owners were value conscious and time conscious about participation in tourism planning. They anticipated that tourism planning would bring better tourism services and facilities to the community, which would not only bring them more enjoyable experiences but also improve the attractiveness of their timeshare in the timeshare exchange market. On the other hand, timeshare owners perceived the cost of participation in tourism planning mainly in the form of consumed time.

The results from testing the theoretical model were utilized to weigh the effects of perceived benefits and perceived costs. The regression coefficient (0.48) between perceived costs and perceptions of participation is bigger than the regression coefficient (0.27) between perceived benefits and perceptions of participation. Since these two regression coefficients were on the same standardized scale, they were compatible. Thus, perceived costs have a bigger effect on perception of participation in tourism planning than the perceived benefits do. This finding might be explained by two reasons. First, perceived costs are direct and immediate while perceived benefits are indirect and in the future. If timeshare owners decide to participate in tourism planning, they need to spend their time when the planning process starts. However, perceived benefits might be viewed by timeshare owners as more about improving the tourism destination, which will do good to them in a long run. From this perspective, it is not surprising that the effect of the direct and immediate costs outweighs that of the indirect and future benefits. Second, this finding might reflect the fact that a timeshare is still a purchased consumer good. It may be hard to persuade timeshare owners to contribute more time to something that they have already paid for. In other words, for timeshare owners, the incremental costs might surpass the incremental benefits in participating in tourism planning. As a result, perceived costs play a bigger role in affecting perceptions of participation in tourism planning than perceived benefits do.

Besides the effects of perceived benefits and costs, effects of the emotional relationships between timeshare owners and their timeshare and the broader destination city were also investigated as potential factors affecting timeshare owners' perception of participating in tourism planning. Timeshare owners' attachment to their timeshare significantly influenced their perception of participation in tourism planning. In fact, timeshare owner's attachment to their

timeshare had the greatest impact on their perception of participation in tourism planning among all the latent exogenous variables. As reported in chapter four, the number of times that timeshare owners visited their timeshare was a significant predictor of the strength of the attachment. The more times timeshare owners visited the timeshare and the tourism destination, the stronger they became attached to their timeshare. Timeshare management companies need to find ways to facilitate loyalty between owners and owned timeshare units, which will encourage owners to return to the timeshare resort and help the destination. These methods might include more communication with timeshare owners and jointed marketing efforts from timeshare management companies and other tourism suppliers at the destination.

The times that timeshare owners visited their timeshare is a behavioral indicator of their bonding with the timeshare as well as a general overall indicator of timeshare owners' emotional involvement with the timeshare. Those timeshare owners who returned to their timeshare multiple times are most likely to spend more time in their timeshare. Timeshare owners who rarely visited their timeshare do not stay long enough to develop emotional connection to the place (Brown, Perkins, & Brown, 2003).

However, timeshare owner's attachment to the city where the timeshare was located was not a significant predictor of their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The contradictory effects of attachment to the timeshare and attachment to the city are likely a result of two reasons. First, timeshare owners' attachment to the city is weak (Table 4-20). The mean scores of answers to those three questions about attachment to the city were around 3 (3.14, 2.69, and 2.96, respectively) on a five-point Likert-type scale with 1=strongly disagree, which suggested that timeshare owners were almost neutral about whether they were attached to the city. Compared with their attachment to the timeshare, timeshare owners had weaker bonds with

the city. Second, most timeshare resorts are gated communities that are exclusive only to their customers. Timeshare owners tend to travel in bigger groups, typically with family and friends (Rezak, 2002), and therefore may stay inside their tourist bubble (MacCannell, 2001) when they are at the destination city. Outside the timeshare resort, they mostly visit tourism attractions and amenities; inside the timeshare resort, they stay with their family, friends, and other visitors. Their lack of in-depth involvement with the city might contribute to the weak relationship between their attachment to the city and their perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

Timeshare owners' past experience with political participation had a significant impact on their perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The more frequently they participated in political activities such as voting, the more likely they were to participate in tourism planning. Planning, in general, is essentially a political activity because planning aims to adjust the relationships among people and reallocate benefits and costs to different individuals (Friedmann, 1987). Tourism planning is no exception. Tourism planning affects the interests of all the stakeholders, namely the local government, the tourism industry, the local community, and tourists. For timeshare owners, the relationship between past political participation and perceptions of participation in tourism planning could be explained by four reasons. First, timeshare owners' past experience of political participation will influence their possible future political participation in tourism planning directly, because past behaviors are an important predictor of future behaviors (Bamberg, Ajzen & Schmidt, 2003; Sheeran, Orbell & Trafimow, 1999). Second, those timeshare owners who were active political participants are more likely to be confident with their political knowledge and skills. As a result, they are confident with the process of participating in tourism planning. Third, those timeshare owners who were active political participants were more likely to have benefited from their participation and recognize

the value of political participation. Thus, they may believe that there are positive outcomes of participation. Four, some timeshare owners might view participation as a citizen's duty, and the social norms about being an active citizen might have influenced them.

Timeshare owners' past experience in civic participation did not significantly affect their perception of participation in tourism planning. It is possible that civic participation is mostly related to an individual's residential community. As indicated early, timeshare owners were generally not attached to the city where the timeshare is located. If timeshare owners clearly distinguish the timeshare city from their home community, it is understandable that their civic participatory activities in their residential community may not affect their perception of participation in tourism planning for the timeshare city.

Generally, these four significant structural relationships represent three levels of analysis in explaining perceptions of future participation, as described in figure 5-2. The three levels are the cognitive level that includes rational components, the affective level that is comprised of emotional components, and the behavioral level that consists of behavioral components.

### **Preferred Ways of Participation**

Timeshare owners' preferred ways of participation were also investigated in this study. Overall, timeshare owners were willing to receive information about tourism planning but reluctant to get involved in person. Timeshare owners preferred indirect ways of participation such as authorizing their timeshare management company to participate in tourism planning or getting involved through the Internet.

Timeshare owners' preferred ways of participation in tourism reflect the level of participation that timeshare owners may commit. Participation in planning is voluntary and participants contribute at different levels (Sanoff, 2000). From the perspective of Arstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation, most timeshare owners are satisfied with participation at

the tokenism level. Many timeshare owners are content with the one-way information from the planners. Few timeshare owners are ready to take the partner role and take shared control of tourism planning. Based on Arstein's (1969) model and Hamdi and Goethert's (1997) work, stakeholders' participation in tourism planning are categorized into four hierarchical levels: nonparticipation, indirect participation, consultative, and shared control. Results from this study suggest that most timeshare owners are willing to indirectly participate in tourism planning or take a consultative role in tourism planning. Although timeshare owners and other tourists are viewed as a stakeholder group in theory, they are unorganized individuals. Individual and unorganized timeshare owners are not likely to take shared control of tourism planning for the destination.

Levels of citizen participation in planning and phases of planning are related. Hamdi and Goethert (1997) proposed a model to describe levels of citizen participation and phases of planning jointly. Generally, tourism planning is comprised of eight phases (Nickerson, 1996). Those eight phases of tourism planning are: 1) inventory resources, 2) forecast demand, 3) develop goals and objectives, 4) study alternatives, 5) decide preferred alternative, 6) develop a strategy, 7) implement plan, and 8) review and revise plan. While the eight-phase model for tourism planning catches many essential steps of tourism planning, tourism planning could be viewed as a continuous process of four stages from the participative perspective. Those four stages are identified by four essential tasks of each phase: initiate, plan, implement, and review. At the initiative stage, the planners and all stakeholders recognize the need for tourism planning and prepare for the planning process by collecting information about supply and demand and forming planning committees and task forces. The second stage is the stage at which the plan is decided. Benefits and costs of different options are evaluated and consensus is reached before the

final plan is formed. The third stage is the implementing stage. The implementing stage is crucial because tourism plan needs to be executed in reality. The last stage is the period of reviewing and evaluating the tourism plan and its implementation. The review stage also serves as a basis for a new round of tourism planning.

Timeshare owners' contribution to the tourism planning process will concentrate on the initiative stage and the planning stage. The local government and other stakeholder groups take responsibility for implementing the tourism plan and evaluating the plan. Timeshare owners will provide input to the tourism planners and receive information about the planning process. The role of timeshare owners in tourism planning is proposed in figure 5-3, based on the combination of levels of participation of timeshare owners and different stages of tourism planning that timeshare owners want to participate at.

Timeshare owners' choice of participation might be explained by a few reasons. First, the perceived benefits and costs of participation might relate to preferred ways of participation. Timeshare owners recognized the benefits of tourism planning, but they were also aware of the time costs of participating in tourism planning. Timeshare owners mostly go to their timeshare for leisure and recreational purposes. Thus, it may be unrealistic to require them to go to the timeshare purposefully to attend a tourism planning meeting.

Second, traditional participation methods, such as public hearings and meetings might not appeal to timeshare owners. Fewer citizens are motivated by traditional methods. Timeshare owners do not want to participate in tourism planning meetings in person, which reflects the problems of traditional face-oriented or file-oriented participation styles in general (Conrey & Evans-Cowley, 2006). For example, public meetings about city planning have low participation levels in general. Traditional ways of participation may have time and geographic constraints for

most participants. In the case of transient residents such as timeshare owners, these constraints could be more pronounced. Because traditional ways such as planning meetings are time-constrained and face-interaction-based, timeshare owners might be disenchanted by them, whether or not it is about tourism planning for the city whether the timeshare is located. Unsurprisingly, timeshare owners prefer indirect participation methods to direct participation ways.

Third, Internet-based citizen participation represents a new trend in citizen participation. Online participation tools have been employed by hundreds of municipal city governments in the U.S. to get their citizens involved in the planning process (Conrey & Evans-Cowley, 2006; Scott, 2006). Conrey and Evans-Cowley classified those online participation tools into two groups: information tools and interaction tools. Prevailing information tools include online zoning ordinances and other online documents, online planning meeting agendas, and email news. Interaction tools include staff emails, commission emails, online registration, and online discussion groups etc. According to Scott (2006), Internet action is beneficial for establishing and maintaining weak ties, which is central to a sense of connection and involvement. Internet-based participation tools have great potential to involving timeshare owners.

Fourth, this study was based on an Internet survey. Respondents to the survey have access to the Internet. Most of them might be Internet savvy. They feel comfortable with the Internet and realize the benefits of using the Internet. Although Internet access has grown steadily in the U.S. recently, it is inevitable that some timeshare owners might not have access to the Internet or do not use the Internet. Therefore a bias might exist with the respondents of this study and the general timeshare owner population.

Understanding timeshare owners' perceptions and preferences is only the first step to get timeshare owners involved in tourism planning process. More importantly, tourism planning needs to be shifted toward a communicative approach. Tourism planners have the responsibilities and opportunities to lead this shift. The four stakeholder groups (the local government, the tourism industry, local residents, and the tourists) need to be motivated and get involved. Therefore, the next section will investigate the roles of tourism planners, the timeshare industry, and the local government in facilitating timeshare owners participating in tourism planning.

### **Tourism Planners and Timeshare Owners' Participation in Tourism Planning**

The communicative approach to tourism planning calls for an active role of tourism planners as an organizers and facilitators of stakeholder participation. Local residents and tourists are less involved in the tourism planning process than the local government and the tourism industry. Timeshare owners are supportive of tourism planning and some of them are willing to participate in tourism planning. Timeshare owners prefer certain ways of participating.

Timeshare owners could be a positive force in tourism planning. Tourists and other transient populations have been viewed as a threat to planners (Weisskoff, 2000). For example, the accusation that tourists engender traffic jams and other burdens on the infrastructure of the destinations has been widely reported in the literature. The challenges that timeshare owners and other tourists generate for planners should not be accepted as a distrust or resentment towards them. It is clear that timeshare owners are willing to get involved in the tourism planning process. Tourism planners need to accept timeshare owners as a valuable party in the planning process.

Second, tourism planners need to take initiatives to provide meaningful ways of participation for timeshare owners. Timeshare owners prefer certain ways of participating, such as Internet based communication and voting. Tourism planners will benefit from integrating new

information technologies into their planning tools. For example, Hasse and Milne (2005) found that the integration of participatory approaches and geographic information systems (GIS) provided a framework for community participation and stakeholder interaction in tourism planning. Visualization technologies such as GIS reduce the differences between experts and lay people and participants have expressed a clear preference for interpreted information rather than raw data and technical terms (Hacklay, 2002). Other studies (Conroy & Evans-Cowley, 2006; Scott, 2006) have also found that electronic participation is a useful means of citizen participation in planning. Generally, new information technology such as GIS and the Internet can be an important tool for boosting participation (Hanzl, 2007).

Third, tourism planners play a lead role in facilitating consensus among stakeholders. The communicative approach emphasizes the importance of mediated participation (Forester, 2006). According to Forester, experienced mediation is crucial not only for assisting dialogues and mediating debates but also for fostering negotiations. Tourism planners should be mediators and facilitators among the four stakeholder groups. It is crucial for tourism planners to make the communication efficient and effective and to attenuate the conflicts between different parties. The communicative approach to tourism planning might generate more conflict among different parties due to more open communication. Tourism planners should encourage negotiation and compromise to reach consensus among parties.

Fourth, tourism planners need to convert the consensus among stakeholders into practice. One important perspective of tourism planning is to integrate tourism planning into the overall city planning, which could be achieved in two ways. First, it is unrealistic to exclude the influence of tourists and other transient residents from city planning. For example, the concern with traffic due to tourists reflects that the planners do not give enough attention to tourists.

Planning for the infrastructure needs to consider tourism. Second, tourism planning needs to be incorporated in city planning because tourism planning requires the consent and resources from local government. In practice, tourism planners should play two roles, tourism planner and city planner.

### **The Timeshare Industry and Timeshare Owners' Participation in Tourism Planning**

The timeshare industry comprises of timeshare developers and timeshare exchange companies. Timeshare developers have two functions, to develop a timeshare resort and to manage the resort. Timeshare developers build timeshare resorts and sell them to their customers. Most timeshare developers continue to manage the timeshare resort after the transaction of the timeshare to the customers and charge an annual maintenance fee, which is an important revenue source for the management company. There are two major timeshare exchange companies, Resort Condominiums International (RCI) and Interval International (II) as well as other smaller exchange companies. Timeshare exchange companies provide exchange service for affiliated timeshare owners and timeshare resorts.

The timeshare industry is dynamic on a few fronts. With the entrance of big brand-name hotel chains such as Disney and Marriott into the industry in the 1980s, the industry changed fundamentally. Market share quickly became concentrated with a few big players. Timeshare products evolved rapidly. The traditional fixed intervals have been replaced by floating intervals and points. New products such as fractional ownership and private recreational clubs emerged and flourished.

Despite the ever-changing nature of the timeshare industry, customer service is the foundation of the business. Findings from this study show that timeshare owners have the need to participate in tourism planning, which is an opportunity for timeshare developers. Since timeshare developers currently do not provide service to satisfy this need, they need to fill this

gap in their service. Facilitation of timeshare owners' participation in tourism planning might lead to greater customer satisfaction. Timeshare owners' desire to participate in tourism planning provides an important opportunity for the timeshare developers to communicate with local government and planners. Many respondents in this study indicated that they would like to authorize their timeshare management company to represent them in the tourism planning process. Timeshare developers could act as a bridge between timeshare owners and the planning authority, which will grant timeshare developers a legitimate role in the tourism planning process, instead of just a business interest.

Timeshare developers' assistance is important for timeshare owners to participate in tourism planning. Timeshare owners will remain unorganized individuals without some form of collective effort or a voice in the tourism planning process. Timeshare developers are in an advantageous position to take on the role as a representative of timeshare owners. Timeshare developers could incorporate the advocacy role to their overall customer service and improve customer satisfaction. For example, among dissatisfied timeshare owners, many were annoyed by the annual maintenance fee (Suchman et al., 1999). The average annual maintenance fee was \$555 in 2006 (ARDA International Foundation, 2007). While the annual maintenance fee covers property taxes, other maintenance costs, and a profit margin for the management company, timeshare owners do not necessarily appreciate the rationale for the annual maintenance fee. If timeshare developers start to take responsibility to represent timeshare owners in the tourism planning process, they might be able to relate one additional service item to the maintenance fee and further justify it.

The American Resort Development Association (ARDA) could play an important role in representing timeshare owners in the tourism planning process. ARDA's mission is to promote

the development and growth of the timeshare industry through advocacy, networking, partnerships, and other activities (ARDA, 2007a). At the federal level, ARDA could use its resources to promote the industry's role in tourism planning. At the state and local level, ARDA could help timeshare developers and timeshare management companies represent timeshare owners. Furthermore, ARDA could also provide information and knowledge about tourism planning to timeshare owners. For example, the ARDA Resort Owners Coalition (ROC) is comprised of timeshare owners across the country (ARDA, 2007b). Timeshare owners contribute \$ 3 a year to join the coalition voluntarily. The mission of ARDA-ROC is to promote a legislative agenda that is beneficial to timeshare owners. The coalition could be an ideal platform to reach timeshare owners and communicate with them about tourism planning at different levels.

### **Local Government and Timeshare Owners' Participation in Tourism Planning**

Local government and its agencies, such as the planning committee usually lead the planning process for the destination city. Local government's regulations such zoning ordinances affect tourism planning profoundly. On the other hand, a sound tourism plan and a prosperous tourism industry are in the best interest of local government for the economic, social, and environmental benefits that they bring about to the community.

Local government has gradually started to get local residents involved in the tourism planning process, as mandated by the law or propelled by calls for more citizen participation. Local government is elected by its citizens and local government represents residents' interests in the planning process. Timeshare owners pay property tax to local governments. From this perspective, timeshare owners should be treated as part of the constituency. Timeshare owners pay property tax, but most of them do not use local public services such as public school or local hospital. From the cost perspective, timeshare owners do not engender many costs to local

governments. Local governments need to recognize the importance of involving timeshare owners in the tourism planning process. Timeshare owners' input in the tourism planning process provides an important source for the local government to take into account timeshare owners' needs and requirements.

Furthermore, local government has the opportunity to communicate with timeshare owners through new information technologies such as the Internet. Many timeshare owners are willing to participate in tourism planning. Regular communications with timeshare owners will not only solicit input for better tourism planning, but also keep reminding timeshare owners to come back to their timeshare, which will generate considerable economic benefits to the host community.

### **Limitation**

This study was an exploratory effort to investigate timeshare owners' roles in tourism planning. Findings presented in chapter four are the result of input from the timeshare industry and many timeshare owners. Although the results revealed a series of significant relationships among timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning and other variables, this study has its limitations. Those limitations include potential problems related to the low response rate and some measurement issues associated with the measurement instrument.

Although the sample size is big enough for the purpose of this study, the response rate of the questionnaire survey is relatively low. The survey was a Web based survey and invitations were sent to selected timeshare owners via emails. Some possible reasons for the low response rate include: (1) Accessibility issues might have been caused by email invitations. Many email inboxes are protected against unsolicited or harmful emails. As a result, some timeshare owners on the list might never read the invitation email. (2) Unlike resident address, multiple email addresses might correspond to one individual. Many individuals often change their email addresses. Consequently, some email addresses on the list might have been discarded by the

users, although technically they are still valid. (3) Some receivers of the email invitation might not be familiar with a Web survey. Some of them might feel uncomfortable with the idea of sharing their thoughts and information online.

Although the measurement model indicated that the model fit the data quite well, some questions in the questionnaire still need improvement, particularly those questions related to place attachment. Both attachment to the timeshare and attachment to the city were measured in this study; however, these measurement questions may not assess place attachment in the timeshare context explicitly mainly because they were adopted from the outdoor recreation literature. As a result, findings reported in this study might include measurement errors that were caused by those adopted questions.

### **Future Studies**

This study provides significant insights into timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning. The proposed theoretical model fit the collected data well and indicated four latent variables that significantly influenced timeshare owners' perceptions of participation in tourism planning. Those four relationships reflected the effects from rational, emotional and behavioral factors on timeshare owners. Future research about timeshare owners in tourism planning, and in an even broader sense, tourists in tourism planning, could be undertaken from the following four perspectives.

First, more research should be carried out to duplicate the findings in this study. This study provides some guidelines for future endeavor, but the results from this study could be preliminary due to the exploratory feature of it. The theoretical model should be tested with different data sets to investigate its generalizability.

Second, the theoretical and practical analysis of tourism planning in this study is based on a normative planning approach. While the focus is on what should be done in planning, the

aspect of “how to do it in practice” might have inevitably been attenuated. Although timeshare owners’ preferred ways of participation in tourism planning have been discussed in this study, obviously more research is needed on how to implement the findings and suggestions. A logical follow-up effort of this study should be devoted to find out ways for tourism planners as well as local government to involve timeshare owners and other tourists in tourism planning.

Third, this study has concentrated on revealing the factors that influence timeshare owners’ perception of participation in tourism planning. More specifically, the emphasis was on which timeshare owners would like to participate in tourism planning and why do they want to do so. Although time has been identified as an important factor that constrains timeshare owners’ participation, other research needs to be undertaken to better understand other constraints on timeshare owners’ participation. The literature suggested that constraints on citizen participation in planning were complex. For example, Albrechts (2002) summarized that there were three main groups of constraints on participants: structural constraints, cultural constraints, and constraints related to a government style. Efforts to identify constraints and ways to overcome constraints among timeshare owners are very worthwhile.

Fourth, it is obvious that timeshare owners and other tourists hold a secondary position in the tourism planning process, although they have been extensively accepted as one of the stakeholder groups. In the long run, more research needs to be devoted to study the relationship among timeshare owners, immigration, and residents in the community. If timeshare owners can be treated as part of the citizenship of the destination city, at least in some aspects, it will be easier for timeshare owners to join the tourism planning process as well as the city planning process more effectively and efficiently.

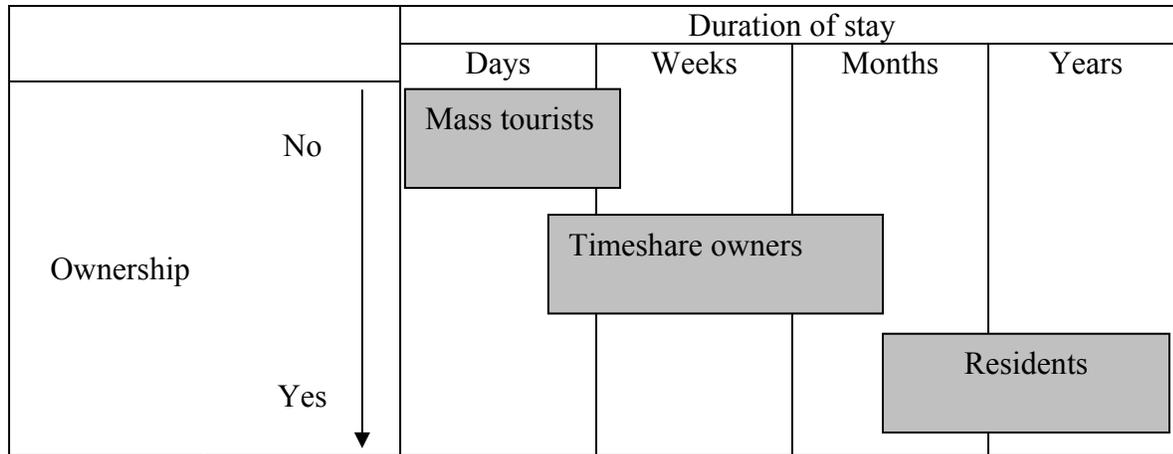


Figure 5-1. Relationships among mass tourists, timeshare owners, residents, and the destination community.

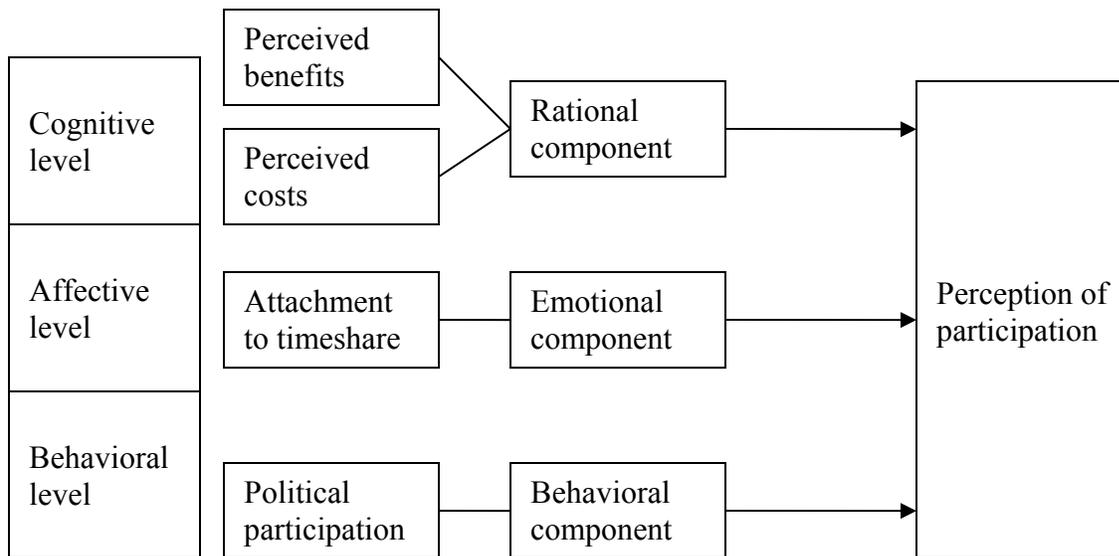


Figure 5-2. A conceptual model of timeshare owner's perceptions of participation in tourism planning.

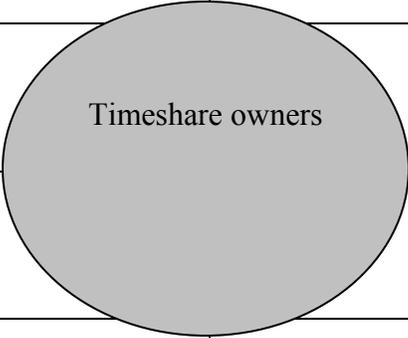
Levels of participation	Stages of tourism planning			
	Initiate	Plan	Implement	Review
None				
Indirect				
Consultative				
Shared control				

Figure 5-3. A framework of timeshare owner's participation in tourism planning

APPENDIX  
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

**Timeshare Owner Survey**



Dear Research Participant:

Thank you in advance for taking time to respond to this survey. The purpose of this research is to investigate timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in the tourism planning process. Since timeshare owners have the right to have their voice heard, we are asking your opinion on several issues related to tourism and destination planning.

The Center for Tourism Research and Development at the University of Florida is dedicated to facilitate interdisciplinary research projects focusing on a wide range of travel and tourism opportunities. This research project is part of the Center's efforts to advocate timeshare owners' rights and to facilitate the healthy development of the timeshare industry.

Invitation to participate in this research is randomly sent to selected timeshare owners. Your opinions are very important and valuable to this project. We thank you for sharing your opinions with us. This survey will take about 10 minutes to finish. Thank you.



Center for Tourism Research and Development  
Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management  
University of Florida  
P.O. Box 118208  
Gainesville, FL, 32611

Dear Timeshare Owner:

Thank you in advance for taking time to read about this research project. The purpose of this research is to investigate timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in tourism planning, since timeshare owners have the right to have their voice heard in the tourism planning process. Invitation to participate in this research was randomly sent to selected timeshare owners and you are one of the lucky ones. Your opinions are very important and valuable to this project.

If you would like to participate in this study, please answer the following questions. The survey will last less than 10 minutes. You will not have to answer any questions you do not wish to answer. Your individual answers will remain anonymous in any reports or findings. Your privacy will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. No compensation will be awarded to you. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the survey at any time without consequence.

This project is also part of my dissertation research. I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Florida. Only my advisor and I will have access to the final data. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at 352-392-4042 ext. 1395 or email me at [cchuang@ufl.edu](mailto:cchuang@ufl.edu). You may also contact my faculty supervisor, Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray at 352-392-4042 ext. 1318. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the UFIRB office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; ph 352-392-0433.

Chenchen Huang

By clicking on the **SUBMIT** button, you indicate that you have read the procedure described above for the project and voluntarily agree to participate in the interview. You also give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript.

Please tell us about your timeshare. If you have more than one timeshare, please choose the one that you visited most frequently as the primary one; if you currently have one timeshare, that one is your primary timeshare.																																									
1	How many timeshares do you own in the U.S.?																																								
2	Which city is your PRIMARY timeshare located in?																																								
3	Which state is your PRIMARY timeshare located in?																																								
4	Which timeshare exchange company does your PRIMARY timeshare affiliate with? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resort Condominiums International (RCI)</li> <li>• Interval International (II)</li> <li>• Both RCI and II</li> <li>• Another timeshare exchange company</li> </ul>																																								
5	How often have you visited your PRIMARY timeshare since you have owned it (including the time you bought it)?																																								
6	What was the most important reason that you purchased your PRIMARY timeshare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exchange opportunity</li> <li>• Liked the tourism destination community/city</li> <li>• Save money on future vacation costs</li> <li>• Liked resort, amenities and/or unit</li> <li>• Inherited or received as a gift</li> <li>• Investment or resale potential</li> <li>• Certain of quality accommodations</li> <li>• Opportunity to own at affordable prices</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>																																								
7	What is the ownership structure of your PRIMARY timeshare? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deeded</li> <li>• Right-to-use</li> <li>• Other</li> <li>• Do not know</li> </ul>																																								
8	Please indicate how important the following factors are to you, regarding the city where your PRIMARY timeshare is located. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 20%;"></th> <th style="width: 15%;">Most important</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Important</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Somewhat important</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Least important</th> <th style="width: 15%;">Not important</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Traffic</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Commercial development</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resort development</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural environment</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social environment</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						Most important	Important	Somewhat important	Least important	Not important	Traffic						Commercial development						Resort development						Natural environment						Social environment					
	Most important	Important	Somewhat important	Least important	Not important																																				
Traffic																																									
Commercial development																																									
Resort development																																									
Natural environment																																									
Social environment																																									
Now that we know about your timeshare, we are interested in finding out your feelings about tourism planning for the city where your primary timeshare is located.																																									

<b><i>Tourism planning refers to any effort or activity aimed at managing and/or planning for tourism in the city where your primary timeshare is located.</i></b>	
9	I believe that successful management of tourism in the city where I own my primary timeshare requires planning. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
10	The city should plan and manage the growth of tourism. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
11*	I am willing to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
12	I would like to vote on local initiatives regarding tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In person</li> <li>• Online</li> <li>• By mail</li> <li>• Not interested in voting</li> </ul>
13	I believe one or more of the following parties should be involved in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeshare developers</li> <li>• Timeshare owners</li> <li>• The local government</li> <li>• The federal government</li> <li>• Timeshare exchange companies</li> <li>• Other, please specify</li> </ul>
14	I would like to participate in tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
If you are interested in participating in tourism planning for the city where your primary timeshare is located, please answer the following questions which relate to your preferred method of participating in tourism planning.	
15**	I would like to participate in meetings related to tourism planning as a citizen representative. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
16**	I would like to get information about tourism planning for the city in the form of newsletters or regular letters. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
17**	I would be willing to authorize my timeshare management company to participate in the tourism planning process for the city. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
18**	I am not interested in participating in tourism planning for the city. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
19	Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare creates better tourism facilities and tourism services. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
20	Tourism planning for the city where I own my primary timeshare contributes to

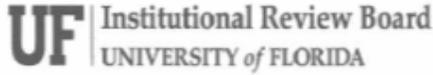
	the attractiveness of my primary timeshare in the timeshare exchange market. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
21	If you agree that tourism planning contributes to the attractiveness of your primary timeshare in the exchange market, please explain why you think so?
22	If I participate in tourism planning for the city where my primary timeshare is located, it would take too much of my valuable time. I would rather be doing other things with my free time. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
23	Tourism planning does not allow for free market development of the city. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Here we would like to understand how important your primary timeshare is to you. We are also interested in understanding how important the city (where your primary timeshare is located) is to you.	
24	My primary timeshare is very special to me. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
25	Visiting the city where I own my primary timeshare reflects who I am as a person (i.e., laid back or fast paced). Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
26	The things I do at my primary timeshare I would enjoy doing just as much at another site. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
27	No other place can compare to the city where my primary timeshare is located. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
28	I am very attached to the city where my primary timeshare is located. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
29	My primary timeshare means a lot to me. Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree
Please tell us about your past participation in political and civic activities.	
30	Are you eligible to vote in the United States? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes</li> <li>• No</li> </ul>
31	How often have you voted in presidential elections? Never Rarely Sometime Often Always
32	How often have you voted in local elections? Never Rarely Sometime Often Always
33	Have you ever participated in community activities, such as “pick up litter” campaigns? Never Rarely Sometime Often Always
34	Have you ever donated to a charitable organization? Never Rarely Sometime Often Always
35	Have you ever volunteered for a civic organization? Never Rarely Sometime Often Always
Finally, we want to know more about you and how satisfied you are with your timeshare exchange company. Please be assured that this information will be kept strictly confidential.	
36	Please tell us your gender. Male Female

37	Please tell us the zip code of your primary residence.
38	Please indicate your highest education level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than high school</li> <li>• High school</li> <li>• Bachelor's degree</li> <li>• Graduate or professional</li> </ul>
39	Please indicate your marital status. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Divorced</li> <li>• Married or partnered</li> <li>• Single and never married</li> <li>• widowed</li> </ul>
40	In which year did you buy/get your first timeshare? 2006-2007 2001-2005 1996-2000 1991-1995 1986-1990 1981-1985 1976-1980 1971-1975 1966-1970 1960-1965
41	Please tell us your age. 21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60 61-70 71-80 81 and older
42	Please indicate your annual household income in 2006. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less than \$49,999</li> <li>• \$50,000 to \$ 74,999</li> <li>• \$75,000 to \$ 99,999</li> <li>• \$100,000 to 124, 999</li> <li>• \$125,000 and up</li> </ul>
43	Overall, how satisfied are you with your timeshare exchange company? Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied
44	Overall, how satisfied are you with the customer service of your timeshare exchange company? Very Dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very Satisfied
45	Other comments

Note: \* Mandatory question

\*\* Contingency questions

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL



PO Box 112250  
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250  
352-392-0433 (Phone)  
352-392-9234 (Fax)  
irb2@ufl.edu

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DATE: April 16, 2007

TO: Chenchen Huang  
PO Box 118208  
Campus

FROM: Ira S. Fischler, PhD, Chair *ISF*  
University of Florida  
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Approval of Protocol #2007-U-0371

TITLE: Timeshare Owner's Perceptions of and Preferences for Participation in Tourism Planning

SPONSOR: None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants, and based on 45 CFR 46.117(c), authorizes you to administer the informed consent process as specified in the protocol.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, *including the need to increase the number of participants authorized*, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

If you have not completed this protocol by April 11, 2008, please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

ISF:dl

Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management  
University of Florida  
206 FLG P.O. Box 118208  
Gainesville, FL 32611

Dear RCI member:

Thank you in advance for taking time to read about this research project. The purpose of this research is to investigate timeshare owners' perceptions of participating in tourism planning, since timeshare owners have the right to get their voice heard in the tourism planning process. As an industry leader, RCI is an advocate for the rights of timeshare owners. Invitation to participate in this research is randomly sent to selected RCI members and you are one of the lucky ones. Your opinions are very important and valuable to this project.

If you would like to participate in this study, please visit this website <http://> and answer the questions online. The survey will last less than 10 minutes. You will not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. You will remain anonymous during the whole process. Your privacy will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. No compensation will be awarded to you. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the survey at any time without consequence.

This project is also part of my dissertation research. I am a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Florida. Only my advisor and I will have access to the final data. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at 352-3924042ext. 1395 or email me at [cchuang@ufl.edu](mailto:cchuang@ufl.edu). You may also contact my faculty supervisor, Dr. Lori Pennington-Gray at 352-3924042ext. 1318. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant rights may be directed to the UFIRB office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; ph (352) 392-0433.

Chenchen Huang

By clicking on the YES button, you indicate that you have read the procedure described above for the project and voluntarily agree to participate in the interview. And you have received a copy of this description by email. You also give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript.

YES

Approved by  
University of Florida  
Institutional Review Board 02  
Protocol # 2007-U-0371  
For Use Through 04/11/2008

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## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Chenchen Huang was born in Jiangyan, Jiangsu Province, China in 1977. He started his formal education at Jiangyan Shiyuan Primary School in 1983. In 1988, he was enrolled at Jiangyan No. 2 High School. His senior high school education commenced at Jiangyan High School in 1991.

The author entered Fudan University, Shanghai, China in 1994 where he majored in Tourism Management with a minor in Accounting. After graduating in 1998, he enrolled at the Graduate School of Fudan University, majoring in Tourism Management. For his master's thesis he conducted research on cultural tourism resources in Shanghai. During his master's program, he also published several journal articles and co-authored a few book chapters on tourism marketing and development.

After he was awarded his master's degree, the author joined Shanghai China International Travel Service (SCITS). During his two years' stay at SCITS, he was fortunate to have hands-on experience in the business management of the travel and tourism industry in general, and travel agencies in particular.

In 2003, he was awarded an Alumni Fellowship from the University of Florida (UF) to pursue doctoral studies in the College of Health and Human Performance. His major was tourism and his main research interests include tourism planning, tourism marketing, and the timeshare industry. The author presented his research at various conferences and in 2006, he was awarded the World Leisure International Scholarship by the World Leisure Congress. His doctoral dissertation investigated timeshare owners' perceptions of and preferences for participation in tourism planning. The author looks forward to contributing to the sustainable development of the tourism industry after graduation.