

Identifying and Planning Geotourism Experiences: A Case Study of Granville Island, Vancouver, BC

by

Ani Dimtcheva Kaltcheva

MAg., University of Burgas, Bulgaria, 2000

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Approval

Name: Ani Dimtcheva Kaltcheva
Degree: Master of Resource Management (Planning)
Title: *Identifying and Planning Geotourism Experiences: A Case Study of Granville Island, Vancouver, BC*
Project No: 595
Examining Committee: **Chair:** Carlos Zavarce
MRM Candidate, Simon Fraser University

Dr. Peter Williams
Senior Supervisor
Professor
School of Resource and
Environmental Management

Dr. Alison Gill
Supervisor
Professor
Department of Geography

Date Defended/Approved:

April 3, 2014

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Abstract

Granville Island has been an attractive, popular tourism and community destination for many years. With its diverse and complex mix of cultural, artistic, retail and entertaining products and services the Island conveys a wonderful sense of imagination, excitement and place. It provides a kaleidoscope of galleries, art studios, restaurants, markets, heritage buildings, street performances, and other unique experiences. The attractions and products are presented to its visitors in a thematically focused and carefully managed operating environment that seems to be aligned with the traits of successful geo-tourism destinations. The goal of this research is to identify the types of experiences visitors experience at Granville Island. In addition the study assesses the extent to which these experiences align with those associated with the authentic place-based geotourism destinations. Research findings suggest the existence of particular visitor experience realms at Granville Island, and some of these correspond reasonably well with notions of geotourism. However, opportunities exist to improve current visitors' experience opportunities. This could be achieved in ways that increase the destination's appeal for visitors seeking unique place-based adventures, and strengthening its position as Vancouver's preferred geotourism location.

Keywords: *Geotourism, tourists' experiences, Granville Island, destination management, tourism products, customer experience management.*

*To my loving parents, Pepi and Jimmy. A lifetime of
gratitude and dedication.*

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Chapter 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introducing Geotourism

The emergence of the 21st century has witnessed within the tourism sector the re-evaluation and reinvention of notions concerning quality visitor experiences and how they can be effectively supported by destinations (Jennings, 2010). Increasingly tourists are seeking uniquely different experiences when they travel in order to make their visits more distinctive and personally meaningful. Traditionally in tourism research the quality of visitor experiences was measured in terms of visitor reactions to a range of tangible products and services such as accommodation, food and beverage, transportation and tour experiences. However, over the past decade and a half a growing number of vacationers have expressed experience preferences in terms of their ability to participate in more immersive, authentic and in some cases transformational forms of travel engagement (Jennings et al, 2009). This new expression has driven an increasing number of travelers away from mass tourism experiences which concentrated on providing highly standardized tourism services and products, towards more customized and experiential forms of travel (Perez & Sampol, 2000).

In their efforts to satisfy travelers' expectations and simultaneously fulfill mass tourism demand, many tourism destinations gradually sacrificed their distinctive character by providing standardized generic products and services which aligned more with the needs of tourists than locals (Hose, 2008a). Over time, these host communities lost some of the special character that made them attractive in the first place. More recently, and in response to losses in overall appeal amongst visitors and residents alike, a growing number of host communities have reacted by attempting to protect/or preserve

their place's geographic character - the entire combination of natural and human attributes that make one place distinct from another. This shift from *mass* to *customized* tourism is reflected in the rise in popularity of alternative forms of tourism built around themes of sustainable, eco, and green, cultural, responsible and most recently, geotourism. Geotourism is an emerging form of tourism development centered on sustaining and enhancing the geographical character of a place (Tourtellot, 2002). Geotourism is about protecting places, emphasizing their natural environments and focusing on the distinctiveness of the place. The concept of geotourism is about being environmentally responsible, committed to conserving resources and protecting biodiversity. Geotourism is also about being culturally responsible, protecting and sustaining local sensibilities and building on local heritage. Geotourism is a relatively new concept that has been in use informally since 1997 (Hose, 1997). In 1997, Jonathan Tourtellot, the Director of the National Geographic (NG) Society's Center for Sustainable Development at the National Geographic Magazine codified the term geotourism. The birth of the term came as a response of variety of industry requests for a term and concept that is more unifying than ecotourism and sustainable tourism. The concept of geotourism was publically introduced for the first time in USA in 2002 in a *Geotourism Study* conducted by the Travel Industry Association of America. The North American definition of geotourism was defined as:

“tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a Place - its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents“

(Center for Sustainable Destinations, www.nationalgeographic.com, April 14, 2014).

Since then, the North American definition concept has gained popularity amongst many tourism stakeholders and has emerged as a planning and management model for several progressive tourism destinations. Geotourism acts as a “ best practice” tourism that not only incorporates sustainability principles but also provides an ethical aspect that focuses on the locale as a whole (National Geographic Society). The idea behind the notion of geotourism is that it supports and enhances the development of a locale based on its

character and sense of place rather than generic branding promoting standard goods and services.

1.2. Study Purpose. Research Questions and Objectives

This research was built and developed based on the concepts introduced and embedded by the National Geographic Society and followed the North American geotourism definition. The study's purpose is to identify the types of experiences expressed by visitors to a destination specifically designed and managed to offer authentic place-based visitor experiences. Its specific aim is to determine the extent to which the experiences the destination encourages for visitors align with those associated with the concept and principles geotourism. It does this with the intent of determining whether opportunities exist to more fully align the destination with the concepts of geotourism, and in the process create additional competitive advantage for case study area stakeholders in the tourism marketplace. The applied case study area for research is the Granville Island area of Vancouver, British Columbia.

- Q1: What kind of service and product experiences are tourists likely to experience during their visit on Granville Island?
- Q2: What are some examples of products and services provided by Granville Island that match with the preferences of the experiences of these visitors?
 - a) To what extent are the selected services and products experienced important to the tourist?
 - b) How satisfied are the tourists with experiencing these products?
- Q3: To what extent do the tourist experiences align with the concept of Pine and Gilmore (1999) four realms of experiences?
- Q4: To what extent do the experiences expressed by Granville Island's visitors align with those embedded within the concept of geotourism principles?

A customized assessment framework based on Pine and Gilmore's (1999) experience concepts and Oh et al. (2007) measurement scales directs the empirical research. Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four thematic realms of experience model provide the primary themes of visitor enquiry. The specific dimensions of these realms are based on geotourism-related customized versions of those questions probed in other research by Oh et al. (2007). Overall, the questions explore the unique settings of Granville Island, and visitor responses to various dimensions of experiences associated with geotourism encountered in this destination.

1.3. Research Strategy and Methods

A combination of literature review, case study, and survey methods inform this study's research design, data collection and analytical methods. The following paragraphs summarize the procedures used to guide the research design and eventual data collection and analysis.

1.3.1. Literature Review

Tourism experience and assessment criteria identified in the literature review guided the development of the research problem, questions and survey design (Oh et al., 2007; Boley and Nickerson, 2009). The literature review investigated the broader notion of experiences in the hospitality and tourism industry, and the concept of geotourism in relation to planning and urban destination experiences (Hose, 2008a; Hose, 2008b; Boley and Nickerson, 2009). Most importantly, concepts of visitor experience as expressed by Pine and Gilmore's model (1999) offered the driving frame for the investigation. Survey design, data collection, and analytical techniques used in other studies (Oh et al., 2007) helped guide and validate the use of the field research methods employed.

1.3.2. Case Study - Granville Island, Vancouver, BC

Granville Island was chosen as the study setting because of its highly experiential nature, rich programming diversity, localized activities, and interesting mix of tourists and residents. Its long-term commitment to implement local heritage in the design and development of infrastructure and choice of community initiatives also offered a strong basis for the case study choice. From an applied perspective, the management team at Granville Island were particularly interested in having empirical research of this nature conducted as a contribution to their longer-term strategic planning processes. More specifically, they felt that the findings discovered from this research might:

- 1) help clarify those aspects of Granville Island that defined its uniqueness (geographically and psychologically) as a community-based destination for locals and international travellers;
- 2) provide insights into the product development and communication options that Granville Island could incorporate into its future planning, development and communication strategy actions; and finally
- 3) help Granville Island position itself as a world class community based geotourism destination.

1.3.3. Survey

A visitor survey was used to gather consumer data concerning the types of geotourism experiences tourists and locals had during their Granville Island visit. More specifically the surveys identified:

- a) Satisfaction levels with various dimensions of the products and services encountered in general and with respect to geotourism in particular; and
- b) Dimensions of visitor experiences that particularly increased or decreased the quality of their visit to Granville Island.

1.4. Research Report Organization

The study is organized into 6 chapters. The format of the study is as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the study, identifies the research questions, and briefly outlines the research objectives and methods employed.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the existing academic literature, insights and models suited to direct the research, and presents further understanding of geotourism experiences in general. The chapter offers a discussion of a variety of concept and themes including the notion of geotourism experiences, an overview of the National Geographic Society's principles, in-depth analysis of Pine and Gilmore's (1999) 4E experiencing realms, host–visitor relations, and sense of belonging and place-making in tourist destinations.

Chapter 3 begins with presenting the case study of Granville Island, BC. In addition it describes the methods used in the study and the way it was designed based on the previously built frameworks in the literature.

Chapter 4 presents the findings of the study. In addition to describing the results of the research, it provides background information on the types of products and programs supporting the delivery of satisfying visitor experiences at Granville Island.

Chapter 5 discusses the overriding themes that emerged from the research findings.

Chapter 6 offers summary conclusions and recommends areas for further inquiry that will complement this research. Review of the implications and solutions will be made by giving suggestions for future improvement derived as a result from the analysis of the study.

1.5. Research Significance

Based on Pine and Gilmore's (1998) concepts and perspectives on “experience economy” realms, the study examines their utility for assessing visitor experiences in potential geotourism destinations. In particular its customized geotourism experience measurement scales may be useful to managers interested in promoting such authentic experiences in their positioning strategies.

The study offers particularly useful insights into the extent to which tourists experience geotourism sites. For geotourism destination managers, knowing the responses of consumers is an important step toward enriching the value of the destination for all visitors. The study's research process provides a valuable means of obtaining feedback regarding destination experiences, and gives an understanding of the concept and motives behind such experiences.

In addition, this study could be potentially beneficial for the Granville Island stakeholders in promoting the authenticity of their locale. The investigation behind the notion of experiences at Granville Island and their alignment with the concepts of Geotourism Charter of principles provides a practical foundation for future management implications and organizational structure. The adoption of the principles and their alignment might allow Granville Island managers to establish short and long term planning frameworks. Strategic principles and goals could focus on the enhancing and supporting the island's sense of place, as opposed to just branding the image of the destination to visitors.

Chapter 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The Chapter begins by introducing the broad notion of tourist experience and geotourism experiences in general. The review will identify the basis for a system of assessing the presence/absence of the National Geographic Geotourism Charter's principles and components essential to creating and managing a geotourism destination.

Further in the Chapter, an outline of the 'Marketing Experience Economy' is described. Focus is placed particularly on the Pine and Gilmore's (1999) four realms of experiences (Absorption, Passive, Active, and Immersive Participation), along with their roles in shaping visitors' behaviour. This is followed by a statement of the importance of understanding visitor-host relations in a place-making context. This investigation will offer insights into the factors that determine the extent to which both visitors and locals constrain or reinforce one another's experiences at the same time and place (Maitland & Newman, 2008; Jennings et al., 2009; Gursoy et al., 2002).

2.2. Defining "Experience" Context

Since the early 1960s appreciation and understanding of tourist experiences has been researched and debated using many different meanings, dimensions and hypotheses. The task here is to identify the most relevant of those debates and meanings of the term in the context of this study's research. In a tourism context, there are many different interpretations and understanding behind the term 'experience'. For instance some scholars have highlighted aspects of experience related to product and service

authenticity (Wang, 1999), or psychologically serendipitous moments (Cary, 2004). Others such as Pine and Gilmore (1999) identify experiences purely from a corporate / business management perspective. These authors describe it as a strategy in which experience environments are created for activating personal experiences:

“A company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event.”
(Pine & Gilmore, 1999:11)

While Pine and Gilmore (1998) provide business perspectives on experiences, at the heart of their concept are four realms of experiences on which this research is based. Focus is given on the understanding and building on the emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual impressions felt by individuals during their engagement in an activity such as visiting a destination:

“Inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level.” (Pine and Gilmore, 1998)

Other scholars (Holbrook and Hirschman (1982, p. 132) have also coined the notion of experiences as being the outcome of processes shaping our emotions. This perspective resonates with others who believe that experiences come from an internal place within us connected to our psychological and emotional side. For example, according to La Salle and Britton (2003) services and products that bring experiences are a valuable part of the final product and an inseparable component for producing meaningful and unique final products / experiences.

“A product or service that when combined with its surrounding experiences events goes beyond itself to enhance or bring value to a customer’s life. This is the ideal – to deliver such overall value that a product transcends the ordinary to become extraordinary or even priceless (La Salle & Britton, p. 38.)

In experience-related literature, other authors have described experiences as” individualistic, psychological and social in nature” (Jennings et al, 2009). In a tourism

context, Ritchie and Hudson (2009) have reviewed the literature and classified tourist experience research into categories related to: 1) understanding the “essence” of experiences, 2) exploring experience seeking behaviour, 3) clarifying experience research methods, 4) investigating different types of experiences, 5) managing and promoting experiences, and 6) identifying different experience concepts. Other related literature describes experiences as a way of escaping reality (Oh et al., 2007; Iso-Ahola, 1982).

According Morgan (2006) the word “experiences” is interpreted as being “... the essence of what customers are seeking and paying for”. If we accept that travelling is a way to escape and find new grounds, then seeking perspectives related to escapism, authenticity and unique experiences could be perceived as huge travel motivational and “push factor” (Cohen, 2010)

Capturing the notion of experiences and putting it in a narrowly framed concept is a complex and subjective task (Jennings, 2009). According to Carù and Cova (2007) the term experience is still ill-defined. For some this situation exists because of the complex relationship between the customer and a product offerings (e.g. LaSalle and Britton, 2003; Carù and Cova, 2007). However, others believe that customers co-create their own unique experience (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004) and that companies primarily provide products and contexts that enable consumers to shape their own experience (Carù and Cova, 2003). Furthermore, some scholars (Schmitt, 1999) take a further step and focus on analyzing the physiology behind one’s experiences. According to Schmitt (1999) customer experiences can be defined in terms of five experience dimensions: sensory (sense); affective (feel); creative cognitive (think); physical, behavioural and lifestyles (act); and social-identity (relate). The psychological dimensions of experiences and their relevance to this study follows.

2.2.1. Dimensions of Experiences

Tourist experiences are multi-dimensional, rich in personal elements that are widely described in the literature. Knowledge, memory perception, emotion and self-

identity are the basic personal realms responsible for how one sees experiences. Ryan (2003) and Selstad (2007) believe these are the elements shaping our experiences and greatly influencing the post-experiences phase that affects motivations and future expectations for experiences. As many definitions refer to experiences *at the* destination, some pioneer scholars in the experience literature (e.g. Clawson and Knetsch, 1966) have suggested that the process of experiencing a trip begins long before arriving at the selected destination and often in the comfort of home. This happens through envisioning, fantasizing, researching and preparing for your trip. The development of the emotional experiencing memoir continues even after trips are completed. The process of post-experiencing and reconnecting with the emotions deepens up by sharing recommendations and personal memorabilia with your friends and family. Satisfaction evaluation occurs internally and plays a great role as the greater satisfaction one gets from an activity or destination the greater the experience is, and vice versa (Gutler and Carmichael, 2010). Studies of urban tourism experiences include examinations of tourists within the tourist environment. These often include studies of the relationships between numbers of elements including: the motivations of tourists; the importance of their prior knowledge of environments; perceptions and cognition of the environment; the values or importance that tourists attach to different elements of the environment, and the behavior and activities of other visitors at the site. Many other authors find connection between tourist experiences and intimacy - relationships; authenticity - notion of place, and trust - satisfaction (Larsen, 2007; Mossberg, 2007; McIntosh and Prentice, 1999). Similarly, in a pioneer study concerning young travelers, Vogt (1976) discovered that different aspects such as diverse environments (physical settings), ability to learn more about themselves (self - identify), expanding knowledge about the world, and ability to communicate and develop relationships (social aspect) were fundamental factors affecting the achievement of deeper, more meaningful experiences while travelling.

The literature suggests that the relationship between tourists and tourism experiences has been note of policy and planning discussions for many years. However, there has been a stronger emphasis on tourist experiences than tourism experiences and

motives behind them (Jennings et al. 2009). Since the 1960s when pioneers like Clawson and Knetch (1963) and Boorstin (1964) wrote about recreation experiences and commented on authenticity with regard to tourist experiences, the concept of tourism-related experiences has evolved. The 70s and 80s saw the introduction of discussions associated with the notion of varying travel motivations and concerns about the nature of host-guest interactions and experiences (Pearce and Caltabiano 1982; Smith 1977, 1989). Since the 1990s much focus has been placed on the nature and behavioral effects of tourist experiences on satisfaction, as well as the role of cultural differences in shaping preferred tourism experiences (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Marconi, 2005, Prentice et al 1994, Smith and Brent, 2001).

Just as there are many different interpretations of the experiences, some challenge can be noted for the measurement of those experiences. Due to its complex nature and subjectivity, measuring the quality of an experience could be further described as anything from values and money, to terms like memorable and extraordinary (Jonas, 2007; Ritchie and Hudson, 2009). At the end of this chapter, the nature of experiences as introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1999) and the connectivity of the 4-realms model of experiences in Granville Island context are presented.

Clawson and Knetsch (1966) developed a model that served as a trampoline for many following studies related to the nature of experiences. Their model introduced five basic phases of experiences starting with anticipation, travel to site, on site activity, return travel and recollection stage. The foundation of their work describes the natural, subconscious way an experience gets formed and shaped before, during and after an activity. Thanks to that introductory model of experiences scholars were able to expand the way we think process and view experiences by exploring other dimensions. Rossman and Chlatter, (2007) discussed the nature of the leisure experience as a “multi - phased event” and argued that experiences can change dramatically over time. They transform at the spot where there have taken place and after the experience are gone based on the cultural, social, demographic or religious views (Nickerson, 2006). Often, one and the same activity (e.g.: street performance) could be viewed interpersonally and enjoyed

completely differently. That process could vary greatly based on whether someone is less life experienced, more curious and likes to be in a crowd, versus somebody who is more travelled, culturally richer, or in need of more personal physical bubble space. These ideas could be re-shaped and transformed and manipulated through marketing, influenced by media, and shaped by the participant's own perception, previous knowledge, and expectations or past travel experiences (Nickerson, 2006).

Collectively, the research suggests that the tourism experience is a complicated psychological process with multilayered aspects to it (Gutler & Carmichael, 2010). Gohen (1979, 2004) and Graburn (2001) argue that everyday experiences are very much different than tourism experiences because of the ways in which individuals perceive and acknowledge an emotion, feel in touch with a place, and interpersonally prepare for experiencing certain events and activity.

Typically, tourism experiences are connected to places, people, and individual memorabilia attached to a destination. Stamboulis and Skyannis (2003) unfolded this concept by suggesting that relationships existed between the destination and tourists. They indicated that tourists are the executors of their own experiences and personal navigators in deciding *how much* and *what* to take home as a final message from a destination trip. Larsen (2007) extended this perspective and argued that experiences should be related to the short and long term memory capacity. He also believed that trip experiences triggered where and how these events were remembered. Similarly, O'Dell (2007) claimed tourism operators tended to 'manipulate places' to meet the needs of the marketplace.

2.3. Geotourism Experience Concept

Geotourism's primary focus is on helping visitors experience destinations' features in ways that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation, and that are locally beneficial (Dowling and Newsome, 2006). The concept

behind geotourism experiences embraces the philosophy that the cultural *and* environmental aspects of a destination should be celebrated and protected as part of the visitors' experience. It emphasizes the importance of encouraging quests that meet tourist's needs while protecting the character, economies and lifestyles of resident (Carmichael, 2006). It also aligns well with those principles of sustainable tourism that focus on protecting and enhancing tourism destinations in ways which keep them unspoiled for current and future generations of residents and travelers. Geotourism is also about creating a place in which both locals and tourists are free to enjoy the area's local environments. It generates an experience that brings together the local landscape, the local community and its visitors (Newsome & Dowling, 2008). To promote and sustain such benefits, host communities must practice good destination stewardship. That means adopting policies that protect the locale's environment and heritage, as well as maximizing tourism benefits with minimal disruption to local community and its environments.

In a traditional Geotourism experience context, success is best measured not by counting tourist arrivals, but by counting tourist benefits to the destination - economic, social, and environmental (Dyer et.al, 2007). While it is compatible with most forms of natural or cultural diversity protection, the notion of Geotourism does not seek to stop the clock and preserve destinations in their current state. Instead, it seeks to preserve is geographical diversity, the distinctiveness of a locale, while offers unique, memorable and pleasurable experiences.

2.3.1. Importance of Geotourism Experiences in the Tourism Sector

The global tourism market is looking for unique product experiences and a broader mix of variety of experiences. Tour operators and destination management organizations have become more aware of the fact that today's travelers have a checklist of criteria that needs to be met. Geotourism has become a popular and effective way for travelers to experience their vacations in a deep and meaningful way - without detracting

from the destination itself. One of the biggest threats to preserving the authentic appeal of a destination is homogenization (Boyle 2008). It leads to a loss of destination uniqueness and important distinctions between its products and services when compared with those in other places.

In a hospitality and tourism context setting, practically everything a “tourist goes through at a destination is part of the overall experience, be it behavioural or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, expressed or implied” (Oh et al., 2007, p. 120). Carbone and Haeckel (1994) argued that “customers always get more than they bargain for, because a product or service always comes with an experience. By providing opportunities for satisfying experiences for residents and tourists, host destination communities become better places to visit. Such places have the potential to provide unique memories, while at the same time becoming even better places to live. In addition, for urban destinations, the implications of geotourism development can be significant, as cities seek to find elements of their character that make them stand out for visitors and residents alike. The average geotourism traveler is a sophisticated, well-traveled individual that generally come from higher socio-economic demographics (Dowling and Newsome, 2010). These travelers value clean, unpolluted environments, outstanding scenery and opportunities to learn about the culture and history of areas they visit. Geotourists will dive into the local environment, culture, history and industry. They will have a rich experience that helps the local economy and sustains the region for the next generation of visitors.

2.3.2. National Geographic Geotourism Charter Principles

The National Geographic Center for Sustainable Destinations has developed *Charter Principles* to guide host destinations towards achieving the Geotourism goals. The 13 principles focus on specific management themes. They are as follows (www.nationalgeographic.com):

Table 2-1 Geotourism principles

National Geographic Charter Principles	
Integrity of place	Protection and enhancement of destination appeal
Market selectivity	Conservation of resources
Market diversity	Planning
Tourist satisfaction	Interactive interpretation
Community involvement	Evaluation
Community benefit	Protection and enhancement of destination appeal

Source: Center for Sustainable Destinations. National Geographic
<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/>

In 2007, Montréal became the first city in the world to sign on to National Geographic Society's Geotourism Charter. Following the example of Montreal, this study research explores the potential for Vancouver's Granville Island to become a world known Geotourism destination. For a destination to respond to Geotourism's principle requires a solid management structure plan in place along with specific planning strategies and actions developed by community stakeholders. It also requires a commitment to pursue the development of best practices that conserve and present a destination's heritage resources in ways that enhance visitor and community members' experiences. Many tourists are looking for more than a short-lived trip to a large city or a few days on the beach. They want to have a sense of place, to understand the unique communities they are visiting. They are interested in other ways of life, and interpretation can help heighten this experience (Newsome and Dowling, 2010). However, these tourists consider themselves to be on vacation, not in school. They are not interested in becoming experts, but would still like to learn something valuable about the place they are enjoying (Jamieson, 2006). This research examines visitors and locals perceptions' of experiences created in Granville Island. Turning simple pleasures into lasting memorable experiences, the way they are catered to the visitors and perceived by them, makes these experiences remembered and treasured is the essence of the this research. As previously discussed the way customers experience destinations is multi-layered and involves more than their participation in the consumption of products and services. Instead, it entails some form of relationship with products and services that create memorable experiences.

Therefore, businesses need to shift their focus from a “delivery-focused” service economy to one that emphasizes high-quality products and services being delivered in environments that facilitate memorable consumer experiences (Pine and Gilmore, 1999).

2.4. Shifting From Mass Tourism Services to Experience Economy Tourism

Business managers, branding specialists, and marketers are becoming increasingly aware of the need to shift from simply promoting and delivering products and services to catering to customer needs for experiences. This shifting development places an emphasis on the “sensory branding” process (Walls et al., 2010). Essential for producing rich experiences that are multidimensional and work on all of our sensory levels, is the provision of sensual environments that appeal to human senses of sight, sound, smell, taste (Walls et al., 2010). This involves delivering products in a progression of forms that are suited to market needs, and at the same time transform them from simply valued goods to premium experiences in their final stage. There are many opportunities to create added value and revenues for businesses in staging unique experiences and moulding them to fit specific market requirements. However, the risk in managing businesses and destinations for the experience economy lies in the possibility of becoming cliché and losing originality and authenticity. This may translate into lost brand message and pushing consumers to seek other destinations and modes for satisfying their needs. As well educated, sophisticated and aware consumers, many of today’s travellers are in the quest for unique and authentic experiences. More and more companies in the hospitality and tourism industries are focusing on creating and managing “*experiences*” for their customers (Walls et al., 2010). In efforts to push away from the standardizing processes of mass tourism with its increasingly commoditized products and services, hospitality companies are looking for ways to differentiate themselves from their competitors. One way this can be achieved is by focusing on the design and delivery process of unique experiences in an effort to increase satisfaction and loyalty (Walls et al., 2010).

From an economic and marketing perspective, Schmitt (1999) suggests that experiences are private, personal events occurring in response to some stimulation and involve the entire being. The general theme emerging from the literature is that both hosts and visitors have great opportunities to shape and affect the quality of experiences encountered by each other in tourism settings including those associated with geotourism (Boyle, 2008; Hose, 2008a; Walls et al., 2010). Pine and Gilmore's four realms of experience offer a useful guiding framework for facilitating experience-building opportunities in destinations. However, most of Pine and Gilmore's and other researchers' discussions (e.g. Gilmore and Pine 2002b; Stamboulis and Skayannis 2003) on the experience economy have been largely conceptual without providing scales for empirical measurement of the tourist experience (Oh et al., 2007).

2.5. Experience Realms Explained

According to Pine and Gilmore (1999) the four realms of consumer experiences are differentiated at two levels:

- i) the degree at which the customer gets involvement (*passive vs. active participation*); and
- ii) the desire with which the customer connects or engages with the event/performance (*absorption vs. immersion*).

The two main categories are subcategorized and distinguished from each other with four types of experiences as shown in Figure 2-1. They are as follows:

- i) Entertainment (Passive/Absorption)
- ii) Educational (Active/Absorption)
- iii) Escapist (Active/Immersion)
- iv) Esthetics (Passive/Immersion)

The Entertainment and Esthetics dimensions falls under 'passive participation', where the consumer does not affect or influence the experiential outcome. In contrast, the Education and Escapism dimensions involve 'active participation' where consumers play

a key part in their experience. Gentile et al., (2007) claimed that the best experiences are often ‘co-created’. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999), each of the four dimensions, ultimately, combine to form the optimal consumer experience.

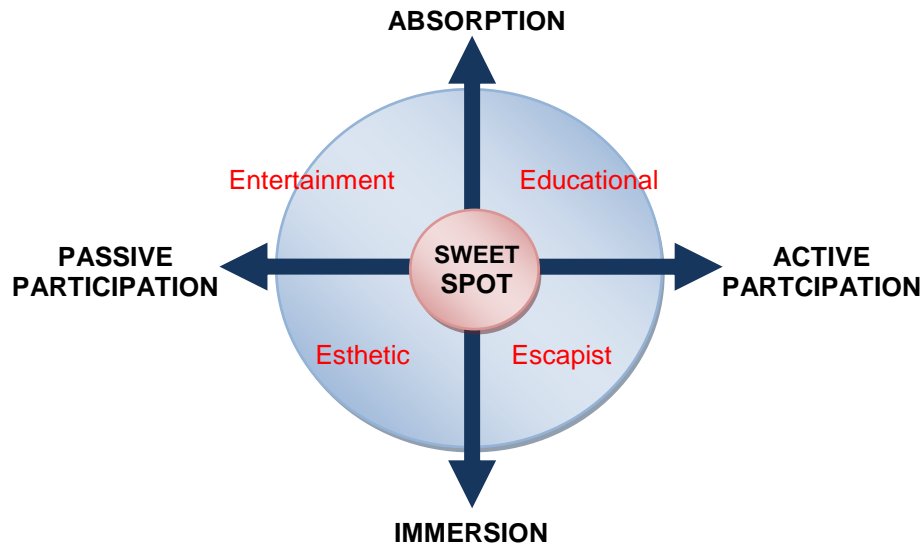


Figure 2-1 Adapted and Modified from Pine and Gilmore “The Experience Economy (1999, p.102)

In their “The Experience Economy” book, Pine and Gilmore (1999) illustrated the importance of creating meaningful and lasting experiences. Their focus is predominately centered on bringing a connection between the commodity and the consumer. Convinced “it is all about engaging them” (Pine and Gilmore, 1999) the authors argued that an experience can stimulate consumers with the inclusion of all the dimensions on the measurement chart (Fig.2-1). Two axis, horizontal and vertical, divide the chart by separating and defying how an experience occurs. The horizontal axis refers to the level of participation tourist experiences. On one side is passive participation, and active is at the opposite end. Based on the level of engagement consumers choose, they could experience one and the same activity differently. The dimensions on the experience measurement chart are somewhat complex and highly interpreted based on the experience consumers undergo. The line between the different dimensions is quite fluid and could be

easily merged as a consumer goes from one activity to another. As Pine and Gilmore explain sometimes even passive participants who merely observe an event or an activity, are not completely passively submerged. Their passive participation benefits others by just being there and contributing to the experience as a whole.

The vertical axis dividing the chart refers to the level of connection between the participants and the commodity (activity, service or product). At the top of the vertical axis is the Absorption and at the bottom end lies Immersion realm. The difference between the two dimensions is in the way a participant experience an activity both physically and mentally. When we are “absorbed” into an event, the experience occupies us on all levels. During an immersion experience, we get "immersed" into it and control the experience process. According to Pine and Gilmore best-staged experiences are composed of the inclusion of all four realms of dimensions. Understanding the four dimensions of participation is essential to understand the notion of staged experiences and how to manage them successfully. The following paragraphs provide analysis of the cluster group findings identified by Pine and Gilmore (1999).

2.5.1. Education: Learn, While Having Fun

The education experience is all about engaging the mind of the observer/consumer, and actively stimulating their senses to make them desire to learn something new and meaningful while part of that activity. Educational experiences increase the customer's skills and enhance his/her knowledge through either active or absorptive participation in the experience.

The main idea behind the educational experience comes from the extent to which at the end of the day the consumer is left with the impression of learning something new and meaningful. The Educational realm of experiences provides knowledge and internal enrichment from an activity. This means that the consumers play a vital role in determining the type of their experience. Based on personal values and cultural differences, the visitor chooses how to participate and engage in the learning process. The

educational experience also serves as an influential marketing tool. A powerful economic and advertisement instrument, this type of experience engages customers by inviting them to learn through both participation and observation, while encouraging them to take home a piece of memorabilia upon departure. As a result, tourists (consumers) engaged in an educational experience activity, will have their knowledge increased or skills improved. In the tourism literature, a key motivating factor to travel is the desire to self-educate oneself (Prentice, 2004). Tourists are thought to be motivated to “consume the extraordinary” because of their desire to learn. When those desires to obtain knowledge and new skills and motivation are being met, their post-consumption satisfaction and level of recommendation could grater benefit destinations’ local economies.

2.5.2. Escapism: Dive into the Experience World

An escapist type of experience can be explained with the degree to which an individual is completely wrapped up or absorbed in the activity. Escapist experiences are highly immersive and require active participation. Described from a typical tourism context, some classic examples of this realm would be theme parks, adventure lands, simulated destinations and attractions. Similarly, Granville Island offers an “island” of opportunities and activities that differ from otherwise typical daily routine and allows the vacationer (visitor) to “escape” into its own portrayed imaginary world. This world could be represented by either of culinary, street performances or other tourist attractions. One of the pioneers in the experience context literature, Boorstin (1964) believed that tourists are in search of ‘authenticity’ to compensate for the ‘inauthentic lives’ they experience at home (MacCannel, 1973). As a result, tourists are motivated and prepared to travel around the world in the hunt for satisfying and authentic experiences (MacCannel, 1973). A visit to Granville Island may allow tourists, for a short period of time, to enjoy the ‘escape’ of their daily routine and to be submerged in a different world. The customer shapes or contributes to the experience, which offers them a way of taking on a new persona.

2.5.3. Entertainment: Let Me Entertain You

Entertainment is one of the oldest known forms of experience. Entertainment experiences entail watching the activities and/or performances of others. Even though the visitor might not be actively involved in the creation of the entertainment, the mind is actively engaged during appreciation of the event

One of the leaders in the mass entertainment tourism industry, Las Vegas, provides stimulus to its visitors with every product and commodity being offered. Each year hotels are being built, resorts remodelled, different attractions created with the single idea of bringing revenues by attracting visitors to those destinations and providing everlasting mesmerizing experiences. Although entertaining usually involves a passive involvement of the individual, very often we have found ourselves experiencing different kinds of entertainment when vacationing. From the birth of the Olympic Games in ancient Greece, to the spectacular gladiator's shows in Ancient Rome, to the present times with scenic performance art like opera and ballet – people around the world get entertained in varied ways. Often entertaining will take a different face based on cultural or religious grounds. Picturesque and exotic carnivals in Rio de Janeiro might seem an unacceptable and offensive way of entertainment for some cultures, while bull fighting in Spain might represent not too excessive a form of entertainment for others. Pine and Gilmore (1998) note that companies are now a 'stage' used to 'delight and entertain patrons'. Whether it is an exotic beach vacation, a bullfight in Spain, or a party trip to Las Vegas the tourists seek to immerse themselves completely in the chosen activity and carry out this type of memorabilia with them. In recent years, tourism industry is specializing in offering a variety of packages and diverse types of vacations satisfying the needs of different demographic groups, genders, and interests of the population. Although the entertainment realm dimension might not be of the same kind in an all-inclusive adults-only resort vs. a Disney world package vacation, the dominating common aspect is the way consumers "sink" into the entertainment activity.

2.5.4. Esthetics: Indulge in the Environments

Esthetic experiences involve visitors' delight of an enriched, unique physical surroundings and design. According to Pine and Gilmore (1999) the dimension behind the Esthetic realm of experience is the need for the spectators to participate in the environment without placing themselves in it. Esthetic experiences include visiting an art gallery, standing on the Niagara waterfall, shopping in New York as well as sitting in a plaza café in Rome watching Italians. In the Pine and Gilmore's (1998) framework the esthetics dimension represents the consumers' interpretation of the physical or built environment surrounding them. A number of studies recognize the role of esthetics in consumer behavior, decision making and service evaluations (e.g. Carmichael, 2006, Carù & Cova). One of the key stimulus and motivators for choosing a trip is the destination built space and esthetics environment. In the tourism and hospitality literature, Bonn et al., (2007) note that the physical environment of attractions play an important role in determining visitors' attitudes, shaping their experiences, future intentions and willingness to recommend. Kwornik (2008) believes that an experience consists of the man-made physical and social environment as well as the natural environment in which the experience - attraction or service is delivered. Granville Island has a similar component of attractions, being able to entertain tourist with both its natural environment and the man – made products and services. The most important characteristic of experiences is the sense of memorability or memorabilia.

In order to revolve the tourists' consumption of ordinary goods and services into 'a memorable experience' tourist products (goods and services) have to be skilfully staged and marketed with the help of psychological insights. Through subconscious patterns of previously experienced memories and emotions the consumer can bring these out and use them in the proper place and time. More and more leisure and tourism enterprises attempt to create such a personality image through an aesthetic/design or architectural identity.

2.6. Integrated Visitor Host Relations in Place Making

Over the years, numerous studies have focused on host-visitor relationships and their perceptions toward tourism (Andereck and Vogt, 2000; Jurowski et. al, 1997; Lankford 1994). In a growing number of cases, residents of host communities and other stakeholders are planning for types of tourism development that support the kind of locale they want to live in. Tourists select places designed with the interests of locals in mind. Communities make decisions' about who they aspire to accommodate and travelers make decisions about whether their interests align with those of communities. Some important dimensions benefiting the host may include reciprocity, community pride, tolerance, and a stronger sense of ethnic and cultural identity (Driver et.al., 1991). One of the greatest benefits and reason for repeated visits in communities is the sense of belonging a destination may convey. According to Smith (2006) the average tourist seeks memorable experiences. The more connected and engaged visitors feel within a community, the more memorable their experiences remain. The more unique, accessible and authentic their experience is, the longer they are likely to stay and to return. Longer stays and repeat visits can generate considerable economic benefits for the community. A satisfied guest is an enthusiastic and reliable source of information, someone who is more likely to return and will speak positively about the experiences that they have encounter at the destination (Morgan et al., 2009). By providing high quality experiences, destination managers encourage return visitation and attract new customers by 'word of mouth'. Word of mouth is a very effective promotion strategy. Interpretation is a powerful way to create this type of visitor engagement (Jamieson, 2006). That is why creating an exclusive and extraordinary experience to a destination is not only necessary but essential in surviving the today's tourist economy.

2.7. Sense of Belonging

Although much of the literature reveals positive views concerning the economic and socio- cultural aspects of tourism, it also offers some contradictory findings

regarding environmental impacts. Popular urban community-based destinations within the city boundaries, such as Granville Island, are most likely to be exposed to those negative attributes. Some of these attributes generated by tourism could be: increased levels of pedestrian congestion, overcrowding at facilities, litter, traffic and pollution, and parking problems. Once a community becomes a tourism destination, the quality of life of the local residents is compromised. Their daily lives are affected by the consequences of the community development (Andereck and Vogt, 2000). The success of any tourism project is threatened if development is planned and constructed outside the knowledge and support of the host population (Gursoy et al., 2002). The reason for that lies in the psychological aspect of tourist experiences and is explained through the host involvement and participation in the process of welcoming the visitors. In order for tourists to feel accepted and have a sense of belonging a major part of that is played by the host population and their acceptance of the “outsiders”. While tourists are drawn to areas because of unique attractions, products and services, visitor experiences are mostly shaped by the hospitality of local residents. A host’s anger, apathy, or negligence towards tourists will ultimately be conveyed to visitors, and is likely to result in greater resistance to visiting such places where they feel unwelcome (Fridgen 1991). The extent and success of such tourist experiences will be based on the quality of the host–guest connection and the willingness and capacity of the consumer to engage in the multidimensional encounter (Walls et al., 2010). Based on related literature, the authors speculate that experience differentiates between *ordinary* and *extraordinary* experiences. Such experiences are composed of a variety of physical and human components that trigger reactions to the consumption of goods and services. In sum, consumer experience is the multidimensional takeaway impression or outcome formed by people’s encounters with products, services, and businesses (Walls et al., 2010).

As discussed in the previous section, the consumer psychology behind skills and knowledge required for an activity, replaces the notion of the *passive consumer* with that of the *active participant* in the experience. Williams (2005) noted that tourists do not simply encounter the physical space of a destination. They build their own impressions

according to their personal preferences, motivations and interpretations. Many of the experiences offered by the tourism industry involve products' and services' skilled consumption, often experienced undetected by the consumers. Such destination product offerings could include the physical challenge of adventure and activity; the sensual delights of gastronomy or local cuisines and wine tasting; the intellectual discovery of arts and cultural events, or excitement of shopping. The experiences that they encounter occur internally and the outcome or the consumption depends on how the consumer, based on a specific situation or state of mind, reacts to that staged experience (Mossberg, 2007; Pine and Gilmore, 1999; Wang, 2002). Participants gain increased satisfaction while submerged in the activity by continuing to improve the experience (Williams, 2006). The optimal effect of satisfaction is likely to occur when the task is challenging but the consumer has developed the skills needed to complete it. If, as Pine and Gilmore (1999) assert, "every business is a stage", then many stages in the tourism sector are "presented by poorly played cast, underpaid and under-rehearsed actors" (Morgan et al, 2009).

Chapter 3. RESEARCH METHODS

3.1. Introduction

This part of the study provides an overview of the approaches for the collection of the research data and presents the methods used to answer the research questions. The chapter begins by introducing the case study location of Granville Island. In addition, summary of the research objectives and questions is provided, followed by the data collection's objectives and purpose, and the rationale behind the survey process. At the end of the Chapter, the study limitations and implications are discussed.

3.2. Case Study Context

Vancouver, British Columbia is a model city for successful demonstration of redevelopment and revitalization. In the recent past, the city has transitioned from a primarily “port city,” to a world class destination for tourism, urban living, and entertainment, with one of the fastest growing economies in the West.

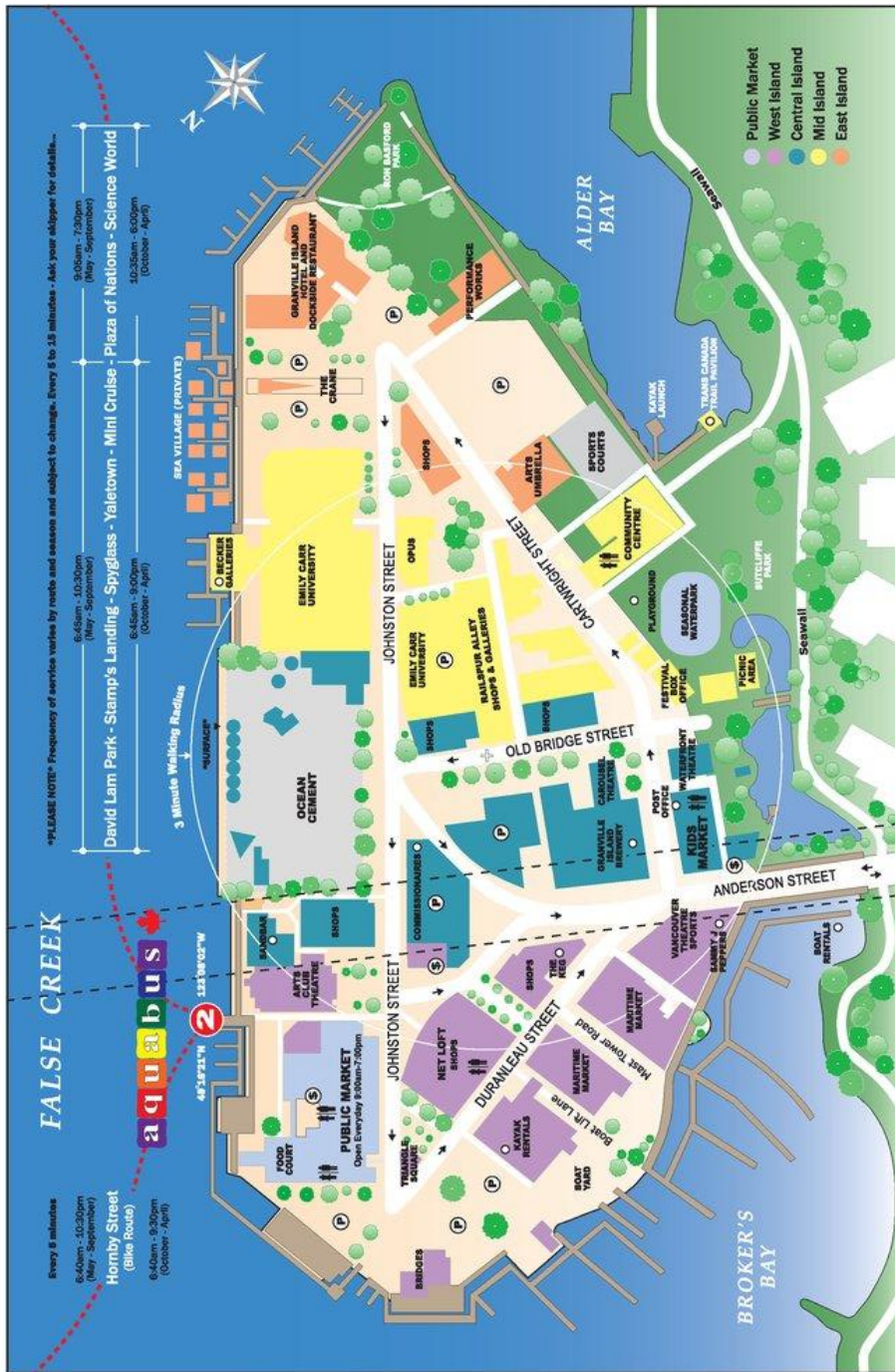
The locale of the city is what makes it so appealing and desirable spot for new settlers and for travel choice destination. Geographically, the core of the city is surrounded by water, including Burrard Inlet, Fraser River and False Creek. The Creek passes through the middle of the developed downtown, and it serves as major arterial locale for the rebirth of Vancouver's downtown lifestyle. Strategically situated on the opposite side of the “Creek” is Granville Island, a formal industrial zone and redevelopment project that is recognized as one of the most successful public spaces in the world (Source: [www. granvilleisland.com](http://www.granvilleisland.com)). Granville Island's convenient central

location makes it an ideal destination that allows you to escape the city without actually leaving it. Easily accessible either by boat, car, and bus, by bicycle or by foot it is a preferred spot for locals and residents of Greater Vancouver (Fig.3-2).

3.2.1. Case study Selection

Granville Island was chosen as a case study model for its emerging multidisciplinary approach to planning integrating physical, social, economic and cultural aspects. The aim of these strategically planned components was to regenerate the “inner communal” city area while converting large amounts of industrial land and properties by taking over planning responsibility from local council and government. These subsidies had the power to acquire and reclaim land, renovate old buildings and improve infrastructure through the investment of government money.

The Island was chosen as a preferred location due to its success in maintaining its communal integrity, and capacity to grow and develop economic, cultural and business industries from within. Its unique geographic locale and combination of unique retail and tourist attractions makes it an engaging destination for visitors to Vancouver (www.tourismvancouver.com). It is also a preferred destination as a day-recreation spot for the escalating population of high-rise dwellers in downtown Vancouver. These qualities, historical background, strong community presence feel and involvement in everyday business activities make the Island an appropriate case for exploring the notions of geotourism experiences.



Almost a century ago two sandbars gave rise to an industrial hub that in turn was converted into what is now referred to as an "urban oasis". Formerly known as Industrial Island, Granville Island is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Canada and truly has something for everyone, local and visitor alike.

Within walking distance of all downtown districts and attractions are numerous ferry stations that will connect you with this unique urban experience (see map over for routes). Providing frequent, fun and friendly service, a trip aboard the iconic rainbow ferries will make your experience of the island complete.

Source and permission: www.grnavilleisland.com
 Granville Island administration office

3.2.2. Historical Background

This research attempts to contextualize revitalization initiatives in the case study of Granville Island within the urban reforms taking place in Vancouver in the early 1900s.

Granville Island is a property of the Canadian government. Developed originally as an industrial zone, the Island consisted of two sand bars located at False Creek area. It was used by First Nations people for collecting shellfish and as a gathering place for fisherman. In 1916 the Vancouver Harbour Commission built a seawall around the two sand bars. In addition, the Commission designated the area to be primarily used for industrial purposes. New factories, mills and machineries opened doors and developed in the area.



Figure 3-2 Granville Island in the 1900s
Wrights Canadian Ropes Ltd Building, now The Public Market
Source: www.granvilleisland.com, Granville Island Administration Office
Photo: Lino Siracusa

However, it was not until the 60 years later that Granville Island's 1 redevelopment emerged. In the 1960s the province's economy struggled and many businesses on the island struggled to survive. This forced many owners to close down and move away. The few remaining businesses continued to pollute the area. Growing

community awareness and public concern over environmental issues led to the city of Vancouver and the Federal Government to join efforts in restoring the island.

The Canadian government transferred the management and redevelopment rights of the island to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in 1973. At that time CMHC was establishing the community of False Creek area with housing developments. In 1976 the Granville Island Trust was formed and as such appointed to direct the redevelopment. Granville Island Trust consisted of influential local community members and business entrepreneurs.

3.2.3. Planning and Design Concept

The Trust committed \$25 million to the Island's redevelopment, \$11 million of which was used to buy out the remaining industrial leases. Revitalization was promoted widely to include economic, social and community development and aimed to encourage cultural aspects and historic preservation. While the city of Vancouver and the Trust could not agree on a design concept and vision for the redevelopment, they drafted the Granville Island Reference Plan which acted as a legal document and agreement between the city and the federal government providing framework and development. The main concepts and design objectives for the project were to turn the use of the industrial and warehouse buildings by changing them into multi-use structures. Key planning objectives were to maintain the industrial feel of the Island while at the same time incorporating structures for a variety of cultural, educational, commercial purposes.

A fundamental principle in the development was that Granville Island it would become a “people place” while reflected and embraced its industrial roots and heritage. The main goal was to make the location accessible to everyone, with a mix of land uses. The Reference Plan however did not provide zoning or street restrictions criteria. This gave the newly developed island freedom and opportunity to grow in a very unique and organic way that has won a reputation today for being authentic and exceptional.

Because the plan vision for the island exceeded its original budget of \$20 million the Federal government allowed the public sector to take on long term leases on specific sites. The City Council then implemented strict codes for the new tenants in order to enforce design regulation, use of space and ensure that the established concept of “sense of place” and “people place” were well kept and maintained. The design requirements not only supported the heritage character of the island but also ensured that there was a flow and harmony in building uses and activities. The diversity of the well balanced and controlled inclusion of tenants from public, non- profit and private sectors continues to ensure the delivery of a unique place with extraordinary experiences.

3.2.4. Granville Island Today

Granville Island is a successful model for brownfield redevelopment that has developed naturally and quite organically over time sustaining its character, design and sense of place. At the present time Granville Island appears quite urban in nature, with its own unique characteristics. Narrow streets and shallow building setbacks, architectural details of brick facades, tall windows, dormers, and gables ensure that the new redevelopment maintained its heritage look. The past appeal was well preserved in remaining architectural structures such as cranes, rail tracks, and industrial-style doorways. This gave the Island a newfound image that still remains to this day - inviting and relaxing historical public space with plenty of mixed uses and activities.

The Island is home of artisans studios, water park, theatre, reputable art university, a marina, cozy restaurants with spectacular views, exclusive marketplace and farmer’s market, a brewery and unique to the Island privately own retailers (www.granvilleisland.com). The Island also houses a row of floating residential homes and boat rentals that make it a unique travel destination with community presence. A day trip to the Island offers many ideas for exploration with cultural activities and stunning waterfronts while remains the opportunity for unexplored sites. The Granville Island architectural model is very simple yet quite successful in attracting its visitors

(www.granvilleisland.com). Alluring with its charm the island holds an appealing aesthetics that results in a bold and successful design concept. With minimal efforts in design and encompassing architectural structures, each building has its own identity through well preserved iron gates and bold painted colors, artists' logos and some of the best signage. The common public spaces are linked together in a net of little streets, industrial elements remains from island historical roots and well-defined community presence.

3.3. Research Objective and Questions

This research centers on exploring the nature of geotourism experiences and their alignment with notions of experience realms introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1998). The study examines visitors' experiences occurring during their visits at Granville Island, Vancouver. The following research questions guide the investigation:

Q1: What kind of service and product experiences do tourists are likely to experience during their visit on Granville Island?

Q2: What are some examples of products and services provided by Granville Island that match with the preferences of the experiences of these visitors?

a) To what extend are selected services and products experienced important to the tourist?

b) How satisfied are the tourists with experiencing these products?

Q3: To what extent do the tourist experiences align with the concept of Pine and Gilmore (1999) four realms of experiences?

Q4: To what extent do the experiences expressed by Granville Island's visitors align with those embedded within the concept of geotourism principles?

3.3.1. Research Strategy

The following combined methods of research were used to answer the research questions, provide an insight into the experiencing realms subject, and guide the development of the research survey instrument:

- 1) Review of the existing academic literature exploring topics concerning the broader notion of experiences in tourism. The literature review included a variety of themes investigating concepts related to:
 - a) dimensions of experiences,
 - b) geotourism nature of experiences and their meaning,
 - c) National Geographic's Principles and their role on experiences,
 - d) Pine and Gilmore (1999) Experience economy realms,
 - e) host - visitor relationships,
 - f) sense of belonging and concepts of place making in tourism settings
- 2) Review of the Geotourism principles and concepts and their existence on the Island;
- 3) Review and discussion of the four realms of experiences as previously introduced by Pine and Gilmore (1999);
- 4) Adopt methods and measurement scale for evaluating customer experiences as introduced by Oh et al.,(2007) ;
- 5) Develop an intercept bases structured survey questionnaire and distribute to Granville Island visitors during summer months of 2011.

3.4. Survey Objectives and Purpose

The overriding goal of the data collection process was to:

- a) learn more about the nature and profile of Granville Island's visitors;
- b) examine tourists' preferences and attitudes towards the destination's products and services;
- c) explore the nature of their experiences during their visit on the Island.

To meet these goals a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods were used. *Qualitatively*, related literature review research shaped the development of the survey instrument. The data collection instrument was designed by following previously developed experience measurement scales by Oh et al., (2007) and by studying the notion of the 4E realms by Pine and Gilmore (1999). Open-ended questions asking top of mind comments were included. *Quantitatively*, structured scaled questions were used to measure visitor responses to a set experience attributes.

3.5. Survey Instrument Design

To evaluate the nature of visitor experiences at Granville Island the experience dimensions developed by Oh et al., (2007), and the experiential scale items based on the Pine and Gilmore 4E realms (1998) was used. These frameworks provided a foundation for the development of the questionnaire and its various dimensions outlined in Table 3-1 (page 39).

A four-paged, two double sided paper surveys were developed for distribution. The survey consisted of 16 questions. The questions were organized and grouped into 4 main categories, specifically targeted to examine the nature and quality of visitor experiences. A copy of the survey is presented in Appendix B. The four survey parts were organized as follows:

1. About you
2. About your experiences here today
3. About your satisfaction with today's Granville Island's experiences
4. More about you

Each one of the survey categories contained questions based on four experiential realm dimensions - Education, Entertainment, Esthetic, and Escape). For each dimension, respondents provided their perspectives on preferences, and satisfaction. Additional top of mind reactions to various characteristics of their experiences were also collected. They

were designed to measure strengths and weaknesses with Granville Islands, products and services, food, live performances, local artisans, architecture, etc. The experience dimensions items in each question were measured using a 5-point Likert-Type scale (Vagias, Wade M. 2006) rating ranging from strongly disagree (coded 1) to strongly agree (coded 5), (see Appendix B for survey details).

3.6. Data Collection

The survey was conducted during the summer of 2011 between June–September. Summer months were chosen as a preferable time of the year as opposed to winter months due to weather conditions, and the availability of a full set of venues for outdoor activities and live performances during that period. A total of 560 surveys were collected, 510 of which were useable and included in the study. The collection of the data became possible thanks to the cooperation and assistance of the Granville Island administration office. A team of 4 assistants helped with the collection of the data. The surveying took place 7 days a week, starting from late mornings (10am) to late afternoon hours (5pm) of the day. Both morning and afternoon times were chosen based on daily weather forecasts, and daily activities on the Island. In order to avoid sampling bias, weekday data was collected by alternating different days of the week. Weekend’s collection was constant with surveys conducted Friday–Sunday. The location of the distribution varied among the different days of the week and it was based on the hour of the day the survey was conducted. Generally, gathering spots and popular locations around main attractions on the Island were chosen as the primary survey points.

3.6.1. Sampling Approach

Participants in the survey were randomly chosen based on the location of surveying. When surveys were distributed at the info kiosks booths, the distribution focused on those seeking information. When surveying took place on the streets, selection involved choosing every 5th visitor passing a specific point. For the nature and

purpose of the study both male and females were approached and only adults over 18 years of age were targeted as respondents. In order to reduce sampling bias, approximately two-thirds of the respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire during weekends and one-third of the surveys were collected throughout the weekdays. This reflected the general flow of visitors to Granville Island during the summer.

3.7. Survey Analysis

All quantitative analysis was performed with the help of MC Excel 2007, SPSS version spreadsheet computer programs – especially frequency cross-tabulation and Chi-square analysis functions.

The Chi-square technique was used to test if recorded frequencies in distinct categories of respondents varied significantly from each other. It helped explore whether different pre-determined of respondents varied significantly in the types of responses they offered. Coding of data for the purposes of this process is identified in Table 3-1. In addition Cluster analysis was performed to identify similar groups of Granville Island visitors based on their experiences. (Kaufman and Rousseeuw 2009). These clusters were then compared with those conceptualized by Pine and Gilmore (1999). Details concerning these clusters are provided in Appendix A. By using the statistical analysis we were able to divide the data into distinct groupings and categories with these groupings were then analysed with respect to their defining characteristics. Overall, four 4 experience groupings were identified. In the following chapter overall and cluster based descriptions of the respondent reactions to their experiences at Granville Island are reported.

Table 3-1 Measurement items related to experience realms, adopted and modified from Oh et al., (2007)

Key words tested	Corresponding Experience Realm
The visit has made me more knowledgeable about this place and its people	Education
I have learned a lot about the area's heritage	Esthetic
The visit has stimulated my curiosity in learning more about local arts and crafts	Education
This was a real learning experience	Education
I felt connected with the local community while taking part in different activities	Escape
I felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's local architecture and heritage	Esthetic
While here I felt like I was part of the local community	Escape
The setting engaged me with the area's culture and heritage	Escape / Esthetic
The setting engaged me with the area's natural surroundings	Esthetic
The Island's attention to local architectural design details enhanced my interest in the place	Esthetic
The setting provided pleasure to my senses (e.g. sounds, sights, smells, touch)	Esthetic
Watching the activities of local artisans was intriguing and captivating	Entertainment

3.8. Data Collection Limitations

A few research limitations should be considered. First, the sample collection took place during summer months and survey results are based on visitors' experiences and preferences during that time of the year. Since no previously collected data regarding visitors' behaviour and experiences was available, little is known about whether or not the findings reflect customers' perspectives at that time of year. Summer is a popular time of the year for travelling and Granville Island is known for providing variety of outdoor activities and attractions to visitors. The island draws attention with its outdoor live performances, summer festivals, scenic views, lively outdoor gathering spots, and picturesque dining patios. However, some attractions and entraining attributes are

available all year round. Further research into the type of products and services that are available, and the type of tourists that visit the island during the rest of the year would be very useful. Looking at the kind of tourists' experiences available in fall/ winter months and how they differ from these offered in the summer would be beneficial for the long term planning of the destination. Learning more about the nature of "all year round tourists", their profiles, characteristics, experiences and preferences towards products and services would implement long term planning goals and provide valuable opportunities for Granville Island to become all year round popular destination not only for locals but also for international tourists.

Second, the analysis portion of the research included all respondents; therefore, the study is about all visitors' perspectives and experiences as opposed to just these of the tourists. The research had limited opportunities to explore residents' responses and their perspectives on the Granville Island tourism' product. Although residents were not excluded from the sampling, greater focus and closer look at residents as visitors/tourists may be useful. They are two main aspects to this future study. The first aspect would be focussing on providing more details on residents' visitation and their attitudes, preferences and satisfactions. Further investigation and separate analysis of residents and visitors segments is needed to look at into existing distinct differences and how these segments differ from one another. Secondly, part of the research would concentrate on investigating the host – tourist's interactions, their relationships and the components of their experiences. Such enquiry would provide additional answers and understanding into the nature of experiences and products that drive and stimulate the tourist experience from a local perspective. Perhaps, looking at the differing aspects and dimensions both from host and tourists perspective would offer insights into ways to strengthen support and foster the local community.

Third, local operators and store owners were not part of the survey. Their perceptions, motivations and experiences from an operational and business point of views would have likely impacted the outcome of results and overall survey process. Their opinions and

attitudes towards experiences on the island could serve as an important revenue stimulator and a key driver for boosting the local economy.

3.9. Summary of Methods

This Chapter outlined main research methods for the study's data collection. Rationale behind the choice of sample collection, techniques and process was presented. Overview of the statistical methods and approaches used for processing and analysing the survey results was given. In addition, the Chapter discussed some of the survey many limitation and implications. Chapter Four will provide further insight into the findings related to the quantitative methodology. Statistical summary and analysis of the survey results is presented and outlined in the preceding chapters.

Chapter 4. SURVEY FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The main objective of this study was to identify the characteristics of Granville Island visitor experiences, and assess the extent to which they aligned with Pine and Gilmore's typology of experience realms and the National Geographic Society's guidelines for geotourism type experiences. This chapter summarizes the responses of a sampling of Granville Island (GI) these visitors visiting the area during the summer months of June through September of 2011. The findings are presented in two main sections. The first part describes overall GI visitor responses. The second section provides insights into the perspectives of specific experience segments of GI visitors, particularly with respect to how they differ from the overall set of visitors and each other.

4.2. Overall Granville Island Visitor Profile

The study's findings provide a useful understanding of the overriding characteristics of GI visitors and their on-site experiences. The 510 visitors surveyed were interviewed in an intercept survey conducted at several selected sites during the period June 2011 through September 2011. While the findings do not provide insights into the characteristics of fall and winter visitors to GI, they do offer some useful understanding of the experience profiles of visitors during the busiest season of the year.

The following section profiles the overriding socio-demographic, trip behavior, experience engagement, and satisfaction traits of these visitors. Appendices A, and B provide further details concerning procedures used to conduct this study.

Overall Socio-demographic and Trip Characteristics

The largest portions of all visitors interviewed tended to be females (65%), ranging from 25-54 years of age (75%), with about 56 percent having university degrees or higher levels of formal education (Table 4-1). The majority (55%) of them were from British Columbia, and were visiting GI for tourism purposes (60%, Table 4-1). The largest proportion (25%) visited once a year (Table 4-1). More detailed information concerning the socio - demographics of these visitors is provided in Appendix A.

Table 4-1 Summary GI visitor socio-demographic and trip profile

Respondent Trait	Most Frequent Response	Share of Respondents
Gender	Female	65.3%
Age	25-54 years	74.6%
Education	University	55.6%
Place of residence	British Columbia	54.9%
Primary trip purpose	Tourism related	60.1%
GI visit frequency	Once a year	25.0%

*See Appendix A for detailed socio-demographic profile of GI respondents

On average, visitors indicated that the most important reasons driving their decision to visit Granville Island as opposed to other Vancouver locations were to visit the area's local market and artisan shops (avg. 4.41), and enjoy its natural scenery and surroundings (avg. 4.40). They placed least importance on going there to see local buildings and architecture (avg. 3.48) or learning about GI's heritage and history (3.82, Table 4-2).

Table 4-2 Factors affecting GI versus other Vancouver destination visits

Factor	Average	n
To visit local market and artisan shops	4.41	510
To enjoy the natural scenery and surroundings	4.40	510
To enjoy the atmosphere and engage with local residents in various activities	4.16	510
To experience the local culture of the Island	4.08	510
To learn more about the local community, and the unique products and services that Granville Island offer	3.87	510
To expand my knowledge about the heritage and history of the Island	3.82	510
To see local buildings and architecture	3.48	510

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= not at all important to 5 = very important

Overall GI Visitor Experiences

A series of specific questions explored the extent to which GI visitors felt they were engaged in various types of GI experiences. These questions corresponded to dimensions of Pine and Gilmore’s experience realms - education, esthetic, escape and immersion. They were modified in order to reflect aspects of the National Geographic Society’s identified geotourism principles (See Appendix B –Survey Instrument).

On average, respondents expressed a relatively high (avg. 4.12) level of agreement that their experiences on GI were engaging (Table 4.3). Their highest degree of agreement (avg.4.51) was associated with how GI had appealed to their senses (sound, sight, smell, and touch), stimulated their interests in the activities of local artisans and entertainers (avg.4.44), and the exclusive products and services they created (avg. 4.43). These experiences and others helped them feel as if they were escaping from their normal routines (avg. 4.28). However, they were less convinced that their visit made them feel that they had learned a lot about the area’s heritage (avg. 3.58), the place and its people

(avg. 3.73). Similarly, their visit had not particularly made them feel like they had really experienced the area's local community (avg. 3.82, Table 4-3).

Table 4-3 Perceptions of GI experience dimensions

Statement	Average*	n
The setting provided pleasure to my senses (e.g. sounds, sights, smells, touch)	4.51	510
Watching the area's entertainers and artisans perform their activities in shops and in the street helped emphasize the unique place I was visiting	4.44	510
I really enjoyed the diversity and local character of products and services exclusively available here	4.43	510
Watching the activities of local artisans was intriguing and captivating	4.40	509
Taking part in the area's activities helped me feel like I was escaping from many of my daily routines	4.38	510
Watching local musicians and artists perform was captivating	4.32	510
The setting engaged me with the area's natural surroundings	4.26	510
Watching the everyday activities of local people was intriguing	4.21	510
The Island's attention to local architectural design details enhanced my interest in the place	4.11	510
The visit has stimulated my curiosity in learning more about local arts and crafts	4.06	510
I felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's local architecture and heritage	4.03	510
The setting engaged me with the area's culture and heritage	4.00	510
I felt connected with the local community while taking part in different activities	3.95	510
This was a real learning experience	3.85	510
While here I felt like I was part of the local community	3.82	510
The visit has made me more knowledgeable about this place and its people	3.73	510
I have learned a lot about the area's heritage	3.58	510
Overall Average Experience Engagement Rating	4.12	5.10

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree a lot to 5 = strongly agree

‘Top of Mind’ GI Experience Reactions

Along with their responses to the specific experience factors, visitors provided ‘top of mind’ words and phrases that they felt best described their overall experience at GI. The most frequently cited words described artistic, scenic, relaxation, and hospitality aspects of their experience. For the most part, the phrases they mentioned highlighted similar items, along with activity, product diversity and engagement factors (Table 4-4).

Table 4-4 Most cited ‘top of mind’ GI experience reactions

Top Cited Experience Descriptor Words	Frequency
Food	72
Art /architecture	59
Amazing / beautiful	25/ 41
Relaxing	58
Friendly/ locals	53
Top Cited Experience Descriptor Phrases	Frequency
Fun & engaging for the whole family with lots of activities	89
Fantastic food market	68
Very positive experience	55
Relaxing experience in a busy city	50
Variety of choices, attractions, shopping	43
	<i>n= 510</i>

GI Site Management Satisfaction

Overall, respondents were generally satisfied (avg. 4.13) with the area’s natural attractiveness maintenance (Table 4-5). The highest level of satisfaction was associated with the attractiveness of the Island’s natural surroundings (avg. 4.48) and the quality of customer service (avg. 4.21). Tourists were least satisfied with the accessibility of the area (avg. 3.95) and the ease of getting around once there (avg. 3.87, Table 4-5).

Table 4-5 Satisfaction with GI experience assets

Experience Satisfaction Dimensions	Average*	n
Attractiveness of natural surroundings	4.48	510
Quality of customer service	4.21	510
Quality of food services	4.17	510
Maintenance of public facilities and spaces	4.14	510
Accessibility of area	3.95	510
Ease of getting around the area	3.87	510
Composite satisfaction level	4.13	510

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree a lot to 5 = strongly agree

When asked to provide ‘top of mind’ comments regarding GI features which either enhanced their overall experience, about 65 percent of respondents provided responses. The most frequently mentioned experience enhancers were social factors associated with interactions with cultural and other service providers in entertainment, shopping or dining contexts (Table 4-6). Table 4-6 summarizes the most frequently cited experience-enhancing features. In contrast, approximately 27 percent of the respondents provided ‘top of mind’ experience-detracting perspectives. The most frequently cited detractors are presented in Table 4-6. The largest proportion of the negative remarks was related to land use accessibility and planning issues. Among some of the most commonly listed detractors were lack of parking, crowded street spaces and poorly planned public open spaces.

Table 4-6 GI visitor ‘top of mind’ experience enhancers and detractors

Most Cited Experience Enhancing Factors	Frequency
Fun and Entertainment	89
Food, restaurants	72
Market and variety of products	68
Artists and performances	60
Friendly people, locals	53
Shopping and services	45
	<i>n= 387</i>

Overall Intent to Return or Recommend to Others

In keeping with their expressed level of overall GI experience satisfaction levels, a large majority (74%) of GI visitors indicated that they would definitely come back to the location again. Another 20 percent also indicated that they would probably return (Table 4-7). An even greater share of the respondents (79%) indicated that they would definitely recommend a GI visit to others.

Table 4-7 GI visitor readiness to return and /or recommend visit to others

Response	%	n
Intend to return		
Definitely	73.73	506
Probably	19.8	506
Recommend to others		
Definitely	79.3	506
Probably	19.1	506

4.3. Experience Specific Groupings

The preceding findings identified the overriding characteristics of GI visitors with respect to their socio-demographic, trip behavior, experience engagement and satisfaction patterns, variations in the responses of these visitors according to specific experience groupings. The following sections provide more insights into these patterns by experience groupings.

To identify the groupings a K-means cluster analysis was conducted using visitor responses to the various experience items explored in the survey. The cluster analysis provided a statistical means of clustering or combining seemingly disparate response items into common groupings. After several attempts to identify a grouping solution that seemed to be of reasonable size and understanding, four cluster groupings were identified. In the following sections these clusters are labeled and described in term of their relative alignment with Pine and Gilmore’s four experience realms (Pine &

Gilmore, 1999). Where appropriate significant difference tests are used to help identify response items that are especially unique to each grouping. Table 4-8 identifies the four clusters and their share of the overall GI visitors interviewed.

Table 4-8 GI experience groups

Experience Type	Share of GI Respondents	n
Escapist	41.1%	209
Entertainment	27.9%	142
Esthetic	16.9%	86
Casual Explorer	14.1%	72

The following sections provide a description of the experience groups in terms of their overall traits - particularly those that differentiate them significantly from the other groups.

4.3.1. Escapists’ Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Escapists were the most immersed of any of the groups in GI experiences. They also comprised the largest share (41%) of visitors interviewed at GI (Table 4-9). From a socio-demographic perspective they were significantly more likely to be 45-54 years old (30%), with some college/or university education (40%), living either in Metro Vancouver (28%) or other BC locations (Table 4-10).

Table 4-9 Socio-demographic characteristics by experience group

Socio-Demographics	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer
Gender*				
Female	60.8%	76.8%	55.8%	66.7%
Male	39.2%	23.2%	44.2%	33.3%
<i>n</i>	209	142	86	72
Age **				
35-44 years	30.8%	21.1%	33.7%	19.4%
45-54 years	29.8%	21.8%	24.4%	19.4%
25-34 years	19.2%	24.6%	25.6%	23.6%
55-64 years	13.9%	16.2%	8.1%	15.3%
Under 24 years	3.8%	10.6%	5.8%	18.1%
65 years or older	2.4%	5.6%	2.3%	4.2%
<i>n</i>	208	142	86	72
Education***				
University degree (Bsc)	34.1%	42.4%	27.9%	34.7%
Some college or University	39.9%	34.5%	31.4%	27.8%
Masters/PhD	19.7%	12.9%	26.7%	26.4%
High school	5.8%	8.6%	11.6%	9.7%
Less than high school	0.5%	1.4%	2.3%	1.4%
<i>n</i>	208	139	86	72
Place of Residence ****				
Other Metro Vancouver	28.2%	13.4%	25.6%	8.3%
Vancouver	12.9%	23.2%	18.6%	25.0%
Other Canada	16.7%	19.7%	20.9%	9.7%
Other BC Resident	25.8%	7.7%	15.1%	2.8%
USA	10.0%	16.9%	12.8%	26.4%
Other country	6.2%	19.0%	7.0%	27.8%
<i>n</i>	209	142	86	72

* Gender differences Pearson Chi-Square = 13.587. **p= 0.004**

** Age differences *Pearson Chi-Square = 31.712. **p= 0.007**

*** Education differences Pearson Chi-Square = 18.005. **p= 0.116**

**** Place of residence differences Pearson Chi-Square = 89.452. **p= 0.000**

Escapists' Trip Characteristics

Escapists were significantly more apt (64%) to be visiting GI for tourism purposes (Table 4-10). They also visited GI more frequently than other GI visitor groups. Approximately 36% of them visited the area at least every two to three months annually (Table 4-11).

Table 4-10 Primary trip purpose by experience group

Purpose	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer
Tourism related (e.g. trip and /or vacation related, touring, shopping, food and beverage, entertainment, etc.)	63.9%	58.5%	58.1%	54.2%
Leisure & recreation related (e.g. personal physical activity, socializing, relaxing, etc.)	21.2%	33.1%	32.6%	29.2%
Household related (e.g. grocery, health care)	7.2%	7.0%	8.1%	9.7%
Work related (e.g. meetings, job tasks, etc.)	7.7%	1.4%	1.2%	6.9%
n	208	142	86	72

*Pearson Chi-Square = 17.370. **p= 0.043**

Table 4-11 Trip frequency by experience group

Frequency	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Causal Explorers
This is my first time	34.6%	47.9%	31.4%	50.0%
About once a year	29.8%	18.3%	34.9%	13.9%
Every 2-3 months	20.2%	19.7%	22.1%	16.7%
About once a month	13.5%	12.7%	11.6%	13.9%
Daily	1.9%	1.4%	0.0%	5.6%
n	208	142	86	72

*Pearson Chi-Square = 25.839. **p= 0.011**

Escapists GI versus Vancouver Destination Selection Factors

Escapists consistently placed significantly more overall importance than any other groups on visiting GI as opposed to Vancouver. Their chosen activities involved exposure to local markets, scenery, community, products and services, heritage and culture, architecture and learning opportunities (Table 4-12). They placed greatest emphasis on choosing GI because of the opportunities it offered to enjoy natural scenery and surroundings (avg. 4.64), local market and artisan shops (avg. 4.58). Engagement with locals in GI activities of all types was rated highest in importance by the escapist visitor experience group (Table 4-12).

Table 4-12 Factors influencing GI versus Vancouver trip by experience group

Factor	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer	F	Sig.
To visit local market and artisan shops	4.58	4.47	4.17	4.08	9.336	0.000
To enjoy the natural scenery and surroundings	4.64	4.37	4.36	3.82	19.440	0.000
To enjoy the atmosphere and engage with local residents in various activities	4.56	3.89	4.19	3.49	31.880	0.000
To experience the local culture of the Island	4.33	4.11	3.90	3.51	13.041	0.000
To learn more about the local community, and the unique products and services that Granville Island offer	4.35	3.57	3.85	3.11	32.573	0.000
To expand my knowledge about the heritage and history of the Island	4.44	3.44	3.77	2.82	53.795	0.000
To see local buildings and architecture	3.93	3.16	3.55	2.71	24.014	0.000
n	209	142	86	72		

*Based on a scale where 1 = not at all important; 5 = very important

Escapists' Experience Engagement

More than any other group, Escapists expressed the highest overall agreement (avg. 4.53) that their visit to GI had been engaging (Table 4-13). For all of the engagement items explored, they were most convinced that these factors had involved them in GI's local cultural, social, heritage and natural environments. They were particularly in agreement that the area's architecture and heritage facilities (avg. 4.75), local artisans (avg. 4.75), and setting (4.74) contributed to this sense of engagement (Table 4-13).

Table 4-12 Engagement by experience group

Engagement Type	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer	F	Sig.
The setting provided pleasure to my senses (e.g. sounds, sights, smells, touch)	4.74	4.54	4.48	3.86	37.351	0.000
Watching the activities of local artisans was intriguing and captivating	4.75	4.28	4.48	3.56	69.420	0.000
The setting engaged me with the area's natural surroundings	4.65	4.06	4.40	3.39	73.074	0.000
The Island's attention to local architectural design details enhanced my interest in the place	4.60	3.89	4.12	3.13	94.692	0.000
The visit has stimulated my curiosity in learning more about local arts and crafts	4.56	3.82	3.97	3.25	74.466	0.000
I felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's local architecture and heritage	4.75	3.54	4.16	2.78	172.645	0.000
The setting engaged me with the area's culture and heritage	4.48	3.73	4.07	3.04	93.420	0.000

Engagement Type	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer	F	Sig.
I felt connected with the local community while taking part in different activities	4.60	3.51	4.01	2.86	143.850	0.000
This was a real learning experience	4.50	3.46	3.88	2.72	119.255	0.000
While here I felt like I was part of the local community	4.38	3.44	3.84	2.92	88.635	0.000
The visit has made me more knowledgeable about this place and its people	4.19	3.61	3.59	2.82	66.897	0.000
I have learned a lot about the area's heritage	4.19	3.20	3.66	2.51	117.385	0.000
Avg. Composite Engagement Level	4.53	3.75	4.05	3.07		
n	209	142	86	72		

*Based on a scale ranging from 1 = disagree a lot to 5 = agree a lot

Escapists' Site Management Satisfaction

Escapists expressed the highest overall satisfaction (avg. 4.46) with GI's management of the area (Table 4-14). Their satisfaction ratings were significantly higher than the other groups for all of the management items examined. Their highest ratings were associated with GI's maintenance of natural surroundings (avg. 4.63) and public spaces and facilities (avg. 4.55).

Table 4-13 GI site management satisfaction by experience group

Statement	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer	F	Sig.
Attractiveness of natural surroundings	4.63	4.62	4.31	4.00	20.053	0.000
Quality of customer service	4.48	4.40	3.53	3.88	34.293	0.000
Quality of food services	4.41	4.30	3.85	3.65	20.273	0.000
Maintenance of public facilities and spaces	4.55	4.35	3.29	3.56	76.481	0.000
Accessibility of area	4.40	4.37	2.60	3.43	130.610	0.000
Ease of getting around the area	4.27	4.33	2.49	3.46	117.333	0.000
Composite site management satisfaction	4.46	4.40	3.35	3.66		
n	209	142	86	72		

*Based on a scale ranging from 1 = not at all satisfied; 5 = very satisfied

Escapists' Intent to Return and Recommend

In keeping with their high satisfaction ratings, Escapists were significantly more likely than other experience groups to indicate intent to return to GI in the future. About 84% of them expressed this view (Table 4-15). Less than one percent of visitors (0.5%) clearly indicated that they would not return. In addition, 81% of them indicated that they would recommend a visit to GI to others (Table 4-15). These overall responses were not significantly different than the responses given for other experience clusters.

Table 4-14 Intent to return and /or recommend to others by experience group

Response	Escapist	Entertainment	Esthetic	Casual Explorer
Intent to Return *				
Definitely	83.5%	73.0%	65.1%	58.3%
Probably	14.1%	17.0%	30.2%	27.8%
Don't know	1.9%	7.8%	4.7%	8.3%
No	0.5%	2.1%	0.0%	5.6%
n	206	141	86	72
Intent to Recommend Visit to Others **				
Definitely	80.7%	83.8%	69.8%	77.8%
Probably	18.4%	15.5%	25.6%	20.8%
Don't know	1.0%	0.7%	4.7%	1.4%
No	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
n	207	142	86	72

*Pearson chi-square for intent to return = 35.066. **p= 0.000**

**Pearson chi-square for willingness to recommend to others = 10.787. p= 0.095

4.3.2. Entertainment Experience Group

Entertainment Group Socio-demographic Characteristics

Entertainment respondents comprised the second greatest share (28%) of GI visitors interviewed (Table 4-8). While their socio-demographic characteristics were similar to other experience groups in many ways they were significantly more likely to be females (77%), and over 55years of age (27%). Compared to other groups they also had the largest share (42%) of people with university degrees. The greatest proportion of them lived in Vancouver (23%), with another third (36%) residing in foreign countries (Table 4-9).

Entertainment Group Trip Characteristics

Entertainment group visitors were primarily (59%) at GI for tourism purposes and the largest proportion (48%) of them were visiting for the first time. The most important

factors driving their choice to visit Granville Island as opposed to other locations in Vancouver (Table 4-12) were to visit the local market and artisans' shops (avg. 4.47), enjoy the local surroundings (avg. 4.37), and experience the local culture. Less importance was placed on learning opportunities designed to expand their knowledge about local heritage, history, architecture or community (Table 4-13).

Entertainment Group Experience Engagement

Entertainment group tourists expressed the second lowest level of overall engagement (avg. 3.75) in GI activities (Table 4-13). They were most engaged by GI's setting and how it stimulated their senses (avg. 4.54), opportunities to enjoy local artisans' performances (avg. 4.28) and chances to appreciate the area's natural surroundings (avg. 4.06). They were least engaged in learning opportunities (avg. 3.46) the place provided particularly with respect to local culture and heritage (avg. 3.20).

Entertainment Group Site Management Satisfaction

Entertainment group visitors expressed the second highest overall satisfaction (avg. 4.40) with GI management of the area (Table 4-14). They gave greatest satisfaction ratings to how GI maintained the attractiveness of its natural surroundings (avg. 4.62), and the quality of customer service (avg. 4.40).

Entertainment Group Intent to Return and Recommend

Overall, their satisfaction levels were reflected in intentions to return and recommend GI to others (Table 4-15). About 73% of them indicated that they definitely planned to return. Additionally, they were significantly more likely (83%) to definitely recommend a GI visit to others (Table 4-15).

4.3.3. Esthetics Realm Experience

Esthetics' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Esthetics comprised the third largest segment of GI visitor market (Table 4-8). They included significantly higher proportions (44%) of males and individuals aged 35-44 years (34%). They also numbered the smallest group 55 years or older (10%). The Esthetics also had the largest share (27%) of people with post graduate degrees (Table 4-9). While the largest proportion of them lived in Metro Vancouver (26%), more of them (21%) than any other group resided in other parts of Vancouver (Table 4-9).

Esthetics' Trip Characteristics

The majority (59%) of Esthetics were visiting GI for tourism purposes (Table 4-10). They were the least likely (1%) of all experience groups to be there for work-related reasons. Compared to other groups, significantly higher proportions of them visited GI more than once a year (35%) or every 2-3 months (Table 4-11). Their most important reasons for selecting GI as opposed to other Vancouver locations for their trip were related to enjoying the area's natural surroundings (avg. 4.36), local atmosphere and resident activities (4.19), and market and artisan shops (avg. 4.17). They placed least importance (avg. 3.55) on visiting for opportunities to see local architecture and heritage (Table 4-12).

Esthetics' Experience Engagement

Esthetics expressed the second highest overall level of experience engagement (avg. 4.05) of any of the groups (Table 4-13). Their highest levels of engagement were with the way GI's setting provided pleasure to their senses (avg. 4.48) and that watching local performances was captivating and intriguing (avg. 4.48) (Table 4-13). They also felt particularly engaged with its natural surroundings (avg. 4.40). Despite the fact that engagement with local architecture was their lowest priority when initially deciding to

visit GI (Table 4-12), during their visit they felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's architecture and heritage (avg. 4.16), Table 4-13).

Esthetics' Site Management Satisfaction

Overall, Esthetic group satisfaction with GI's site management was lowest (avg. 3.35) of all the experience clusters identified (Table 4-14). While generally satisfied with the attractiveness of the areas' natural surroundings (avg. 4.31), Esthetics were significantly more apt than other experience groups to express lower satisfaction with respect to GI's management of customer service (avg. 3.53), public facilities and space maintenance, location accessibility (avg. 2.60), and ease of getting around the site (2.49).

Esthetics' Intent to Return and/or Recommend

While not especially satisfied with their overall experience, about 65 percent of the Esthetics indicated that they would definitely be coming back in the future (Table 4-15). Another 30 percent of them indicated that they would probably return. However, they also were the least likely (69%) to be willing to definitely recommend a GI visit to others.

4.3.4. Casual Explorers Experience Group

Casual Explorers' Socio-demographic Characteristics

Overall, Casual Explorer's s represented about 14% of all GI visitors (Table 4-8). The largest proportion (67%) of them was female (Table 4-9). Predominantly (57%) they were between 18-34 of age, they were significantly more likely than other groups to hold university or post graduate degrees (35%). Similarly, they were significantly more apt than other groups to be non-Canadians (54%) or Vancouver residents (25%, Table 4-9).

Casual Explorer Trip Characteristics

Casual explorers were the least likely (45%) to be visiting GI for tourism purposes (Table 4-10). Seventeen percent of them were at GI for work or household related reasons. As such, they were significantly more likely than other groups to be either first time visitors (50%) and/or more frequent visitors (20%) visiting daily or monthly (Table 4-11). The more frequent visitors were most apt to be local Vancouver residents. Their reasons for visiting GI as opposed to other locations were reflected in their trip purpose. Their most important reason (avg. 4.08) for visiting GI was to visit local market and artisan shops (Table 4-12). However, the importance they attached to this motivation and all of the others explored was significantly less than that reported by the other experience groups (Table 4-12). For instance, they placed the least importance of any group on seeing local architecture and buildings (avg. 2.71) and expanding their knowledge about GI's heritage (avg. 2.82).

Casual Explorers' Experience Engagement

Casual Explorers' were the least engaged of all GI visitor groups examined in this study. Their overall average engagement score was 3.07 (Table 4-13). While Casual Explorers were most in agreement that the setting had had stimulated their senses (avg. 3.86), their overall score on this engagement factor was significantly lower than that for all of the other groups. In addition, their stated engagement levels with other experience factors were also very low. Their lowest level of engagement was associated with heritage learning opportunities (avg. 2.51).

Casual Explorers 'Site Management Satisfaction

Casual Explorers expressed the second lowest level of overall satisfaction (avg. 3.66) with GI's site management (Table 4-14). While they expressed their highest satisfaction (avg. 4.00) with the management of the area's natural surroundings, they were less convinced than any other group that the quality of customer (avg. 3.88) and food (avg. 3.65) services were at a high level. They also expressed limited satisfaction with accessibility to (avg. 3.43) and within (avg. 3.46) GI (Table 4-14).

Casual Explorers' Intent to Return or Recommend

Casual Explorers were significantly less apt than all the other experience groups indicate they would definitely return to GI. Only 58 percent indicated their readiness to return again (Table 4-15). Since a large segment of them were international visitors this lack of intent seemed reasonable. In contrast about 79 percent of them indicated that they would recommend a visit others to visit GI (Table 4-15).

4.4. Summary

This chapter described overall patterns in the responses of GI visitors to experiences at this unique location. The description provided an overview of the socio-demographic, trip motivations and behaviour, engagement levels, and satisfaction levels of these visitors. In addition, it provided a segmented perspective concerning four experience groups within the overall population of GI visitors surveyed for this study. The dominant, unique behaviours and experience perspectives of these four groups were subsequently provided. Based on these data patterns, implications for Granville Island managers interested in promoting geotourism at GI are provided in the subsequent discussion chapter.

Chapter 5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

Chapter 4 summarized the survey findings and defined four main cluster groups. The groups were formed based on tourists' responses and preferences during their visit on the island. The survey questionnaire measured the value and quality of the visitors' experiences and aimed to answer the following two main questions of the study:

Q1: Is there any evidence of geotourism nature experiences on Granville Island?
Do the people visiting the Island tend to have geotourism experiences?

Q2: Are there any segments of geotourism visitors that are apt to have geotourism experiences?

To further explore the answers to these questions the survey was customized around Pine & Gilmore experience realms approach as described by Oh et al. (2007). The following sections in this chapter provide analysis of the individual clusters, their relation to Pine and Gilmore experience realms and alignment with the notion of geotourism experiences. The intent is to provide an understanding of visitor experiences at Granville Island from a geotourism perspective. If geotourism experience characteristics as identified in National Geographic's guiding principles exist, this may provide part of the rationale needed for the area to seek status as a geotourism destination. The following paragraphs discuss the findings of the survey in the context of their support for Granville Island as a geotourism destination.

5.2. Tracing Geotourism Experiences at Granville Island

The following paragraphs discuss the nature of geotourism experiences as discovered and experienced by the tourists in the four realm groups. Each realm group represents a unique set of characteristics that define tourists' behaviour and outlines the distinctiveness of the realm group. A connection between the geotourism experiences and the top five most cited geotourism principles is examined. Evidence of this linkage is reflected in visitors' responses and daily experiences that supports the existence of the geotourism product and experiences on the Island.

5.2.1. Escapist experiences

Escapists are immersionist tourists and represent the largest clusters among tourists visiting the Island (Table 4-9, page 51). Immersionists are defined as tourists, who seek to enjoy their experiences through active or passive participation (Fig 2-1, page 20). What makes them a unique group and separates them from the rest of the clusters is their high appreciation of the overall tourism product offered at the island. Escapists showed the highest interest for visiting Granville Island. Their satisfaction with the engagement and experience factors was the highest overall among the realms identified. They aligned best with the Pine & Gilmore's conceptualized central or core experience positioning (Fig 2-1). Described as the "sweet spot", the center of the chart allows for optimal participation and engagement in all theorized experience realms. Immersionists' indicated that they were particularly immersed in the surroundings and area's environment, enjoyed the esthetical qualities of the area's local architecture and heritage, and connected with the local community through active participation and observing of local activities. These experiences helped them escape their daily routines. They were eager to learn more about the local history and heritage that brought them close to the Education realm. In addition, they were quite absorbed in enjoying the local artisans and as such were also closely aligned with the Entertainment realm. Escapists' immersionists provided overall most

positive responses, highest satisfaction and therefore expressed the highest probability of returning in the future, and recommending the destination to others. Granville Island is a recognized and popular location for both entertainment and relaxation. The Island offers variety of events year round that allow its visitors to get immersed through different ways of participation. Escapists have the option to engage either partially or fully through a number of seasonal festivals, concerts, shows and performances. The Island's calendar offers a mixture of activities and events suitable for a wide range of age groups. Live performance enthusiasts can escape "reality" any day of the month at the Performance Works theatre that offers some of Vancouver's best performance events and productions. Parents with children are regular visitors as the island offers some of the best activities for them. The Kids Market is an eclectic one-stop entertainment hub offering everything from a playground area to retailers housing unique handcrafted locally made toys. It provides a unique play environment for children, and provides novel venues for families to escape to a different kind of environment. The Island's water park is a favourite for wet activities or simply having a picnic with freshly prepared food from the local market. Whether attending a pumpkin patch festival or simply walking alongside the busy streets, the availability of events and diversity of communal engagement is what enhances the character and distinctiveness of Granville Island. Such an array of tourism products leaves a lasting satisfaction with visitors. Visitor satisfaction is particularly high with Immersionists at Granville Island, and this aligns well with the objective of one of Geotourism's principles: - "Ensure that satisfied, excited geotourists bring new vacation stories home and send friends off to experience the same thing, thus providing continuing demand for the destination". Higher satisfaction promotes positive word of mouth marketing essential to on-going business prosperity.

5.2.2. Esthetics' experience

Granville Island seeks to provide unique and memorable experiences. Esthetics seek experiences that connect to them at an inner and subconscious level. Esthetics type visitors feel, smell, see, observe, breathe, touch and engage in their environments through

a large and sometimes complex sensory spectrum of experiences. A way to describe the sensory world through the eyes of a true Esthetic experience is expressed by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry in his book *The Little Prince* “The most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched; they are felt with the heart.” (Exupery, *Little Prince*, 1943)

The way Esthetics experience their surroundings is very different than the rest of the realms and their attention is emphasised on the hidden characteristics that make a place unique. A typical day on the island through the eyes of the Esthetics tourist would include engaging in aspects of the place that are perceived to be exceptional. An ordinary early morning begins with sirens from the first Aquabus breaking the air’s silence. The day looks promising because the sun is waking up still barely touching the pavement with its first solar kisses but with an assurance for a happy day. The island is waking up as well with its first busy sounds and typical daily routines. First visitors are spotted, wandering, sipping coffees and nibbling freshly baked goods. For Esthetics this is all part of experiencing the island and observing locals’ daily routines. There is something esthetically pleasing and very different about watching the fruit-filled crates being delivered at the local market. The morning dew brings to the air the aromas and sweetness of strawberries, the zest of lemons and the freshness of just cut cilantro making this experience like no other. This is a true part of the esthetics’ culture that brings a sense of pleasure and satisfaction. It supports the existence of esthetical experiences that are particularly evident at Granville Island. Observing the Island’s early morning’s fuss while just sitting, having breakfast surrounded by hanging flower baskets reinforces the distinctiveness of the area. In the process of my research, visitors were spotted enjoying the Public Market with noticeable admiration, armed with long zoomed cameras, mesmerized by displays’ of vivid “Picasso” like painting in bright hues and colors. Positioned amidst such picturesque canvases of such daily activities, ordinary events and cultural routines, visitors seemed to be left awe of Granville Island’s life. Somewhere in all of these experiences lies a secret message that only Esthetics can see and decode. Esthetics are the kind of individuals that enjoy an event or environment but often have little or no effect on it. Granville Island offers numerous examples of Esthetic experience opportunities. Every venue, business and retailer tells a story though esthetically designed

images. A visit to the Sand Bar restaurant's roof top terrace, being wrapped in a cozy blanket while enjoying a freshly caught fish on a handpicked selected daily menu creates memories and provides a lingering sense of enjoyment and satisfaction long after dinner is over. A marina boat dinner on the patio deck at "Bridges" restaurant under the open sky creates a special moment in time and a sense of participating in an extraordinary activity. Art-lined walls and accent style lighting create an esthetic experience in an otherwise understated typical coffee house. Well designed and glamorous décor of a perfect retailer along with beautifully displayed products offers another type of esthetic experience. A kaleidoscope of seasonal freshly picked fruits and veggies at the Granville Island's Market neatly displayed in geometric shapes draws shoppers and tourists. Piles of vibrant orange colored pumpkins craftily showcased along with a Halloween themed lighting offer an esthetic kind of experience during the holiday season. These all exist at Granville Island.

For a destination to attract visitors with unique experiences, it must set itself apart from competitors. One way to do this is to offer exclusive products and services that reflect the area's heritage and community. Another way is to promote principles and strategies that will be appealing yet entertaining to most people. Such type of geotourism experiences are noticeably present on the Island and fully supported by the products and services being offered. One of the key components enhancing Granville Island reputation as a unique and authentic destination is the exclusiveness of the products and the way that they are offered. Market selectivity and diversity were recognized by survey respondents as being particularly evident at Granville Island, which aligns with important geotourism principles - Market selectivity which "Encourages growth in tourism market segments most likely to appreciate, respect, and disseminate information about the distinctive assets of the locale" (Geotourism principles, Center for sustainable destinations). While market selectivity is responsible for maintaining the brand image of the area, market diversity supports economic growth. It "Encourages a full range of appropriate food and lodging facilities, so as to appeal to the entire demographic spectrum of the geotourism market and help maximize economic resiliency over both the short and long term."

Adherence to these geotourism principles is at the heart of what makes Granville Island exclusive and a preferred destination for so many people. Products are developed to bring satisfaction and please in the most esthetic kind of way.

While not clear consensus definition of a tourism product exists in the literature, there is a general understanding that such a product must appeal to travelers engaged in either business or leisure activities. From a tourist's perspective, the product is a complete experience that fulfills multiple tourism needs and provides benefits. A real treat for visitors to Granville Island is the absence of chain stores. Starbucks, McDonalds, London Drugs or any other chain retailers are "banned" from the area in order to preserve the area's communal feel and brand image. A delightful experience for Esthetics shoppers is the selection of hand-crafted market goods exclusive to the Island and manufactured locally by artists in their own on-site studios. Over 50 percent of the stores offer primarily local merchandised and community trade products – a feat that is quite challenging in the competitive business of retailing. An art pottery studio on the Island showcases products while entertaining and capturing tourists' attention by allowing them to participate in the product creation process. Involvement in such activity generates everlasting memories that visitors carry away and therefore helps create memorable experience and bond with the host destination. Whether we travel to seek unexplored territories, create new memories, find ourselves in investigating different cultures and unknown societies, or peruse anonymity as visitors, tourism nowadays offers much more than just traveling. It offers a way of living, a way of communicating, a way of experiencing life, and a new way of thinking. It offers a whole new spectrum of experiences called Geotourism experiences.

5.2.3. Entertainment

Granville Island provides a wide range of entertainment options. A pleasant summer afternoon Granville Island is a perfect destination to enjoy street performances, live concerts and shows. Daily, there are variety of attractions and activities providing

memorable experiences for visitors through either passive observation or actual participation as part of a live show. Aside from its staged entertainment activities, Granville Island allures its visitors predominately with its historical, cultural and heritage character. The magic begins when you take your first steps under the bridge and enter the premises of the island. While housing 300 businesses, studios and facilities the island evokes an older industrial feel. Tourists are entertained by the number of craftsmen and locally-owned studios proudly displaying well-kept traditions and master skills proving once again that customs and craftsmanship has not died. This tradition lives through every mouth-blown glass object and ceramic bowl or knitted sweater. While the existence of the art shops, various galleries and studios provides opportunities for entertainment and engagement, the presence of these opportunities, the area's industrial architecture gives the island its distinguished and unique reputation. A combination of restructured warehouses and heritage buildings, restored antique shops, preserved signage and architecture building elements bring tribute to the area's industrial days. Visitors are entertained through visual and sensory experiences. While destinations like Granville Island involve visitors at a range of participation levels, this destination offers its own unique and authentically entertaining experiences. Live performances in many of the island's common spaces are one of the biggest attractions during summer months. Violin performances, solo sax, the songs of visiting ethnic bands break the air with lively music gathering crowds and adding charisma to the local setting. Aside from these relatively unrehearsed daily performances the island attracts music fans with its renowned Vancouver International Jazz Festival that showcases some of the best musicians and talents in the genre. The annual festival has become iconic for the island and draws visitors from all over Canada and abroad.

Music is one of the most recognized and distinct entertainment features on the island. Festivals, streets performances, art scrolls, and/or dining experiences present the tourist with the opportunity and atmosphere to be entertained through either absorption, passive, active or immersive participation. Even without recognizing the concept behind such experiences, both local residents and visitors are often engaged in one or more of the

4 dimensions of experiences identified by Pine & Gilmore (1999) and Oh et al., (2007). During the participation process, they feel engaged in not only captivating experiences but also a part of an exceptional community. Such experiences can only be produced at destinations where communities are willing to cooperate and accept guests into their neighbourhood. As such Granville Island supports the Protection and Enhancement of Destination Appeal principle of geotourism. “Encourage businesses to sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, aesthetic appeal, and local culture”. Typically, tourists gain knowledge and improve their skill sets while get involved at the destinations activities (Oh et al, 2007). Visitors to the island’s art shops, studios, galleries, and museum may learn the historical background of knitting and weaving, glassmaking, metal and others forms of art presented in various ways (on site, brochures, art classes, conversations with the artist, etc.). This may increase their skills by trying to participate on a task following the artist’s instructions, or simply remain entertained through observation. Either way, a tourist who is entertained and is left pleased with a task or activity achieves a greater level of satisfaction at the end. A higher level of satisfaction creates an overall positive response from consumers. It also provides a feedback and encourages strategies for protecting and enhancing the necessary elements vital for the survival of Granville Island as a uniquely attractive place for exceptional entertainment experiences.

5.2.4. Casual explorers

Casual visitors did not indicate a strong interest in the area’s heritage or other unique dimensions of the destination. Perhaps this was because locals were more familiar with the area, accessed it regularly, and were primarily focused on using it for more essential work and living purposes such as running errands and shopping activities. In contrast, a small segment of the international visitors were more curious than engaged in experiencing the area’s dining and shopping opportunities. In some cases they were interested in experimenting with the destination’s features – preferably at little or no cost at all. The island is known for offering many attractions and activities that are free of charge. Such activities are definitely sought by many causal explorers and were able to

deliver a great personal value and satisfaction. For those seeking unique gifts and ideas or just wanting to be entertained with shopping the island is the perfect place to be. Famous for its authentic shopping retailers such as Net Loft Stores, Paper –Ya and the Granville Island Toy Company the Island provides a very rich retail experience that is both educational and entertaining. Many of the “window shopping” guests get allured and enthusiastic about rare finds and eventually end up purchasing a gift or a souvenir. It is often hard to resist stores like Thousand Island or Granville Island Hat shop that take you back in time through their boutique displays and storytelling environments. Visitors can enjoy a beautiful walk or ride a bike around the island experiencing scenic views for no additional cost. Coffee taste better when sipped with a great view of the Vancouver harbour. The island offers a variety of bargain deals suitable for the Casual type tourists. The area’s food market carries numerous meal choices suited to satisfying most taste and nutrition preferences. During the months of my research at Granville Island, many tourists were spotted enjoying the outdoors and the scenic views while resting over freshly prepared goods from the nearby deli, local bakery or market stands. Indulging in such activity avoids tipping costs and busy lines, while simultaneously bringing a sense of personal control over the visit costs. Casual Explorers were the least likely of all the experience groups to specify that they would return in the future. A reason for this could be perhaps due to the fact that Casual Explorers group was largely comprised of international visitors. On the other hand, local residents expressed similar experiences probably because of the broader range of experience options available to them in Vancouver. Therefore, what seems unique and different for visitors may become routine and mundane for residents. Residents who live in a close proximity to the island are able to visit throughout the year with access to most products and services. With such close contact to the area it is sometimes easy to almost ‘take for granted’ all of the unique features that island have to offer. Despite all, the island still remains their preferred choice for shopping and recreational casual activities. Three of the main characteristics that define the Island and make people talk about are its fresh local food, the way it is delivered and its live entertainment. Respondents comment about its appeal, uniquely crafted fresh food, its diverse spectrum of entertainment, and its local attractions

exclusive to the area. Whether is a slice of Italian pizza, a hot oven baked bun garnished with crafted cheese and topped with a slice of prosciutto or a traditional Middle Eastern donair infused with spices, the island leaves even the casual visitor pleased. Designed to entertain, support its host community, as well as educate visitors about local culture and heritage, Granville Island is an engaging community based destination. It demonstrates that the past and present can provide the synergy needed to ensure long term vitality and economic stability and integrity of a place. Place integrity is one of the guiding geotourism principles. Its intent is to “Enhance geographical character by developing and improving it in ways distinctive to the locale, reflective of its natural and cultural heritage, so as to encourage market differentiation and cultural pride.” A tourist destination like Granville Island where the community is tightly connected with all products and services helps create circumstances ensuring that place integrity is protected. This study’s survey findings suggested that the majority of tourists interviewed were in agreement that local activities and products helped emphasize the uniqueness of the place they were visiting. Their experiences helped them form a conscious opinion and perception of the local people, the culture of the destination and the lifestyle of the community.

There are many ways for destination managers to respond to rapidly changing socio-economic conditions in ways that increase the resilience and of places. Granville Island store owners are passionate about sustainability and buying local (Sandy Wu, July 01, 2010, Epoch Times). Today’s tourists are well-educated, sophisticated travelers aware of sustainability issues and understanding the competitiveness of the global market. They expect not only higher standards of service and diversity of products but also unique experiences. What separates one destination from another is the level of engagement and ways to immerse tourist into the area’s environment. Destination managers need to know and learn the culture of their average visitors. This fine-tuning is a must for providing memorable experiences and establishing long lasting relationship between the host destination and its visitors. This host – tourist relationship is embedded in the core image of the island and is currently working well. By supporting the development of various

local studios, galleries, encouraging the growth of small businesses and sustaining a healthy relationship with local business owners the island creates an invisible bridge between the host and the tourist. That bridge is the one responsible for catering and maintaining the unique experiences and ensures the authenticity and integrity of Granville Island.

5.3. Summary

This Chapter discussed the way tourist perceived the products and services encountered at Granville Island from an experiential point of view and outlined their linkage to the four Pine and Gilmore realms as described in Chapter 3. In addition, the notion of the visitors' experiences in a geotourism setting was explored and their alignment with the National Geographic's principles was discussed. Findings and discussion confirmed a relationship between the tourism products and certain geotourism experiences on the island and their linkage to five of the survey most cited geotourism principles.

Chapter 6. CONCLUSION

6.1. Summary of Conclusions

The aim of this research was to understand the nature of tourists' experiences in a specific urban setting. The study's overriding research questions were:

Q1: What kind of service and product experiences are tourists likely to experience during their visit on Granville Island?

Q2: What are some examples of products and services provided by Granville Island that match with the preferences of the experiences of these visitors?

- a) To what extent are selected services and products experienced important to the tourist?
- b) How satisfied are the tourists with experiencing these products?

Q3: To what extent do the tourist experiences align with the concept of Pine and Gilmore (1999) four realms of experiences?

Q4: To what extent do the experiences expressed by Granville Island's visitors align with those embedded within the concept of geotourism principles?

The findings and analysis provided useful information on experience characteristics as expressed by visitors on Granville Island. Many of these attributes were perceived to be particularly satisfying for visitors. This aligned and supported important principles and goals embedded in the National Geographic's geotourism charter of principles. The importance of such findings demonstrates the opportunity that exists for Granville Island to become a leading geotourism destination. The analysis presented insights into what kind of geotourism experiences exist on Granville Island. It also helped in understanding how the tourism product is being delivered to tourists and experienced

by them. The research findings provided useful examples of methods and ways to stage and co-create satisfying experiences that also support geotourism goals. The research suggests the existence of multiple opportunities to use tourism products for the development of satisfying experiences. Such experiences can be enhanced through benefiting from the destination's cultural, natural, environmental and entertainment attributes, which are essential components of the geotourism concept.

The overriding conclusions of this research lie with the belief that experiences are complex and multidimensional. The ways we consume, perceive and experience the products and services varies greatly based on the individuals' socio-demographics, cultural needs and interests. Understanding the relationships that link tourists with various experience realms and behaviours is complex and challenging. More research is needed to understand these organic relationships. Similarly, there is a need for greater understanding of the geotourism brand concept. In addition, it is essential to understand how this image can drive and guide destinations towards more sustainable forms of tourism development. Better understanding of the behavioural traits, visitors' cognitive perceptions, and preferences of customized experience market segments is needed. This could assist destinations to co-create rich, unique and exclusive experiences. Such planning strategies could support the destination to achieve its brand image, boost competitiveness and support its sustainability enabling pleasurable geotourism experiences. To maintain and manage tourists' expectations and motivations is particularly important in places like Granville Island where the destination has no control over important attributes like the weather. Therefore, market managers need to emphasize the crafting of exceptional tourism products and services that deliver extraordinary and memorable geotourism experiences.

6.2. Recommendations for Further Research

In this research, experiences were analyzed and linked to specific experiencing attributes in order to determine the extent of geotourism development at Granville Island,

as well as to identify the potential for the development of other geotourism related experiences. The study identifies two primary venues for further research.

6.2.1. Recommendations for academic research

First, because the concept of geotourism is still relatively novel and not wildly popularized, further research and a greater understanding of the notion of geotourism in urban settings is needed. More specifically, knowing how particular geotourism experiences stimulate the development of more sustainable tourism products and the effect that geotourism has on the destination's brand image is required. Destination managers need to evaluate the need and assess the potential for developing niche market-based products and services that will drive the establishment of geotourism experiences and attract specific types of geotourists. Consumers are the generator for creating geotourism experiences.

Further investigation of geotourists profiles should examine their motives, behaviours and look at how their experiences differ from those in other geotourism destinations. Such research could be very beneficial for local communities and serves as a planning tool for destinations managers concerned with the establishment of greater local sustainability, destination authenticity and place identity. While investigating previously conducted research for the purpose of this study, a need for more comprehensive research in a wider range of destinations and respondents competitive with the case of Granville Island was discovered. Additional exploration is needed to understand the relationship between experiences, emotions, absorption, cognition, and multisensory elements. Further research should be focused towards exploring the way that tourists seek, enjoy and evaluate their vacation experiences

Second, the concept of travel experiences has been very well researched and reported in the academic literature. While investigating the topic and concepts outlined in this research I discovered an existing gap concerning the factors between the dynamics that drive and impact visitor experience. As someone who understands the nature of

experiences and values the benefits of traveling I see experiences to be deeply personal, meaningful activities that could be presented in a storytelling form. When we travel we sense, feel, observe and reflect on our surroundings. During these moments the creation of experiences is born and our surrounding environments shape the eventual outcome of experiences. As such, there is an essential need for further understanding and interpretation of the notion behind the concept of storytelling in experiences and how they impact our sensory and behavioural perceptions. Storytelling is a powerful and effective marketing tool. As Pine and Gilmore (1999) concluded the nature of “experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual” and as such researchers need to understand the subjectivity of the term, and the highly personalized nature of the quality of the tourism experiences. Furthermore, researchers need to ensure relatedness, flexibility and adaptability in the methods used to understand and interpret the changing and complex nature of tourism experiences. The benefits and knowledge generated from this study only provides a partial basis for more creative research approaches. It serves as a foundation for further exploration of the development of the experiences. More research is needed to elaborate on the true nature of geotourism experience delivery, their roots and their relation to the destination’s development.

6.2.2. Granville Island management implications

This area of research recommendation might be of interest to Granville Island management bureau for furthering their long term strategic planning.

First, our study’s primarily research focus was on customers’ experiences and their perceptions based on how they experience the destinations’ products and services. Since no exploration on their spending habits was evaluated, further research in the area of their spending experiences, looking at their shopping patterns and behaviours is

needed. Such study might be of an importance for the Granville Island's managers in order to set marketing and policy trends.

Second, based on the study findings I recommend that managers look at the top and lowest segments of the tourist groupings realms. It would be valuable to select which ones are worth further exploration and eventually more beneficial to the island's long term planning goals. From a policy and planning point of view decision-makers need to assess the need for further development and investing on research that focus on two aspects. First, a closer look into the realm group with the highest overall scores (escapists) and the potential for investing in research that brings back the frequent visitors on the island. Second, investigating the implications, causes and strategies for aiming to convert the casual explorers tourist group into frequent visitors to the island. Short and long term planning goals could have different objectives and outcomes, and involve different tools and strategies for achieving them. Therefore, I recommend that Granville Island's managers review their planning objectives, key priority action areas and destination's future vision prior to establishing a strategic plan.

The Third recommendation is based on the success story and tourism initiatives of the city of Montreal which was chosen as a UNESCO City of Design in 2006. In 2007 Montreal became the first city in the world to sign the Geotourism Charter of the National Geographic Society and to be recognized as a geotourism destination (<http://www.montrealgeo.com/>, April, 2014). As an example of their successful tourism development, I recommend that Granville Island management implement as part of its future planning strategies the development of a Granville Island Council. The Council should be comprised of key stakeholders from the Island including local community members, store owners, and business developers. The main role and objective of the council should be to represent local interests, identify key priority areas for development, recognize challenges, and define opportunities for implementing Geotourism related planning strategies. Effective collaborations with the Council could facilitate the development of variety of tourism products and services that would additionally support and enhance the character of the locale while maintain its diversity. Most of all, such

local partnership would preserve the unique character of the Island and its “sense of place” while sustaining its image of being a “people place”.

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Appendix A. Profile of Respondents' Socio Demographic and Travel Characteristics

Table 1 - Socio-demographic profile of GI respondents

Socio-Demographics	n	%
Gender		
Female	333	65.3
Male	177	34.7
<i>n</i>	504	100.0
Age		
35-44 years	137	26.9
45-54 years	128	25.1
25-34 years	115	22.6
55-64 years	70	13.8
Under 24 years	41	8.1
65 years or older	18	3.5
<i>n</i>	509	100.0
Education		
University degree	179	35.4
Some college or University	178	35.2
Masters/PhD	102	20.2
High school	41	8.1
Less than high school	6	1.2
<i>n</i>	506	100.0
Place of Residence		
Other Metro Vancouver	106	20.8
Vancouver	94	18.4
Other Canada	88	17.3
Other BC Resident	80	15.7
USA	76	14.9
Other country	66	12.9
<i>n</i>	510	100.0

Table 2 - Predominant Trip Purposes

Purpose	n	%
Tourism related (e.g. trip and /or vacation related, touring, shopping, food and beverage, entertainment, etc)	306	60.1
Leisure & recreation related (e.g. personal physical activity, socializing, relaxing, etc)	140	27.5
Household related (e.g. grocery, health care)	39	7.7
Work related (e.g. meetings, job tasks, etc.)	24	4.7
n	509	100.0

Table 3 - Predominant Visit Frequency Pattern

Frequency	n	%
This is my first time	204	40.1
About once a year	128	25.1
Every 2-3 months	101	19.8
About once a month	66	13.0
Daily	10	2.0
n	509	100.0

Table 6 - Factors affecting GI versus other Vancouver destination visits

Factor	Average	n
To visit local market and artisan shops	4.41	510
To enjoy the natural scenery and surroundings	4.40	510
To enjoy the atmosphere and engage with local residents in various activities	4.16	510
To experience the local culture of the Island	4.08	510
To learn more about the local community, and the unique products and services that Granville Island offer	3.87	510
To expand my knowledge about the heritage and history of the Island	3.82	510
To see local buildings and architecture	3.48	510

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= not at all important to 5 = very important

Table 5 Perceptions of GI experience dimensions

Statement	Average*	n
The setting provided pleasure to my senses (e.g. sounds, sights, smells, touch)	4.51	510
Watching the area's entertainers and artisans perform their activities in shops and in the street helped emphasize the unique place I was visiting	4.44	510
I really enjoyed the diversity and local character of products and services exclusively available here	4.43	510
Watching the activities of local artisans was intriguing and captivating	4.40	509
Taking part in the area's activities helped me feel like I was escaping from many of my daily routines	4.38	510
Watching local musicians and artists perform was captivating	4.32	510
The setting engaged me with the area's natural surroundings	4.26	510
Watching the everyday activities of local people was intriguing	4.21	510
The Island's attention to local architectural design details enhanced my interest in the place	4.11	510
The visit has stimulated my curiosity in learning more about local arts and crafts	4.06	510
I felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's local architecture and heritage	4.03	510
The setting engaged me with the area's culture and heritage	4.00	510
I felt connected with the local community while taking part in different activities	3.95	510
This was a real learning experience	3.85	510
While here I felt like I was part of the local community	3.82	510
The visit has made me more knowledgeable about this place and its people	3.73	510
I have learned a lot about the area's heritage	3.58	510
Overall Average Experience Engagement Rating	4.12	5.10

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree a lot to 5 = strongly agree

Table 6 - Frequently Cited Words / Phrases Used By Visitors to Describe Their Overall Granville Island Experience

Top 5 most cited words	Frequently cited
Food	72
Art /Architecture	59
Amazing / Beautiful	25/ 41
Relaxing	58
Friendly/ locals	53

Top 5 most cited phrases	Frequently cited
Fun & engaging for the whole family with lots of activities	89
Fantastic Food market	68
Very positive experience	55
Relaxing experience in a busy city	50
Variety of choices, attractions, shopping	43

Table 7 - Sense of Physical and Social factors

Statement	Average*	n
Attractiveness of natural surroundings	4.48	510
Quality of customer service	4.21	510
Quality of food services	4.17	510
Maintenance of public facilities and spaces	4.14	510
Accessibility of area	3.95	510
Ease of getting around the area	3.87	510

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree a lot to 5 = strongly

Table 8 - Sense of Engagement Factors

Statement	Average*	n
Watching the area's entertainers and artisans perform their activities in shops and in the street helped emphasize the unique place I was visiting	4.44	510
I really enjoyed the diversity and local character of products and services exclusively available here	4.43	510
Taking part in the area's activities helped me feel like I was escaping from many of my daily routines	4.38	510
Watching local musicians and artists perform was captivating	4.32	510
Watching the everyday activities of local people was intriguing	4.21	510
Taking part in the area's activities made me feel that I was part of the local community	4.07	510

*Average scores based on a scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree a lot to 5 = strongly agree

Table 9 - Enhancing Experiences

Response	n	%
Yes	324	65.1
No	174	34.9
n	498	100.0

Table 10 - Factors Enhancing Experience

Key factors enhancing experience	Frequently cited
Fun and Entertainment	89
Food, restaurants	72
Market and variety of products	68
Artists and performances	60
Friendly people, locals	53
Shopping and services	45

Table 11- Detracting From Experiences

Response	n	%
No	364	73.5
Yes	131	26.5
n	495	100.0

Table 12 - Predominant Choices to Return

Response	n	%
Definitely	373	73.7
Probably	100	19.8
Don't know[25	4.9
No	8	1.6
n	506	100.0

Table 13 - Predominant Choices to Recommend

Response	n	%
Definitely	403	79.3
Probably	97	19.1
Don't know	8	1.6
No	0	0.0
n	508	100.0

Appendix B. Cluster Analysis Tables

GRANVILLE ISLAND (RESPONSE BY CLUSTER)

I. ABOUT YOU

1. Where is your primary place of residence?

Residence	Frequency by Cluster				
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Overall
Vancouver	18.6%	23.2%	25.0%	12.9%	18.5%
Other Metro Vancouver	25.6%	13.4%	8.3%	28.2%	20.8%
Other BC Resident	15.1%	7.7%	2.8%	25.8%	15.7%
Other Canada	20.9%	19.7%	9.7%	16.7%	17.3%
USA	12.8%	16.9%	26.4%	10.0%	14.7%
Other country	7.0%	19.0%	27.8%	6.2%	13.0%
n	86	142	72	209	509

Pearson Chi-Square = 89.452. **p= 0.000**

2. How often do you visit Granville Island?

Frequency	Frequency by Cluster				
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Overall
This is my first time	31.4%	47.9%	50.0%	34.6%	40.0%
Daily	0.0%	1.4%	5.6%	1.9%	2.0%
About once a month	11.6%	12.7%	13.9%	13.5%	13.0%
Every 2-3 months	22.1%	19.7%	16.7%	20.2%	19.9%
About once a year	34.9%	18.3%	13.9%	29.8%	25.2%
n	86	142	72	208	508

Pearson Chi-Square = 25.839. **p= 0.011**

3. What is the MAIN PURPOSE of your trip here today?

Purpose	Frequency by Cluster				
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Overall
Work related (e.g. meetings, job tasks, etc.)	1.2%	1.4%	6.9%	7.7%	4.7%
Household related (e.g. grocery, health care)	8.1%	7.0%	9.7%	7.2%	7.7%
Leisure & recreation related (e.g. personal physical activity, socializing, relaxing, etc)	32.6%	33.1%	29.2%	21.2%	27.6%
Tourism related (e.g. trip and /or vacation related, touring, shopping, food and beverage, entertainment, etc)	58.1%	58.5%	54.2%	63.9%	60.0%
n	86	142	72	208	508

4. Based on your experiences here today, place a check mark in the column best describing how much you agree /disagree with the following statements:


Statement	Average by Cluster*					F	Sig.
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Overall		
The visit has made me more knowledgeable about this place and its people	3.59	3.61	2.82	4.19	3.73	66.897	0.000
I have learned a lot about the area's heritage	3.66	3.20	2.51	4.19	3.59	117.385	0.000
The visit has stimulated my curiosity in learning more about local arts and crafts	3.97	3.82	3.25	4.56	4.06	74.466	0.000
This was a real learning experience	3.88	3.46	2.72	4.50	3.85	119.255	0.000
I felt connected with the local community while taking part in different activities	4.01	3.51	2.86	4.60	3.95	143.850	0.000
I felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's local architecture and heritage	4.16	3.54	2.78	4.75	4.04	172.645	0.000
n	86	142	72	209	509		

*Based on a scale where 1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree.

5. Please tell us how satisfied you were with following:

Statement	Average by Cluster*					F	Sig.
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Overall		
Quality of food services	3.85	4.30	3.65	4.41	4.17	20.273	0.000
Quality of customer service	3.53	4.40	3.88	4.48	4.21	34.293	0.000
Attractiveness of natural surroundings	4.31	4.62	4.00	4.63	4.49	20.053	0.000
Maintenance of public facilities and spaces	3.29	4.35	3.56	4.55	4.14	76.481	0.000
Accessibility of area	2.60	4.37	3.43	4.40	3.95	130.610	0.000
Ease of getting around the area	2.49	4.33	3.46	4.27	3.87	117.333	0.000
n	86	142	72	209	509		

Appendix C. Survey Instrument



Welcome!

In efforts to make Granville Island's time more enjoyable to our guests the "CMHC - Granville Island" and Simon Fraser University would like to learn more about your experiences here today. While your personal views will be kept strictly confidential, they will be combined with those of many other visitors to help us understand what you think of Granville Island as a place to visit and experience Vancouver's heritage and culture.

Your opinion counts, so please help us by completing the following questionnaire. In appreciation for your help, we will be pleased to include your name in a draw for a framed Granville Island print.

Participation in the survey and the draw for the prize is completely voluntary, and you can withdraw from the survey at any time if you wish to do so.

I. ABOUT YOU

1. Where is your primary place of residence?

- Vancouver Other Metro Vancouver Other BC Resident
 Other Canada USA Other country

2. How often do you visit Granville Island?

- This is my first time Daily About once a month
 Every 2-3 months About Once a year

3. How important were the following factors in your decision to visit Granville Island AS OPPOSED to other Vancouver locations today?

	Not at all important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Important	Very important
To see local buildings and architecture	1	2	3	4	5
To experience the local culture of the Island	1	2	3	4	5
To enjoy the natural scenery and surroundings	1	2	3	4	5
To visit local market and artisan shops	1	2	3	4	5
To learn more about the local community, and the unique products and services that Granville Island offer	1	2	3	4	5
To enjoy the atmosphere and engage with local residents in various activities	1	2	3	4	5
To expand my knowledge about the heritage and history of the Island	1	2	3	4	5

4. What is the MAIN PURPOSE of your trip here today? *Please check only one:*

- Work related (e.g. meetings, job tasks, etc.) Household related (e.g. grocery, health care)
 Leisure & recreation related (e.g. personal physical activity, socializing, relaxing, etc) Tourism related (e.g. trip and /or vacation related touring, shopping, food and beverage entertainment, etc)

Page 1
Date: , 2011
Time: am/ pm

II. ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCES HERE TODAY

1. Based on your experiences here today, place a check mark in the column best describing how much you agree /disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The visit has made me more knowledgeable about this place and its people	1	2	3	4	5
I have learned a lot about the area's heritage	1	2	3	4	5
The visit has stimulated my curiosity in learning more about local arts and crafts	1	2	3	4	5
This was a real learning experience	1	2	3	4	5
I felt connected with the local community while taking part in different activities	1	2	3	4	5
I felt a real sense of being able to relate to the area's local architecture and heritage	1	2	3	4	5

2. What three words/ phrases best describe your Granville Island experience today?

3. Based on your experiences here today, place a check mark in the column best describing how much you agree /disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
While here I felt like I was part of the local community	1	2	3	4	5
The setting engaged me with the area's culture and heritage	1	2	3	4	5
The setting engaged me with the area's natural surroundings	1	2	3	4	5
The Island's attention to local architectural design details enhanced my interest in the place	1	2	3	4	5
The setting provided pleasure to my senses (e.g. sounds, sights, smells, touch)	1	2	3	4	5
Watching the activities of local artisans was intriguing and captivating	1	2	3	4	5

III. ABOUT YOUR SATISFACTION WITH TODAY'S GRANVILLE ISLAND'S EXPERIENCES

1. Please tell us how satisfied you were with following:

	<i>Not at all satisfied</i>	<i>Somewhat satisfied</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Satisfied</i>	<i>Very satisfied</i>
Quality of Food Services	1	2	3	4	5
Quality of customer service	1	2	3	4	5
Attractiveness of natural surroundings	1	2	3	4	5
Maintenance of public facilities and spaces	1	2	3	4	5
Accessibility of area	1	2	3	4	5
Ease of getting around the area	1	2	3	4	5

Date: _____, 2011
 Time: _____ am/ _____ pm

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2. Based on your experiences here today, place a check mark in the column best describing how much you agree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Watching the everyday activities of local people was intriguing	1	2	3	4	5
Watching local musicians and artists perform was captivating	1	2	3	4	5
I really enjoyed the diversity and local character of products and services exclusively available here	1	2	3	4	5
Taking part in the area's activities made me feel that I was part of the local community	1	2	3	4	5
Taking part in the area's activities helped me feel like I was escaping from many of my daily routines	1	2	3	4	5
Watching the area's entertainers and artisans perform their activities in shops and in the street helped emphasize the unique place I was visiting	1	2	3	4	5

3. During the time spent on Granville Island today were there features of your visit that:

a) Enhanced your overall experience?

No Yes → the features that added most to your enjoyment were:

b) Detracted from your overall experience?

No Yes → the features that detracted from your enjoyment were:

4. Would you recommend a visit to Granville Island to your friends/family?

No Don't know Probably Definitely

5. Do you intend to come back to Granville Island again?

No Don't know Probably Definitely

IV. MORE ABOUT YOU

1. Are you: Female Male

2. What age category are you in?

Under 24 years 25-34 years 35-44 years 45-54 years
 55-64 years 65 years or older No Response

3. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

Less than high school High school Some college or University
 University degree Masters/ PhD No response

Date: _____, 2011
Time: _____ am/ _____ pm

We would like to thank you for taking the time to complete our survey!

If you would like to participate in a draw for the framed Granville Island's print, please provide your email or home address below.

❖ Please, note that your personal information provided below is for the prize draw only and will not be retained for other commercial purposes.

For the purpose of winning, please provide one of the following:

Email: _____

Name: _____

Or/and

Tel: _____

City/Town: _____

Province/ State: _____

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey please feel free to contact:

Supervisor Contact Information:

Dr. Peter Williams

Centre for Tourism Policy and Research
School of Resource and Environmental Management
Simon Fraser University, Burnaby BC V5A 1S6

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

THANK YOU AND HAVE A NICE DAY!



Date: _____, 2011
Time: _____ am/ _____ pm

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Appendix D. Study Ethics Documents



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
THINKING OF THE WORLD

H. Weinberg, Ph.D.
Director, Office of Research Ethics
Simon Fraser University

8888 University Drive
Multi-Tenant Facility
Burnaby, B.C. Canada, V4A 1S6
778 782 6593



Minimal Risk Expedited Approval

Date	File	Approval	Principal Investigator
9 Aug. 2011	[2011s0384]	Approved	Kaltcheva, Ani
Title		Start Date	End Date
Planning for Geotourism Experiences: A case study of Granville Island, Vancouver, BC		9 Aug. 2011	9 Aug. 2014
SFU Position	Department / School	Supervisor	
Graduate Student	REM	Williams, Peter	

Hello Ani

Your application has been categorized as 'Minimal Risk' and approved by the Director, Office of Research Ethics on behalf of the Research Ethics Board, in accordance with University Policy r20.01 (<http://www.sfu.ca/policies/research/r20.01.htm>)

The Research Ethics Board reviews and may amend decisions made independently by the Director, Chair or Deputy Chair at the regular monthly meeting of the Board.

Please acknowledge receipt of this Notification of Status by email to dore@sfu.ca and include the file number as shown above as the first item in the Subject Line.

You should get a letter shortly. Note: All letters are sent to the PI addressed to the Department, School or Faculty for Faculty and Graduate Students. Letters to Undergraduate Students are sent to their Faculty Supervisor.

Good luck with the project,

Hal Weinberg, Director



Appendix E. National Geographic Geotourism Charter of Principles

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Mission Programs

Center for Sustainable Destinations

This global template is designed for nations but can also be adjusted for signature by provinces, states, or smaller jurisdictions, and for endorsement by international organizations.

Geotourism is defined as *tourism that sustains or enhances the geographical character of a place – its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents.*

The Geotourism Charter

WHEREAS the geotourism approach is all-inclusive, focusing not only on the environment, but also on the diversity of the cultural, historic, and scenic assets of _____,

WHEREAS the geotourism approach encourages citizens and visitors to get involved rather than remain tourism spectators, and

WHEREAS the geotourism approach helps build a sense of national identity and pride, stressing what is authentic and unique to _____,

THE UNDERSIGNED parties to this Agreement of Intent commit to support these geotourism principles, to sustain and enhance the geographical character of

_____ - its environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage, and the well-being of its residents:

Integrity of place: Enhance geographical character by developing and improving it in ways distinctive to the locale, reflective of its natural and cultural heritage, so as to encourage market differentiation and cultural pride.

International codes: Adhere to the principles embodied in the World Tourism Organization's Global Code of Ethics for Tourism and the Principles of the Cultural Tourism Charter established by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

Market selectivity: Encourage growth in tourism market segments most likely to appreciate, respect, and disseminate information about the distinctive assets of the locale.

Market diversity: Encourage a full range of appropriate food and lodging facilities, so as to appeal to the entire demographic spectrum of the geotourism market and so maximize economic resiliency over both the short and long term.

Tourist satisfaction: Ensure that satisfied, excited geotourists bring new vacation stories home and send friends off to experience the same thing, thus providing continuing demand for the destination.

Community involvement: Base tourism on community resources to the extent possible, encouraging local small businesses and civic groups to build partnerships to promote and provide a distinctive, honest visitor experience and market their locales effectively. Help businesses develop approaches to tourism that build on the area's nature, history and culture, including food and drink, artisanry, performance arts, etc.

Community benefit: Encourage micro- to medium-size enterprises and tourism business strategies that emphasize economic and social benefits to involved communities,

especially poverty alleviation, with clear communication of the destination stewardship policies required to maintain those benefits.

Protection and enhancement of destination appeal: Encourage businesses to sustain natural habitats, heritage sites, aesthetic appeal, and local culture. Prevent degradation by keeping volumes of tourists within maximum acceptable limits. Seek business models that can operate profitably within those limits. Use persuasion, incentives, and legal enforcement as needed.

Land use: Anticipate development pressures and apply techniques to prevent undesired overdevelopment and degradation. Contain resort and vacation-home sprawl, especially on coasts and islands, so as to retain a diversity of natural and scenic environments and ensure continued resident access to waterfronts. Encourage major self-contained tourism attractions, such as large-scale theme parks and convention centers unrelated to character of place, to be sited in needier locations with no significant ecological, scenic, or cultural assets.

Conservation of resources: Encourage businesses to minimize water pollution, solid waste, energy consumption, water usage, landscaping chemicals, and overly bright nighttime lighting. Advertise these measures in a way that attracts the large, environmentally sympathetic tourist market.

Planning: Recognize and respect immediate economic needs without sacrificing long-term character and the geotourism potential of the destination. Where tourism attracts in-migration of workers, develop new communities that themselves constitute a destination enhancement. Strive to diversify the economy and limit population influx to sustainable levels. Adopt public strategies for mitigating practices that are incompatible with geotourism and damaging to the image of the destination.

Interactive interpretation: Engage both visitors and hosts in learning about the place. Encourage residents to show off the natural and cultural heritage of their

communities, so that tourists gain a richer experience and residents develop pride in their locales.

Evaluation: Establish an evaluation process to be conducted on a regular basis by an independent panel representing all stakeholder interests, and publicize evaluation results.