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## RV Association Members' Profile: A Demographic Segmentation and Lifestyle Exploration

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## 1.0 Introduction

Travel and tourism is a vast industry with distinct market segments. One significant market share is the recreational vehicle (RV) traveler. Previous literature has offered narratives regarding targeted RV travel markets and/or diverse agendas. Lifestyle travel of today's RVer, however, had yet to be studied. Of particular interest for the present study, therefore, was to profile the RV traveler by demographic segmentation with a subsequent examination of lifestyle travel patterns by cluster. Both will assist in future RV tourism and travel marketing by identifying heterogeneous and homogeneous characteristics and preferences of current RV travelers. The following research questions were addressed in the current study:

- 1) What are the demographic characteristics of today's RV traveler?
- 2) What are the cluster variables of today's RV traveler?
- 3) What are the travel patterns of RVers within the defined clusters?

## 2.0 Literature Review

The following sections were selectively positioned as foundation for the present study; segmentation, lifestyle, the lifestyle traveler, and RV specific studies.

### Segmentation

Understanding and determining travel and tourist behavior may never be complete. The emergence of segmentation methodologies, however, has been utilized to more precisely forecast the needs and preferences of targeted markets. Identifying homogeneous groups and/or segments within a larger market assists the marketing of products, services, and entities. Smith (1956), an early adopter of segmentation, identified age, income, and hobbies as inclusive factors when defining homogeneous subgroups. Kotler (1991) identified demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioral variables for segmentation and for cluster analysis. Jackson, Inbakaran, and Schmierer (2003) claimed demographics is the most recognized category utilized for segmentation coupled with the most researched. Gender, however, was not a factor for resort selection yet life-cycle, education, and age were influential for resort patrons.

### Lifestyle

Lifestyle has been utilized as a variable descriptor in segmentation literature. Plummer (1974), for example, identified lifestyle to segment the market because it provides a wide view of the customer. Woodside and Pitts (1976) argued lifestyle information is possibly more influential in predicting travel behavior than demographics. A key factor to consider is that lifestyle is dynamic in nature and influenced by attitudinal variables (Chaney, 1996). Gladwell (1990) utilized activities, interests, and opinions to identify vacation-specific lifestyle segmentation for state park users in the midwest. Likewise, the tourism product has transitioned from broad offerings to a more customized and segmented entity (Elliot-White & Finn, 1998) with lifestyle receiving extensive attention in the travel and tourism literature. More recently, Scott and Parfitt (2004) described lifestyle as a concept to understand patterns of consumption. It is assumed that people of similar lifestyle segments are more likely to use the same products and services (Craig-Lees, Joy, & Brown 1995).

Lifestyle segmentation increases personalization of consumer behavior patterns by understanding the foundation for identified attributes (Gonzales & Bello, 2002). The attributes included in each segment provides a more detailed profile of the targeted segment. The interacting nature of all variables provides a clearer understanding of tourists. A'guas, Costa, and Rita (2000) argued segmentation creates a portfolio for destination management while Dodd and Bigotte (1997) promoted the financial benefit of segmentation for the development of promotional materials. Inbakaran and Jackson (2005) utilized demographic and behavioral variables as segmentation variables for selecting resorts as their trip destination.

Empirical studies of lifestyle have included cultural segments, vacation homes, rural tourism, and vacation ownership clubs. For example, Lee and Sparks (2005) found group travel, length of holidays, and travel arrangement protocols as cluster variables influencing cultural travel. Sievanen, Pouta, and Neuvonen (2012) determined recreational home users were distinct clientele for rural tourism. Findings revealed spending time at recreational homes is not exclusive to higher socio-economic status. Furthermore, numerous working class residents have access to recreational home use and are able to enjoy expanded vacations. Chen, Lehto, and Cai (2012) examined family travelers' leisure activity participation patterns in rural environments and their influence of family composition, identifying the four clusters of gamers, campers, rural heritage trekkers, and social visitors. More specifically, campers enjoyed natural and outdoor based activities such as walking, backpacking, hiking, wildlife viewing, and cave exploring. Upchurch, Rompf, and Severt (2006) found lifestyle differences existed in a selected vacation club owners group relative to consumption and satisfaction of recreational and leisure services offered on property. Additionally, vacation club segmentation revealed consumers were relatively affluent, enjoy leisure-oriented activities, are in their peak earning years, and have no children residing at home.

### The Lifestyle Traveler

Lifestyle travel has garnered attention in the tourism and travel literature with regards to market segmentation. Cohen (2011) defined the lifestyle traveler as an individual who travels by choice. To further define, travel is a way of life and central to the adopter's identity. Lifestyle travel has included market segments of backpacking, ocean yacht cruising, and caravanning. The latter, caravanning, closely resembles the market share represented in the current study.

Backpacking empirical studies are plentiful. For example, Loker-Murphy (1996) identified backpackers in four clusters; social/excitement seekers, escapees/relaxers, achievers, and self-developers. Thyne, Davis, and Nash (2004) identified five cluster groups of backpackers were identified for marketing and promotional implications in Scotland; typical backpackers, discoverers, outdoors, family ties, and routine travelers (Thyne, Davis, and Nash, 2004). Cohen (2011) explored how backpackers found backpacking as a choice in travel. Findings revealed numerous backpackers adopt the backpacking lifestyle as a result of their first extended backpacking trip. Backpackers financially support their backpacking travel choice with brief periods of work. A possible enticement to the backpacking industry is the flexibility since much of the activity is controlled by the traveler. Tourism to the backpackers is part of their life, not a break from life's responsibilities, common to the traditional traveler.

Ocean cruising is also prevalent in the lifestyle travel literature. Ocean cruising has increased over the years due to yacht design, comfort, technologies, and a conscious decision of leisure over work (Jennings, 1997). Ocean cruising is a lifestyle extending beyond weekend and days off recreational activities (Lusby & Anderson, 2010). Ocean cruisers live aboard their boats and are constantly on the move. Cruisers experience freedom, travel, and their love of the ocean. Cruisers make a conscious decision to leave mainstream society in an effort to create a more fulfilling and satisfying life (p. 101).

Caravanning is a popular travel segment in Australia, mirroring the RV travel segment in the United States. Caravanning includes either a parked or mobile vehicle, the latter typically towed behind a vehicle. Prideaux & McClymont (2006) noted the caravanning industry experienced a surge in participation levels between 2000-2003. What once was a lifestyle for family cohorts can now be more accurately described as empty nester travel parties. The following demographics were revealed in the Prideaux and McClymont (2006) study, providing comparative analysis for the current study. The age demographics included 4% younger than age 45, 89% between ages 45-75, and 7% were of age 75+. Approximately 73% were retired. Additional characteristics revealed the average caravanning trip was 10 weeks, with approximately 49% of the participants recorded their trip length between 1-3 months and 19% caravanning 2-4 weeks. Stopovers during their trip entirety included 11 or more stops by approximately 60% of the travelers while 27% of the travelers made 5-10 stopovers.

RV specific studies have been noted in the academic literature. Campers' preference for public, private, or state owned campgrounds were studied by Hammitt & Strohmeir (1983). Ronkainen and Woodside (1984) focused on a campground's tourism strategy and market share. Solitude, nature, and facility were identifying factors critical to camper satisfaction (Connelly, 1987) while McFarlane (2004) studied the behavioral, cognitive, and psychological attachment of recreation specialization to the choice of recreation settings and site selection. The flexibility of RVing offering a range of options at the destination and/or along their travel route was the focus of the Fodness & Murray study (1997). The RV traveler is generally experienced as a travel consumer and more likely to plan a trip based on their personal experience (Fodness & Murray, 1999).

More recently, Fjelstul and Severt (2011) provided evidence on the current usage patterns of member-based and public-based online forums, revealing destination inquiries was the most reported theme in both platforms. Fjelstul, Wang, and Li (2012) provided empirical evidence identifying RV traveler perspectives from recent campground experiences. Themes identified in current forums included campground attributes, campsite attributes, outdoor activities, surrounding area, campground policies, and staff. Heintzman (2012) explored the spiritual dimension of a camper's park experience and the implications for park management. Fjelstul (2013) examined pull factor variables specific to campground attributes.

## The RV Industry

The recreational vehicle (RV) industry can be chronicled back to the early 1900's. RVers traveled in modified automobiles equipped with sleeping and cooking gear to enjoy the comforts of home away from home. They camped along the road heating cans of food on gasoline stoves

and were often referred to as “tin can tourists (Go RVing, 2012). Interest in RVing has continued throughout the past century with an estimated 8.9 million households in the United States owning a RV in a current RV industry estimated at \$37 billion (RVIA, 2012). Moreover, the modified camping automobile of the past has also evolved, offering basic amenities to customization such as slide out room expansions, entertainment centers, satellite systems, designer kitchens, and washers and dryers. Extreme RVs include double-decker living quarters up to 45 feet in length.

A comprehensive lifestyle segmentation of today’s RV traveler in the United States had not been conducted prior to the present research. In fact, the most recent industry sponsored survey was conducted in 2011 (RVIA, 2012). In brief, the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) national survey of RV owners explored general demographics, patterns, and trends (RVIA, 2012). Demographics revealed an average age of 48 with an income of \$62,000. Over 64% of the RV owners intended to use their RV more during the spring/summer of 2011 than the previous year, 24% will use their RV about the same amount, and 7% indicated they will use it less. Approximately 58% indicated fuel prices would affect their plans by choosing closer destinations and driving fewer miles. Approximately 18% intended to leave their RV at a destination and travel back and forth by family car, an emerging trend in today’s RV industry.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

The design and development of the present study was multi-faceted. First, a review of current literature was conducted to determine the presence of RV related studies. The review included academic and industry related articles respective to the objectives set forth in this study. A review of industry-based surveys was also conducted as a reference to key dimensions. Phone calls, conference calls, and emails with industry leaders followed, providing a perspective for the study.

The initial draft of the survey was developed and subsequently reviewed by industry leaders. Once reviewed and edited, a survey pretest was administered to check for face validity and readability. Minor edification was performed. The final survey was electronic-based and included general demographics, travel patterns, campground selections, and general RVing questions. Likert scales, ratings, and open ended questions were included. The current study’s objectives centered on general demographics and travel patterns for market segmentation of the RV traveler.

The survey was randomly distributed to 100,000 members of a large RV membership association. Participation was voluntary and confidential. The participants of the online survey submitted their responses in the spring, 2012. There were 30,539 surveys returned, equating to an approximate 30% response rate. The collected data was coded into an SPSS data file for analysis. After further review, the final number of usable surveys was 30,414. Based on the large sample size, the usable surveys were randomly categorized into two groups of equal size, each containing 15,207. One group was utilized for analysis for the current study. The other group will be utilized for validation in future studies.

In accordance to the objectives set forth, the following procedures were conducted. First, general demographics were analyzed on 15,207 respondents to gain an overall understanding of today's RV traveler (Table 1). Next, a cluster analysis was performed on variables within the data set to provide an in-depth profile of the RVer market share. According to Everitt, Landau, and Leese (2001), cluster analysis is an exploratory investigation which aims at sorting variables into groups with their degree of association as maximal for those belonging to the cluster and minimal otherwise. K-Means Cluster Analysis was chosen due to the large sample size in the present study (Coakes & Steed, 1999). Variables in the cluster analysis included gender, age, marital status, occupation, education, and income. Two distinct clusters were observed and appeared most appropriate. The two cluster solution provided distinction between groups and allowed for understandable interpretation. The two clusters were then identified as the Destination RVer (Cluster 1) and the Touring RVer (Cluster 2). Table 2 represents the two cluster summary.

For a better understanding of the RV lifestyle experienced by members of each cluster, an analysis was performed as how each cluster member describes their RV lifestyle categorically. More specifically, each respondent identified their RV lifestyle in one of the following categories; a weekend RVer, spending their RV vacation at one destination, travels from park to park with minimal time at each place, seasonal RVer, snowbird, or full-timer. (Table 3).

Lastly, the two identified clusters were analyzed for differences in travel patterns. Travel pattern questions in the survey referenced preferences in visiting campgrounds recommended by friends/family, choosing campgrounds or destinations first, selecting campgrounds previously or not previously visited, and the distance traveled to the selected campground in relation to their home base. A 5-point likert scale measuring the degree of agreement was utilized in each question, from strongly disagree to strongly agree (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree). A one way ANOVA was performed to investigate differences in travel patterns between clusters. Table 4 provides a summary of travel patterns by cluster.

## 4.0 Results

### Overall Respondents

A total of 30,539 surveys were returned, resulting with a total of 30,414 usable surveys. Based on the large response, two groups were randomly formed, each represented with 15,207 participants. Table 1 reveals the demographics of the 15,207 participants. Briefly, the respondents were predominantly male (67%), married (77%), and represented by ages 50+. Additionally, approximately 2/3 of the respondents were retired. Income levels were widespread yet fairly evenly distributed by income range. A summary of the demographics is provided in Table 1.

| Table 1<br><i>Demographics (n=15,207)</i> |         |
|---|---------|
| Variable                                  | Results |
| Gender                                    |         |
| Male                                      | 67%     |

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Female              | 19% |
| Age                 |     |
| 20-34               | 1%  |
| 35-49               | 6%  |
| 50-64               | 32% |
| 65+                 | 50% |
| Marital Status      |     |
| Single              | 23% |
| Married             | 77% |
| Occupation          |     |
| Employed            | 20% |
| Business Owner      | 6%  |
| Retired             | 61% |
| Unemployed          | 2%  |
|                     |     |
| Education           |     |
| High School or less | 16% |
| Some college        | 35% |
| Bachelor's Degree   | 21% |
| Master's/Doctorate  | 16% |
|                     |     |
| Income              |     |
| \$49,999 or less    | 16% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999   | 20% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999   | 16% |
| \$100,000+          | 21% |

### Cluster Description

As noted previously, there were a large number of surveys returned, over 30,000. Thus, the returned surveys were randomly assigned to two groups, each containing 15,207. One group was set aside for future validation use. The second group was utilized for cluster analysis in the current study. A cluster analysis was performed. Two cluster groups were determined by analyzing gender, age, marital status, occupation, education, and income. The two clusters were labeled as the *Destination RVer* and the *Touring RVer*. Table 2 outlines the demographic variables utilized and the resulting data report by cluster.

#### *Cluster 1: Destination RVer*

RVer in Cluster 1, referred to as the Destination RVer, are predominantly male. More than half are between the ages of 50-64 and are married. The majority of RVer are employed and with incomes exceeding \$100,000. RVer of this cluster are fairly balanced between the South (37%), West (29%), and Midwest (20%) of the United States when defining their home base region, with slightly less representation from the Northeast (13%). A limited number identified their home base as the Pacific Northwest (1%). Approximately 2/3 of the cluster described themselves as either a weekend RVer or one who stays at a particular destination for the entirety of the vacation. Less than 1/3 of the cluster travels from campground to campground while visiting a particular destination. The balance of members classified themselves as a seasonal RVer, a snowbird RVer, and/or a full timer who lives in the RV year round.

### Cluster 2: Touring RVer

RVerS in Cluster 2, referred to as Touring RVerS, are predominantly male. The majority are 65+ and married. The majority of cluster 2 members are retired. Incomes are balanced yet widespread, ranging from less than \$50,000 to over \$100,000. RVerS of the touring cluster are fairly balanced in home base locations between the South (35%) and West (37%) regions of the United States, with less representation from the Midwest (19%) and Northeast (9%), respectively. The Pacific Northwest as a home base region was not represented in this cluster of RVerS. Approximately 1/2 of the cluster described themselves as one who travels from park to park while touring the surrounding area. Furthermore, less than 20% spend their RV vacation at one destination, 12% are snowbirds, 10% full timers, and the balance are either weekend RVerS or seasonal RVerS.

|                     | Clusters |     |
|---------------------|----------|-----|
|                     | 1        | 2   |
| Gender              |          |     |
| Male                | 77%      | 80% |
| Female              | 23%      | 20% |
| Age                 |          |     |
| 20-34               | 1%       | 0%  |
| 35-49               | 19%      | 1%  |
| 50-64               | 63%      | 29% |
| 65+                 | 17%      | 70% |
| Marital Status      |          |     |
| Single              | 12%      | 12% |
| Married             | 88%      | 88% |
| Occupation          |          |     |
| Employed            | 88%      | 0%  |
| Business Owner      | 10%      | 6%  |
| Retired             | 0%       | 94% |
| Unemployed          | 2%       | 0%  |
| Education           |          |     |
| High School or less | 21%      | 18% |
| Some college        | 41%      | 40% |
| Bachelor's Degree   | 23%      | 24% |
| Master's/Doctorate  | 15%      | 19% |
| Income              |          |     |
| \$49,999 or less    | 9%       | 27% |
| \$50,000-\$74,999   | 19%      | 31% |
| \$75,000-\$99,999   | 23%      | 22% |
| \$100,000+          | 49%      | 21% |

Categorical data was requested from participants in the present study. The participants were asked to identify which category best described their RV lifestyle. Table 3 provides a summary by cluster. For the *Destination RVer*, a fairly equal classification was observed as weekend



travelers, RVers choosing to spend their vacation at one destination, and RVers who travel from park to park with little stay at any one park. The *Destination RVer* had minimal representation as seasonal RVers, snowbirds, and full-timers. In contrast, a significant portion of the *Touring RVer* travels from park to park with minimal days at each stopover.

|  | Clusters         |              |
|--|------------------|--------------|
|  | Destination RVer | Touring RVer |
| Weekend RVer   | 35%              | 9%           |
| Spend RV vacation at one destination   | 28%              | 18%          |
| Travels from park to park, possibly one or two nights at one place while in area | 28%              | 49%          |
| Seasonal RVer; rents an RV site for at least one month                           | 4%               | 3%           |
| Snowbird RVer; travels to sunbelt state in the winter                            | 2%               | 12%          |
| Full-timer; lives in RV full-time  | 3%               | 9%           |

### Travel Pattern Differences between Clusters

A one way ANOVA was performed to investigate differences in travel patterns between clusters. The means for each travel pattern listed was calculated based on a 5-point Likert scale, reflecting their level of preference. The analysis of variance revealed significant differences ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) existed between clusters with each travel pattern. Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test indicated the mean score was significantly different between the clusters and each travel pattern. More specifically to the mean value, *Destination RVers* preferred by a narrow margin the following travel patterns over the *Touring RVer*; visiting campgrounds recommended by friends/family, and preferring to stay at campgrounds not previously visited. In contrast, the following travel patterns were favored slightly by the *Touring RVer* over the *Destination RVer*; choosing a destination first and staying at least 100 miles from home. Table 4 provides a summary of the travel patterns between clusters.

| Travel Pattern                                  | Cluster | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---------|------|----------------|
| Choose campground recommended by friends/family | 1       | 3.63 | 1.14           |
|   | 2       | 3.40 | 1.17           |
| Choose a destination first, then a campground   | 1       | 4.37 | .91            |
|   | 2       | 4.41 | .89            |
| Choose a campground first, then a destination   | 1       | 1.92 | 1.04           |
|   | 2       | 1.69 | .98            |

|  |   |      |      |
|--|---|------|------|
| Choose a campground not previously visited       | 1 | 3.29 | .89  |
|  | 2 | 3.19 | .92  |
| Choose a campground I have previously visited    | 1 | 3.89 | .88  |
|  | 2 | 3.81 | .91  |
| Choose a campground close to home                | 1 | 2.80 | 1.11 |
|  | 2 | 2.39 | 1.11 |
| Choose a campground at least 100 miles from home | 1 | 3.48 | 1.02 |
|  | 2 | 3.63 | 1.07 |

## 5.0 Conclusions

There were limitations to the study. First, the participants for the present study were members of a large RV membership association. General demographics of the association are unknown. Second, the present study was predominantly supported by participants age 50+. For comparison, it is unknown how many members of the association are younger than age 50.

Nevertheless, the present study contributes to the literature and for the industry in several dimensions, providing empirical evidence in identifying market segmentation of today's RV traveler. First, gender, occupation, and income had the most variation when comparing variables between the entire population and the clusters. For instance, when reviewing the participants without cluster separation, the findings revealed 67% male. Cluster segmentation reported 77% and 80% respectively. In reference to occupation, the entire demographic profile revealed 20% employed with 61% retired. By cluster, 88% of the *Destination RVer* was employed and none of the *Touring RVers* were employed. Furthermore, none of the *Destination RVers* were retired and 94% of the *Touring RVers* were retired. Income also varied between the entire sampling and the clusters. Tables 1 and 2 offer the variations to avoid redundancy. There appears to be substantial variation in gender, occupation, and income when solely analyzing demographics without segmentation. The findings, thus, are consistent with Plumber (1974) in that segmentation provides a wider view of the customer. Future research should explore statistical differences between all respondents and the identified clusters with regard to demographic variables. Additionally, predicting travel behavior and consumption patterns by demographics and by cluster would assist in developing products and services attractive to each cohort.

As mentioned previously, caravanning is similar in lifestyle to RVing. The present study revealed similar demographics to Prideaux and McClymont (2006) where 89% were between ages 45-75. The present study revealed 82% in a similar age bracket. By cluster, however, the *Destination RVer* was consistent with Prideaux and McClymont (2006) but the *Touring RVer* revealed variation. Therefore, it would be worth noting what types of marketing campaigns are implemented for the 45+ age group in the promotion of caravanning globally to be replicated domestically. Mirroring such campaigns may be an enticement for international travelers to choose RVing as a vacation alternative while visiting the United States or as a permanent relocation adopted lifestyle. Campaigns attractive for the *Touring RVer*, however, would require further exploration to be more applicable and effective for their cohort.

Second, age as a demographic variable was a predominant finding in the current study for future consideration and customization of products, services, and promotions for the RV traveler. Approximately 80% of the 15,000+ randomly grouped respondents are between the ages of 55-74. By cluster, approximately 80% of the *Destination RVer* was over age 50 and 99% of the *Touring RVer* was over age 50. Identifying products, services, and effective communication channels would be highly recommended to attract and/or retain today's RVer. Equally important, however, is for the marketing, promotion, and attraction of the younger generation to the RV industry. Assumedly, there are different marketing strategies for younger and older travelers, for instance with communication mediums. In agreement with Craig-Lees, Joy, and Brown (1995), it would be assumed that people of similar segments would consume similar products. Sustainability of the RV industry weighs heavily on the ability to retain the current RVer while attracting the younger RV generation traveler. Furthermore, the majority of Cluster 2 members (*Touring RVer*) identified themselves as retired. A further investigation by cluster as to why the older than age 50 RVer travels by RV would be necessary to expand on identified motivators, subsequently assisting in the marketing of the RV lifestyle to the next generation.

Third, a significant distinction between the two clusters was how they describe themselves. The *Destination RVer* is active in the lifestyle on weekends and tends to choose a destination first before a campground. For sustainability, a recommendation would be to determine the average distance traveled from home by the *Destination RVer* to enhance promotions regarding venues and attractions within the defined radius. Since most *Destination RVers* are still employed, the average distance traveled would assumedly be within close proximity from home base as likely predicated by most still employed in the workforce. Likewise, an exploration of venues attractive to the younger than age 50 RV travelers would be beneficial for sustainability and an increased likelihood for attracting more travelers to the RV lifestyle.

A future exploration of Cluster 2 (*Touring RVer*) of their typical day RVing would be beneficial for stakeholders striving for their market share. More specifically, how far they travel and their interests should be noted; i.e. cultural destinations, nature based settings, upscale resorts, or secluded venues. In times of economic uncertainty, it also proves timely to explore what inhibits and/or may negatively impact their future RV travel planning. For example, will this pattern remain relatively stable or will the economic landscape dictate the number of miles traveled and/or the number of times an RVer will move locations, all of which adds to increased fuel expense. If in fact the *Touring RVer* begins to mirror the *Destination RVer* by staying in one location longer, it would be suggested that destinations begin advertising day trip excursions within a designated radius for the attraction of the *Touring RVer* market share. Such practice is also well positioned for the present *Destination RVer* as they typically stay in one destination. The *Touring RVer* is more likely to be a snowbird or full-timer as compared to the *Destination RVer*. Future studies should explore why snowbirds and full-timers choose RV travel over the conventional accommodation; condo, house, manufactured home would serve dual purpose. First, findings would provide a more accurate account for marketing of products and services, including the sale of RVs and locations and destinations which are RV friendly. Second, a clearer understanding as to why RVers travel by RV will assist in promoting the RV lifestyle. Campground owners/operators could host informational seminars on what life is like as an RVer and the economics common to the snowbird and as a full time RVer, educating present day RVers and/or non-RVers for future consideration to the lifestyle.

Income levels of current RVers are encouraging. The *Destination RVer* has approximately 50% of its cluster earning over \$100,000, indicating a strong possibility of available disposable income for the future sustainability of the RV industry. The *Touring RVer* reported more balanced income levels, with over 20% reporting \$100,000+. Such findings are consistent with Sievanen, Pouta, and Neuvonen (2012) in that the RV lifestyle is not exclusive to the higher socio-economic status. Future research should explore spending patterns with regards to the type of RV owned, the campground type preferred, and travel patterns to capture how each income level experiences the RV lifestyle.

An additional finding respective to home base regions was that few RV travelers were from the Pacific Northwest ( $\leq 1\%$ ). Further investigation is needed to determine why the region has low representation. There are growth and financial opportunities for RV manufacturers and dealers to gain presence in the region. Exploring the inhibitors to RV travel in the northwest would provide clarity for growth initiatives. Two assumptions for the sparse representation would be worth noting. One is the mountainous terrain. RVs in mountainous terrain should be equipped with sufficient torque for ease of travel. The same holds true for the vehicles towing an RV. Torque accommodates the extreme elevations. If an RVer does not have sufficient torque in their RV, quite possibly the enjoyment for RV travel is suppressed by the struggle with elevation travel. Second is to investigate if RVers are sufficiently educated on amenities and features available in RVs for their usability year round. The purchase of an RV is often a sizeable investment. Thus, the projected usage would predictably be a factor in purchasing an RV and/or pursuing the RV lifestyle. RVs can be lived in during extreme cold with proper features and systems. Many avid RVers cannot use their RV for winter activities if their RV is not equipped. Interestingly, the Northeast was adequately represented in the present study. The northeast has harsh winters as well. Mountainous terrains of the northwest, therefore, may be the deterring influence but could be overcome with the proper education and ultimately owning a compatible RV to the local terrain.

Lastly, all travel pattern scenarios were significant between clusters. The strongest preference was choosing a destination prior to campground selection. This finding is consistent with A'guas, Costa, and Rita (2000) in that segmentation creates a marketing portfolio, critical to destination marketing organizations and local convention and visitors bureaus. Marketing destinations that are RV friendly and age specific could have an economic impact in the local economy. Choosing a campground previously visited and/or recommended by friends and family was also of strong influence. The travel pattern least preferred by both clusters was choosing a campground before choosing a destination. This is a significant finding for campground owners. Assumedly, the goal of the campground is to attract first time guests while retaining their current clientele for future stays. Of relevance may be online review forums. Campground reviews are readily available. Onlookers are searching for guest experiences. It is imperative that the campground owner/operator have continual monitoring of online review sites respective to their property and in addressing negative reviews. Most prudent persons realize online narratives represent personal opinions. Personal bias may also be a factor. In addition, the validity of the postings relies on the authenticity of the RV traveler who is posting a review. It may also be argued that travelers posting RV campground experiences may or may not have experienced the posted event. The clusters are in agreement that choosing a campground prior to

choosing a destination is least preferred. Therefore, it would be advisable to campground owners and operators to spotlight the surrounding area attractions for campground marketing and promotions. Certainly, onsite features and amenities should be promoted but findings reveal destination selection is preferred over campgrounds.

In conclusion, the current study is a catalyst for future research involving the RV traveler. Market segmentation has been performed, thus presenting a benchmark for future studies. Recommendations for future studies have been identified throughout the discussions. The RV traveler is a tremendous market share central to travel and tourism with boundless research opportunities and exploration.

## 6.0 References

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