

# Evaluation of a Tourist Brochure

Kathleen L. Andereck

**ABSTRACT.** Even with advances in tourism information search technology, brochures are still popular information sources for tourists. The purpose of this paper is to describe tourist evaluations of a brochure, and to better understand how such evaluations influence visitation interest levels and actual visitation. A mail survey was conducted using a sample of individuals who requested travel information from Glendale, Arizona. Results suggest that the brochure did significantly increase respondents' interest in visiting Glendale and subsequent visitation, and that evaluation of the brochure was related to actual visitation. Visitors, prospective visitors, and non-visitors differed with respect to brochure evaluation. There were also some differences between respondents who had visited the community before and those who had not, as well as several demographic segments. [Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-HAWORTH. E-mail address: <docdelivery@haworthpress.com> Website: <<http://www.HaworthPress.com>> © 2005 by The Haworth Press, Inc. All rights reserved.]

**KEYWORDS.** Tourism information, information search, brochure, evaluation

## INTRODUCTION

Despite the rapid emergence of travel information technology, the brochure remains a popular and frequently used information source for tourists. In spite of heavy investment in the development, production, and distribution of brochures, little attention is given to understanding tourist use of brochures or evaluations of their effectiveness. The purpose of this paper is to investigate tourist evaluations of a brochure.

Brochures are produced by a myriad of organizations and businesses, and seem to be widely used by consumers (Holloway & Plant, 1988; Wicks & Schuett, 1991). In an early welcome center study, Gitelson and Crompton (1983) found brochures to be the second most frequently used external information source following commercial guide books. Out of a list of 12 information sources, Hsieh and

O'Leary (1993) found brochures to be the third most commonly used information source by travelers following two forms of interpersonal communication. Further, a distinct cluster of travelers relying largely on brochures and pamphlets emerged. Similarly, Andereck and Caldwell (1993) found brochures to be the third most important information source for an attraction, out of a list of nine sources, following interpersonal sources and past experience. More recently, Fodness and Murray (1999) found that brochures were ranked fourth in frequency of use among automobile travelers out of a list of eleven information sources following word of mouth, welcome centers and automobile clubs. Yamamoto and Gill (1999) reported that brochures were ranked as one of the two most important sources of information for Japanese package tourists. Finally, Andereck, Vogt and LeClerc (2003) discovered that brochures were the fifth most frequently used in-

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formation source behind personal experience, word of mouth, maps and travel guides by welcome center visitors. As well, 98 percent of visitors indicated they expected the welcome center to have brochures and pamphlets available. Researchers have also reported the large amounts of money that are spent on brochure production (Gilbert & Houghton, 1991; Hodgson, 1993; Holloway & Plant, 1988) with little evidence of the usefulness or effectiveness of brochures.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Information Search*

Many studies have considered traveler use of destination information. Knowing the nature of information search and acquisition is important because information search is one of the first steps toward purchase of a product or service (Murray, 1991). Consumers search for information to help them reduce the risk of purchasing products or services. There is evidence that services, such as travel products, are perceived as riskier purchases than goods (Murray, 1991; Zeithaml, 1981). Zeithaml (1981) contended that because services are more difficult and riskier to evaluate prior to purchase, consumers use different processes and cues than with evaluating goods. Although consumers tend to seek limited information in many situations, higher perceived risk, as well as high price, many product alternatives, greater product importance, less experience with a product, and situational determinants will tend to encourage information search (Capella & Greco, 1987).

Assael (1993) suggested perceptions follow some information search and precede the formation of brand beliefs. Beliefs then lead to brand evaluation and purchase behavior. Similarly, Goodrich (1978), in a study of destination choice, placed perceptions, familiarity and product knowledge as factors preceding product preferences or evaluation. Both models suggest that perceptions play an active role in a stage of the consumer decision process, however, perceptions and images are held, and can be influenced, throughout the consumption process, as well as outside the consumption process.

All travel information, including brochures, is to help travelers make informed decisions. Research has documented that some individuals tend to plan various aspects of a vacation in advance (Walter & Tong, 1977). Planning and information search gives tourists the opportunity to reduce the risk of uncertainty and disappointing experiences (Jackson, White, & Schmierer, 1996; Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992). Vogt and Fesenmaier (1998) suggested four aspects which define functional information needs: (1) acquisition of *product knowledge* as a way to help with decision-making and to enrich one's memory; (2) level of consumer *uncertainty* and the amount of risk individuals will accept about need satisfaction of a product; (3) *utility*, or the perceived value an individual gains from information; and (4) *efficiency* which is the ability to function in the most effective and productive manner possible. Thus, consumers search for information to make purchase decisions and to reduce purchase risks. They will conclude their search when their knowledge base is perceived as sufficient and/or the costs of searching exceed the benefits (Vogt & Fesenmaier, 1998).

### *Prior Experience and Information Search*

Consumers use both internal and external information when making purchase decisions. Typically internal information, or memory, is used as the consumer's first source of information. The consumer then moves to external search for information from a variety of sources (Murray, 1991). The extent to which a consumer searches for travel information depends, in part, on the amount of internal information a consumer possesses. If a consumer possesses adequate internal information, previsit information search is probably not needed. The more unfamiliar the destination, however, the more time and effort will be spent on pre-purchase information search (Fodness & Murray, 1999). Also, selected travel factors and demographics have been linked to travel planning (Zalatan, 1996) and information search (Fodness & Murray, 1997).

Probably the factor most effecting internal information is past experience with a destination. Past experience and knowledge influence expectations, preferences and motives. A par-

participant's evaluation of an experience is largely determined by individual expectations which are often based on previous experiences, or experience use history (Schreyer & Lime, 1984; Webster, 1991; Williams, Schreyer, & Knopf, 1990). Motives are linked to expected outcomes of behavior, expectations about future consequences initiates behavior, and behavior is expected to result in satisfaction (Dunn Ross & Iso-Ahola, 1991; Lounsbury & Polik, 1992; Ragheb & Tate, 1993; Stewart & Carpenter, 1989). As a result, participation in leisure experiences is, to a great extent, determined by evaluations of past experiences. Participants will be unlikely to again participate in experiences that have not met expectations and may discourage others from participating (Chubb & Chubb, 1981). Travel consumption research has shown that past experience is one of the strongest information sources and influences on destination image, vacation choice, and trip consumption (Andereck & Caldwell, 1993; Raitz & Dakhil, 1988), particularly when only one information source is used (Fodness & Murray, 1997). When a participant has no experience use history, as is often the case with the purchase of travel related services, external sources of information such as name familiarity, reputation, direct observation, price, alternatives, and advertising (Garretson, Clow, & Kurtz, 1995; Webster, 1991), and non-directed information such as television and books (Pocock, 1992) are used. Word-of mouth, however, is often the most influential source of external information on participant expectations (Webster, 1991). Some inexperienced participants develop unrealistic expectations (Arnould & Price, 1993), especially with respect to special events or visits to well-known sites, such as national parks.

Prior experience has also been considered as an influence on beliefs and subsequent consumer actions. Mazursky (1989), in a study of a single attraction, found a positive relationship between the number of experiences with the attraction and future intention to return to the attraction. Milman and Pizam (1995) found individuals with past experience at a destination had a more positive image of the destination and were more likely to revisit compared to individuals who were aware of, but had never vacationed in, the destination. They also found that individuals with no

awareness of a destination were similar in their intention to visit as compared to individuals with some level of destination awareness.

### *Use of Information Sources*

When searching for information, several sources may be used (Moutinho, 1987; Runyon & Stewart, 1987). Internal sources include one's own memory. External sources can be: (1) interpersonal sources such as friend, family, or other social contacts; (2) marketer-dominated sources such as advertisements or promotional materials, and salespeople; (3) public sources such as newspapers and magazines; (4) objective sources such as product rating and consumer information services; or (5) experiential sources accessed by direct experience with, or observation of, the product (Berkman & Gilson, 1986; Fodness & Murray, 1998).

Word-of mouth is often the most influential source of external information on participant expectations (Webster, 1991). A number of studies have indicated that of all the external sources of information available to tourists, the interpersonal sources of family and friends are often relied on most heavily (Rao, Thomas, & Javalgi, 1992; Raitz & Dakhil, 1989; Capella & Greco, 1987; Gitelson & Crompton, 1983). The recommendations of travel agents also are a key influence on travelers' decisions, although there is evidence that they received biased information and a small number of product choices (Hudson, Snaith, Miller, & Hudson, 2001).

Destinations use a variety of promotional methods that provide information to consumers. The effectiveness of some of these promotional methods has been researched while others have received little attention. Researchers have specifically considered the influence of advertising (Butterfield, Deal, & Kubursi, 1998); information fulfillment programs (Johnson & Messmer, 1997; Messmer & Johnson, 1993); highway welcome centers (Fesenmaier & Vogt, 1993; Tierney, 1993); the Internet (Tierney, 2000); and brochures (Zhou, 1997).

In spite of criticism regarding some of the methods used to evaluate advertising effectiveness, evidence does show that advertising increases awareness of, and changes attitudes toward, a destination, causes visitation to a destination, and subsequently results in tourist

expenditures and significant returns to the advertising campaign (Butterfield et al., 1998). Related research investigates the effectiveness of information fulfillment programs. It is often assumed that advertising results in requests for additional information from destinations, and the effectiveness of this additional information has been explored (Messmer & Johnson, 1993). This research has found information fulfillment programs to be effective in attracting visitors and their associated expenditures. Quite a number of studies have been conducted looking at the effectiveness of welcome centers or other tourism information centers. The effectiveness of information centers on tourist expenditures is still uncertain, but there is some evidence that centers result in longer stays and there is strong evidence that they influence travelers' tourism product choices (Fesenmaier & Vogt, 1993; Tierney, 1993). Most recently, the Internet has emerged as an information source. To date, it appears that web sites do influence people's travel decisions though evidence is not yet conclusive (Tierney, 2000).

Certain demographic characteristics of travelers have been linked to information search behavior. For example, studies have found that college educated individuals were more likely to use destination specific literature (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983), and people of higher socio-economic class frequently used travel agents as information sources (Woodside & Ronkainen, 1980). Gitelson and Crompton (1983) found that older people were more likely to use a travel agent than younger people. Older people have also been reported to heavily rely on information from friends and family (Capella & Greco, 1987). Raitz and Dakhil (1989) suggested that younger people value information provided by peers more highly than that provided by family members, and may rely on a narrower set of information sources. Snepenger, Meged, Snelling, Worrall (1990), however, found no difference in information search strategy based on average age among visitors to Alaska, although it appeared that men were less likely to use travel agents than women. Other findings have suggested that family groups are more likely to gain information from the media than other groups (Gitelson & Crompton, 1983).

### ***Brochures as an Information Source***

One of the most relevant criteria to understanding information source usage is effectiveness of the information because it reflects how influential the information is on making purchase decisions (Murray, 1991). In general, brochures have been found to be a preferred consumer information source for a great diversity of consumer products or services including small manufacturers (Weinrauch, Mann, Pharr, & Robinson, 1991); dentists (Kressel & Haycock, 1988); accountants (Heischmidt, Elfrink, & Mays, 2002); insurance providers (Darko, 1999) and natural areas (Burger, 2003). The influence of brochures as an information source on people's travel decisions has been a topic of debate (Baas, Manfredo, Lee, & Allen, 1989). Some researchers have found brochures are able to influence people's behavior to some extent (Krumpe & Brown, 1982; Lime & Lucas, 1977; Roggenbuck & Berrier, 1982), but all of these studies were looking at the behavior of outdoor recreationists, especially with respect to redistribution of visitors in parks and other recreation sites. More specific to participation in tourism activities, Bass et al. (1989) found that a brochure about charter boat fishing did not increase participation in the activity, though it did increase awareness of opportunities. Cunningham and Thompson (1986), however, found respondents who became intercity bus tour passengers placed more emphasis on brochures as an information source than did respondents who inquired about, but did not purchase, a bus tour.

More generally, Etzel and Wahlers (1985) found that brochure requestors with no knowledge of a destination were more likely to visit than non-requestors. Wicks and Schuett (1991) studied the way in which a population of travelers used brochures that they had requested. They found the travelers used the brochures to help plan their trips and as a reference during the trip. Zhou (1997) also evaluated the effectiveness of a destination brochure that travelers requested. Results indicated that most people read the brochure, 50 percent ended up visiting the destination, and most consulted the brochure during their visit. As well, the brochure helped increase respondents' interest in visiting and had more of an influence on in-

experienced visitors than repeat visitors. The influence of the brochure on visitation decisions was affected by prior experience and perceived usefulness of the brochure.

Based on findings reported by researchers the following questions were developed to guide this study:

1. Does a tourist brochure influence interest in a destination and destination visitation decisions?
2. Is there a relationship between positive evaluations of a brochure and interest in visiting a destination and destination visitation decisions?
3. Do visitors evaluate a tourist brochure more highly than non-visitors?
4. Does a tourist brochure differentially influence inexperienced versus experienced visitors?
5. Do respondents' evaluations of a brochure differ based on demographic characteristics?

### ***METHODS***

This study consisted of a survey of individuals who requested visitor information about the City of Glendale, Arizona from June 1997 to July 1999. This long time frame was required in order to gain a large enough sample for the study, but it should be noted that those who received the brochure at an earlier time period than others may have recalled less information about the brochure. The same brochure was used throughout the study period. The fulfillment piece being evaluated consisted of a large, glossy color brochure highlighting Glendale's historic downtown and Saguaro Ranch Park. It was printed on both sides, 16 inches by 18 inches, folded in half and then again in fourths. It featured photos of Glendale with a general description of the community and some specific attractions, events, and areas highlighted. It also included a small map of downtown as well as the address, phone number and web site address of the Glendale Marketing Department. Some visitors also received a welcome letter, calendar of events and/or a map of Arizona or

Glendale, though most received only the brochure.

Glendale is in the Phoenix Metro Area and is the fourth largest city in Arizona, with a population of about 225,000. The city's population grew 48% in the 1990s. Glendale has fairly recently started to focus on tourism as an economic development strategy. The primary attraction is historic downtown Glendale which has been redeveloped as an antiques and specialty shopping district and includes the city's tourism information center, Cerreta Candy Factory, quaint shops and cafés. Several well-known special events are held in downtown Glendale or elsewhere in the city. Currently (after this study took place) two major sports facilities are being built contiguously in Glendale: the NHL Phoenix Coyotes hockey arena, and the NFL Arizona Cardinals football stadium.

To evaluate the brochure, a four page survey instrument was designed to meet the study objectives. Several variables were used to determine the effectiveness of the Glendale brochure. Respondents were asked to indicate whether they had previously visited Glendale, and if so how many times. Five variables were measured on a four point agreement scale with one being "strongly disagree" and four being "strongly agree," with a "don't know" answer also included. The respondents who answer "don't know" were not included in analysis using these five variables. Items were as follows: (1) the information made me want to vacation/visit; (2) the brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale; (3) the information provided was useful for trip planning; (4) the information changed my initial image or expectations positively; and (5) the brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale. As well, two variables were developed to capture respondents' levels of interest in visiting Glendale before receiving the brochure and then after receiving the brochure, with both variables measured on a five point scale where one equaled "not at all interested" and five equaled "extremely interested."

Three items were developed to measure visitation decisions made as a result of the brochure measured on a five point scale where one equaled "strongly disagree" and five equaled "strongly agree." The items were: (1) I ex-

tended or altered my vacation plans to include Glendale; (2) the brochure caused me to stay longer on my visit to Glendale; and (3) I planned for additional time to visit Glendale. Actual visitation to Glendale was measured by asking respondents to indicate that they had visited, that they had not visited but still planned to, or that they had not visited. Finally, standard demographic questions were asked of respondents.

The survey mailing procedure followed a well-established method designed by Dillman (1978) with some minor modifications. An initial mailing of a questionnaire, cover letter, and postage-paid return envelope was sent to each selected individual. After one week, a postcard reminder was sent to non-respondents. In another two weeks, a second survey packet was sent to the remaining non-respondents. To encourage study participation, an incentive of a drawing for a basket of Glendale products from downtown shops was offered. A systematic random sample was taken of information requestors by selecting every fifth name and address from the database of requestors. The survey was conducted during the fall of 2000. A total of 1,089 individuals were selected and sent questionnaires. Of those, 157 were returned undeliverable. The final number of questionnaires returned was 371, for a final response rate of 40 percent.

## RESULTS

The respondents to the questionnaire were more frequently women (57%), tended to be 45 years old or older (84%), and were working full time (44%) or retired (40%). There was a wide income distribution with a large percentage having modest incomes (73% less than \$80,000) and fairly high education levels with 49 percent being college graduates (Table 1). The study did not include Arizona residents, and respondents lived in a variety of states, especially the mid-west with 15 percent from Illinois, 14 percent from Ohio, 12 percent from Minnesota, and 11 percent from Wisconsin. Fifty-seven percent of respondents had heard of Glendale prior to reading an advertisement or promotional piece, 34 percent indicated they first found out about Glendale via word-

TABLE 1. Demographic Profile of Information Seekers

Variables	Frequency	Percent
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	210	57
Male	159	43
<b>Age</b>		
25-34	18	5
35-44	40	11
45-54	91	25
55-64	104	28
65+	116	31
<b>Income</b>		
Under \$40,000	83	27
\$40,000-\$59,999	73	24
\$60,000-\$79,999	67	22
\$80,000+	84	27
<b>Education</b>		
High school	62	17
Technical school	13	4
Some college	107	30
College graduate	93	26
Graduate school	84	23
<b>Employment</b>		
Working full time	160	44
Working part time	37	10
Retired	147	40
Student	1	1
Not working outside of home	19	5

of-mouth. Seventy-five percent recalled receiving the Glendale information, and of those that did recall receiving the information, 94 percent indicated that they did read the brochure. Few respondents (21%) had previously visited Glendale, most three times or less (78%), and only 25 percent indicated that they had made the decision to visit before requesting information. Ultimately, 21 percent did visit, 55 percent indicated they had not visited but still planned to, and 24 percent did not visit. Of those that visited, 91 percent reported use of the information during their visits.

The first research question asked whether a brochure influences destination interest and visitation decisions. Responses to several variables suggest that the brochure did influence respondents' interest level in visiting Glendale. Respondents tended to agree that the *brochure made them want to visit* ( $m = 3.2$ ), *influenced them to visit* ( $m = 3.0$ ), *was useful for trip planning* ( $m = 3.2$ ), *positively changed their initial image of Glendale* ( $m = 3.0$ ), and *increased their interest in a future visit* ( $m = 3.2$ ) (Table 2). Respondents indicated being "slightly" to "somewhat" interested in visiting Glendale ( $m = 2.5$ ) before they received the travel information, but "somewhat" to "very" interested in visiting after receiving the infor-

mation ( $m = 3.5$ ) (Table 2). A paired-samples t-test indicated that this was a statistically significant difference ( $t = -15.3, p < .01$ ). With respect to actual visitation behavior, the brochure seemed to be somewhat less effective but appeared to still have a positive effect on respondents' visitation decisions with relatively few indicating the brochure did not influence their Glendale travel plans (Table 2).

To explore the relationship between positive evaluations of the brochure and interest in, and decisions about, visiting Glendale (research question two), regression analyses were performed. The independent variables used included the first five items listed on Table 2. The final regression model exploring predictors of interest in visiting is presented in Table 3. Two of the variables, *usefulness of the information for planning* and *positive influence on image* were not significant in preliminary versions of the model. Three additional regression analyses were then conducted to determine predictors of travel decisions (Table 4). The only significant predictor of extending or altering vacation plans to include Glendale was a respondent's *image being changed positively* by the information; both longer stays to include Glendale and additional time to visit Glendale were predicted by increased *interest in visiting due to the information*.

Next, research question three, the relationship between the five evaluation variables and actual visitation to Glendale was tested. Also, the relationship between level of interest in visiting Glendale after receiving the brochure and visitation decisions was tested. Using analysis of variance (ANOVA) with *post-hoc* Duncan Multiple Range tests, it was discovered that there were differences between the three groups for all but one of the variables (Table 5). The one non-significant variable was *the information changed my initial image or expectations positively*. The non-visitors had the lowest evaluations for the remaining variables. Two variables, *the brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale* and *my level of interest in visiting Glendale after receiving the information* differed significantly among all three groups. For the other variables, the visitors who still planned to visit and those that already had visited did not differ significantly.

Research question four was answered by testing for differences between visitors with no previous visits and repeat visitors using independent sample t-tests. Table 6 presents the results of these analyses, however few differences emerged. To start, the difference in *perceived familiarity* with Glendale was tested for the two groups with repeat visitors reporting a much higher level of familiarity with the com-

TABLE 2. Influence of Brochure on Visitation Decisions

Evaluation items	Percents					Mean
	1	2	3	4	5	
<b>Interest in visiting</b>						
The information made me want to vacation/visit <sup>1</sup>	1	5	72	22	n/a	3.2
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale <sup>1</sup>	1	13	67	19	n/a	3.0
The information provided was useful for trip planning <sup>1</sup>	1	4	68	27	n/a	3.2
The information changed my initial image or expectations positively <sup>1</sup>	2	12	72	14	n/a	3.0
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale <sup>1</sup>	1	6	61	32	n/a	3.2
My level of interest in visiting Glendale <i>before</i> receiving the information <sup>2</sup>	23	25	33	15	4	2.5
My level of interest in visiting Glendale <i>after</i> receiving the information <sup>2</sup>	2	7	40	42	9	3.5
<b>Visitation decisions</b>						
I extended or altered my vacation plans to include Glendale <sup>3</sup>	15	15	38	29	4	2.9
The brochure caused me to stay longer on my visit to Glendale <sup>3</sup>	18	25	42	12	3	2.6
I planned for additional time to visit Glendale <sup>3</sup>	15	19	27	30	9	3.0

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1=strongly disagree to 4=strongly agree

<sup>2</sup>Scale: 1=not at all interested to 5=extremely interested

<sup>3</sup>Scale: 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree

TABLE 3. Final Regression Model of Brochure Evaluation Variables and Interest in Visiting

Evaluation variables	$\beta$	t	p
The information made me want to vacation/visit	0.31	4.76	.00
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale	0.19	2.90	.00
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale	0.30	4.63	.00
<b>Model statistics: Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .49, F = 82.9, p = .00</b>			

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

TABLE 4. Final Regression Models of Brochure Evaluation Variables and Travel Decisions

Variables	$\beta$	t	p
Dependent variable: I extended or altered my vacation plans to include Glendale <sup>1</sup>			
The information changed my initial image or expectations positively <sup>2</sup>	0.32	2.51	.02
<b>Model statistics: Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .09, F = 6.3, p = .02</b>			
Dependent variable: The brochure caused me to stay longer on my visit to Glendale <sup>1</sup>			
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale <sup>2</sup>	0.37	3.03	.00
<b>Model statistics: Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .12, F = 9.2, p = .00</b>			
Dependent variable: I planned for additional time to visit Glendale <sup>1</sup>			
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale <sup>2</sup>	0.59	5.61	.00
<b>Model statistics: Adjusted R<sup>2</sup> = .33, F = 31.5, p = .00</b>			

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

<sup>2</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

TABLE 5. Visitor versus Non-Visitor Differences in Brochure Evaluations

Evaluation variables	Means <sup>3</sup>			F	p
	Non-visitors	Still plan to visit	Visitors		
The information made me want to vacation/visit <sup>1</sup>	2.9 <sup>a</sup>	3.2 <sup>b</sup>	3.3 <sup>b</sup>	7.3	.00
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale <sup>1</sup>	2.7 <sup>a</sup>	3.0 <sup>b</sup>	3.3 <sup>c</sup>	12.0	.00
The information provided was useful for trip planning <sup>1</sup>	3.1 <sup>a</sup>	3.2 <sup>ab</sup>	3.3 <sup>b</sup>	3.5	.03
The information changed my initial image or expectations positively <sup>1</sup>	3.5	3.8	3.7	1.9	.15
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale <sup>1</sup>	2.9 <sup>a</sup>	3.3 <sup>b</sup>	3.3 <sup>b</sup>	11.4	.00
My level of interest in visiting Glendale after receiving the information <sup>2</sup>	2.9 <sup>a</sup>	3.6 <sup>b</sup>	3.8 <sup>c</sup>	26.9	.00

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

<sup>2</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

<sup>3</sup>Duncan Multiple Range Tests: means that do not share a superscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .

munity than visitors with no previous experience. Repeat visitors also reported a higher level of interest in visiting Glendale before they received the information than did those with no prior visits. Finally, inexperienced visitors' images or expectations of Glendale changed positively to a greater extent than did repeat visitors' images. There were no differ-

ences between the groups for any of the other variables.

Finally, a few differences were found among demographic groups with respect to evaluation variables (Table 7). Women were more heavily influenced to visit Glendale due to the brochure. They also expressed a higher level of interest in visiting after receiving the bro-



TABLE 6. Differences Between Inexperienced and Experienced Respondents

Variables	Means		t	p
	Inexperienced respondents	Experienced respondents		
Level of familiarity with Glendale <sup>1</sup>	3.0	1.5	6.91	.00
The information made me want to vacation/visit <sup>2</sup>	3.4	3.3	0.94	.35
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale <sup>2</sup>	3.3	3.3	0.32	.75
The information provided was useful for trip planning <sup>2</sup>	3.4	3.3	0.15	.88
The information changed my initial image or expectations positively <sup>2</sup>	2.8	3.3	-2.19	.03
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale <sup>2</sup>	3.2	3.4	-0.73	.47
My level of interest in visiting Glendale before receiving the information <sup>3</sup>	3.5	2.5	4.20	.00
My level of interest in visiting Glendale after receiving the information <sup>3</sup>	3.8	3.8	-0.40	.69
I extended or altered my vacation plans to include Glendale <sup>4</sup>	3.0	2.9	-0.66	.51
The brochure caused me to stay longer on my visit to Glendale <sup>4</sup>	2.4	2.8	1.17	.25
I planned for additional time to visit Glendale <sup>4</sup>	3.0	3.1	0.30	.76
Amount of money spent in Glendale	\$458	\$529	0.48	.63

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1 = not at all familiar to 5 = extremely familiar

<sup>2</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree

<sup>3</sup>Scale: 1 = not at all interested to 5 = extremely interested

<sup>4</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

chure, as well as being more likely to add Glendale to their travel itineraries. There were also differences with respect to age, with respondents in the youngest age category finding the information was less useful for trip planning and less likely to have increased their interest in a visit to Glendale. Respondents with higher incomes, and to some extent those with higher education, levels were less likely to have been influenced to visit due to the brochure. As well, those with higher incomes were less likely to have included Glendale in their itinerary, to have stayed longer in the community, or planned for additional time on their trips to visit due to the brochure.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Brochures remain one of the most commonly used tourism information sources. Even with advances in information search technology, many small destinations or tourism businesses do not have adequate finances for sophisticated and costly information dissemination. Thus, it is still important to understand tourist use of brochures and evaluate brochure effectiveness. This study suggests that a brochure can increase prospective visitors' interest in visiting a destination, can influence people to actually visit a destination or keep it in their decision set, and is used for trip planning.

The results of this study are largely congruent with those of Wicks and Schuett (1993) and Zhou (1997) with respect to the brochure's influence on interest in, and visitation decisions about, a destination. Prospective travelers who requested the brochure did indicate that it increased their interest in the destination. There was a fairly large increase in level of interest in visiting Glendale due to the brochure with many respondents moving from being somewhat interested in a visit to very interested. From this perspective, the brochure can be considered effective in positively influencing visitation interest levels. The brochure also affected visitation decisions, though to a lesser extent than it influenced interest levels, with a substantial number of respondents changing their travel plans to include Glendale or to stay longer in the community. These findings support research question one.

The second research question is also supported. Interest in visiting was clearly affected by the brochure, with respondents who evaluated the brochure more highly on destination decision items being more likely to be interested in a visit to Glendale. Traveler interest in visiting

TABLE 7. Demographic Differences in Brochure Evaluations

Evaluation variables <sup>1</sup>	Means <sup>4</sup>					Test	p
	1	2	3	4	5		
<b>Gender</b>							
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale <sup>1</sup>	female = 3.1	male = 2.9				t = 2.7	.00
My level of interest in visiting Glendale after receiving the information <sup>2</sup>	female = 3.6	male = 3.3				t = 2.5	.01
I extended or altered my vacation plans to include Glendale <sup>3</sup>	female = 3.2	male = 2.6				t = 2.2	.03
<b>Age</b>							
The information provided was useful for trip planning <sup>1</sup>	18-34 = 2.8 <sup>a</sup>	35-44 = 3.1 <sup>b</sup>	45-54 = 3.3 <sup>b</sup>	55-64 = 3.3 b	65+ = 3.3 <sup>b</sup>	F = 3.5	.00
The brochure and information increased my interest in a future visit to Glendale <sup>1</sup>	18-34 = 2.7 <sup>a</sup>	35-44 = 3.2 <sup>b</sup>	45-54 = 3.3 <sup>b</sup>	55-64 = 3.3 b	65+ = 3.3 <sup>b</sup>	F = 2.5	.04
<b>Income</b>							
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale <sup>1</sup>	<\$40K = 3.1 <sup>a</sup>	\$40-59.9K = 3.1 <sup>b</sup>	\$60-79.9K = 3.1 <sup>b</sup>	\$80K+ = 2.9 b		F = 2.9	.04
I extended or altered my vacation plans to include Glendale <sup>2</sup>	<\$40K = 3.3 <sup>a</sup>	\$40-59.9K = 3.6 <sup>ab</sup>	\$60-79.9K = 2.6 <sup>b</sup>	\$80K+ = 2.5 b		F = 3.1	.03
The brochure caused me to stay longer on my visit to Glendale <sup>2</sup>	<\$40K = 3.5 <sup>a</sup>	\$40-59.9K = 2.9 <sup>ab</sup>	\$60-79.9K = 2.3 <sup>bc</sup>	\$80K+ = 2.0 c		F = 7.9	.00
I planned for additional time to visit Glendale <sup>2</sup>	<\$40K = 3.5 <sup>a</sup>	\$40-59.9K = 3.7 <sup>b</sup>	\$60-79.9K = 3.1 <sup>b</sup>	\$80K+ = 2.2 b		F = 6.1	.00
<b>Education</b>							
The brochure has influenced me to visit Glendale <sup>1</sup>	High school = 3.1 <sup>ab</sup>	Tech. school = 3.3 <sup>a</sup>	Some college = 3.2 <sup>ab</sup>	College grad. = 2.9 b	Adv. degree = 2.9 <sup>b</sup>	F = 2.7	.03

<sup>1</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree

<sup>2</sup>Scale: 1 = not at all interested to 5 = extremely interested

<sup>3</sup>Scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

<sup>4</sup>Duncan Multiple Range Tests: means that do not share a superscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$ .

Glendale after they had received the information was predicted by the extent to which they evaluated the brochure as influencing that interest in Glendale as a destination. Interest in visiting was not predicted by evaluations of brochure usefulness or its effect on respondents' images of the community. Effect on image did, however, predict extending or altering vacation plans to include Glendale, while staying longer in the community and planning for additional time were predicted by the brochure's effect on interest in a future visit. Of the perceptions travelers hold of destinations, perhaps existing images are the most influential in decisions to even include a destination in their travel itineraries, while increased interest is more likely to influence length of time allowed in the travel itinerary to visit a destination.

Travelers who had more positive evaluations of the brochure were more likely to be

visitors, or at least keep Glendale in their decision set, providing support for research question three. Interestingly, however, for many of the variables, inexperienced visitors were not more heavily influenced by the brochure than were experienced visitors as might be expected, even though repeat visitors reported higher levels of familiarity with the destination than did those with no prior visits. There are two relationships that are noteworthy, however. Repeat visitors did report a higher level of interest in visiting Glendale *before* receiving the information, but there were no significant differences between the two groups with respect to visitation interest *after* receiving the information. This implies that the interest levels of visitors with no experience were much more heavily influenced by the brochure than the interest levels of experienced visitors. In addition, visitors with no ex-

perience reported a greater change in initial image or expectation than those who had previously visited Glendale. Thus, there is some support for research question four. These findings are congruent with existing research that has found individuals with past experience at a destination are likely to have a more positive image than those who have not visited before (Milman & Pizam, 1995). Theoretically, repeat visitors have more realistic images and expectations than individuals with no experience use history so tourism information would be expected to more extensively influence destination image of those with no experience (Mazursky, 1989; Milman & Pizam, 1995; Webster, 1991). It is difficult to say why, in this study, there were few differences in brochure evaluation ratings between experienced and inexperienced travelers. One possibility is that Glendale has undergone a number of downtown improvements in recent years, so perhaps even repeat visitors do not have a great deal of familiarity with the major tourist area of the community.

The brochure was evaluated differently by different demographic groups on several variables. Women tended to be more heavily influenced by the brochure than men, as were people of middle age with lower incomes. This suggests that the primary target for the brochure is middle-aged or older middle-class women. Interestingly, this suggests the brochure was effective in that it is this market that is the primary target for downtown Glendale.

The findings of this study tend to support the concept of information search as a method to reduce risk uncertainty and help make travel decisions. Unlike the respondents in many studies, many of those surveyed for this project were unfamiliar with the destination. Few had visited Glendale before requesting the information, most of those who had previously visited had only done so one or two times, and relatively few respondents gained information by means of the most influential external information source, word-of-mouth. As a result, respondents had little internal information and were very dependent on the brochure for their information. The empirical results show that respondents who became visitors, or remained prospective visitors, were more powerfully influenced by the brochure. Theoretically, this

suggests the information search process was successful in helping individuals make travel choices.

This study supports the premise that brochures do have an effect on people's travel decisions. A brochure can increase interest in visiting a community, and people who rate the brochure more favorably are more likely to be interested in visiting, and then become a visitor or remain a prospective visitor. The good news for many smaller destinations or businesses is that the brochure remains a useful tool for promotion and fulfillment purposes. This may be especially true for a community like Glendale with which few prospective visitors are familiar and few have already decided to visit. Marketers in such communities have considerable opportunity to influence such individuals.

It should be noted that this study sampled people who specifically requested information about the destination suggesting at least some existing interest or propensity to visit, and some pre-trip travel planning. A brochure picked up from a display or rack, often along with other brochures, may not have the same effects. As well, respondents did not evaluate elements of the brochure such as design, layout and content which could influence perceptions of effectiveness. Never-the-less, at least for the short term, brochures can still be considered an important information source for travelers.

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