

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PSYCHOGRAPHICS OF
VISITORS TO HOMESTAY MALAYSIA**



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**PENYERAHAN LAPORAN AKHIR:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO PSYCHOGRAPHICS OF VISITORS TO
HOMESTAY MALAYSIA (KOD PROJEK: 600-RMI/SSP/DANA5/3/Dsp(73/2009))**

Dengan segala hormatnya perkara di atas adalah dirujuk.

Sukacita dimaklumkan kepada pihak tuan bahawa penyelidikan kami telah tamat.
Bersama-sama disertakan dua salinan laporan akhir yang telah lengkap.

Sekian. Terima kasih.

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Dengan sukacitanya, Institut Pengurusan Penyelidikan (RMI) mengucapkan tahniah kepada puan kerana telah berjaya ditawarkan Geran Dana Kecemerlangan bagi projek penyelidikan tersebut.

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4 Report

4.1 Proposed Executive Summary

The government has initiated, organised and will continuously seek to improve the Malaysian homestay programme. The success in operating this programme will be meaningless if we are unable to attract accurate segments to the destination. Since this special interest tourism depends a lot on the niche market, understanding this specific group of visitors is vital in ensuring effective promotion of the programme. Research on the psychographic of the homestay visitors to the country is very much lacking thus this study aims to fulfil the gap.

The main objective of this research is to undertake a quantitative approach in identifying the typology of the homestay visitors based on their psychographics as well as socio demographic. Other objectives include: (i) to explore the psychographics of visitors to the homestay programme; (ii) to determine whether differences exist between members of the resulting segments with respect to their vacation behaviour, environmental attitudes and socio demographic characteristics; (iii) to examine if the environmental attitudes, trip and demographic characteristics discriminate between the resulting segments of homestay visitors.

4.2 Enhanced Executive Summary

This study attempts to develop a profile of visitors to nationally significant homestay tourism destinations in Malaysia. Psychographics are used as the segmentation bases in order to understand the attitudes, interests and opinions of the visitors. A self-administered survey in two languages was obtained from 275 visitors in the study area. Three segments are identified according to the respondents' psychographic characteristics and are termed "The Adventurer", "The Quiet Nature and Scenery Seeker" and "The Cultural and Activity Oriented". Finally the implications for market development are discussed.

The findings offer a better understanding of community-based homestay visitors, whereby such understanding is useful for the management and marketing of this type of tourism. The host providers should be aware of the differences among the homestay visitors in aiming for a sustainable homestay tourism industry. It is suggested that the marketers use parsimonious tool for developing promotional messages for the three identified distinct visitor segments within the community-based homestay tourism. Communication strategies should also be designed with these results in mind. If the homestay has features that are known to be attractive to the under-represented group, then the information on the visitors profile can be used to design advertising campaign that attract more members of that group.

4.3 Introduction

Homestay villages are becoming prominent destinations in the country for increasingly popular village life discoveries and cultural activities of community-based leisure travel and tourism, particularly the homestay tourism (Tourism Malaysia, 2008). One of the challenges for homestay management identified by previous researchers was the issue of implementing viable homestay marketing and planning programmes (Hamid & Ramanchandram, 2002; Hamzah, 2004; Kayat, 2009) that could eventually create interest and increase the number of visitations among the locals and foreign visitors. It is believed that an understanding of the homestay visitors is imperative for the achievement of this end, and thus the identification of the segment of homestay visitors is relevant.

As it was long recognized that market segmentation is useful in travel and tourism (Chandler & Costello, 2002; Dolničar, 2004; Kastenholtz, Davis & Paul, 1999), it allows planners and service providers a means to gain a competitive advantage and guidance in the design of promotional messages and the choice of activities, facilities and information for different group of homestay visitors. With selection of segmentation's bases ranging from demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural to benefits sought type variables (Kastenholtz et al., 1999), psychographic-based segmentation has been chosen for the current study.

The potential usefulness of psychographic as a basis for segmentation has been argued for by Schewe & Calantone (1978) who points out that psychographic measures can provide detail profiles of the visitors that enable marketers to visualize the people they are trying to reach, attract these segments to the homestay villages and manage their behaviour once they are on site. Additionally, the understanding of attitudes, interests and opinions of selected groups, such as the community-based homestay visitors, permits the hosts and marketers to tailor promotions and improve the existing offerings desired by these groups.

4.3.1 Problem Statement

The government has initiated, organised and will continuously seek to improve the Malaysian homestay programme. The success in operating this programme will be meaningless if we are unable to attract accurate segments to the destination. Since this special interest tourism depends a lot on the niche market, understanding this specific group of visitors is vital in ensuring effective promotion of the programme. Research on the psychographic of the homestay visitors to the country is very much lacking thus this study aims to fulfil the gap.

4.3.2 Objectives of the Study

Previous psychographic segmentation studies that attempts to look at tourist lifestyle characteristics has been widely accepted (Wells, 1975). Psychographics provide an understanding of tourists through their activities, interests, opinions, perceptions and needs (Gladwell, 1990) and create profiles that delineate segments while also substantially differentiating those segments from each other (Schewe & Calantone, 1978). Despite extensive segmentation research capturing many sectors in tourism market, community-based homestay visitors that represent relatively new segment in tourism remain unexplored. Therefore, the aim of this study was to segment and profile the homestay visitors that were based on psychographics so as to provide a better understanding of community-based homestay tourism in Malaysia. A factor-cluster segmentation approach was applied. Once distinguished, the segment will be analyzed in terms of their preferences and behavioural attitudes. In the process, this research attempts to achieve specific objectives as follow:

4.3.3 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study provide important implications both theory and practice. Theoretically, this study adds to existing knowledge on psychographics and on segmentation in the homestay tourism. From the practical perspective, it provides

information to policymakers and marketers to improve on strategising and marketing of the homestay tourism from the perspective of the visitors.

It is important to note here that homestay tourism should be marketed with *The Adventurer* segment in mind followed by *The Quite Nature and Seanery Seeker*. This focus would allow marketers to target the appropriate audience and appropriate media and to be selective in their message. This action might prevent the excessive promotional costs, scattered media choices and off-target messages that result from targeting an overly broad market (Plog, 1994). One option for accomplishing this goal is to recognise and understand the unique values and agendas that these distinct visitor segments bring to a tourism encounter and how these agendas affect the nature of their experiences and satisfaction. Homestay tourism marketers should use a parsimonious tool for developing promotional messages that exclusively attract the venturer segment to the market.

It is also suggested that to attract more venturer visitors to homestay tourism and to serve them better, the marketers should take advantage of the advertising and promotional opportunities available online, in tourism-related magazines and at the state travel information offices where most tourists tend to obtain travel-related information. The state tourism promotion agency might allocate significant space in its travel guide to provide information on special activities, cultural performances and festival events in the homestay villages in different states. The importance placed by the venturer group on the experiential value of activities, culture and knowledge would make such advertising effective.

4.3.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is described in terms of its object and its unit of analysis. The research object is visitors' demographics and psychographics. The research questions of this study are based on individual psychographic characteristics and the unit of analysis for this study is the homestay visitor.

Although this empirical study is investigative in nature, some methodological limitations should be mentioned. The data were gathered through a convenience sample using a “partial” group of respondents (visitors to only selected homestay villages in the country), and therefore the issue of respondent exhaustion should be addressed.

Another limitation concerns the results; the issue of generalising Asian homestay tourism perspectives and findings to Western homestays needs to be considered. Looking to the future, the study should be replicated in other cities and countries. The value of this study's results is likely to improve by widening the sample frame to include different tourists

4.3.5 Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of key terms used in the current study:

Psychographics:

Psychographics refers to any form of measurement or analysis of the consumer's mind that pinpoints how one thinks, feels and reacts (Nelson, 1969). Operationally, psychographic research can be defined as quantitative research that differs from demographics and is intended to locate consumers in a psychological dimension (Wells & Tigert, 1971). In the tourism literature, the range of labelled traits include venturer, dependable, seeker, drifter, escapist, guided, groupie, sociable, explorer, moderate, enthusiast, conservationist, anthropocentric, optimist, realist, investigative, artistic, enterprising and conventional. Psychographics in this study attempts to identify the internal, context-free aspects of the person that dominated the homestay visiting experience (these include personality traits such as venturer, scenery seeker and cultural or activity-oriented).

4.4 Literature Review

4.4.1 Homestay Tourism

Tourism worldwide has remains to be a key engine of growth despite of its slow recovery from the 2009 worst recession since the 1930s. The updated forecasts from World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) and Oxford Economics show that there has been no change in the projected long-term trend growth of 4% per annum forecast for travel and tourism over the coming decade, making it a key engine of expansion in the longer term (WTTC, 2009). As for Malaysia, the number of tourists' arrival surpassed the 19 million target set by the government when the country recorded 23.65 million tourist arrivals in 2009 (Tourism Malaysia, 2009). This has preserves the tourism industry's rank as a key foreign exchange earner and continues its contribution to growth, investment and employment.

The growth rate of arrivals to the country is encouraging due to a number of factors that pull the tourist such as the country's advantage as a centre for conferences, event organisation, sports facilities, exhibitions and conventions, its wealth in arts and crafts, shopping and recreation ("The Ninth Malaysia Plan, 2006-2010", 2006), the 'untouched' and 'exotic' environments and the local people, the advancement of transportation and the expansion of travel-related technology. Today there are lots of new tourism products that have been developed and diversified as to make it appealing to the same market as well as to attract new markets to the destination (Ibrahim, 2004). Among the priorities, is to promote tourist activities that include culture and heritage, international shopping, major events, health tourism, education tourism, space tourism, dark tourism, eco-tourism, real-estate tourism, sports tourism, Malaysia My Second Home and community-based homestay tourism (Othman, 2007).

It is worth noting that this community-based homestay tourism has the potential of becoming a major source of income for the rural population (Hamzah) and are contributing both directly and indirectly to the rural community. Even presently it is a

relatively small sector of the overall tourism industry, yet it still makes a significant contribution to rural economies (Sharpley & Sharpley, 1997). It is a niche product with definitely a lot of potentials and a plenty of room for growth (Edward & John, 1973). Yaman & Mohd's (2004) research in issues of community-based tourism in Malaysia suggested that the type of tourism that is related to community and nature is one of the dynamic sectors of Malaysian tourism industry. This niche tourism sector has emerged as a means for nurturing locally based tourism operations in the developing countries like Malaysia (Kayat, 2009).

The field of homestay and rural tourism is considered as an agent of change, sometimes package as 'sustainable tourism' for underprivileged regions. As Oppermann (1996) pointed out, most of the developing countries place high effort to draw tourist to rural areas and small villages in order to provide employment opportunities and to lessen rural-urban migration. The fact that an extra visitor visiting and staying in the homestay village would contribute to the rural economy; it will be a stand-in in terms of income for the industry, especially during the challenging period. An important first step in sustaining the growth of this type of tourism sector is to fully understand the needs and preferences of the marketplace through segmentation.

4.4.2 Psychographics

Psychographic was earlier defined as the use of psychological, sociological and anthropological factors (such as benefits desired, self-concept and lifestyle) in segmenting consumers in the market with an aim of making particular decision about products, person or ideology (Demby, 1994). Various called as "personality", "lifestyle", "activity and attitude" (Wells, 1975), psychographics research was emerged as a result from an integration of the richness in motivation studies and the statistical sophistication of computer technology (Kassarjian, 1971).

Psychographic is an imperative constituent of segmentation and marketing (Martínez & Montaner, 2008; Mostafa, 2009) in view of the fact that the more the

marketers knows and understands about consumers, the more effectively they can communicate and advertise to the potential market (Plummer, 1974). Psychographic data has been recognized and used by many studies as it is beyond the demographic characteristics. As many researchers argued that psychological dimension has supersede traditional demographic variables (Alvin & Mary Carolyn, 1979), psychographic has become a meaningful and relevant means in providing additional information about the psychological aspect of the consumer.

The application of psychographics research was found dominant in the segmentation research that allows researchers to measures numerous aspects of consumers, including people's activities, their interests, opinions, needs, values and personality traits. Thus, the more detail of the consumer's profiles was known, the better the understanding of the consumers' behaviour will be. Consequently, it will increase the effectiveness of a promotional campaign by the marketers as their target are appropriate to the right consumer (Hsu, Kang, & Wolfe, 2002).

Studies on psychographic role in tourism management however, only started in the mid-to-late 1970's (Hsu et al., 2002) and since then its roles and contributions begins to develop. Plog (1965) could be one of the pioneers to study psychographic system applicable to destinations at which he identified two extremes in his scale labelled as 'psychocentric' (the dependable) and 'allocentric' (the venturer). He cautioned that these are just theory with no one is actually a perfect example of either one.

Mayo (1975) incorporated a similar idea, presented seven lifestyle traits namely the adventurer, the planner, the impulsive decision maker, the action-oriented person, the outdoorsman, the escapist and the self-designated opinion leader. Later, Goodrich (1978) identified four different groups of holiday maker's namely passive entertainment, active sports, outdoor types and historical and cultural interest. Crask (1981) identified differences in five vacation segments such as rest and relaxation

vacationers, sightseers, cost conscious/attraction-oriented, sports enthusiasts and campers.

Subsequent contribution has come from Shih (1986) who reported different lifestyles for three different segments such as belongers, achievers and societal conscious. Zins (1999) identified nine different vacation styles for distinct psychographic profiles of travelers. They are sightseeing tourist, family escapist, carefree wellness tourist, comfort seeker, demanding pleasure traveller, cultural interactionist, relax-in-safety tourist, and nature-loving vacationer and ambiance seeker.

4.4.3 Research Application of Psychographic Role

The application of psychographic research dominates the perspective of segmentation research. The use of psychographics in lifestyle segmentation research enables the researcher to measure numerous aspects of consumers, including their activities, interests, opinions, needs, values and personality traits. Thus, the more detail that is known about consumers' profiles, the better the understanding of the consumers' behaviour will be. Consequently, the effectiveness of a promotional campaign can be increased by marketers targeting the right consumers (Hsu et al., 2002). It is also significant that in addition to segmentation, psychographic applications are widely seen in the literature on consumer research, as depicted in Figure 1, pg.18. These applications include the areas of consumer behaviour, consumer profiles and the prediction of future behaviour or performance.

4.4.4 Psychographic Theory

The theories on psychographics discussed below and many others have influenced the discipline of psychology as well as other diverse fields.

4.4.4 [a] Psychoanalytic Theory

In the fields of marketing and consumer behaviour, Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory was among the earliest contributions and has had a significant influence on other fields, such as medicine and the social sciences (Kassarjian, 1971). Psychoanalytic theory stresses the unconscious nature of personality and motivation based on three interacting set of forces: the id, ego and superego. This interacting set shapes human behaviour. This theory argued that the rich variety of people's personalities, interests, motives, attitudes and behavioural patterns results from the way in which the ego guides the energies of the id and the moralistic demands of the superego. Freud also believed that the degrees of love, tension and frustration that a human being encounters through various stages of biological development produce his/her adult personality and behaviour.

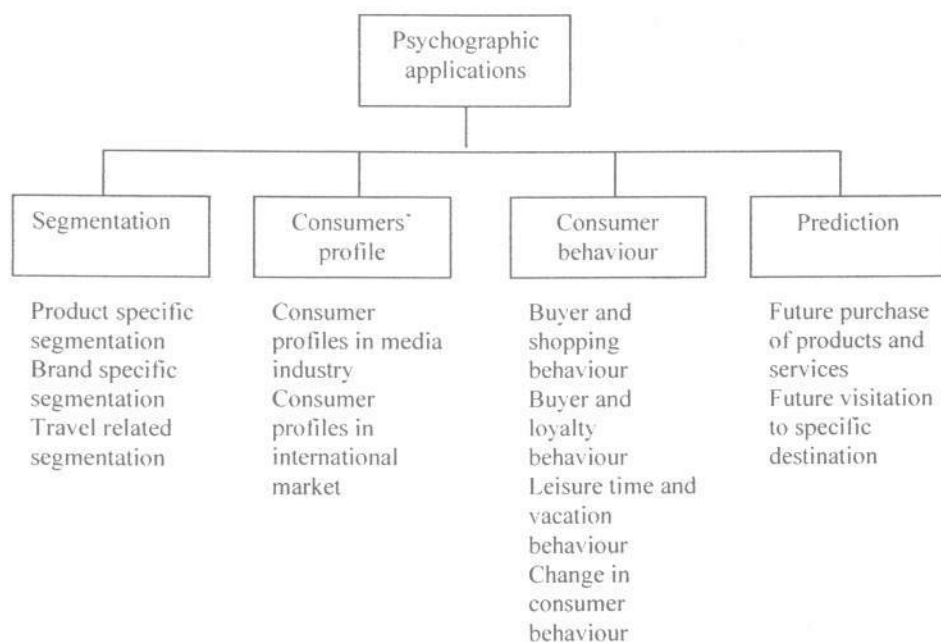


Figure 1 Psychographic Applications in Consumer Research
(Source: Edris & Meidan, 1990; Cleaver, Green & Muller, 2000; Reisinger & Mavondo, 2004)

4.4.4 [b] Social Theory

Several followers of Freudian theory have developed their own views of the social context. For example, in 1911, Adler argued that man's basic drive involves striving for superiority and aiming to overcome the feelings of inferiority imposed during childhood (Heffner, 2002). He explained that one's life choices and behaviour were part of the effort to perfect the self and feel less inferior to others. Erich Fromm considered man's loneliness in society and stressed that the search for rewarding relationships was the central focus of human behaviour and motivations. Karen Horney felt that childhood insecurities stemming from parent-child relationships created basic anxieties (Heffner, 2002). The personality develops as the individual learns to cope with his/her anxieties. The application of these theories can be seen in promotion and advertising, which exploits the striving for superiority and the needs for love, security and escape from loneliness (Kassarjian, 1971).

4.4.4 [c] Stimulus-Response Theory

The stimulus-response or social learning theory approach to personality presents the most elegant view, supported by research and laboratory experimentation (Kassarjian, 1971). Social learning theory argues that personality characteristics demonstrated within a family are learned by children during their early developmental years (Bandura, 1977). A response to a particular stimulus comes from a specific drive, and a particular habit is learned if this response is reinforced. Some stimuli are linked to the psychological processes necessary for the survival of an individual, while others are secondary or acquired. Complex behaviour, such as the consumer decision process, is learned in the same manner. Thus, the concepts of cues, drives, responses, reinforcement and complex motives like the need for achievement or self-esteem are learned in a similar way as brand preference, racism, purchasing habits and attitudes towards products or businesses.

4.4.4 [d] Trait and Factor Theory

Factor theory evolved from the quantitative sophistication of statistical techniques and computer technology (Kassarjian, 1971). The core of these theories is that personality is composed of a set of traits or factors, some general and others specific to a particular situation or test. Trait theory explains personality as a complex and differentiated structure of traits (Frew & Shaw, 1999). A trait is a mental structure that accounts for regularity and consistency in behaviour (Cattell, 1950).

4.4.4 [e] Theories of Self and Self-Concept

These theories focus on the relationship between product image and self-image. The core view is that the individual has an ideal self that is very much reflected in his/her actions, his/her material possessions, his/her family, friends, and enemies, and his/her profession, including his/her evaluations and purchases of products and services. Individuals perceive products that they own, would like to own, or do not want to own in terms of symbolic meaning to themselves and to others (Kassarjian, 1971). The theories on psychographics discussed above and many others have influenced not only the single discipline of psychology but also other diverse fields. These theories on psychographics discussed above and many others have influenced not only a single discipline of psychology but also a diverse field.

4.4.5 Psychographic Measuring Techniques

An overview of the literature reveals various approaches to measuring psychographic variables (see Figure 2, pg.21).

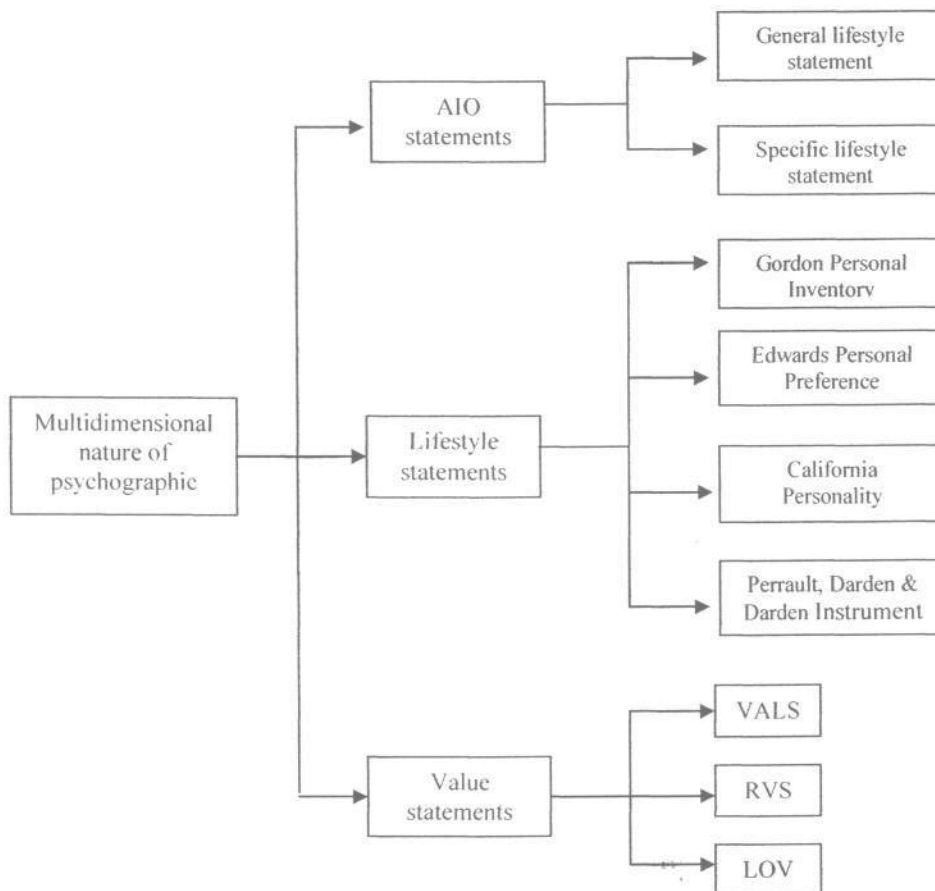


Figure 2 Research Streams on Psychographics

4.4.5 [a] Activity-Interest-Opinion Statements

In the field of marketing, the use of activity-interest-opinion (AIO) statements has been widely accepted (Hawes, 1977). AIO statements seek to provide in-depth understanding of consumers in terms of their living styles (Schewe & Calantone, 1978). AIO statements measure: (1) people's activities in terms of how they spend their time; (2) people's interest in the sense of what is important to them in their immediate surroundings; and (3) people's opinions of how they view themselves and the world around them. According to Wells (1975), the explanation of the psychographic profile depends on the type of research. It can be explained from general lifestyle statements (for example, 'I love to eat', 'I read the newspaper everyday' or 'I like danger') or product-specific lifestyle statements (for example, 'I am

more practical in car selection', 'A car offers me a chance to tinker with machinery' and 'The only function of a car is transportation').

4.4.5 [b] Lifestyle Statements

A number of previous psychographic studies have used personality traits as descriptors whereby the profile comes from statements that describe attitudes towards the issue discussed. This concept of traits, factors or variables that can be quantitatively measured has led to the development of hundreds of personality scales. Among the most prominent ones are the Gordon Personal Inventory, which professes to measure ascendancy, responsibility, emotional stability and sociability; the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, a factor-analysed instrument to measure psychoanalytically oriented needs or themes; the California Personality Inventory, which measures innovativeness and leadership; and the Perrault, Darden & Darden Instrument, which measures activities, interests and opinions for both leisure time and vacation activities (Perrault, Darden & Darden, 1977).

4.4.5 [c] Value Statements

Another type of psychographic profile utilises statements that measure personal values. Values are an abstract type of social cognition that are used to store and guide general responses to classes of stimuli (Kahle & Chiagouris, 1977). Among others, the use of value and lifestyles (VALS) statements attempt to understand people in terms of their attitudes, needs, wants and beliefs (Shih, 1986). The VALS typology was created in 1978 by SRI International, an applied-research organisation that has divided Americans into four categories and nine lifestyles (see Table 1, pg.23).

The Rokeach Value Survey (RVS) is an instrument that has frequently been used for measuring personal values (Madrigal & Kahle, 1994). The RVS contains 18 instrumental value statements and terminal value statements. One of the RVS's

shortcomings is that the List of Values (LOV) was developed with only a nine-value scale that better represents the theoretical notions of values (Chandler & Costello, 2002). The purpose of the LOV is to measure adaptation to different roles through value fulfilment. It is reported that the LOV has a greater predictive power than the VALS in the study of consumer behaviour (Kahle, Beatty & Homer, 1998), and its higher-order value system was more consistent in predictions (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001).

Table 1
The VALS Typology

Categories	Lifestyles
Need-driven groups	Survivor lifestyle
	Sustainers lifestyle
Outer-directed groups	Belongers lifestyle
	Emulator lifestyle
	Achiever lifestyle
Inner-directed groups	I-am-me lifestyle
	Experiential lifestyle
	Societal conscious lifestyle
	Integrated lifestyle
Combined inner- and outer -directed group	Integrated lifestyle

4.4.6 Psychographic Research in Hospitality and Tourism

Hsu et al. (2002) noted that psychographic studies first appeared in tourism literature in the mid- to late 1970s. It was agreed that different destination areas around the world attract different types of visitors with different characteristics (Plog, 1994). In addition to demographics, there are enormous differences in the psychology of people who prefer trips to famous destinations compared with those who want to travel to newly discovered places. As a result, the roles of psychographic, economic, demographic and experiential variables have drawn

significant attention from researchers for forming opportunity sets and destination choices (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Mayo, 1975; Plog 1974; Um et al., 2006).

Demographic data have become one of the most frequently collected types of data to identify tourists' characteristics (Gladwell, 1990) since the late 1920s, as studies began to segment the population into categories such as age, sex, marital status, income, occupation, education, area of residence and so on. However, aside from their income, age and marital status, there is little to be said about people who travel because people of different occupations may earn good incomes, live in the same neighbourhood and shop at the same stores. According to Plog (1994), the similarity ends when they choose different travel destinations, prefer different types of lodging and transportation modes and participate in different activities. Therefore, psychographic research has emerged as a way for researchers to learn about tourists' decisions and choice of destination.

Plog (1965) was one of the pioneers who applied the psychographic system to destinations. He identified two extremes in his scale, labelled 'psychocentric' (the dependable) and 'allocentric' (the venturer). He cautioned that these were theoretical, and no one is actually a perfect example of either one. The dependable personality is less venturesome and less exploratory. Dependables are cautious, conservative in their daily lives and restrictive in spending discretionary income, prefer the well known because it is the popular and safe choice, have low self-confidence, low activity levels and stable lifestyles and prefer to be surrounded by family and friends. In contrast, the venturer is continually seeking new experiences and enjoys activity, makes decisions quickly and easily, spends discretionary income more readily, prefers newly introduced products, is full of self-confidence and energy, prefers nonroutine tasks and may appear friendly and outgoing but often prefers to be alone and is somewhat meditative (Plog 1965).

The later stage of Plog's research development presented the two-dimensional, six-cell correlational matrix of Plog's lifestyle and activity level model. As