

Students Beliefs About the Benefits of Travel and Leisure: A Qualitative Analysis

A Senior Project

Presented to

the Faculty of the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration Department

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Bachelor of Science

By

Corbie E. Smith

March 2010

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## ABSTRACT

### THE BELIEFS AND MOTIVATIONS THAT IMPACT TRAVEL AND LEISURE OF MILLENNIAL GENERATION STUDENTS

CORBIE E. SMITH

MARCH 2010

Millennial generation students are a growing market for the travel and tourism industry, yet tourism marketers lack research regarding travel habits and motivations for them. As a result, the travel and leisure industry have not been able to capitalize on this revenue stream. The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, motivations, and attitudes that millennial generation students have about the benefits of travel and leisure. Topics for the literature review included motivations and attitudes, and qualitative research. Essays on motivations and beliefs of travel and leisure were assigned in fall 2009 to the RPTA 214 class and submitted electronically over blackboard. Of the original 22 essays 12 were randomly selected and converted into a master copy to eliminate names. The researcher analyzed the data qualitatively by scanning for word usage and context. The results indicated that the major beliefs, motivations, and attitudes for millennial generation students were: the whole experience, education, freedom, and personal growth. These findings can be used by the travel and leisure industry to better target the millennial generation college students.

Keywords: millennial generation, motivations, student, travel, leisure

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Background of the Study

Every year millions of dollars are spent on international and domestic leisure and travel activities. Motivations for travel vary from person to person and can be tricky for marketers to keep track of. Simon (2009) suggested that socioeconomic forces influence the travel industry and the way people travel through out the year. The travel industry is evolving and changing everyday. In order to understand and make marketing decisions to best serve the potential participants, new and viable research is needed on a frequent basis.

One of the largest target populations for travel and leisure marketing is currently the “Baby Boomer Generation.” They typically have expendable income and time to participate in leisure and travel activities. Marketers have been successful with this market segment and continue to have ample research on motivations and attitudes of this target population. For example, Cleaver, Green, and Muller (2000) found that the boomer generation can be segmented based on their travel motivations, and ultimately influence the way hospitality and tourism products are designed and communicated. Another large and up and coming group of travel and leisure participants is the millennial generation. College students make up for a vast majority of this generation, and according to McIntosh and Goeldner they are “educated travelers that tend to appreciate a change in scenery and do make efforts to explore the new” (as cited in Hallab, Price,

Fournier, 2006, p. 138). College students are a revenue resource for the leisure and travel industry with growth potential.

According to Chadee and Cutler (1996), the economic impact and potential growth of college student travel has had little coverage in the academic press (as cited in Kim, Oh, & Jogaratnam, 2007). This current lack in research concerning millennial generation motivations for travel has resulted in inadequate marketing. Travel industry promotion and advertisement currently focus primarily on the boomer generation with little regard toward the millennial generation. College students don't want to take the same vacations as their parents or grandparents, so in order to use time and money efficiently on marketing to this target population, proper research must be conducted to explore and understand their needs and wants as travel participants.

Research conducted on college student travel motivations could be used by industry marketers, hotels, travel destinations, tour providers, colleges and universities, as well as any leisure service provider. This study could also be used by other researchers working on their own studies concerning travel by the millennial generation. College students as a target market for travel could provide added revenue to local, national, and international service providers. This study will zero in on a small segment of students at Cal Poly to explore motivations and attitudes towards the benefit of leisure and travel using a qualitative approach. Asking the "why" questions in this study will help marketers and service providers understand this generations core values and beliefs that motivate them to choose their travel and leisure activities. It is hoped that this study will prove to be useful in gauging how millennial generation college students participate in

the travel industry and aid various travel and service providers in their marketing strategies toward this group.

### Review of Literature

The information for this review of literature was gathered from scholarly journal articles from the following databases at Robert E. Kennedy Library on the California Polytechnic State University campus in San Luis Obispo, California: EBSCOhost, Hospitality & Tourism Complete, Academic Elite, E-Journals, and link plus book and online articles. The review is divided into two major topic areas. The first topic area focuses on motivations and attitudes as they pertain to various leisure and travel benefits. The second topic area focuses on the qualitative approach to research and its use in studies related to leisure and travel research.

Motivations and attitudes. Travel motivations and attitudes have been a topic of research and discussion for many years. The findings from these studies became useful primarily when leisure and travel suppliers began marketing their services. College students have become a large market in the travel industry, and within the last decade marketers have geared many travel packages and leisure activities to appeal to this growing market segment. In order to understand why college students choose their leisure and travel endeavors it is imperative to look deeper into their personal motivations and traits. This section explores issues related to travel and leisure motivations.

Student travel and leisure choices are derived from a wide array of motivations. Both external and internal motivations ultimately influence where, when, and how students travel. Hallab et al. (2006) conducted a study in which they surveyed Swiss

hospitality students about their push and pull factors in regards to travel. They reported that cost, security, and scenery were the three most important factors in choosing a destination. Cost makes up for a large portion of concern when traveling on a students' budget, but as reported above, it is one of many factors students take into consideration when choosing a travel destination.

Other researchers have found that internal factors such as relationships, social interaction and personal beliefs are also significant motivations for travelers (Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006; Ralston, 1993). When studying the Anne Frank House as a travel destination, Poria et al. (2006) found that patrons to the site who felt a personal link to the history were more inclined to visit, but when the recognition of their personal link to the history was measured they found that the patrons did not necessarily recognize or discount the link with their personal history. In linking internal motivations with travel motivations Ralston (1993) found a noteworthy difference in the motivations for travel among males and females. The research shows that female choices in travel are influenced by factors such as social contact, family togetherness, and nostalgia, whereas rest, escape, and natural appreciation for a setting influence males. Both internal and external motivations influence the way students think and act on their leisure and travel pursuits.

Ongoing research about different types of travelers has set the framework for the study of personality traits and how they play into travel and leisure pursuits. Plog (2002) defined venturers as travelers who "reach out and explore the world around them with anticipation and excitement" (p. 246). Similarly, Zuckerman (1994) stated that "Sensation seeking is a personality trait, defined as one's need for varied, novel,



complex, and intense sensory stimulation and the level of willingness to take physical, legal, and/or financial risks to satisfy the desire for such stimulation” (as cited in Litvin, 2008, p. 440). On the other end of the spectrum, Plog (2002) described dependables as travelers who have “a general sense of indecisiveness, a low-level feeling of dread or anxiety that may pervade much of their lives, and a desire to make safe and comfortable decisions” (p. 246). On a demographic level, Ralson (1993) explained her findings regarding traveler type and age. The research shows that the two populations Ralston surveyed (senior citizens and college students) had significantly different traits in terms of traveler type. The former studies show that varying beliefs and demographics among individuals that mold their personality traits to land them somewhere on a spectrum of traveler types ultimately influencing the way they perceive the motivations and benefits of travel and leisure pursuits.

Qualitative research. Qualitative research has been used in many fields of study over the years, but has more recently seen changes due to technological advances. Computer software has allowed researchers to speed up the process of coding and allowed for ease of organization of data. Despite these advances, some researchers opt to use the manual approach to qualitative data analysis. Resulting from time and cost, qualitative data is not at the forefront of research analysis methodologies, but if chosen as an analytical method it allows a bridge between collection and analysis of data enabling the researcher to refine their understanding of the study throughout the projects life span (Basit, 2003). This section will cover concepts, uses, and types of qualitative research. Qualitative data analysis can be explained as an objective oriented and in depth interpretation resulting in direct findings from raw data without preconceived notions

(Thomas, 2006). Research is typically looked at from a scientific standpoint, but Eisner (2001) has argued that qualitative research has many parallels to the arts by stating that:

Qualitative researchers pay careful attention to highly nuanced qualities in both their uptake and their output, they are focused on cases, that is, on the particular; they use forms of communication that are intended to do more than tell, but show, that is, to convey a sense or feeling of person or place. Qualitative research has much to do with making vivid what had been obscure. (p. 136)

Basit (2003) also stated that researchers should be focused on the idea of what the subjects feel and why, instead of merely focusing on how they answered. In many studies the why question is never asked, so focus tends to be weighted on how they answered instead of exploring the motivations behind the answer.

There are many ways in which a qualitative study can be conducted. The basic two methods are manual (by hand) and computer programs that aid in organization and coding. In a study on qualitative approaches, Webb (1999) suggested that researchers who are new to the qualitative approach would benefit from doing their initial projects manually in order to gain a basic understanding of the approach. Researchers have the option of getting more intimate with their study when analyzing the data by hand, but it can be very tedious and time consuming. Advances in technology have led to computerized research packages that aid in “data reduction, condensation, distillation, grouping and classification (Basit, 2003, p. 152). When dealing with large study samples, computerized analysis may benefit the researcher by cutting down time, but many of the computerized packages are costly.

When conducting qualitative studies, researchers typically use purposive sampling instead of probability because they seek to gain understanding about a specific group. The researchers aim to explore “discover and/or refine theories and concepts” in order to support the purpose of their study (Devers & Frankel, 2000, p. 268). The use of another method within qualitative research is the idea of concept mapping. According to Wheeldon and Faubert, (2009) concept mapping is a visual way for participants to categorize their values, and has been used in a number of fields including science education, engineering, mathematics, psychology, and health. They found that there is a great potential for this method in the social science field as well. This concept could prove to be useful in the travel industry if it is cost and time effective.

Summary. The review of literature covered two topic areas: motivations and attitudes and qualitative research. Motivations and attitudes of millennial travelers are important to travel destinations and service providers. It can be used to formulate efficient marketing strategies geared to this specific segment. Researchers would also be able to use this study to build on for their own endeavors. The lack of information concerning millennial travelers and motivations shows a need for research. New research will help the tourism and travel industry target this market segment and create a new revenue stream. Manual qualitative research may not be used as much due to the technology advances and computer software, but it still shows results and allows the researcher to get intimate with the data and refine understanding. Research using qualitative analysis asks the why questions. In the travel industry why questions are how researchers gain knowledge and understanding of their customers, allowing travel

providers to offer the appropriate services. Understanding the current market, how the market functions, and why are important tool for the travel industry.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, motivations, and attitudes that millennial generation students have about the benefits of travel and leisure.

### Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What beliefs, motivations, and attitudes do RPTA students have about the benefits of travel and leisure?
2. Do students communicate their beliefs about the benefits of travel and leisure in context with their personal belief systems?
3. Are travel and leisure choices influenced by students' personal beliefs?

### Delimitations

This study was delimited to the following parameters:

1. The data from this study were gathered from "This I Believe...about Travel and Leisure" essays written by students in RPTA 214.
2. Students' beliefs and attitudes towards travel and leisure were analyzed in this study.

3. The essays used in this content analysis study were gathered from Dr. Greenwood and her RPTA 214 class on the California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo campus.
4. The data were collected in the fall of 2009.
5. Content analysis was used on the essays for this study.

### Limitations

This study was limited by the following factors:

1. A small sample size was used in this study.
2. The data analyzed for this study were graded documents and may reflect what the participant thought was expected and not their actual feelings.

### Assumptions

This study was based on the following assumptions:

1. It was assumed that RPTA 214 students wrote essays reflecting their own beliefs and attitudes truthfully.
2. It is assumed that all essays were written by RPTA 214 students.

### Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as used in this study:

Motivation. characteristics that influence travel choices through push and pull factors

## Chapter 2

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, motivations, and attitudes that millennial generation students have about the benefits of travel and leisure. This chapter will present readers with a description of the subjects, instrument, and procedures used in this study followed by the method of data analysis.

#### Description of Subjects

The subjects in this study were undergraduate students in the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration major at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, California. The subjects were enrolled in RPTA 214, Introduction to Travel and Tourism, in the fall quarter of 2009. The total population for the RPTA 214, Introduction to Travel and Tourism, was 22 students, out of which half were selected using simple random sampling. The subjects were male and female students ranging in age between 18-25 years old. This group of subjects qualified for this study because they completed the required essay “This I Believe... about Travel and Leisure” during the fall 2009 quarter of RPTA 214.

#### Description of Procedures

On November 2, 2009 Dr. Greenwood distributed and collected the informed consent forms to gain permission to use RPTA 214 students’ essays. On December 2, 2009 all essays were collected electronically using Blackboard. After collection, the

eleven essays selected for the study were combined into one master document to eliminate all students' names.

### Description of Instrument & Method of Data Analysis

A qualitative approach was used for the data analysis portion of this study. Dr. Greenwood distributed the instructions for the "This I Believe... about Travel and Leisure" essays and the informed consent letter stating the minimal risks for participating in this study. The Human Subjects Committee approved this study, and a copy of the informed consent letter can be found in Appendix A and a description of the assignment can be found in Appendix B. The assignment used for this study was constructed on the idea of building respect and understanding for different belief systems. The idea of tapping in to individual beliefs in order to learn and respect others was originally purposed by journalist Edward R. Murrow in the 1950's. Since then people like Colin Powell, Muhammad Ali, and Tony Hawk have all contributed to this discussion. The assignment for this study took Edward R. Murrows' idea and aimed at discovering millennial students' core beliefs and the role they play in the students' travel and leisure choices. After the essays were completed they were submitted electronically and scanned by hand for common word usage and phrases. The researcher placed the data into categories illustrating the common motivations shared by the participants. The most frequent phrases and common word usage on the spread sheets led the researchers back to the raw data to analyze the context in which the phrases were used. This practice added insight into how and why students feel they way they do about the benefit of travel and leisure in their lives.

## Chapter 3

### PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, motivations, and attitudes that millennial generation students have about the benefits of travel and leisure. A total of 22 students from RPTA 214, Introduction to Travel and Tourism, in the RPTA Department at Cal Poly participated and submitted essays for this study. Of the 22 essays submitted 12 were randomly selected and scanned for common word usage. The following reflects the researchers' motivation to create this study.

#### Researcher's Reflection

Currently in my last year at Cal Poly I have had the opportunity to reflect on my experience in the variety of programs offered by the RPTA department. My concentration is in Tourism Planning and Management, and I have taken a similar class to RPTA 214. In that class, I was introduced to the travel and tourism industry and the current trends and practices used by travel and leisure service providers. An area lacking in data was the millennial generation category. Currently, being a part of this generation of young college students, I found it interesting that not only was there a lack of general data, but that there was a lack of data regarding information about the driving motivations for travel within this demographic. The value of this data for travel marketers is endless because of constant contact they have with such an adventurous group. The millennial generation alone has made quite an impact on the travel and leisure industry for spring and summer trips.



After that class I was privileged enough to be a part of the 2009 RPTA 412 Mexican Rivera Cruise over spring break. This gave me the opportunity to think about what motivates me and my fellow student to travel as part of the millennial generation. Once Dr. Greenwood expressed her interest in this subject I immediately jumped on the opportunity to contribute to the travel and tourism field by creating a study that would reflect RPTA students' beliefs and motivations in choosing to travel. The following are the major motivations and beliefs deducted from this study.

### Motivations and Beliefs

The two major motivations that reoccurred throughout the analysis were the notion of creating the “whole experience,” and the motivation to be a global student and learn about the unknown. The major beliefs that help motivate the participants in their travel and leisure choices were mentioned as freedom and personal growth. The following are the four major areas broken down into these categories: the whole experience, education, freedom, and personal growth.

The experience. Of the 12 participants, 11 reflected on the fact that they were motivated by the “experience” they would receive from their travel and leisure choices. One of the participants mentioned that the experience of visiting their homeland in the Philippines allowed them to be, “...submerged into a culture that has opened my eyes to the realities of the world, I have broadened my perspectives on the way I think...” Others mentioned that new locations and environments, food, and culture were what they hoped to experience and gain appreciation for. Five of the participants described the experience of connecting with family, friends, and/or strangers to be a driving factor for

their travel and leisure participation. One participant stated that for them making connections with people in a new place increased their familiarity among a new culture as well as creating stronger bonds with old family and friends. Four of the participants felt the importance of stepping out of their comfort zone was a way to submerge themselves into a new culture or activity and gain a glimpse of life through someone else's eyes. One participant said, "I think traveling is meant to take people out of their comfort zones and challenge them to either push themselves to do something they wouldn't normally do, such as backpacking through Europe with no specific schedule or direction, or in a smaller way by getting them to try a different food."

Education. Out of the 12 participants 11 additionally mentioned that the educational aspects are important motivations when traveling. Within the education category, the participants mentioned they wanted to "expand their knowledge", "broaden perspectives", and "gain appreciation" for individuals and other cultures as a whole. Not only did the participants gain intangible knowledge, but they also gain different physical skills that they could take home with them. One participant learned to play the taiko drum while traveling and staying with host families in Japan. Others were able to learn about a new culture and reflect on their own culture with a little more appreciation. One participant summed up their thoughts on cultural appreciation by saying, "I believe that you must fully immerse yourself in a truly unfamiliar world in order to understand and appreciate your own." Others explained how broadening one perspective, "...educates a person on world affairs" when viewing things from a different cultural stand point. Generally speaking, most of the participants found that being a "global student" was an important motivator in their choice to continue traveling.

Freedom. A third of the participants mentioned that they believed travel to be freedom. For some this meant physical freedom from work, school, and everyday life. For others freedom in travel meant eliminating mental stress and creating a sense of relaxation while traveling. One participant mentioned that in their leisure time surfing helped them to, “keep their stress levels at a minimum”, and increase their morale and stay positive. Another simple put it, “traveling is good for the soul.” Travel and leisure for these participants allows their creativity and individuality to take shape without having the environmental constraints of time. According to one participant freedom can only be achieved when having an “open mind” and “willingness to experience” new surroundings and people. For some, freedom is just experiencing the rawness and purity of nature through surfing, hiking, and backpacking. For others this freeing sense can come from stepping into the unknown through travel.

Personal Growth. Seven of the participants explained that the personal growth they receive from their experiences in travel and leisure influence them in their choices. For some the participants’ personal growth was mentioned as being a new found understanding for a culture their parents came from. Two participants explained that they understood and grew as a person when they visited the homeland of their relatives. One mentioned that they were bringing home a profound understanding for their parents, having experienced what life was like for them in their homeland. Another participant felt there was mutual growth between them and their host family through “storytelling and photo-sharing.” Others learned about themselves through the people they chose to travel with. Some found that their bonds few stronger, while other felt a longing for people they left behind.

Through the analysis of the data it can be concluded that the major motivations for travel and leisure of millennial generation students are the educational aspects, as well as the opportunity to create as lasting and meaningful experience. The beliefs and attitudes of travel and leisure were positive for the participants. They believe that travel and leisure bring a variety of things to their lives, but the majority of the responses revolved around the notion of freedom and personal growth. The next chapter will allow for interpretation of these findings.

## Chapter 4

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

Businesses in the travel and leisure industry are looking for consumers who spend the most money, and that's who they market their products and services to. Currently, they are targeting their travel packages to the "Baby Boomer Generation." There is ample research in the travel and leisure industry on the spending patterns and the motivations of this market. Growing populations of millennial generation college students have flooded the travel and leisure scene over the past decade, but there is little information regarding what motivates them in their travel and leisure choices. Spring and summer trips are increasing in popularity, largely due to this demographic, and the travel and leisure industry would benefit from learning more about this market. The purpose of this study was to explore the beliefs, motivations, and attitudes millennial generation students have about the benefits of travel and leisure.

The review of literature covered two topic areas: travel motivations and attitudes, and qualitative research. In recent years, marketers have tried to create packages, leisure service activities, and promotional materials that have some draw for the traveling college student. In order to do so effectively, marketers need to know what motivates these student travelers, and what sort of attitudes they have towards travel and leisure activities. Motivations for travel and leisure pursuits can vary based on the type of traveler. The travelers classified as venturers are more inclined to step out on their own and explore the unknown, whereas travelers classified as dependables generally feel

insecure and typically make safe decisions about the activities they choose to take part in (Plog, 2002). Major motivations that relate to these categories and have also been seen in other research done on this demographic are: cost, security, scenery, relationships, social interactions, and personal beliefs (Hallab et al., 2006; Poria, Reichel, & Biran, 2006; Ralston, 1993).

Qualitative analysis has been a common form of research in other fields, but is not quite so common in the travel and leisure field. Over the last decade technology has made this form of research much easier by the introduction of word scan software. Despite the technological advances, the manual approach is still used. This approach allows researcher to form an in-depth understanding of the subjects feelings, as well as allowing them to interpret the subjects answers, not just based on how they answered, but why they answered the way they did (Basit, 2003; Thomas, 2006). In regards to millennial generation students and their motivations, attitudes, and beliefs towards travel and leisure, the qualitative analysis approach allows for an intimacy with the data for the researcher to put their motivations into context.

The subjects for this study were undergraduate students in the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration Department at Cal Poly who were enrolled in RPTA 214, Introduction to Travel and Tourism, in fall 2009. Ages ranged from 18-25, and both genders participated in the study. The requirement for the study was the completion of the “This I believe... about Travel and Leisure” essay. Of the 22 essays submitted, 12 essays were randomly selected to be used for the study. Dr. Greenwood assigned the essay to the students and distributed the informed consent letter. The essays were collected electronically using Blackboard, and from there they were inserted into a master

copy which eliminated all names and identification information. The researcher analyzed the data using the qualitative research method known as content analysis. The data is initially scanned by hand for common word usage, and then analyzed further for context. The researcher was able to use the data to gain a general perspective on the motivations and attitudes the students have when choosing their travel and leisure activities.

The purpose of the first research question was to determine what beliefs, motivations, and attitudes RPTA students have about the benefits of travel and leisure. According to the research, students' motivations and beliefs about the benefits of travel and leisure revolved around the following ideas: whole experience, education, freedom, and opportunity for personal growth. The majority of the students mentioned the notion of the "whole experience" as a driving motivator. Those experience seekers were looking for diversity in culture, environments out of their comfort zone, and personal connections with others. Education was another major motivation. A broadened perspective, increased knowledge, and appreciation for a new culture were among the learning aspects students looked for when choosing their travel and leisure pursuits. A significant number of students believed that travel and leisure meant freedom from physical constraints like work, school, and everyday life. For others, freedom meant relief from mental stressors. Another significant belief and attitude expressed by the students was positivity towards personal growth through travel and leisure. This notion of personal growth ranged from increased understanding of a culture to an increased sense of self and how that plays into the students' bond with others.

## Discussion

The research in this study was conducted to explore the major beliefs, motivations, and attitudes millennial generation RPTA students have towards the benefits of travel and leisure. The major areas of interest can be broken down into four categories: the whole experience, education, freedom, and personal growth.

The whole experience, education, freedom, and personal growth are the major beliefs and motivations for student concerning their travel and leisure choices. Of these four areas, the most prominent were the notion of the whole experience, and education. In these major areas, 11 out of 12 students mentioned that activities they encountered while participating in travel and/or leisure fell into these two motivational categories. The students expressed a need to create a worthwhile experience, and their thirst for knowledge suggests that the students aren't just seeking activities for pure fun; they want to get something out of their travel and leisure choices, something that will last long after the endeavor is over. They choose to travel or participate in certain leisure activities because of the rich cultural and educational experiences they have encountered in the past. The students expressed a passion for learning and understanding that they seek through cultural immersion, as well as by making personal connections with family, friends, and strangers along the way.

The other two significant beliefs and attitudes made evident from the study were that travel and tourism allow students to feel a sense of freedom and opportunity for personal growth. Students mentioned that freedom and open-mindedness in their past experiences in travel and leisure lead them to seek out freedom in their new pursuits. This suggests that students look for activities and destinations that are relaxing, stress



free, and set apart from their everyday life, similar to the choices of the traveling Baby Boomers. The idea of personal growth was a major factor for some students, which implies that maturity is an objective of travel in a young person's life. This also suggests that students want to grow in their global knowledge to become well rounded people that can make an impact on society.

Previous research on millennial generation students' travel habits and motivations were limited, but the results of this study do have some correlations to the literature found. Internal factors such as social connections, bonds, and relationships with family friends and strangers were significant motivations for students in previous studies as well as this study. Poria et al. (2006) linked personal attachments to history and patrons motivation to visit a site. Similarly, millennial generation students' personal links to a culture and thirst for education have influenced them to look for travel and leisure opportunities that incorporate these two areas of interest. The millennial generation students who participated in this study expressed excitement, anticipation, open-minded thinking, and a willingness to step out of their comfort zone, similar to the personality traits of travelers defined as venturers (Plog, 2002).

As the researcher, I was able to gain a deeper understanding for the motivations and beliefs of the students by using manual qualitative data analysis. Eisner (2001) noted that qualitative analysis appears very similar to the arts, in that it makes "vivid what was once obscure" (p. 136). In qualitative research the "why" question is asked, and it can be evaluated in more depth than data derived from quantitative research.

One of the major limitations in this study was the small sample size. The total class was only 22 students. In order to get a fair representation of the class a little more

than half were randomly selected for the study. This hindered the significance of the study because the results from the study cannot be generalized for the entire population of millennial generation students. The results only reflect on a small portion of that larger demographic, but the hope is that the study shares some insight as to what millennial generations students look for when engaging in travel and leisure activities. Another limitation was that the essays used for this study were required and graded documents for a class. Unfortunately, this means that there was no guarantee that the data derived from the essays are honest opinions from the students. Additionally, lack of age verification was also a limitation encountered. There were no precautions taken to ensure that the age of participants was limited to those that fall into the millennial generation age group.

The millennial generation makes up the vast majority of college students which have made their debut as participants in the travel and leisure industry in the last decade. The lack of research regarding this demographic's travel motivations and habits has limited marketers, hotels, travel destinations, tour providers, colleges and universities, as well as leisure service providers from harnessing the potential revenue this group can generate. This study has provided information to the travel and leisure industry about the opportunity to alter their current packages and promotional materials for college student towards an expressed need for creative, educational, and all inclusive experiences. Relaxation and stress free vacations market well to the millennial generation as well as the Baby Boomers, but tend to differ in setting and activity preferences. Colleges and universities have the ability to capitalize on this target market because they can offer educational travel opportunities that allow students to experience new cultures and reflect on their personal growth through their school work. This study, though small in size,

contributes valuable insight into the motivations and beliefs guiding this generation's student to choose certain travel and leisure activities.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. The top beliefs, motivations, and attitudes about the benefits of travel and leisure for millennial RPTA students are: the whole experience, education, freedom, and personal growth.
2. Millennial RPTA students communicate their beliefs about travel and leisure through the context of their values and goals for individual growth and interpersonal connections.
3. The choices made by millennial RPTA students about travel and leisure are influenced by their personal belief that freedom and learning come through personal growth when they are engaged in activities that allow creative and well rounded experiences.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Further research can be done to explore the beliefs, motivations, and attitudes students have towards travel and leisure on a wider scale in order to accurately represent the millennial generation as a whole.

2. The travel and leisure industry can modify promotional materials targeting college students to reflect the millennial generation's need for educational and meaningful travel and leisure experiences.
3. Hotels, tour providers, travel destinations, and leisure service providers can use this information to put together packages with activities for spring and summer trips specifically tailored to the millennial college students.
4. Colleges and universities can use this information for trips offered through their continuing education programs, or for credit classes offered on trips during spring and summer break. Choosing travel destinations and activities geared towards personal growth, relaxation, and cultural immersion will aid colleges and universities in attracting millennial students for these trips.

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## APPENDIXES



Appendix A

Essays

Appendix B

Informed Consent Letter & Assignment Description

## INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF STUDENT BELIEFS ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF TRAVEL AND LEISURE

A research project on student beliefs about the benefits of travel and leisure is being conducted by Corbie Smith in the Department of Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. The purpose of the study is to explore RPTA students' beliefs and attitudes about the benefits of travel and leisure using a qualitative approach.

You are being asked to take part in this study by providing permission to the researcher to utilize your "This I Believe...about Travel and Leisure" essay for content analysis. Your participation will take approximately five minutes. Please be aware that you are not required to participate in this research and you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty by emailing the instructor and asking that your essay be removed from the study.

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this study. Your essay will not be included in the study until your grade for the course has been posted. If you should experience any negative effects from participation in the study please be aware that you may contact the faculty advisor, Dr. Jerusha Greenwood at [jbgreenw@calpoly.edu](mailto:jbgreenw@calpoly.edu) or (805) 756-2050 for assistance.

Your confidentiality will be protected. Your essay will be copied into a separate document and any identifying information will be removed. The original essays will be saved in a password protected file on the faculty advisor's computer. The folder will be deleted after the study is concluded. Potential benefits associated with the study include enhancing the tourism industry's understanding of the millennial generation's beliefs and attitudes about the benefits of travel and leisure.

If you have questions regarding this study or would like to be informed of the results when the study is completed, please feel free to contact Corbie Smith at [csmith26@calpoly.edu](mailto:csmith26@calpoly.edu), or Dr. Jerusha Greenwood at [jbgreenw@calpoly.edu](mailto:jbgreenw@calpoly.edu). If you have questions or concerns regarding the manner in which the study is conducted, you may contact Dr. Steve Davis, Chair of the Cal Poly Human Subjects Committee, at 756-2754, [sdavis@calpoly.edu](mailto:sdavis@calpoly.edu), or Dr. Susan Opava, Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, at 756-1508, [sopava@calpoly.edu](mailto:sopava@calpoly.edu).

If you agree to voluntarily participate in this research project as described, please indicate your agreement by signing below (*or, in cases in which a signature is not needed<sup>6</sup> you may substitute "by completing the attached questionnaire"*). Please keep one copy of this form for your reference, and thank you for your participation in this research.

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Signature of Volunteer<sup>7</sup>

Date

## This I Believe...about Travel

*“...the beauty associated with being a human can often best be expressed through the sharing of stories.” (TIB, n.d)*

### Purpose

In the 1950s, a journalist named Edward R. Murrow challenged Nobel Prize winners and average Americans to “write about the core beliefs that guide your daily life.” In 2005, NPR producers revived the This I Believe project as a way “to encourage people to begin the...difficult task of developing respect for beliefs different from their own.” Colin Powell, Gloria Steinem, Muhammad Ali, Yo-Yo Ma, and Tony Hawk have contributed their essays to the project, and now it’s your turn to add your voice to the discussion.

The *This I Believe* project is about personal articles of faith. In 3-4 pages, you are going to articulate your core beliefs about the role of travel and leisure in your daily life. In order for you to gain an understanding of the importance of travel to our community (global, national, regional, etc.) you must have a personal understanding of its importance and relevance to you.

For this assignment to be meaningful, it must be entirely your own. As you look for focus, try to choose concrete language and to find something that helps others understand your past, present, and future choices.

### Instructions

Your ultimate goal with this exercise is to submit it to the *This I Believe* project for publication. Therefore, we will use the *This I Believe* essay-writing instructions:

“We invite you to contribute to this project by writing and submitting your own statement of personal belief. We understand how challenging this is—it requires such intimacy that no one else can do it for you. To guide you through this process, we offer these suggestions:

Tell a story: Be specific. Take your belief out of the ether and ground it in the events of your life. Consider moments when belief was formed or tested or changed. Think of your own experience, work, and family, and tell of the things you know that no one else does. Your story need not be heart-warming or gut-wrenching—it can even be funny—but it should be real. Make sure your story ties to the essence of your daily life philosophy and the shaping of your beliefs.

Be brief: Your statement should be between 350 and 500 words. That’s about three minutes when read aloud at your natural pace.

Name your belief: If you can’t name it in a sentence or two, your essay might not be about belief. Also, rather than writing a list, consider focusing on one core belief, because three minutes is a very short time.

Be positive: Please avoid preaching or editorializing. Tell us what you do believe, not what you don’t believe. Avoid speaking in the editorial “we.” Make your essay about you; speak in the first person.

Be personal: Write in words and phrases that are comfortable for you to speak. Read your essay aloud to yourself several times, and each time edit it and simplify it until you find the words, tone, and story that truly echo your belief and the way you speak.

*Ultimately, you’ll be reading your essay aloud to the class, so this step is important.*

In introducing the original series, host Edward R. Murrow said, “Never has the need for personal philosophies of this kind been so urgent.” We would argue that the need is as great now as it was 50 years ago. We are eager for your contribution.”

### Deliverables

This exercise is composed of nine different point-accruing sections. Writing an essay isn’t something you do during an all-nighter – it takes careful planning, reflection, and opportunity for revision. Therefore, you will be given ample opportunity to craft your essay throughout the quarter. Here is a schedule of due dates and assignment descriptions. *By their very nature, in-class assignments can not be made up (so please do not ask – unless you like hearing the word “no”).*

Credo Exercise:

Points – 30

Due Date – October 7

For this assignment, compose a personal credo that distills your unique belief about travel and leisure into a short statement of no more than 250 words. Don’t let the word limit frustrate you – this is just a skeleton for your full essay. You’ll have time to be more descriptive later; for now, you’re simply defining your belief as precisely as possible.

To help you get started: As you begin to articulate your own credo about travel and leisure, spend some time reflecting on creeds that have shaped political, social, or religious movements you’re interested in. Spend 15-20 minutes researching statements that have galvanized a group of people or shaped a movement.

For example, would you consider the Preamble to the Constitution or the Communist Manifesto as creeds? Do Amnesty International, Greenpeace, or other campus groups use statements of belief to identify themselves?

Can creeds be negative as well as positive statements, dividing as well as uniting as well as dividing people? In an interview on “The Need for Creeds,” Jaroslav Pelikan suggests, “in the darkest hours of life, you’ve got to believe something specific, and that specification is the task of the creed, because, much as some people may not like it, to believe one thing is also to disbelieve another. To say yes is also to say no.” Would you agree that human societies need creeds

**The Need for Creeds** with Jaroslav Pelikan on NPR

<http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/pelikan/transcript.shtml>

**Wikipedia** introduces the creeds of religious, political, and social groups

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creed>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American's\\_Creed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American's_Creed)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scout\\_Promise](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scout_Promise)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhisattva\\_vows](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bodhisattva_vows)

Listening to the Voices of Others

Points – 30

Due – October 14

We can all remember situations in which others have passionately stood up for their belief, and we often consider the purpose of these declarations to be persuasive or even evangelistic: “My belief is validated if I win you over to it.” And yet, as the producer of



*This I Believe*, Dan Gediman, re-introduced the series, he argued that “The goal of *This I Believe* is not to persuade Americans to agree on the same beliefs but to encourage Americans to pursue the much more difficult task of developing respect for beliefs different from their own.”

As a step toward developing this kind of mutual respect, we’re going to prepare to write our own essays by listening carefully to the voices of others:

Visit [www.thisibelieve.org](http://www.thisibelieve.org) and search the essay database for submissions from your city or state *or* for essays on a theme of interest to you. \*\*Do not select essays used in class as examples.

Skim quickly through the opening paragraphs of several of these essays and print copies of three you’d like to read.

Read through each essay the first time listening for the author’s unique voice. What experiences have shaped the lives of each? How does each respond, physically or emotionally, to these experiences?

Without attempting to indicate your agreement or disagreement with the essay, write a 1-2 paragraph summary of the author’s core belief and the way this belief has shaped life in the past or present. Each summary should be scrupulously accurate in recording the philosophy that guides the life and choices of the author.

Bring the essays and your summaries to class and be ready to discuss the original ways these writers responded to the assignment. How do they establish their own unique voice through each essay?

I Believe in Music discussion

Points – 10

Due – In-class assignment

Audience Awareness Discussion

Points – 10

Due – In-class assignment

Draft 1 – *This I Believe...* essay

Points – 50

Due – November 9

See instructions above.

Acting on Belief exercise

Points – 10

Due – In-class assignment

Peer Evaluation Exercise

Points – 10

Due – November 30

Revise the first draft of your manuscript based on the feedback from the instructor. If you've thought more about your essay based on class discussions or personal experiences, feel free to modify it as required. Bring \_\_\_\_ copies of your essay to class and be prepared to share it with others, receive constructive feedback, and respond to the presentation of others'.

Final Draft – *This I Believe...* essay and In-Class Reading

Points – 40

Due – December 2

The manuscript: Revise your manuscript based on the feedback from your peers. Make sure it meets the requirements outlined above and the formatting requirements outlined in the syllabus. It should be free from error, so proofread and ask others to proofread your work.

The reading: The *This I Believe* project is first and foremost an audio project. You are expected to read your essay to the class. Your reading should be well rehearsed, though it need not be memorized. There will be no audio-visual support for this component of the exercise – just you, your voice, and your words. Remember, your essay, when read aloud, should be no longer than three minutes.

Revising Belief Discussion

Points – 10

Due – In-class assignment