

# **Development of a Visitor Satisfaction Survey as a Strategic Tool for Aboriginal Tourism Operators**

**by**

**Mykol Knighton**

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# Approval

**Name:** Mykol Knighton  
**Degree:** Master of Resource Management (Planning)  
**Report No.:** 651  
**Title:** *Development of a Visitor Satisfaction Survey as a Strategic Tool for Aboriginal Tourism Operators*  
**Examining Committee:** Chair: Soudeh Jamshidian  
PhD Candidate, Resource and Environmental Management

**Dr John R. Welch**  
Senior Supervisor  
Professor

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**Dr Peter W. Williams**  
Supervisor  
Professor Emeritus

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**Date Defended/Approved:** June 21, 2016

## Ethics Statement



The author, whose name appears on the title page of this work, has obtained, for the research described in this work, either:

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or

- b. advance approval of the animal care protocol from the University Animal Care Committee of Simon Fraser University

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- c. as a co-investigator, collaborator, or research assistant in a research project approved in advance.

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## **Abstract**

The goal of this study was to generate an optimal survey instrument for l'Hos Cultural Tours (ICT), a small scale guided marine tourism company operating out of Tla'amin Nation (formerly Sliammon First Nation). The five most commonly used visitor satisfaction models were delineated through an extensive literature review. The suitability of each model was then evaluated using an assessment framework with criteria drawn from a review of Tla'amin tourism planning documents. It was determined that a modified Importance-Performance Analysis was the most appropriate model for ICT's visitor satisfaction survey. As a result of the research, an online survey was developed and pilot-tested, which confirmed content validity and internal reliability. The resulting custom-made survey instrument can be administered via ICT's social media or email. It was designed to be user friendly, adaptable and time conscious. It facilitates data collection on visitor demographics for possible future market segmentation and performance benchmarking applications, and on levels of visitor satisfaction related to specific facets of the tourism operation. With this data ICT's management will be able to direct attention and resources as needed.

This resulting survey will be of immediate benefit to ICT and Tla'amin Nation, while the design methodology has broader implications for tourism operators seeking to develop surveys rooted in community or institutional values. Study limitations related to qualitative research, survey design, and online distribution are discussed and recommendations for future research applications are presented in conclusion.

**Keywords:** Cultural tourism; importance-performance analysis; survey design; management tools; Aboriginal tourism planning

## Dedication

*For Mavis Arkinstall and Roger Roberts*

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## List of Acronyms

AtBC	Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia
CTMP	Sliammon's <i>Commercial Tourism Management Plan</i>
CTPR	Centre for Tourism Policy and Research
ICT	I'Hos Cultural Tours
IPA	Importance-performance analysis
RATER	Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness
REM	School of Resource and Environmental Management
SCRMPR	<i>Sliammon Commercial Recreation Management Plan Report</i>
SERVPERF	Service performance measurement (Cronin & Taylor, 1992)
SERVQUAL	Service quality measurement (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990)
SNRC	Sliammon Natural Resource Committee
SFU	Simon Fraser University
STS	<i>Sliammon Tourism Strategy</i>
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat analysis

# Chapter 1.

## Introduction

**Tla'amin traditional knowledge and teachings form  
the basis for moving into the future.”  
(Eugene Louie in SNRC, 2005)**

Over the past few decades Aboriginal Tourism has moved from a niche market to a viable and growing industrial sector worldwide (McIntosh, 2004). In Canada, annual federal tax revenues from tourism businesses owned and operated by indigenous entrepreneurs have steadily increased, with visitation volumes in British Columbia doubling between 2006 and 2010 (Williams & O'Neil, 2012) and growing annual revenues from \$42 million in 2012 to a forecasted \$68 million in 2017 (AtBC, 2015). If successful, tourism operations can increasingly provide indigenous communities with economic development opportunities and positive social and cultural effects such as local growth and cultural preservation (Colton, 2005; Colton & Harris, 2007; Hinch, 1995). In order to achieve long-term, sustainable success, Aboriginal tourism in Canada is at least partially dependent on the development of products and services both in line with market preferences, but also delivered by well-trained native entrepreneurs and their business partners (O'Neil, 1997; Notzke, 2004; 2006). Operators (e.g., guides, tour operators, communities, etc.) need to be kept abreast of not only market opportunities, but also how they can realistically and appropriately adjust their product lines to match with consumer needs (Nielsen, 2010).

### **TLA'AMIN TOURISM AND I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS**

Despite the potential benefits accompanying this industry-wide growth, cultural tourism operators in British Columbia are challenged with developing novel and adaptable cultural attractions in order to remain competitive (Kutzner & Wright, 2010).

Since 1996, the Tla'amin Nation (formerly Sliammon First Nation) have been working to develop tourism in their lands and shoreline territory (Chris Bottrill Consulting, 1999; Tla'amin Nation, 2001; Community Visions Consulting Group, 2002; DeHart, 2005). These planning efforts have done much to identify key potential opportunities, as well as identify issues related to developing tourism within the Tla'amin community. Concerns related to required cost and training, potential exploitation, and community control of the growing Tla'amin tourism industry were most commonly highlighted. It was these specific concerns which prompted the community-rooted design process adopted for this study. With respect to Tla'amin tourism strategies, these planning studies also identified a number of marine based products which meet both community values and consumer needs.

Several local operators became ready to move from planning to implementation. In 2012, Erik Blaney, the former coordinator of Tla'amin Nation's Guardian Watchmen program, launched l'Hos Cultural Tours (ICT), a marine cultural tourism company operating out of the Lund Hotel and Marina. ICT incorporates a number of elements identified during planning efforts which are well suited to local values, available natural amenities and consumer demand. Combining heritage site tours, wildlife viewing, dining and craft workshops--all deeply rooted in Tla'amin traditional culture--ICT completed its first full year of operations in 2013. During that year bookings steadily increased for the various packages with marine guided tours becoming the most popular service. Despite this early growth, ICT remained too small an operation to attract a business partnership with Tla'amin Nation. As an independent operator with limited resources, Blaney faced the same competitive disadvantages of limited economies of scale and scope common to most small businesses. The key challenges that Blaney faced in the development of ICT as a small scale aboriginal tourism operation were; developing comprehensive and effective marketing plans, staff capacity, and appropriate products for markets (Williams & Peters, 2008).

Success would require fine tuning products to meet market demands and gauging consumer satisfaction (Colton & Harris, 2007; Williams & Richter, 2002). As part of this crucial next step, l'Hos intended to generate a cost effective online survey package to measure visitor satisfaction with the quality of service, facilities and cultural

elements. The intended purpose of this study was to examine a number visitor satisfaction models currently in use in order to design a visitor satisfaction survey that would best meet the operational needs of Tla'amin Nation. This research product would empower ICT's management with an accessible and customizable management tool possessing the ability to fine tune operations as needed, that can be expanded to provide market segmentation data as visitation volumes increase. In order to address issues related to community control and ownership, the final survey tool and all data gathered became the intellectual property of ICT. As permitted, a copy of the final survey tool has been included for reference (Appendix B) but all response data has been withheld.

## **VISITOR SATISFACTION MEASUREMENT**

The efficient management of tourism products depends on the ability of operators to reliably evaluate the quality of experience provided to visitors and adjust to suit consumer preference. Decades of research in marketing and psychology have produced theoretical frameworks and related methodologies which attempt to describe and measure the processes which lead to satisfaction. In response to ICT's request for a tool to help set operational priorities in its sophomore year, a literature review was conducted to determine which currently employed methodology (or hybrid) was most appropriate to measure visitor satisfaction. It was determined that while no one survey model met all of the operational needs defined by the Tla'amin Tourism planning process, a modified Importance-performance style analysis was determined to be the most appropriate. The results of this literature review guided the design of a custom fit and reflexive online survey package. The resulting survey design was additionally tested for reliability. This research product is intended to empower ICT's management with an accessible and customizable management tool resulting in clear directives to fine tune operations as needed.

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The overall objective of this research is to determine the optimal design characteristics of a visitor satisfaction survey to aid the planning and management of

small-scale Aboriginal cultural tourism operations. This research focuses on ICT, one coastal operation in British Columbia.

### ***Research Questions***

Within the context of ICT, the Aboriginal cultural tourism operation chosen for this study, the specific applied research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) Which of the currently employed visitor satisfaction survey models (or combination thereof) is most appropriate for ICT?
  - a. Which elements of these visitor satisfaction models are incongruous with the operational needs defined by the Tla'amin tourism planning process?
  - b. Given these considerations, which are specifically well suited to ICT?
  - c. Is there one specific survey model ICT could use to achieve its desired outcomes?
  - d. Would a modified survey model be useful and appropriate?
- 2) Could this survey design method be beneficial to the management of other small-scale Aboriginal cultural tourism operations?

## **METHODS**

### ***Method One: Literature Review***

A literature review was carried out in order to develop a framework for defining the optimal survey for use as a management tool by ICT. In particular, three areas of literature were explored. First, background research on Tla'amin tourism was conducted through a review of previous planning documents. This consisted of reviewing all documents developed during Tla'amin tourism planning efforts over the past 20 years. This was done to highlight operational needs related to Tla'amin's tourism planning, and show how ICT being a small scale tourism operation owned and managed by Tla'amin

Nation members provides the ideal case study. Then, five of the most common methods in visitor satisfaction research were reviewed with an eye for specific methodological requirements in models currently being applied to tourism management studies. Finally a brief discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of each survey model was generated. The literature review helped to establish an assessment framework for evaluating the applicability of various survey models to the needs and values defined by Tla'amin Tourism planning literature. The assumptions of this survey design method were tested during the creation of a custom tailored survey tool as a case study.

### ***Method Two: Case Study***

Based on the findings of the literature review, a case study was undertaken with ICT. The major component of the case study involved the design and pilot testing of an appropriate survey tool. Tla'amin Tourism's operational needs and the assessment criteria established through the literature review guided the survey design.

## **REPORT ORGANIZATION**

This report is divided into six chapters, including this introduction. Chapter Two reviews three areas of the literature that are relevant to the study. Chapter Three describes the methods used in the study. The primary research technique is a case study in which a survey tool was custom built following the literature review. The tool was then modified based on the results of pretesting; involving expert review, input from ICT, and feedback received from a pilot test. Chapter Four presents the findings of the case study which describe the results of the pilot study and a review of survey design process. Chapter Five summarizes the study's limitations. Chapter Five also discusses the themes that emerged from the case study and reviews management implications of this survey and its design process, including its applicability to other Aboriginal tourism operations. Chapter Six issues conclusions and recommends areas of further inquiry which would complement this research.

## Chapter 2.

### Literature Review

#### INTRODUCTION

This review examines three general areas of literature that are relevant to this study. It begins by reviewing the tourism planning literature generated by Tla'amin Nation since 1996. A review of this literature, predominantly planning guides and community surveys, is the foundation for an inventory of *operational needs*. For the purposes of this study operational needs are defined as those qualities considered essential to the tourism development process by Tla'amin Nation (Table 2.1). The second section then presents a summary of the five theoretical and methodological approaches most commonly applied to tourism visitor satisfaction research, with a particular focus on those operations most similar to our case study (Table 2.4). This will contribute to and allow for a broader, more critical summary of each approach in the third section of this review, the goal of this section is to highlight comparative strengths and weaknesses of the various alternate methodologies of measuring visitor satisfaction in tourism research.

The methodological review helps to delineate an assessment framework. This assessment framework will be used to evaluate the suitability of various approaches to measuring visitor satisfaction at ICT by comparing the derived operational needs and the methodological constraints of each visitor satisfaction methodology. (Table 2.5).The assessment provides a justification of the survey design presented in Chapter Three and tested in Chapter Four.



## **TLA'AMIN TOURISM**

### ***Regional Background***

Tla'amin Nation's lands are located on the Sunshine Coast, just north of the City of Powell River (Appendix A). Forestry had been the dominant local industry through much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an industry which for a time supported the largest pulp mill in the world. Since the 1960's the region has experienced a decline in the pulp industry. The resulting diversification of the local economy prompted a renewed focus on the natural and cultural richness of the region. This promotion of environment and heritage allowed for growth in areas such as sport fishing, the arts and ecotourism. Though the region experienced a decline in tourism employment between 2001 and 2006, the industry's regional workforce is projected to grow by 60% (270 jobs) through 2028 (Vaanstruth, 2008:30). A recent profile of the region listed sightseeing, nature and wildlife viewing as the intended activity of the majority (59%) of visitors (TourismBC, 2014:7).

### ***Tla'amin Tourism Planning (1996-2011)***

In 1996, the Tla'amin Nation started to pursue the development of tourism in their lands and shoreline territory. The first formal study, carried out by Chris Bottrill Consulting, analysed public data sources such as the Tourism Resource Inventory (Government of British Columbia, 1996) in order to produce a summary of potential tourism products and key local market gaps (Bottrill, 1999). This report identified the growing need for marine based tourism in Tla'amin territory and highlighted a potential niche market for heritage or cultural tourism developed by the community.

Tla'amin Nation produced and finalized the *Sliammon Tourism Study (STS)* in 2001. Strategically, this study offered a long term marketing plan as well as several well defined tourism packages. The *STS* also identified capacity issues and value conflicts which could potentially restrict the community's ability to develop local tourism resources. Several issues highlighting a need for overall operational *adaptability* are noted within the *STS*. On the consumer side products need to be "packaged to suit customer needs" (Tla'amin Nation, 2001: 25) and with respect to potential future

operators, a lack of technical and organizational skills stress a need for “innovative and custom tailored solutions” (2001: 29). This need for novel solutions to address technical knowledge gaps also draws attention to the need for operational *simplicity*, meaning processes which require minimal or no advanced technical knowledge. This need is echoed throughout the *STS*, with “lack of qualified workforce and tourism-related management experience and skills” listed as the top challenge facing Tla’amin tourism development (2001: 28). One other key challenge highlighted by the *STS* is the lack of investment capital within the community” (2001: 28) which gives us the final operational need provided by this report, *affordability*.

Over the following few years Community Visions Consulting Group produced a master report, the *Sliammon Commercial Recreation Management Plan Report (SCRMPR)* (Community Visions, 2002a). Community Visions also contributed to *Tourism Sliammon Concept Paper*, jointly produced with Cathy Galligos of Tla’amin Nation (Tla’amin Nation, 2003). Within this paper several values and guiding principles were identified as being important to Tla’amin Nation’s tourism planning process (Tla’amin Nation, 2003: 4-5). Though a number of these principles would prove useful while generating a list of attributes related to visitor satisfaction at ICT (e.g., accountability, discipline) most were related to interpersonal conduct and did not translate as broader operational needs. A SWOT analysis presented within did reinforce the needs for *simplicity* and *affordability*, listing high cost and lack of training as potential weaknesses (2003: 21).

Of particular importance to the present literature review is the community survey component of the *SCRMPR* (Community Visions, 2002b). This survey, aimed at providing community feedback regarding goals and concerns related to tourism in Tla’amin territory, offers insight into some of the shared Tla’amin community values. The operational needs previously identified by the *STS* are reinforced throughout the community feedback. In particular, comments from the nearly 50 community members polled stress concerns about limited local technical expertise and funding sources (Community Visions, 2002a:13-15; 2002b) reflect the need for operational *simplicity* and *affordability*. From the responses to several open-ended questions in the community survey two additional operational needs are clearly apparent. Various comments

express the need for *community control* of tourism products. Some community member comments reflect concerns of “exploitation by joint venture partners” (2002b: 1), while others see tourism “as a way to exemplify independence” (2002b: 3). A number of similar concerns presented within can be summed by the feedback of one of the respondents -- “Tourism needs to be run by our people... ask the people what they want, not all these consultants (2002b: 5)”. A final operational need is apparent in the aggregate responses, *educational capability*. Eighteen respondents listed “Cultural awareness, revival of culture, [and] increased cultural knowledge” while a further nine respondents answered “cultural education for non-aboriginal people” as the primary benefits of a Tla’amin tourism industry (2002b: 2). In the report synopsis, the potential ability for tourism to contribute to cultural education is listed as equal with the ability to provide employment, topping the list of perceived benefits.

Tla’amin Nation’s most recent planning document is the *Commercial Tourism Management Plan (CTMP)*, produced by Wildland Recreation Services (DeHart, 2005). This plan is intended to summarize development options for a number of Tla’amin tourism operations with respect to land tenure and other legal arrangements. Focused on community development of tourism resources the document puts forth a series of short-term development priorities for the following 5 years. *CTMP* recommends that a cultural educational component be included in all projects via signage, heritage guides and interpretive services in an effort to share heritage and cultural with guests (DeHart, 2005: 17).

Following 15 years of dedicated efforts aimed developing a Tla’amin Tourism strategy, 2012 saw a number of local operators poised to move towards implementation. Erik Blaney, a lifelong steward of the Tla’amin coastline launched ICT. As recommended in several of the previous planning studies, a marine cultural tourism company such as ICT operating out of the Lund Hotel and Marina was an ideal starting point to grow and develop a tourism industry on the Tla’amin lands. The key challenges that ICT faced in the development of an independent small scale aboriginal tourism operation were; developing comprehensive and effective marketing plans, staff capacity, and appropriate products for markets. As part of this crucial next step, l’Hos intended to generate a cost effective online survey package to measure visitor satisfaction with the quality of service,

facilities and cultural elements. The operational needs defined by this literature review provided a community-rooted framework to guide and structure the resulting visitor satisfaction survey.

## **Operational Needs**

Table 2.1 lists the operational needs to consider for all Tla'amin tourism planning. These criteria are derived either directly or through inference from the literature reviewed in this chapter. These operational needs guide the methodological characteristics and attribute selection involved in Chapter Three's survey design case study as well as the results presented in Chapter Four's case study findings.

**Table 2.1** *Operational needs derived from Tla'amin tourism planning documents*

Operational need	Definition	Reference
Adaptability	The ability to change or be changed with ease in order to fit or work better in some situation or for some purpose	Tla'amin Nation, 2001, 2003
Simplicity	The quality of being easy to understand or do without substantial training	Tla'amin Nation, 2001, 2003; <i>Community Visions, 2002a; 2002b</i>
Affordability	That which requires minimal financial resources or investment	Tla'amin Nation 2001, 2003; <i>Community Visions, 2002a; 2002b</i>
Community Control	Power or influence kept within the community and independent of external agencies	<i>Bottrill, 1999; Community Visions, 2002a; Tla'amin Nation, 2003; DeHart, 2005</i>
Educational Capability	Ability to convey or impart Tla'amin values with respect to culture and heritage	<i>Bottrill, 1999; Community Visions, 2002a; 2002b; Tla'amin Nation, 2001, 2003; DeHart, 2005</i>

## **TOURISM AND VISITOR SATISFACTION**

For the purposes of this study, satisfaction is defined as a cognitive and affective reaction resulting from a consumed product, service or experience (Rust and Oliver, 1994). One of the key assumptions in tourism management literature is that the level of satisfaction reported by visitors has direct affects their behavioural intentions, specifically that customers who consider themselves highly satisfied with a product or service will be more likely to purchase the product or service again (Hosany & Prayag, 2013). Recent studies support that satisfaction leads to favorable behavioral intentions, such as:

offering favorable reviews about or even recommending the tourism service to other people, and repeat visitation -- even if the price were to increase (Williams & Soutar, 2009; Kim & Lee, 2011).

While the link between visitors' satisfaction and behavioural intentions has undeniable implications for tourism managers looking to increase revenue through repeat visitation and positive word of mouth, instruments measuring consumer satisfaction should be approached with caution. Dolnicar, Coltman and Sharma (2013) conducted a meta-analysis of instruments measuring visitor satisfaction and found a high risk of producing systematically biased results. The authors provide several recommendations for reducing response biases in visitor satisfaction instruments which were considered during this study.

### ***The Products of Tourism***

First, it is important to discuss the fundamental differences between a good and a service, the two commodified outputs of tourism. Goods are tangible objects that are produced and purchased with intentions of future use or enjoyment, such as a hand carved pendent or an article of clothing. In the context of tourism, a service is described as the interaction provided by management, between the visitor and a natural and/or cultural area. This interaction enables the visitor to derive personal and intangible benefits (Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003; Foster, 1999). Although most services are supported by tangibles, the intangible essence of what is being bought is summed up in a single word: experience. Pine and Gilmore (2011) argue that services, like goods before them, are becoming more and more commodified. As a result, tourism operators must strive to add value to their products with the provision of meaningful and memorable experiences. Tourism managers hoping to satisfy visitors must be aware of and manage all types of outputs, tangible and intangible alike. The delivery of experience-centric services requires the systematic management and design of customer experiences through the careful planning of tangible and intangible service elements in the service delivery system (Zomerdijk & Voss, 2010).

## ***Tourism and the Experience Economy***

Pine and Gilmore (2011) transformed the experiential paradigm by generating a comprehensive model for operators to understand and manage customer experiences. The authors differentiate between the four stages of economic progression, namely *commodities, goods, services, and experiences*. Expanding on the earlier work of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) the authors acknowledge that goods and services fulfill both utilitarian and hedonic functions. In an Experience Economy consumers can be viewed as problem solvers seeking utilitarian products to support the tourism experience, or as pleasure seekers looking for hedonic products to enhance the experience (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2000). Pine and Gilmore (2011) identify four realms of experience, which are differentiated by their requisite levels of customer participation and interaction. The four dimensions are *entertainment, education, esthetics, and escapism*. The entertainment and esthetics dimensions entail passive participation. In these dimensions the consumer does not affect the experiential outcome. In contrast, the education and escapism dimensions require active participation wherein consumers play a key part in the process. The authors conclude that an optimal visitor experience is one that involves a satisfying overlap of all four dimensions. If, as Sternberg (1997) asserts, tourism establishments are in business to shape, package and sell unique experiences, ICT will need to assess and manage visitor satisfaction across all four experiential dimensions; entertainment, education, esthetics, and escapism. With respect to each dimension, the following considerations were throughout the development of the instrument.

Pine and Gilmore (2011) note that tourism companies are now a stage used to delight and entertain patrons. Cultural tourism elements that fall within the entertainment dimension could include oral history, traditional singing and dancing. ICT will need to deepen considerations of how these elements relate to visitor satisfaction. One aspect of escapism relevant to the quality of visitor experience at ICT is the element of authenticity. As stated by Hosany and Witham (2010:354), “tourists are prepared to travel around the world in the hunt for satisfying and authentic experiences”. Regarding esthetic qualities of ICT, Bonn, Joseph-Mathews, Dai, Hayes and Cave (2007) note that the appearance of heritage attractions plays an important role in determining visitors’

attitudes, future patronage intentions, and willingness to recommend. Education, already determined to be a necessary component of any Tla'amin tourism operation, also plays a significant role in both travel motivation and satisfaction. Prentice (2004) suggests that tourists are largely motivated to travel because of a desire to learn and subsequently report greater levels of satisfaction when those desires are met. This is particularly true of cultural or heritage attractions (Richards & Wilson, 2006). In order to fully evaluate and manage the quality of experience offered by ICT, it was necessary that the resulting instrument measure visitor satisfaction of elements within these four dimensions.

## **MEASURING VISITOR SATISFACTION**

The measurement of consumer satisfaction is well studied within and at the interface of marketing and psychology. Several frameworks describe the processes which lead to satisfaction. Literature regarding consumer satisfaction is heavily influenced by the underlying notion that satisfaction can be measured as the difference between a consumer's desired level of product quality and the actual performance of that product (Martilla & James, 1977; Oliver, 2014; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988). Other theories assert that satisfaction has less to do with product-performance, and more to do with self-image (Sirgy, 1982). The variety of factors that influence consumer satisfactions have been well studied (Ryan, 1995) and various measurement models have been developed and are commonly used in diverse sectors. In tourism, measurements of satisfaction provide a means of quality assurance for the visitor, an approach to performance measurement for the administration, and a rational basis for decision making about delivery of goods and services.

### ***The Nature of Satisfaction***

Ryan (1995:41) suggests that "if satisfaction is seen as the congruence of need and performance, then dissatisfaction can be perceived as the gap between expectation and experience". This implies an analysis between measurable expectations and performance or experiences would be most appropriate for research which hopes to gauge consumer satisfaction. This type of gap analysis is the standard method used to understand consumer satisfaction (Pearce, 2005). One approach to gap analysis is commonly referred to as Sirgy's congruity model (1982; Sirgy & Su, 2001). Additional



approaches to expectation-perception research that have been applied in gauging consumer satisfaction include expectancy/disconfirmation analysis (Oliver, 2014) and most commonly Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry's SERVQUAL gap model (1985; Parasuraman, Berry & Zeithaml, 1991; Bigne, Martinez, Miquel, & Andreu, 2003). Criticisms focused on the validity of studying consumer expectation due to the inherent biasing effect of a variety of internal (e.g., mood, cultural background, experiential familiarity) and external factors (e.g., geographical awareness, weather) have questioned the fundamentals of studies involving measurements of expectation (Pearce, 2005; Millan & Esteban, 2004; Ryan, 1995). If we view services as the intangible purchased experiences provided to the consumer, then it must be true that they cannot be displayed, sampled, tested or evaluated before purchase, making measures of expectation flawed (Bagozzi, Gopinath & Nyer, 1999). Studies such as SERVPERF (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Quester, Romaniuk & Wilkinson, 2015) eliminate gap comparisons of expectation vs. performance and focus instead on measures of performance only. Identifying the flawed nature of expectation measurements and comparisons, "importance" vs. performance gap analyses are commonly used in visitor satisfaction studies (Azzopardi & Nash, 2013). Ryan (1999) distinguishes measures of importance from those of expectation in such that the former are desired outcomes and the latter tolerated outcomes defined by consumers' personal background.

The following five sections present brief discussions of the theoretical framework, methodological requirements and current applications of the five most common approaches to researching consumer satisfaction in the tourism industry, as defined by Dolnicar and Le (2008). The resulting comparison of Sirgy's self-congruity model, Oliver's expectancy/disconfirmation method, SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, and importance-performance analysis help to delineate the model most suited to providing management guidance to ICT.

## **VISITOR SATISFACTION MODELS**

### ***Sirgy's Self-Congruity Model***

One model aimed at measuring visitor satisfaction which breaks from the expectation/perception gap model is self-congruity theory. Self-congruity refers to the

degree of likeness or disparity between an individual's perception of a product and the perception they have of themselves (Sirgy, 1980). At its basis, self-congruity theory proposes that the more similar product-perception is to self-perception, the higher the product preference because its symbolic characteristics reinforce and validate the individual's self-perception (Swann, Stein-Seroussi & Giesler, 1992). Several tourism studies have supported this notion, finding a moderate to strong correlation between self-congruity product preference and visitor satisfaction (Litvin & Goh, 2002; Beerli, Meneses & Gil, 2007; Ekinci & Riley, 2003).

As a tool to measure visitor satisfaction in the tourism industry, surveys based in self-congruity theory were found to follow a consistent format (Chon, 1992; Ekinci & Riley, 2003; Hosany & Martin, 2012). These instruments are typically delivered before and after the tourism experience, in two separate sections. The first section employs either Likert scale ratings (Chon, 1992) or semantic differential scales (Malhotra, 1988) to measure the relationship between a visitor's self-image and impressions of their destination. Survey questions framed as semantic differential scales require the respondent to place a ranking at the appropriate point of scale between two opposing qualities that best reflects their self-image (Table 2.2). Likert scale self-perception rankings were framed as statements to which respondents would indicate a ranking between strongly agree and strongly disagree. A second section using a Likert scale is aimed at rating destination preference.

**Table 2.2** *Example self-perception assessment component of a self-congruity survey using a 5-point semantic differential scale*

I consider myself someone who is... (place an "x" in appropriate space provided below)						
Dirty	–	–	–	–	<u>X</u>	Clean
Unattractive	–	–	<u>X</u>	–	–	Attractive
Impolite	–	<u>X</u>	–	–	–	Polite

Some studies fail to provide convincing support for congruity theory in the context of tourism destinations, finding only a moderate to weak correlation between self-congruity (Malhotra, 1988; Chon, 1992; Boksberger, Dolnicar, Laesser & Randle, 2011). Critics of the model question the relevance of destination self-congruity in measuring visitor satisfaction and predicting tourist behaviour (Kastenholz, 2004). One study

described a puzzling inverse relationship (Murphy, Moscardo & Benckendorff, 2007) where the most congruous products were also ranked among the least desirable.

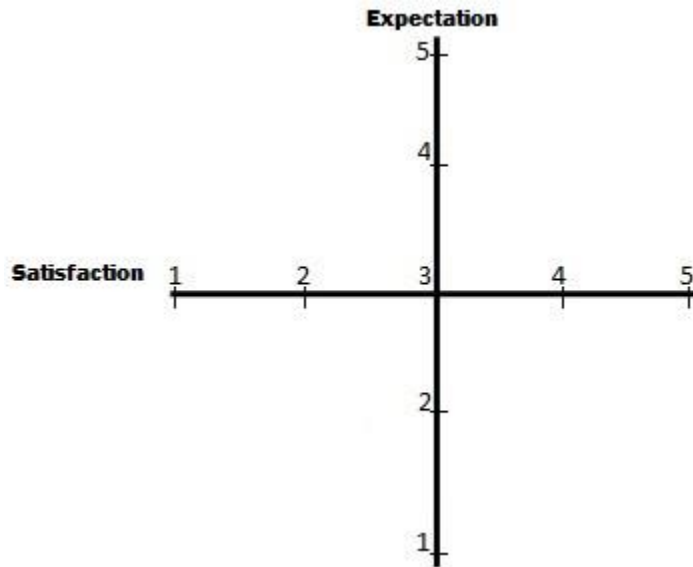
### ***Oliver's Expectancy-Disconfirmation Method***

Of the variety of theoretical models that have been applied to tourism satisfaction research, Oh and Parks (1997) concluded that expectancy/disconfirmation is the most widely accepted. Expectancy/disconfirmation theory suggests that satisfaction or 'positive disconfirmation' occurs when the performance of a specific operational component, knowledgeable staff for example, exceeds visitor expectation. Conversely 'negative disconfirmation' or dissatisfaction occurs when the performance of said component is worse than the visitor expects (Oliver, 2014).

As a tool to measure satisfaction in the tourism industry, surveys based in expectancy/disconfirmation theory generally follow a consistent format (Kozak & Rimmington, 2000; Heung & Cheng, 2000; Joppe, Martin & Waalen, 2001; Huh, 2002). These survey instruments are commonly delivered in at least two stages, a preliminary survey to gauge the visitor's preconceived expectations with regard to various attributes of an upcoming product, and then a follow-up survey aimed at measuring the level of performance of each attribute. Attributes are typically drawn from various sources including literature review, and management or researcher interest. Respondents are requested to give a score to each of the attributes on the levels of expectations and satisfactions separately using a Likert-type scale ranging from very low expectation to very high expectation initially, and from very dissatisfied to very satisfied upon reflection.

By way of graphical outputs the average level of satisfaction and average expectation of these attributes can be calculated and placed on an expectation-satisfaction grid (Figure 2.1). The grand means for all satisfaction and expectation scores determine the placement of the axes for each on the grid. Each attribute on the grid can be analyzed by locating the appropriate quadrant in which it fell. For example, the top left quadrant would be populated with attributes that prospective visitors rated with very high expectations but following the visit the satisfaction ratings of those attributes were below the grand mean. Attributes plotted in the top right quadrant would reflect satisfied visitors whose expectation was above the average. Attributes in the

bottom left quadrant were considered less satisfactory though the visitors' expectation was also low. Finally, attributes plotted in the bottom right quadrant were rated above average on visitor satisfaction, but below average on expected quality.



**Figure 2.1** Example Expectation-Satisfaction Matrix using a 5-point Likert Scale

Yüksel and Rimmington have noted that expectancy disconfirmation theory has received theoretical and operational criticism (1998). Measuring expectations prior to the service experience has its weaknesses; chiefly that expectation may not reflect reality and may be based on a lack of information and unfair comparisons. Consumers' prediction of performance might also be superficial and the customer may revise his/her expectation based on previous tourism experience or on others' opinions during the service encounter (Yüksel & Rimmington, 1998). Following this logic, Botteril concluded that satisfaction measurements drawn from tests of expectation/performance comparisons are not truly reflective of the gap between expectation and performance, and that increases in measured satisfaction may represent the adaptation of the tourists themselves to unpredictable events (1987).

## **SERVQUAL**

Though expectation is difficult to study, there remains a need to assess the expectations of the consumer, while considering the predispositions, and perceptions of reality that consumers bring to the service delivery equation. This means that consumers' perceptions are their reality and that those perceptions primarily drive consumer assessments of service quality. One widely used empirically designed measurement tool for these expectations is called SERVQUAL, shortened from service quality (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990). This method intends to correct for individual perception biases in testing expectations by following a prescribed question format that provides adequate weighting to a number of statistically derived service quality dimensions. This measurement tool has been applied to assessments of service quality in a wide variety of service sectors (Kumar et al. 2009; Curry & Sinclair, 2002; Badri et al. 2005; Akan, 1995). Originally the SERVQUAL model was comprised of ten dimensions of service quality; tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding the customer, and access (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985: 47-48). Since 1988, these dimensions have been streamlined to reduce redundancy. The remaining dimensions, acronymised RATER are as follows; Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1988: 23). Berry et al. (1985) argue that these five dimensions concisely represent the core criteria that customers employ in evaluating service quality (O'Neill, 1992).

As a tool to measure satisfaction, surveys based in the SERVQUAL method were found to possess several common elements (Kumar, Kee & Manshor, 2009; Curry & Sinclair, 2002; Badri, Abdulla & Al-Madani, 2003; Akan, 1995). These instruments could be delivered in a single stage, gauging the visitor's attitudes with respect to statements of expected service quality and then measuring the level of performance of each attribute. Single stage deliveries are more common with familiar attractions, for example parks, but expectancy being more reliably measured prior to a new or unique experience often necessitates a two stage survey delivery.

In terms of structure SERVQUAL surveys typically examine both expectation and performance ratings of 22 fixed attributes. The attribute list was developed from an initial pool of 97 generated through a series of focus group sessions conducted with consumers (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988). This pool was reduced to the 22 attributes with consistently high content reliability (1988). The reliability of the attribute responses was tested using Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency. In SERVQUAL surveys questions addressing the remaining 22 attributes are divided between the five RATER dimensions; with five attributes tested for each of the reliability, responsiveness, tangibles dimensions, and four statements about attributes in each the empathy and assurance dimensions (see Table 2.3). Responses to each of these statements are typically recorded on a seven point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, with a statement of expectation for each attribute, and from strongly disagree to strongly agree with a statement regarding attribute performance. As with all expectation/performance comparisons, gap scores could be calculated based on the difference between expectation and perception of service delivery, and service quality could be inferred by interpreting these results.

**Table 2.3 Components of SERVQUAL Survey**

Dimension	Definition	Number of attributes tested	Sample statement
Reliability	The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	4	<i>Excellent tourism operators are experts in their local area</i>
Assurance	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence	5	<i>Polite tour guides are a sign of an excellent tourism company</i>
Tangibles	Physical facilities, equipment, and staff appearance	4	<i>An ideal tourist destination has clean washrooms</i>
Empathy	Caring, individual attention the firm provides its customers	5	<i>An excellent reception desk provides staff that is genuinely concerned</i>
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service	4	<i>The best boat tours are those that start at the scheduled time</i>

Though widely used, the SERVQUAL model has come under criticism that it is predominately about service quality, which is only one part of client satisfaction but doesn't account for non-quality service dimensions such as cost or fairness (Oliver, 2014). Additionally, customer expectations are not stationary but change incrementally over a period of time or rapidly in response to market and economic trends. A consequence of this is that gaps in service delivery can oscillate or show trends through time. An obvious solution would be to use the SERVQUAL model several times a year to identify gaps. However, this might be time consuming and costly for organisations (Boulter & Bendell, 2010).

### ***SERVPERF***

The problematic nature of studying expectations has been a constant constraint in measurements of visitor satisfaction. One early theoretical rejection of expectation is evident in Leiper's system theory. At its core Leiper's theory (1990) suggests that every tourism system involves at least one consumer and that they themselves are the most important element. Leiper viewed tourism as a linear system in which the consumer passes through three basic regions. This is based on the assumption that visitor satisfaction is the sum of his or her satisfaction with pre-trip experience, satisfaction with destination experience, and satisfaction with transit regardless of expectation. Any dissatisfactory experience with any service aspect is likely to decrease a traveler's satisfaction with travel and tourism services. Subsequently, Cronin and Taylor (1992) were the first to offer a theoretical justification for discarding the expectations portion of SERVQUAL in favor of scalar measurements of performance only, which they termed SERVPERF. Specifically, Cronin and Taylor (1992) argue that, if service quality is to be considered "similar to an attitude," as proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988), it could be better measured by an attitude-based model. Therefore, they suggest that the expectations scale be discarded in favor of a performance-only measure of service quality. Such performance-only models suggest that it is the quality of the product or experience which is the most important determinant of value, and view satisfaction as a *post hoc* attitude.

As a tool to measure satisfaction in tourism industry, a number of surveys based in the SERVPERF method were found to follow a fairly consistent format (Qin & Prybutok, 2008; Hudson, Hudson & Miller, 2004; Lee, Lee & Yoo, 2000). These instruments are delivered in a single stage, gauging the visitor's attitudes with respect to the performance of each attribute. In terms of structure SERVPERF surveys typically seek to provide performance ratings of the 22 SERVQUAL attributes. Questions addressing the 22 attributes are similarly divided between the five RATER dimensions (see Table 2.3). Cronin and Taylor (1992) suggest that the performance-based scale SERVPERF is more efficient than the SERVQUAL scale, since it reduces the number of items that must be measured from 44 to 22. Responses to each of these statements are typically recorded on a seven or five point Likert scale.

One benefit to SERVPERF and its lack of expectation data is the analytical simplicity of avoiding gap analysis measurements entirely. However, as Pearce (2005) rightly notes, these assessments often omit the context for interpretation, as there is no measure of importance or expectations, making managerial decisions based on performance problematic.

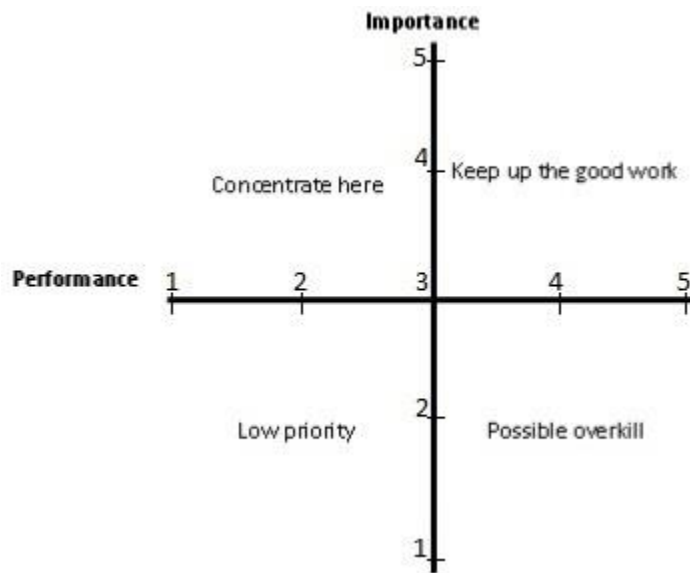
### ***Importance-Performance Analysis***

Like SERVQUAL and SERVPERF the important-performance method, IPA is rooted in multi-attribute models (Wilke & Pessemier, 1973). This approach, also known as quadrant analysis, was introduced to customer satisfaction research by Martilla and James (1977). In their study they focus on highlighting the service attributes which are most important to customers while likely to make the strongest contribution to overall customer satisfaction. The method used by Martilla and James (1977) also draws from customer evaluations of the company's performance to highlight items in need of improvement. By using the mean performance scores of each attribute (importance and performance/satisfaction), the attributes are ranked and classified into high or low categories. By plotting these two sets of rankings along each axis, each attribute is placed into one of the four quadrants that are displayed graphically (see Figure 2.2). Like expectation-satisfaction matrices the grand means for all importance and performance scores determine the placement of the axes for each on the grid.



With little modification, IPA has already been applied successfully to tourism management (Burns, 1988; Evans & Chon, 1989; Chon & Olsen, 1991; Vaske, Beamen, Stanley & Grenier, 1996; Wade & Eagles, 2003; Williams & Dossa, 2003). In terms of structure, IPA surveys provide importance and performance ratings concurrently to a series of attributes typically drawn from various sources including literature review, management or researcher interest, and similar studies. Respondents are requested to score their level of importance and satisfaction with each of the attributes using a Likert scale ranging from very low to very high importance, and then from very dissatisfied to very satisfied.

One of the often cited advantages of IPA is its ability to provide its users with practical guidance when determining improvement areas (Azzopardi & Nash, 2013). IPA matrixes are comprised of four quadrants; concentrate here, keep up the good work, low priority and possible overkill (Oliver, 2014). Oliver provides a breakdown of the four quadrants and their respective management implications (2014). Attributes that fall in the *Keep up the good work* quadrant are those that score high in both consumer importance and performance/satisfaction. These attributes are assumed to be key drivers of consumer preference, and management's imperative is then to ensure that the organization continues to perform well in these areas. Those that reside in the *Concentrate here* quadrant are elements or attributes are also assumed to be determinant factors of customer satisfaction, though they have scored high in importance but low in performance. These items should be viewed as critical performance deficits. Management's priority should be to ensure that adequate efforts are made to improve performance in these areas. The *Low priority* quadrant (items scoring low in both customer importance and performance) are attributes assumed to be relatively unimportant. These factors perform poorly but it is of little consequence and should not be the focus of management's attention. Finally, *Possible overkill* items are those that score low in customer importance but high in performance, and thus should be assumed to be relatively unimportant. High performance items of little importance should prompt management to redirect resources from these elements to high-priority areas in need of improved performance.



**Figure 2.2 Example IPA Matrix using a 5-point Likert Scale**

Disadvantages and issues commonly cited for IPA seem to focus on its statistical weakness or simplicity when compared to other models. Given that mean scores are used, individual differences between respondents can be obscured giving a false impression of uniformity and resulting in possible bad decision making by managers (Vaske, Beamen, Stanley & Grenier, 1996). Vaske, Beamen, Stanley and Grenier (1996) also note that IPA lacks the statistical testing ability to predict which attributes are the specific drivers of overall visitor satisfaction, loyalty and positive word of mouth. There is a functional relationship between importance and performance, which may result in high correlations between these variables and possibly high importance scores with limited variation (Oh, 2001). Oh (2001) suggests this could be due to the respondent's perception that since the attribute is listed it is inherently important. This can affect placement in the quadrant and possible misinterpretation by managers, with a bunching in the top right hand corner of the quadrant.

## **COMPARING METHODOLOGIES**

In an attempt to encompass many of the previously mentioned methodological attributes, while aiming for comprehensiveness, clarity and simplicity, a summary describing and classifying each visitor satisfaction model is presented below (Table 2.4).

**Table 2.4 Comparison of Visitor Satisfaction Assessment Models**

	Self-congruity	Expectancy/disconfirmation	SERVQUAL	SERVPERF	IPA
Delivery method	2 Stage	2 Stage	1 or 2 stage	1 Stage	1 Stage
Questionnaire format	2 parts, Adaptable	2 parts, Adaptable	2 parts, Fixed distribution of 44 paired attributes	2 parts, Fixed distribution of 22 attributes	1 part, Adaptable multi-attribute
Survey time required	High	High	Mid/High	Low	Mid
Response scale	Likert and semantic differential	Likert Scale	Likert Scale	Likert Scale	Likert Scale
Statistical analyses required	Moderate to advanced	Basic to advanced	Moderate to advanced	Basic to advanced	Basic to advanced
Online translation*	Unavailable	Available	Available	Available	Available
Management applications	Least	Moderate	Moderate	Least	Most
Main strength	Marketing applications	Intuitive, theoretically simple	Most statistically supported gap analysis	Simple, performance only measure	Provides simple but powerful tool
Main criticism	Too esoteric	Expectancy is poor measure of satisfaction	Limited focus, time consuming	Limited management applications	Weak statistics

*\*Based on availability at SurveyMonkey.com*

The relative strengths and weaknesses presented above have prompted satisfaction researchers to question the reliability of measuring visitor satisfaction. Studies of expectations are inappropriate for services that vary in scope and content substantially (such is the geographically, culturally, and environmentally defined nature of Aboriginal cultural tourism) (Millan & Esteban, 2004; Pearce, 2005). As noted, there may be an irreconcilable difference between assessing the quality of the experience and

the individual consumer's satisfaction with the performance, as overall satisfaction may be defined by several external or personal factors. Pearce also suggests that consumer satisfaction research should endeavour to broadly identify how attribute specific performance (such as quality of signage, helpfulness of staff, and cleanliness of facilities) contributes to overall visitor satisfaction (2005). As a result, consumer satisfaction research has developed alternative, broadly applicable factors to test satisfaction against, rather than the more subjective expectation.

### ***IPA as the Optimal Tool***

IPA style surveys emerge as having advantages over other forms of satisfaction monitoring. IPA provides an easy to use diagnostic tool which can be applied to benchmark the satisfaction attributed to a number of products over time. It is flexible, whereas models like SERVQUAL and SERVPERF require consistency across companies and industries (Duke & Persia, 1996). Like expectancy/disconfirmation and self-congruity, IPA can be adapted for varied purposes and attributes that are tailored to meet the needs of diverse studies. Unlike the former gap analysis models, IPA avoids the theoretical pitfalls common in studies of expectation or self-identity as determinants of satisfaction. While more statistically complicated than performance only models such as SERVPERF, IPA and other gap analyses are essentially comparisons of two sets of means. They require less advanced statistical analyses than studies of self-congruity. All gap analyses have similar management applications in that they are easy to use and understand with results presented visually (Bennett, Dearden & Rollins, 2003). IPA is unique in that it identifies specific areas which need further research and management attention without sophisticated statistical analysis techniques. All of the models have the potential to provide market segmentation analyses given sufficient sample sizes and the inclusion of demographic questions related to a respondent's age, gender, level of income and education, and residency.

## ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

### *Assessing Survey Methods against Tla'amin Operational Needs*

When these models are assessed against the appropriate operational needs defined in Table 2.1 the most desirable characteristics are delineated and ICT's optimum survey design is evident. The operational needs of Adaptability and Simplicity will be applied. Educational Capability is not suitable criteria of survey design so it was omitted from the framework as were the remaining two operational needs which were deemed redundant. The resulting instrument will be owned by ICT and Tla'amin Nation, and final edits were provided by ICT throughout the research process and survey design so Community Control exists regardless of design considerations. The final survey instrument will be constructed in an online format using SurveyMonkey.com so Affordability will be the same for all models.

The assessment of visitor satisfaction model suitability to ICT given the operational needs of Tla'amin tourism is presented below in Table 2.5. For visual simplicity methodological characteristics that did not meet the operational mandate for Adaptability have been crossed out. Those that did not meet the requirement of operational Simplicity have been shaded. Unaltered cells represent those methodological characteristics best suited to ICT's survey design process.

Each survey model was also given a suitability score based on its cumulative number of failures to meet operational needs. A survey model which met all operational needs across all methodological characteristics received a score of zero. Operational needs were treated as equal and each failure to meet a requirement was therefore weighted as -1.

**Table 2.5 Tla'amin Operational Needs Assessment of Visitor Satisfaction Models**

	Self-congruity	Expectancy/disconfirmation	SERVQUAL	SERVPERF	IPA
<b>Delivery method</b>	2 Stage	2 Stage	1 or 2 stage	1 Stage	1 Stage
<b>Questionnaire format</b>	2 parts, Adaptable	2 parts, Adaptable	<del>2 parts, Fixed</del>	<del>2 parts, Fixed</del>	1 part, Adaptable
<b>Length/Survey time required</b>	High	High	Mid/High	Low	Mid
<b>Response scale</b>	Likert and semantic differential	Likert Scale	Likert Scale	Likert Scale	Likert Scale
<b>Statistics required</b>	Moderate to advanced	Basic to advanced	Moderate to advanced	Basic to advanced	Basic to advanced
<b>Online translation</b>	<del>Unavailable</del>	Available	Available	Available	Available
<b>Management applications</b>	Least	Moderate	Moderate	Least	Most
<b>SCORE</b>	<b>(-8)</b>	<b>(-4)</b>	<b>(-6)</b>	<b>(-3)</b>	<b>(-1)</b>

## Chapter 3.

### Methodology

In addition to the preceding literature review, the study's methods included a case study, in which a custom-made survey instrument was developed and pilot-tested. This chapter describes the objectives and procedures of the case study.

#### RESEARCH OBJECTIVE AND QUESTIONS

The overall objective of this research is to determine the optimal design characteristics of a visitor satisfaction survey to aid the planning and management of small-scale Aboriginal cultural tourism operations. This research focuses on ICT, one coastal operation in British Columbia.

##### *Research Questions*

Within the context of ICT, the Aboriginal cultural tourism operation chosen for this study, the specific applied research questions guiding this study are:

- 1) Which of the currently employed visitor satisfaction survey models (or combination thereof) is most appropriate for ICT?
  - a. Which elements of these visitor satisfaction models are incongruous with the operational needs defined by the Tla'amin tourism planning process?
  - b. Given these considerations, which are specifically well suited to ICT?
  - c. Is there one specific survey model ICT could use to achieve its desired outcomes?

d. Would a modified survey model be useful and appropriate?

2) Could this survey design method be beneficial to the management of other small-scale Aboriginal cultural tourism operations?

## **CASE STUDY: ICT VISITOR SATISFACTION SURVEY DESIGN**

### ***Design Considerations from the Assessment Framework***

It is apparent from literature summarized in Table 2.4 that, while being statistically limited, IPA yields both clearly defined results and comprehensible management directives. Table 2.5 assessed the various methodological characteristics of each visitor satisfaction model against the operational needs defined by Tla'amin's tourism planning documents. It was evident from this assessment framework that studies rooted Self-Congruity are least suitable to ICT's objectives. Self-Congruity received a suitability score of -8. Two stage delivery, comparatively high time requirements, statistical complexity and relative lack of management applications made Self-Congruity a poorly suited survey model considering ICT's considering operational needs for adaptability and simplicity. The flawed nature of expectancy studies, relatively large time requirements, and two-staged delivery methods associated with Expectancy-Disconfirmation studies were also poorly suited to the goals of ICT. The rigid design structure and relatively high level of statistical complexity required made a SERVQUAL study incompatible with ICT's operational needs and resulted in a low suitability score (-6).

The assessment confirmed IPA as the best suited instrument format for ICT use in gauging visitor satisfaction. IPA characteristics determined to be optimal given Tla'amin Tourism's operational needs included its relative simplicity, adaptability and superior management applications. IPA only fell short in the assessment framework with respect to survey time requirements, resulting in a suitability score of -1. As a result of the longer format questionnaire IPA requires a comparatively greater amount of a respondent's time than SERVPERF. SERVPERF had a suitability score of -3 and was the second most desirable visitor satisfaction model according to this framework. Its lack



of management applications and rigid structure, however, made it unsuitable to the needs of ICT.

As a result of the previous considerations it was determined ICT required a simple and adaptable IPA based tool constructed to provide management recommendations while considering the affordability and educational potential of test attributes. The relatively greater respondent time requirements were also a consideration throughout the design process. It was decided that the online format would simplify delivery and improve time. Online surveys are more affordable, have lower dropout rates and produce more complete data sets than paper formats (Dolnicar, Laesser & Matus, 2009). The process of initial survey design was drawn from relevant IPA examples found in the substantial literature review (Azzopardi & Nash, 2013; Ritchie, Mules & Uzabeaga, 2008; Vaske, Beamen, Stanley & Grenier, 1996; Wade & Eagles, 2003). Attributes related to tourism were also drawn from literature review and scoped to fit the specific marine cultural tourism operations offered at ICT. Guiding principles outlined in Tla'amin Nation's *Tourism Sliammon Concept Paper* were considered when generating attributes related to personal service, specifically accountability, communication and discipline (2003: 4-5). The design of the online questionnaire was undertaken in consideration of the specific appropriate order and goal of each question and section, and respondent comprehension, as per conventionally accepted guides (Vaske, 2008; Fanning, 2005; Dillman, 2007).

### ***Purpose of the Survey Instrument***

The first step in the design of any survey defined in the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing is to define "the scope of the constructs to be measured" (AERA, 1999:37). For this study two constructs, quality of goods and quality of experiences, were intended to respectively capture the tangible and intangible aspects of visitor satisfaction (Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990; Tian-Cole & Crompton, 2003; Foster, 1999). Attributes were grouped within these two constructs in order to present concepts in a logical order, minimize content reliability issues and fully evaluate all aspects of visitor satisfaction at ICT.

### ***Survey Format***

The second step was to design the instrument by identifying test specifications which delineate the format of items, tasks, or questions; the response format or conditions for responding; and the type of scoring procedures (Kline, 2013). The immediate intention of this survey was to use a simple IPA style questionnaire to identify areas of concern and prioritize management actions toward improving visitor satisfaction with ICT's products. It was decided that in order to enhance the instrument's adaptability and assist in pretesting open-ended qualitative responses would also be gathered. Following recommendations made by Dolnicar, Coltman and Sharma (2013), a variety of question formats and attributes specifically relevant to ICT's management were developed in an effort to reduce response biases and increase the predictive applications of visitor satisfaction data. Demographic information was not collected from the pretesting and pilot study drafts, but would be included in the final survey instrument to allow for future studies aimed at market segmentation or long-term performance benchmarking. Given the variety of data collected a mixed methodology was appropriate.

The first section of the survey employed a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions to collect demographic data related to respondents' visitation patterns to aboriginal tourism attractions including: where respondents travelled from, familiarity with the area, and duration and purpose of stay. The purpose of Section 1 was to create a profile of visitors with the potential of informing future market segmentation applications. All visitors other than locals were asked questions related to their familiarity with the destination, purpose and length of stay.

Section 2 contained multiple choice and open-ended questions to collect visitor data about their specific tourism package. At the outset respondents were asked about the specific ICT tour package they purchased. This offers the analyst the flexibility to gauge visitor satisfaction across the many tours ICT offers, or as an overall aggregate report of all operations. In this section visitors were also asked about prior experience with ICT, travel party characteristics (such as size and demographics) as well as duration of visit. It was expected that analysis of the responses from the first two

sections could be used to examine whether a relationship exists between the visitors travel habits and their satisfaction with ICT.

The design of the following two sections of the survey (Sections 3 and 4) was mostly concerned with questions of visitor satisfaction and loyalty. These sections also were intended to collect the importance and performance ratings data to inform the IPA outputs. The purpose of Sections 3 and 4 was to gauge visitor ratings related a list of attributes relevant to ICT's tourism operation. A discussion of how these attributes were generated was presented in Section 5. A paired 5-point Likert scale was used for all IPA attribute questions in Section 3 and 4 to be consistent with previous tourism IPA studies. Furthermore, nonresponse options ("0") were provided as an alternative to respondents when rating the importance and satisfaction levels of individual attributes, as suggested by Ryan and Cessford (2003). It was decided to include a nonresponse option for importance and satisfaction ratings, as these could be recoded upon analysis if necessary. Other studies have suggested that consumer satisfaction studies should balance qualitative (scale based) content with more qualitative (expressive) elements such as experiential or open ended questions, to provide more holistic and less rigid expression of satisfaction measurement (Oh, 2001). As such, respondents were invited to provide open ended feedback following each attribute question in Sections 3 and 4. In Section 4 respondents were also invited to describe whether they had encountered any problems, whether they had reported these problems, and the extent to which they felt their concerns were resolved.

The final section of the survey was an optional section containing a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions to collect additional demographic data related to respondents' age, sex and occupation. The intention in separating Section 5 and making it optional was to enrich the visitor profile information gathered in previous sections while being sensitive to the fatigue and resistance online respondents report when providing exhaustive personal details (Savage & Waldman, 2008).

### ***Development of ICT Specific Importance/Performance Attributes***

The process of survey design began with the identification of the two constructs: *quality of goods* and *quality of experiences*. Knowing these constructs assisted in the

survey design in that it helped to structure the survey. In contrast to Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry's (1990) assertion that service is intangible and purely experiential it was decided that customer service attributes be grouped with *goods*. This decision was made in consideration of Pine and Gilmore's (2011) statement that services, like goods are commodified. The decided groupings were therefore aimed at providing more clarity to management applications, in that they are all purchasable and quality ratings can be directly changed by management action. Purely experiential attributes such as notions of quality time were grouped separately in that they are more personal and reflective in nature. As recommended by Dolnicar, Colton and Sharma (2013) this separation of constructs in the instrument works to reduce response bias and enhance instrument reliability. This action was not challenged during expert review, nor were any problems apparent in the respondents' feedback, or tests of reliability.

The initial 21 IPA attributes were generated by literature review of similar studies related to cultural tourism visitor satisfaction and my review of ICT's inventory of tourism products, amenities and Tla'amin Tourism's planning literature. Attributes were included in consideration of Pine and Gilmore's (2011) four experiential dimensions; *entertainment, education, esthetics, and escapism*. The resulting initial pool of attributes, their definition, and the construct they represent are presented in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Initial pool of IPA attributes with definitions and construct ascription**

IPA Attribute	Definition	Construct expressed
First Impression	...of facility, amenities and staff	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Atmosphere	...of facility and tour	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Authenticity	...of cultural elements provided	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Staff Interaction	... at visitor center, during tour and booking process	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Clarity of Staff	... at visitor center, during tour and booking process	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Guide Boat	Size, comfort, suitability to the tourism operation	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Visitor Facility	Size, comfort, location	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Range of Activities	Number of available tourism products	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Food Services	Quality of food provided	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Booking Process	Quality of service, ease of use	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Staff Helpfulness	Before, during and after tour	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Visitor Centre	Design, layout, spaciousness	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Reception Information	Availability and presentation of company material	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Gift Shop	Availability and quality of memorabilia	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Parking Facility	Design, layout, spaciousness	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Value of Services	As a necessary condition of satisfaction	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Service Quality	As a necessary condition of satisfaction	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Facilities and Services	As a necessary element of cultural tourism	<i>Quality of Goods</i>
Quality Time with Others	As provided by the tourism product	<i>Quality of Experience</i>
Have a Unique Experience	As provided by the tourism product	<i>Quality of Experience</i>
Opportunity to Experience Aboriginal Culture	As provided by the tourism product	<i>Quality of Experience</i>

Once the initial list of 21 attributes was generated they were evaluated using Tla'amin's operational needs (Table 2.1) and planning literature. As a result two attributes from the *quality of goods* construct were of particular concern due to the

substantial perceived costs involved in replacing or otherwise altering them. These attributes—Visitor Facility and Guide Boat—were removed from the survey before pretesting. Three *quality of experience* attributes were added before the pretest—Opportunity to Learn Something New, Understanding Aboriginal History, and Understanding Aboriginal Identity—in order to explore visitors impressions of the educational potential of ICT products. Finally, attributes were made “clear, concise, and as unambiguous as possible” (Lester & Bishop, 2000:11). The draft of survey was then built using the online survey website, SurveyMonkey.com.

A five part, self-administered online version of the questionnaire was designed using SurveyMonkey.com. This online tool proved intuitive and simple to use, with a variety of question formats and research outputs available with purchase of a basic level subscription. The open-ended, multiple choice and Likert scale formats were all fully customizable. A completed first draft of the survey tool was prepared for pretesting.

## **SUMMARY**

A case study approach was employed in this research. Specifically, a draft of ICT’s optimal visitor satisfaction instrument was developed following the assessment framework. The next chapter will present the pretesting and pilot study findings and demonstrate the extent to which this study was able to answer the research questions directing this project.

## **Chapter 4.**

### **Results**

#### **ICT PRETEST FEEDBACK**

Pretesting involved efforts undertaken to evaluate the capability of ICT's survey instrument to collect visitor satisfaction data related to quality of goods and experience, and the overall adequacy of the instrument's structure and delivery. Measures of content validity and internal reliability are commonly used to determine the strength of surveys. Assessing content validity is a largely judgmental review process aimed at subjectively determining whether or not the tool adequately addresses the desired constructs. Internal reliability is a statistical measurement of the correlations between all responses to one attribute, or within one construct. Reliability usually measured with Cronbach's alpha, a statistic calculated from pairwise correlations between items. As measures of reliability, alpha scores range from 1 (very high) to less than -0.5 (low). In order to verify the content validity and internal reliability of the survey Dillman's four stage approach to pretesting was used (2007).

#### ***Stage 1 – Review by experts***

This scope of this step was decidedly limited since the researcher opted for internal review of the survey draft. Two faculty members at Simon Fraser University's School of Resource and Environmental Management were consulted, professors Wolfgang Haider and John Welch. Haider and Welch reviewed the survey and provided feedback regarding content validity and structure. Following this feedback a refined draft was then distributed to graduate students in the Center for Tourism Policy and Research (CTPR) for comment. Amy Suess and Luke Cvetich provided additional feedback and helped to further improve questionnaire wording and structure.

Once the content validity of the questionnaire had been verified, and the structure and wording finalized, a draft was sent to Erik Blaney at ICT for owner input. Blaney requested that an attribute related to the Guide Boat be included in the final survey and that an additional opportunity for open-ended feedback be included for respondents to detail any positive experiences they took away from their visit. Additionally, Blaney asked that questions related to the Visitor Facility (Lund Hotel and Marina) be included in the final tool. Prior to their inclusion into the pilot survey the final 46 questions exploring 23 attributes were carefully scrutinized for their content, clarity of expression, logical fallacies and reading difficulty level. Once the final list of 23 attributes was included and revisions were made, the pilot testing version was distributed using a SurveyMonkey.com provided via email. The final list of attributes was:

- 1) Atmosphere
- 2) Authenticity
- 3) Staff Interaction
- 4) Clarity of Staff
- 5) Guide Boat
- 6) Visitor Facility
- 7) Range of Activities
- 8) Food Services
- 9) Booking Process
- 10) Staff Helpfulness
- 11) Visitor Centre
- 12) Reception Information
- 13) Gift Shop
- 14) Parking Facility
- 15) Value of Services
- 16) Service Quality
- 17) Facilities and Services
- 18) Quality Time with Others
- 19) Have a Unique Experience
- 20) Opportunity to Experience Aboriginal Culture
- 21) Opportunity to Learn Something New
- 22) Understanding Aboriginal History
- 23) Understanding Aboriginal Identity



### ***Stage 2 – Interviews to evaluate cognitive and motivational qualities***

At this stage the interviewer invites the respondents to comment in order get an understanding of how each question is being interpreted and whether the intent of each question is being realized (Dillman, 2007:142). This consideration was addressed to a certain extent in the expert review phase and was built into open-ended questions following each section of the pilot test. No concerns related to interpretation or intention were brought up following the expert review or pilot test.

### ***Stage 3 – Pilot test***

For the purposes of this study the pilot test was released in order to both test reliability of the IPA attributes, and to gain any feedback regarding the interpretation or intention. A pilot survey was administered to 56 anonymous ICT visitors after the first full year of operations.

## **PILOT TEST FEEDBACK**

### ***Estimates of reliability***

The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency. Several manipulations of the attributes related to the Quality of Goods construct provided no improvement in the alpha score which stood at .840. Alpha scores from attributes related to the Quality of Experience construct could be improved from .620 to .929 if Attribute 21 *Opportunity to learn something new* was removed but given that this attribute was specifically included to address the operational need for educational capability the item was retained. It was decided to keep all 23 attributes variables because all had coefficients greater than 0.50 as such were considered acceptable and a good indication of construct reliability (Nunnally, 1959).

#### ***Stage 4 – Final check***

There was only one minor misinterpretation of one of the demographic questions in Section 5 of the survey. The item was clarified in the final version of the survey (Appendix B).

#### **CASE STUDY RESULTS AND SUMMARY**

The survey design and attributes were refined following the feedback offered during pretesting. Once pretesting was complete the final product was a tailor made, internet based survey capable of generating meaningful outputs to inform management priorities in the short term, but with the potential to offer some powerful marketing applications in future. This instrument was based in IPA which was determined to be the most appropriate for ICT. Although the operational need of simplicity was only partially met because of the comparatively moderate time required to complete an IPA survey, the potential benefits of this type of instrument were numerous. Though no single survey model was a perfect fit, the resulting IPA was modified to include more open-ended questions to provide the opportunity for rich qualitative feedback from future respondents. Also built into this instrument was the ability to gather enough demographic data to allow for robust long-term studies involving market segmentation and performance bench marking.

## Chapter 5.

# Limitations and Management Implications

### STUDY LIMITATIONS

This research was affected by all inherent assumptions and data issues of conducting qualitative research. The limitations of research strategies are discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### *Issues with Literature Review*

The literature review for this research was not intended to be a comprehensive review of aboriginal tourism planning or visitor satisfaction survey models. It was designed, rather, to present sufficient overview of a range of commonly used visitor satisfaction survey methods and to test their applicability to a specific aboriginal tourism operation. The review of aboriginal tourism literature was therefore limited to the defined scope of ICT operations within Tla'amin Nation's overarching tourism planning efforts. Given the operational disconnect resulting from a lack of formalized partnership between ICT and Tla'amin Nation, the assessment framework would have likely benefitted from additional operational needs drawn directly from ICT's management and Tla'amin leadership and entrepreneurs. The resulting framework was specifically relevant to ICT, but may have been too narrowly focused to be beneficial to Tla'amin Tourism.

A further limitation in this review was the focus on a selection of only the five most prevalently used tourism visitor satisfaction models listed by Dolnicar and Le (2008). These five models were suitable to this study as they offered a broad range of methodological characteristics to evaluate with the resulting assessment framework. A

number of additional methodological approaches exist and modified approaches are also commonly used (Dolnicar and Le, 2008).

### ***Limitations of Case Study Approach***

Richness and depth of interpretation are benefits associated with the case study approach. However, a potential drawback is that the findings and conclusions of this study are only relevant to the operations of ICT and Tla'amin Tourism, limiting the ability to generalize these findings beyond the study area. A further limitation was the decision to choose a single case study cultural tourism operation (ICT) working within a single case study organization (Tla'amin Nation) versus multiple aboriginal tourism operations and their related organizations. For example, Aboriginal Tourism British Columbia (AtBC) a non-profit, stakeholder-based organization committed to growing and promoting Aboriginal tourism in the province currently has over 150 stakeholders offering a variety of First Nation owned and operated tourism experiences. This study could have been augmented if several operators and their governing organization participated in the design of multiple custom-made surveys, and the validity and reliability of each tested.

As a final note regarding stake holder input, this research summary was also limited by a paucity of feedback during preparation of the final written component. Resulting from conflicting obligations and schedules, a number of Tla'amin stakeholders were unable to provide final input and direction with respect to research context. This input would have surely enhanced some of the more narrative elements of this report, in particular employment data and demographic history of the Tla'amin community and how tourism became an attractive industry.

### ***Survey Design Limitations***

Though the literature review and resulting assessment framework helped to determine the best suited visitor satisfaction model and methodological characteristics, a few design limitations still exist within the final instrument. These limitations should be considered during future efforts aimed at refining the instrument.

As suggested by Oh (2001), consumers could have been involved in the identification and selection of important attributes. The attributes chosen for Section 3

and 4 of the survey were those that were deemed important following literature and expert review, and ICT manager feedback. This list could have been extended or limited through additional questions aimed at gaining visitor feedback and/or factor analysis in the pilot study to determine the most important attributes prior to the full implementation of the survey.

### ***Limitations of Online Delivery***

Although the technological benefits of enhanced attractiveness, usability and geographic distribution offered by online delivery have been noted as significant advances in survey methodology (Deutskens, Ruyter, & Wetzels, 2006; Dillman, 2007), scholars have also criticized web-based surveys as inherently unrepresentative. Couper, Kapteyn, Schonlau, and Winter (2007) have noted age biases in internet based survey respondents, citing that technological fluency may be limiting the participation of older respondents. Evans and Mathur (2005) add that the technology could have other biasing effects related to respondents' perceptions of surveys as junk mail and privacy and security concerns. Perhaps the most significant flaw in online survey methods is the assumption that a representative sample can be drawn from only those individuals who regularly use the internet. As Palmquist and Stueve (1996) suggest the demographics and responses of the excluded group may differ significantly from those of their online counterparts.

## **MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

### ***Recommendations for ICT***

Though the immediate goals of ICT were to gain a prioritized set of management objectives, short-term research only provided a snapshot estimate of visitor satisfaction. As discussed below, data should be collected via social media following every visit and examined routinely. Analyses of long-term data done at regular intervals (every 2–5 years) provide the opportunity to enable enhanced market segmentation and longer term benchmarking.

### ***Instrument Delivery***

For development and delivery of the pilot study SurveyMonkey.com, an online survey building and hosting website, was used. Survey delivery is available either by email or social media link. It is recommended that during operations ICT collect email addresses from visitors who would be willing to fill out a survey about their experience and distribute this tool via email shortly after. This will work to address the online access and participation limitations discussed previously.

The finished questionnaire (Appendix B) required very little time or technical expertise to build and code. The open ended and multiple choice questions were simple to generate. The Likert scale questions in sections 3 and 4 required only that a consistent numerical scale be applied throughout. In this case attributes receiving “very little” importance or performance rankings were coded “1”, “very high” attributes ranked as “5”, and those in between scaled accordingly. “Not applicable” was coded “0” to allow for attributes not included in all tourism packages (e.g., boat, food, gift shop).

The output data that can be collected from SurveyMonkey.com were also highly customizable and easy to use. For the purposes of this analysis, Excel format files were generated for the IPA data, and summary reports were created to present the results of the open ended and multiple choice questions. Using Microsoft Excel these outputs would be sufficient for the immediate management objectives of ICT, with each pair of attribute rankings being shown in a scatterplot graph. Axes for the IPA matrices should be generated by determining the grand means for performance and importance scores individually after separating the data into the two attribute constructs, *good* and *services*. This will allow for the level of internal reliability that was evident in pre-testing retained in the final results.

### ***Recommended Enhanced Analyses***

In addition to initial IPA outputs and long-term performance benchmarking studies that can be produced using the relatively simple analyses already described, the data can also inform marketing segmentation applications which could greatly enhance the competitiveness of ICT in a growing market. Dolnicar (2008) defines market

segmentation is a strategic tool to correct for the heterogeneity among tourists by grouping them into market segments which include members similar to each other and dissimilar to members of other segments. Tourism professionals frequently use market segmentation widely to study opportunities for competitive advantage in the marketplace.

As Wade and Eagles (2003) state, segmented IPA studies are preferred to the homogeneous approach taken in this study, given that the latter can fail to recognise distinct differences in niche markets and ultimately lead to the displacement of these visitors. Once established, segments can both be sampled and studied separately, or compared and contrasted within the same sample and study. According to Dolnicar (2002), a typical segmentation study for a survey of this size should have around 500 respondents. Once a sufficient sample is collected the importance ratings should be used to cluster (segment) visitors into distinct groups. A furthest neighbour Ward's hierarchical analysis can then be undertaken to calculate the number of possible clusters based on visitor responses to the importance of both the goods and service attributes. Once the number of clusters is determined a k-means analysis can then be used to help define cluster membership details including their socio-demographics and travel characteristics. Marketing can then be focused directly on these discrete groups based on membership demographics. These segments can also be used to structure long-term benchmarking studies in order to determine the effectiveness of management decisions over time, as reflected by visitor satisfaction levels within demographic groups.

### ***Broader Implications for Aboriginal Tourism***

Though custom built for ICT, this instrument could potentially benefit similar cultural tourism operations or First Nations tourism planning departments without significant changes to the content or structure. Once a list of operation specific attributes, representative of Pine and Gilmore's experiential dimensions (2010) has been established and pretesting is completed, this instrument can be adapted to suit a number of small scale operations. Given the financial and technological capacity challenges faced by this type of tourism operation, a survey model optimized to be adaptable, technologically simple, and inexpensive has obvious applications.

The survey design process used to create and validate this instrument has wider applications. By incorporating stakeholder input and community values, in this case Tla'amin Tourism's operational needs, as both an assessment framework for existing visitor satisfaction models and as a set of design requirements, survey designers are able to externally produce better suited instrumentation. This process can be adopted by any group or tourism operation who wishes to effectively incorporate their operational values into the design of tailor-made visitor satisfaction survey, thereby reducing response biases and enhancing its predictive strength.



## **Chapter 6.**

# **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS**

This research generated an optimally designed survey instrument for I'Hos Cultural Tours (ICT), a small scale guided marine tourism company operating out of Tla'amin Nation. The overall purpose was to design a survey that not only best served, but also reflected the needs of Tla'amin tourism. A framework was produced in order to determine which overall survey style was most appropriate to ICT's needs and which specific survey characteristics were incompatible. This framework informed and guided the final survey design at every stage. A literature review and a case study were undertaken as primary methods to achieve this paper's purpose.

A review of Tla'amin tourism planning documents and related community feedback delineated five operational needs: Adaptability, Simplicity, Affordability, Community Control, and Educational Capability. These operational needs were treated as necessary qualities of the intended survey tool, and used to evaluate multiple characteristics of the five most commonly used visitor satisfaction models currently applied to tourism research. It was determined that a modified IPA style instrument be designed with increased focus on open-ended feedback and respondent time requirements, as well as importance-performance attributes specific to the needs of Tla'amin Nation and ICT.

A pilot survey was designed and distributed to academic experts, ICT management and 56 anonymous ICT visitors to test for content validity and internal reliability. Both of these criteria were successfully met and the resulting instrument is presented in Appendix B.

## ICT FEEDBACK ON EFFECTIVENESS OF FINAL INSTRUMENT

ICT distributed the survey via their Facebook page in November of 2013 and Erik Blaney provided feedback. Overall Mr. Blaney characterized the instrument as helpful. Specifically the IPA matrices provided clear direction in a few key areas. With respect to *goods and services* attributes, visitor feedback was least favorable regarding attributes related to the Lund Hotel and Marina. Respondents reported that while atmosphere was an important attribute, it was underperforming. Open ended responses listed accommodation cleanliness and parking availability as key contributors to the low levels of satisfaction. Underperforming *experiential* attributes reported by respondents were mostly related to Pine and Gilmore's education dimension.

This feedback, supported by negative reviews on TripAdvisor.com, prompted Blaney to distance ICT's base of operations from the Lund Hotel. This allowed him broader managerial control of visitor experiences provided by ICT. Additional focus was also paid to the educational aspects of ICT operations. Unfortunately due to recent health issues, Mr. Blaney stepped away from ICT in 2016.

A key issue that emerged from this case study is the role of independently owned aboriginal tourism operating within overarching First Nation agencies. In terms of the survey design process, the lack of a formalized partnership between Tla'amin Nation and ICT could have resulted in inconsistencies in the assessment framework. Specifically, the operational needs drawn from Tla'amin Tourism planning literature were at times at odds with those valued by ICT. For example, early in the design process concerns related to the operational need of affordability prompted the removal of two attributes, Visitor Facility and Guide Boat. Upon review, Blaney requested these attributes be included in the final instrument. As noted above, some of the most valuable respondent feedback was focused on negative experiences related to the Visitor Facility. This information would not have been gathered had Mr. Blaney not provided final review of the instrument. While institutional values are a valuable during assessment and general design of survey instruments, in this process managerial input must be sought during attribute selection and final review.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The process of conducting research generates new questions. This study revealed the need for further inquiry in the following areas:

- Given that the Tla'amin Nation has concluded its treaty with Canada and British Columbia, there is an opportunity and potential need to examine the changing relationship between community values, land base, economic development, and tourism planning. This shifting dynamic will directly affect the long-term applicability of this study.
- Similar studies could be conducted with other aboriginal tourism operations outside of the guided marine tour market such as First Nation owned and operated cultural centers, resorts, and restaurants. Such studies would help to explore whether this design process could be useful in scenarios with presumably different community values, operational needs, and testing attributes.
- Similar survey design processes could be undertaken in corporate tourism operations. Using organizational values to define operational needs, these studies could help externally validate the suitability of this tailor made method.
- The research lends itself to further exploration of the factors that are instrumental in aboriginal tourism success. Particularly important are issues related to strategic partnerships, community support, and the role of education in cultural tourism experience.

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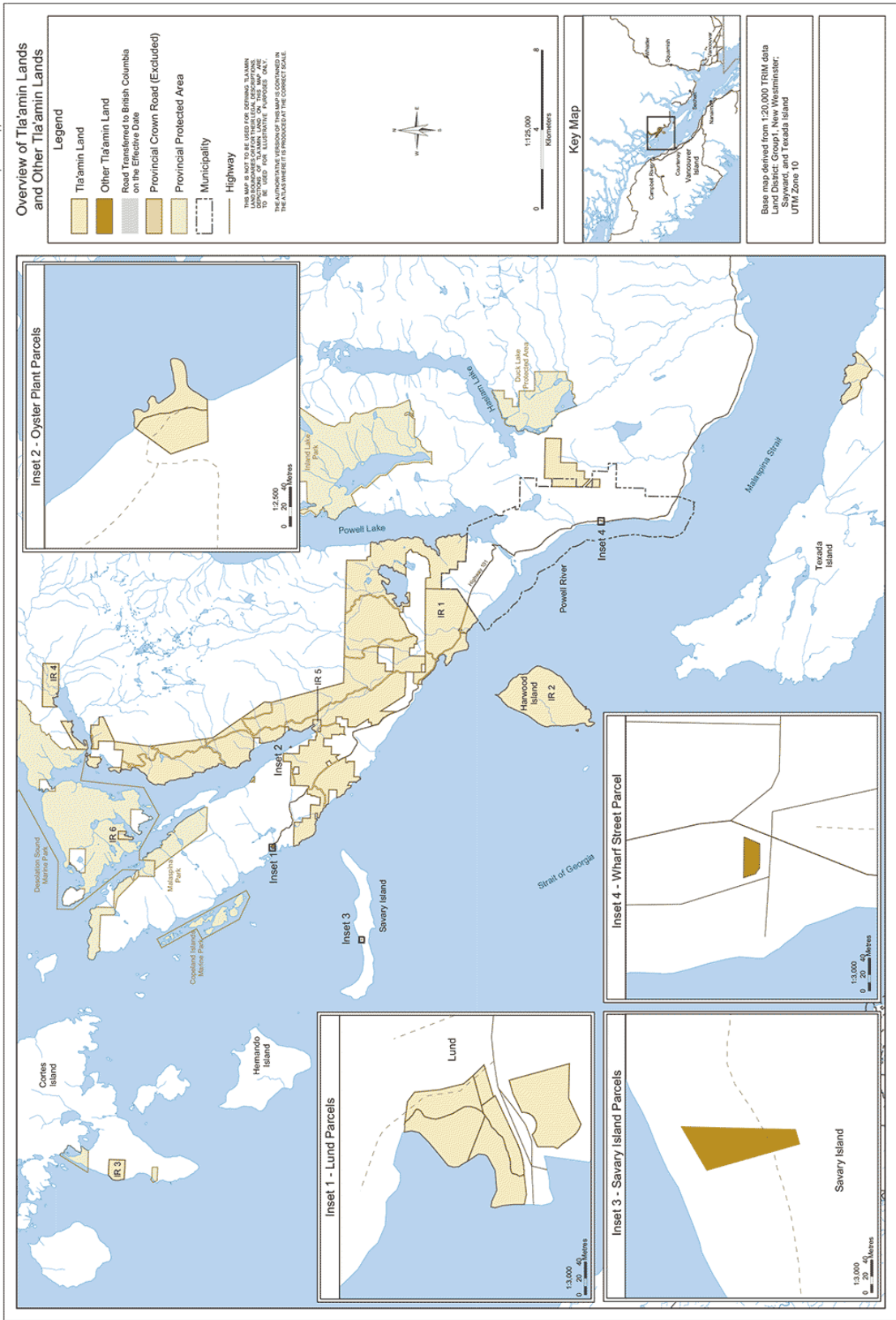
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## **Appendix A.**

### **Map of Tla'amin Lands**

From Tla'amin Treaty Guide, 2011; used with permission from Sliammon Treaty Society.



## **Appendix B.**

### **I'Hos Cultural Tours' Online Survey Instrument**

Final vesrion; used with permission from I'Hos Cultural Tours.

## **<b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY**

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Your input will help...**

The questions in this short survey (10-15 minutes) relate to your recent visit to I'Hos Cultural Tours.

Answer as much from Sections 1 and 2 as you like but please spend the time to give us your thoughtful feedback in Sections 3 and 4. The information provided in Sections 3 and 4 of the survey will help us to make the changes necessary to provide the best Cultural Tourism experience we can.

Thank you for helping us make your tourism experience the best possible.

### **SECTION 1: TRAVEL DETAILS (Optional but appreciated)**

#### **2. Do you live in British Columbia?**

Yes, I live in.... (please enter   
city)

No, I live in.... (please enter   
city, state/province, country)

#### **3. How many times have you visited an aboriginal tourism attraction in British Columbia including both daytrips and overnight trips ... (If you can't remember exactly, please give your best estimate)**

in the past past 3 years?

in the past 6 months?

#### **4. What was your main purpose of the trip that involved a visit to I'Hos Cultural Tours?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit friends                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Business meeting or conference |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit family                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Convenient stop-over point     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attend a specific event or exhibition | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit specific attraction(s)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal Tourism                    |   |

Other (please specify)



## **<b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY**

**5. How many nights did you stay locally (less than 10 km from I'Hos Cultural Tours) during this trip?**

### **SECTION 2: YOUR I'HOS CULTURAL TOURISM EXPERIENCE**

The following optional questions in this section relate to the activity you participated in when you provided your contact details.

**6. Please identify the specific package you chose as part of your I'Hos Cultural Tourism experience?**

**7. How many people did you visit this particular attraction with?**

**8. How would you describe your travel party, that is, all persons with whom you travelled and shared your I'Hos Cultural Tourism experience?**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Travelling alone                       | <input type="radio"/> Business associates travelling together  |
| <input type="radio"/> Adult couple (married/relationship)    | <input type="radio"/> Family group—parents and children        |
| <input type="radio"/> School group (including sporting)      | <input type="radio"/> Friends or relatives travelling together |
| <input type="radio"/> Sporting group/community group or club |  |

Other (please specify)

**9. How long did you stay at this attraction? \_\_\_\_\_ hours**

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### 10. How did you hear about this I'Hos Cultural Tours?

(Choose as many options as apply)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A travel agent                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel book, guide or brochure                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends or relatives                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Lund Hotel  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The internet (our website)                        | <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising/travel articles (TV, radio or print)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The internet (other website)                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Road signage                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Prior visits to this or other Sliammon attraction |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tourist Office/Visitor Information Centre         | <input type="checkbox"/> None (came upon it by coincidence)                |

Other (please specify)

## SECTION 3: ATTRACTION FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The following are a number of items that we think are important facilities and services at cultural tourism attractions.

The following questions ask you to rate how important each item is to you, then rate your personal experience with I'Hos Cultural Tours.

PLEASE ANSWER BOTH and then feel free to add your own input below (not required)

### \*11. How would you rate "first impression"?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is first impression to you as a customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with your first impression of I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

## **<b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY**

### **\* 12. Overall, how would you rate "atmosphere"?**

**Atmosphere can be defined as the tone or mood of the tour  
(e.g. friendly, boring, exciting, etc)**

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is "atmosphere" to you as a customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the "atmosphere" at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anything further you'd like to add?	<input type="text"/>					

### **\* 13. Overall, how would you rate the "authenticity" of cultural experiences?**

**Authenticity can be defined as an obvious deep connection the guide has to the cultural elements presented at I'Hos Cultural Tours (e.g. sacred sites, traditional stories, art, food)**

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is "authenticity" to you as a customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the "authenticity" of cultural experiences at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anything further you'd like to add?	<input type="text"/>					

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### \* 14. How would you rate interaction with guide(s) during activities?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is operator interaction to you as a customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were you satisfied with the level of interaction you experienced at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?(If you have any specific information it would be helpful, such as location, activity or individual)

### \* 15. How would you rate presentation clarity as an element of cultural tourism?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is the clarity of a guide's presentation to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were you satisfied with the level of clarity you experienced at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

### \* 16. How do you value the guide boat as an element of coastal cultural tourism?

**(Factors to consider: Size, comfort, all-weather design, overall appearance)**

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is boat quality to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were you satisfied with our guide boat at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### \* 17. How would you rate range of activities available through cultural tourism?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is having a range of available activities to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the range of available activities you were offered at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

### 18. We would appreciate your feedback - What types of activities would you like to be available through I'Hos Cultural Tours?

### \* 19. How would you rate food services?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is food service to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the food service at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

### \* 20. How would you rate our booking process?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is the booking process to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the booking process we use at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### \*21. How would you rate staff helpfulness?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is a helpful staff to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the helpfulness of the staff at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

### \*22. How would you rate our visitor centre at The Lund Hotel?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is a visitor centre to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with I'Hos Cultural Tours' visitor centre?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

### \*23. How would you rate front counter/reception information?

(e.g. Promotional material, events calendar, rate sheets, pamphlets...)

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is a informative material provided at the front counter to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the front counter/reception information at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### \*24. How would you rate gift shops as an element of cultural tourism? (e.g. area providing post cards, art, memorabilia...)

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is a gift shop area to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were you satisfied with the gift shop area at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

### \*25. How would you rate parking facilities?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important are parking facilities to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were you satisfied with the parking facilities at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

### \*26. Overall, how would you rate "value" of services? (Comparing the cost of a product with level of satisfaction)

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is "value of services" to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Were you satisfied with the value of services at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### \*27. Overall, how would you rate quality of service?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is service quality to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the quality of service you were offered at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

### \*28. Overall, how do you rate facilities and services as elements of cultural tourism?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important are high quality facilities and services to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Were you satisfied with the overall quality of facilities and services at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

**29. What about this attraction were you particularly happy with on your recent visit? Did you have any good experiences at the attraction that you did not plan or expect? Please record these below.**

**30. Did you have any bad experiences at the attraction that you did not plan or expect? Please record these below.**

## SECTION 4: ATTRACTION EXPERIENCES AND LOYALTY



## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

The following questions in this section will ask about your recent I'Hos Cultural Tourism Experience. Below are a number of items that we think are important experiences at Cultural Tourism attractions.

The following questions ask you to rate how important each item is to you, then rate your personal experience with I'Hos Cultural Tours.

Again PLEASE ANSWER BOTH and then feel free to add your own input below (not required)

### \* 31. Do you value cultural tourism as a chance to learn something new?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is learning something new to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel you learned something new at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

### \* 32. Do you value cultural tourism as an opportunity to spend quality time with other people?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is spending quality time with other people to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel you spent quality time with others at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anything further you'd like to add?

## <b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY

### \* 33. Do you value cultural tourism as an opportunity to have a unique experience?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important are unique experiences to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you feel you had a unique experience at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
--	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

Anything further you'd like to add?

### \* 34. Do you value cultural tourism as an opportunity to experience Aboriginal Arts or Culture?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important is the experience of Aboriginal Arts or Culture to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you feel you experienced Aboriginal Arts or Culture at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

### \* 35. Do you value cultural tourism as an opportunity to understand Aboriginal history?

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important are opportunities to understand Aboriginal history to you as a tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you feel you had the opportunity to understand Aboriginal history at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Anything further you'd like to add?

**<b>I'HOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY**

**\* 36. Do you value cultural tourism as an opportunity to better understand Aboriginal identity?**

	Not applicable	Not at all	Mildly	Fairly	Very	Extremely
How important are opportunities to better understand Aboriginal identity to you as a cultural tourism customer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel you had the opportunity to better understand Aboriginal identity at I'Hos Cultural Tours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Anything further you'd like to add?	<input type="text"/>					

**\* 37. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with your visit to I'Hos Cultural Tours? Take all aspects of your visit into account.**

	Very dissatisfied	Fairly dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied
Please choose one:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 38. If it were possible, how likely are you to return to I'Hos Cultural Tours in the next 12 months?**

	Definitely won't	Probably won't	Undecided	Probably will	Definitely will
Please choose one:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**\* 39. How likely are you to recommend I'Hos Cultural Tours to other people as an attraction to visit?**

	Definitely won't	Probably won't	Undecided	Probably will	Definitely will
Please choose one:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**40. Did you experience any problem(s) with any aspect of the attraction on your visit?**

Yes  
 No

## **<b>IHOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY**

**41. If so, were these problems reported to our staff?**

- Yes  
 No

**42. Was the response from staff satisfactory?**

- Yes

No (please specify)

### **SECTION 5: ABOUT YOU**

The following optional questions in this section relate to you as the customer. These questions are designed to help us understand our market better and help us plan for your specific needs in the future.

**43. Could you tell us a little bit about you to help us build a more client focused business?**

- Yes  
 No

**44. What is your gender?**

- Female  
 Male

**45. What is your age?**

- 18 to 24  
 25 to 34  
 35 to 44  
 45 to 54  
 55 to 64  
 65 to 74  
 75 or older

Other (please specify)

**<b>IHOS CULTURAL TOURS</b>: VISITOR SURVEY**

**46. Which of the following best describes your lifestyle at present?**

**Are you...**

Working full-time

Mainly doing home-duties

Working part-time

Retiree / Pensioner

Studying

Not currently employed /looking for work

Other (please specify)

**Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey. Your input will help...**

