

MATCHING MOTIVATIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR 4WD CLUB MEMBERS AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPING DESERT 4WD TOURISM.

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ABSTRACT

Approximately 18% of Australia can be classed as desert and about 66% of the continent receives an annual rainfall of less than 500mm, classifying it as arid or semi-arid land. Desert Australia is vast, has few residents and even fewer roads but has become a place of fascination for visitors who are willing to travel into this region. Tourism has been suggested as one industry that has some scope to add economic value to Australia's desert regions as well as providing employment and business opportunities. To date there has been little research into the profile of desert visitors, their motives and the activities they participate in. In this paper, we look at the place of desert tourism within the travel activities of 4Wheel Drive (WD) club members. This paper reports on the characteristics of 4WD club members and their general 4WD holiday experiences in a desert environment. Results suggest a good match between activities and motivations, a promising sign for 4WD desert tourism which offers many opportunity sought by 4WDDrivers on vacation.

Key Words: 4Wheel Driving. Motivations, desert tourism, 4WD Clubs, Australia

INTRODUCTION

In recent years 4Wheel Drive (4WD) ownership rates in Australia have grown rapidly but it is apparent that many of these vehicles have been purchased for reasons other than recreational 4WheelDriving. In many cases it appears that the reason for ownership is to make a lifestyle statement or demonstrate an intent to travel off-road that may never be consummated. The

economic term often applied to the purchase of goods that are used for show of this nature is conspicuous consumption. The original purpose of 4WD vehicles was to give their drivers access to areas that were inaccessible to conventional vehicles. However, in Australia, as in many other countries, this means that many 4WD vehicles are never used in an off road situation (Hamilton and Barbato 2005), implying that 4WD sales figures alone are a misleading indicator of the off-road and/or rural/remote(r) area drive market. Nonetheless, there are a large number of 4WD owners who do travel into remote areas and it is for this reason that there is a need to identify who these people are, what activities they like to participate in and the areas they prefer to visit. An obvious place to begin research into this area is with 4WD club members who fall into a different category of 4WD owners to those in the conspicuous consumption group.

From a research viewpoint, whilst we do not know a great deal about the behaviour of 4WD drivers in a tourism context, even less is known about the profile of 4Wheel Drive trips in desert and arid Australia (Taylor and Prideaux accepted). Intuitively there appears to be three current user groups and a fourth potential user group. Current user groups may be defined as 4WD Club members, independent 4WD owners and tourists who travel the desert regions as members of commercial 4WD expeditions. A potential fourth group are those 4WD owners who currently do not undertake trips into areas requiring off road vehicles. While the exact size of each of these segments is unknown some research indicates that 4WD Club membership may constitute about 5 to 10% of total 4WD owners (Carson and Taylor 2006), suggesting an active and not insignificant potential market for 4WD tourism in remote areas, including Australia's deserts.

For desert Australia, the development of the domestic tourism market has become a major objective and both the public and private sectors have realised the need to develop infrastructure, particularly in the drive sector (Carson & Waller, 2002; Olsen, 2002). This is particularly true in many remote areas of Australia where tourism has been identified as having some potential to provide business opportunities as well as employment for local communities (Desert Knowledge Australia 2006). A number of authors have acknowledged that innovation is a key requirement in the planning and development of attractive drive routes (Hardy, 2003; Hardy, Beeton & Carter, 2005). Other authors including Prideaux (2000) have examined the difficulties of developing remote drive routes particularly when considerable distances have to be traversed between the generating region and the particular

drive route. Moreover, the difficulty of developing an economically sustainable 4Wheeldrive tourism sector in remote areas has been noted by Carson and Taylor (2006).

As many remote areas are serviced by poor quality road systems the tourists who do visit these areas are most likely to be persons who travel by 4WD vehicles and have particular motives for visiting remote areas. As a first step to developing a profile of 4WD tourists in desert Australia (see Figure 1) the research reported upon in this paper was designed to develop a profile of 4WD club members. The research forms part of a larger project funded by Desert Knowledge CRC that aims to look at the potential contributions and impacts of Four Wheel Drive (off track) tourism in desert Australia,. Future research will look at the other 4WD user groups including independent 4WD owners who tourists who undertake commercial 4WD tours.

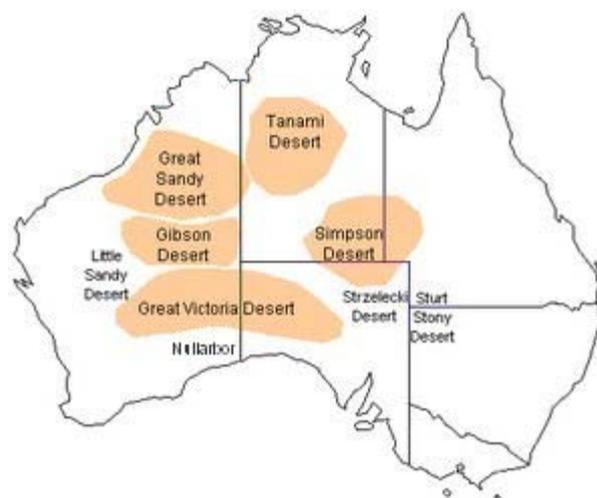


Figure 1 Location of Major Deserts in Australia

Source: www.outback-australia-travel-secrets.com

This research specifically targeted 4WD club members and asked them about various aspects of their 4WD experiences in general and their preferences for desert activities within the context of their 4WD driving activities. This approach seeks to place desert tourism within the overall context of 4WD preferences about which little is known. The decision to use club members was based on the ease of capturing and sampling an active group of 4WD owners. Specifically the study looks at the respondents’:

- Socio-demographic characteristics
- 4WD activities
- Trip planning
- Travel motivations and activities
- Improving 4WD experiences

The results are used to build up a picture of visitor segments that are likely to participate in 4WD tourism in desert areas with specific emphasis on members for 4WD clubs. These findings will also be used in a future project that will look at the potential for 4WD tourism to support development of tourism projects in rural and indigenous communities that are located in desert Australia.

METHODOLOGY:

To understand the elements that shape 4WD driving desert experiences, a focus group study was undertaken with members of the 4WD Victoria in Melbourne in February 2006. Participants (N=15) were chosen by a facilitator from 4WD Victoria and were asked questions about their trip motivations, preferences for experiences on trips, activities undertaken, negative aspects of 4W Driving and perceptions of remedial actions required, destination and accommodation selection and interactions with indigenous communities.

Based on an initial analysis of the focus group results, a questionnaire was designed to draw out responses from a larger sample of 4WD club members. The questionnaire was distributed to 4WD club members with the aid of 4WD club committee members in Victoria, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia, and mailed back to the researchers. The questions covered the same topic areas as the focus groups, and included a mix of open-ended and Likert-scale questions. A sample of 208 surveys were collected from the four states with the great majority of responses originating from Victoria (N = 190) and fewer responses from Western Australia (N= 14), South Australia (N = 3) and one completed survey from Queensland. Overall, a 20% response rate was recorded (within the acceptable range for mail-back surveys), with high levels of variation between the states.

A mail-out survey methodology has several limitations which affect the ability of the findings to be generalised. Limitations included a low response rate of 20% and the possibility of some sampling bias. Although the respondent's socio-demographic characteristics include a range of income levels, ages and lifecycle stages, it is likely that many of the completed

surveys were received from respondents who had a higher interest level in the subject than other club members, leading to a possible non-response error. The low response rates from Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia precludes comparisons between respondents from these states.

RESULTS

Socio-demographics of Respondents

The sample was biased towards males (82%) with the majority of respondents located in the 30 to 59 age group (Figure 2). Nearly 66% of respondents had an income of between \$40-80 thousand (Figure 3) and were likely to be employed as professions or managers (36%), self-employed (18%) and trades persons (12%). As illustrated in Figure 5, a high percentage of respondents are living with a partner or partner and children.

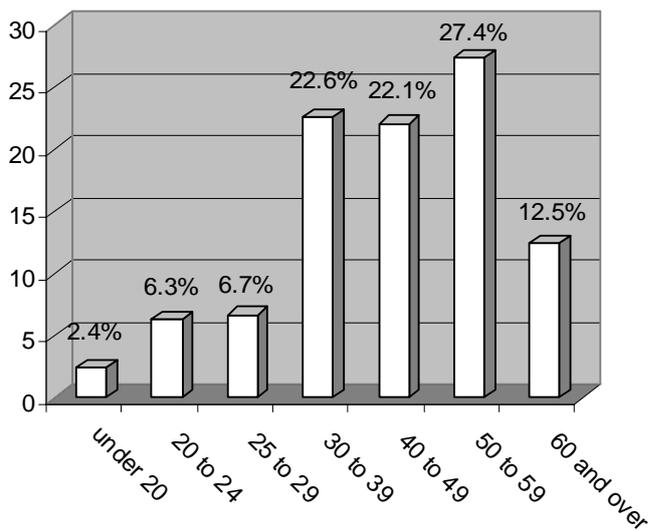


Figure 2: Respondents' age distribution

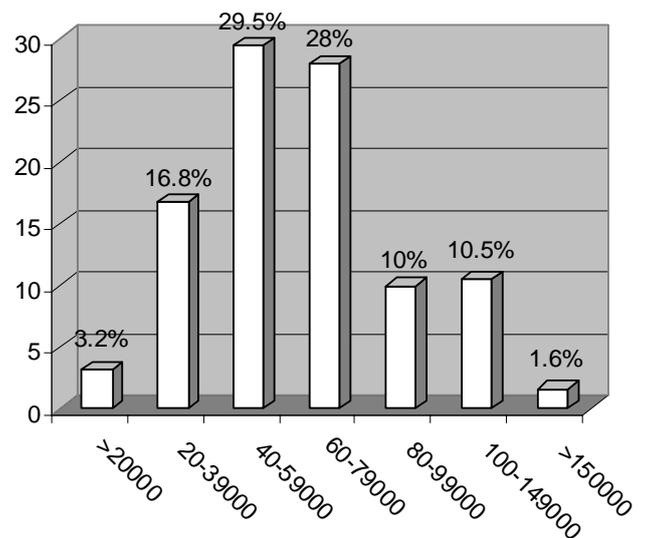


Figure 3: Respondents' income brackets.

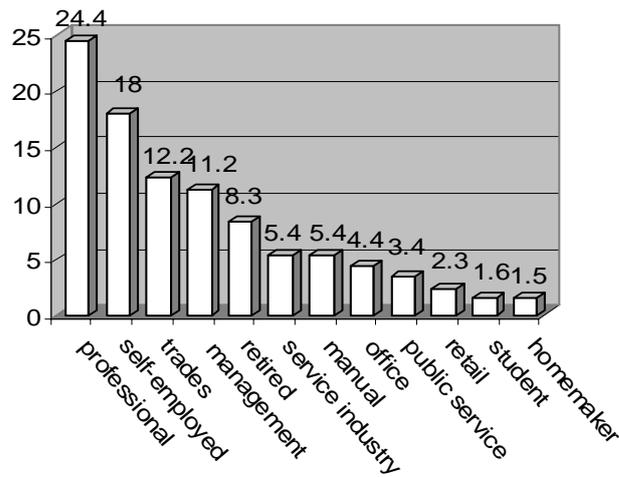


Figure 4: Respondents' occupations.

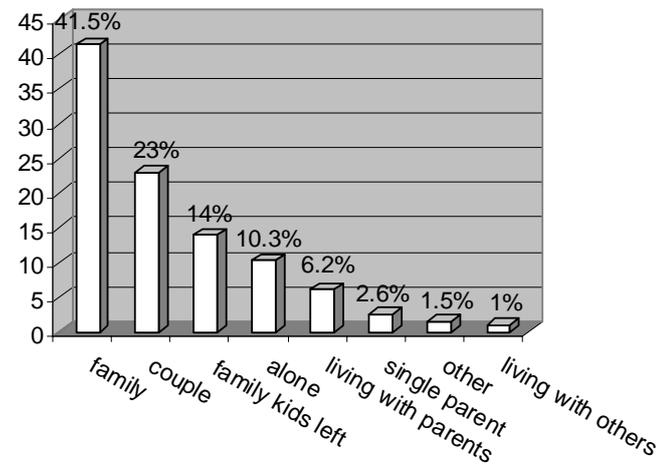


Figure 5: The Position of Respondents' according to Life Cycle

The average age of vehicles was seven years old, with the oldest vehicle being 22 years old. Again, this varied significantly with the respondent's age, and younger respondents were more likely to have older vehicles, and respondents between the ages of 30 and 59 had the newest vehicles (Table 1) ($F=3.895$, $p<0.05$). In addition, the youngest respondents were the least likely to buy a new 4WD in the next two years and only 28% of all respondents said that they were likely to buy a new vehicle in the next two years. The average number of trips undertaken in the last year was five, and the average length of trip was 10 days ($SD=15.6$) although this varied according to age, with older respondents taking significantly fewer ($F=3.8$, $p<0.05$) but significantly longer ($F=8.5$, $p<0.05$) trips than younger respondents (Table 1).

Table 1: The average car age, likelihood of buying a new car and number of trips in the last two years according to respondent age

Age	<20	20-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69
Mean car age	14 yrs	9.2 yrs	9.6 yrs	6.5 yrs	5.5 yrs	6 yrs	8.2 yrs
Likely to buy a new car	0%	38.5%	14%	34%	24%	29.5%	42%
No of trips	9.8	9.6	5.2	4.3	5.6	4.6	3.2
Length of trip	6.4	6.5	6	7.8	6.0	12.5	28
Total (N)	5	13	14	46	45	54	26

Respondents' 4WD travel behaviour:

Respondents were asked a series of questions about the routes used, approach to planning (including sources of information) and type of trips undertaken. In general respondents indicated that they preferred to try new routes (82.5%), or would go where the group likes to go (76%). Many respondents had a favourite destination (62.5%) or selected from a set of favourite destinations (54%). Few respondents (12.5%) said that they tend to always go to the same place. Respondents aged 40 and above were less likely (2.7%) to return to the same destination, whilst 28% of respondents under the age of 40 were likely to go back to the same destination. Whilst the sample was too small to make any substantial comparisons, it appears that respondents who live alone are the most likely to travel back to the same destination (30% compared to 10% of all respondents).

When asked about their favourite 4WD driving environment respondents showed a strong preference for alpine environments (44.5% ranked it as their favourite 4WD driving environment), possibly reflecting the bias towards respondents from Victoria, for whom the High Country represent an accessible and appealing destination (Figure 6). The outback was also an attractive 4WD driving environment, with 51.4% rating it as their first or second most preferred environment. Desert environments were generally ranked third by many respondents (55.5%) and were generally slightly more popular than beach or rainforest environments. This finding may reflect a sample bias, as Victorians do not have easy access to rainforests and 4WD driving is prohibited on Victorian beaches.

The overwhelming majority of respondents choose to travel with 4WD clubs (81%) and in their own vehicle (93.5%). However, many respondents indicated a willingness to travel with friends and relatives (68%). Very few (6%) of the respondents reported that they travelled with an organised tour group or in a commercial tour vehicle.

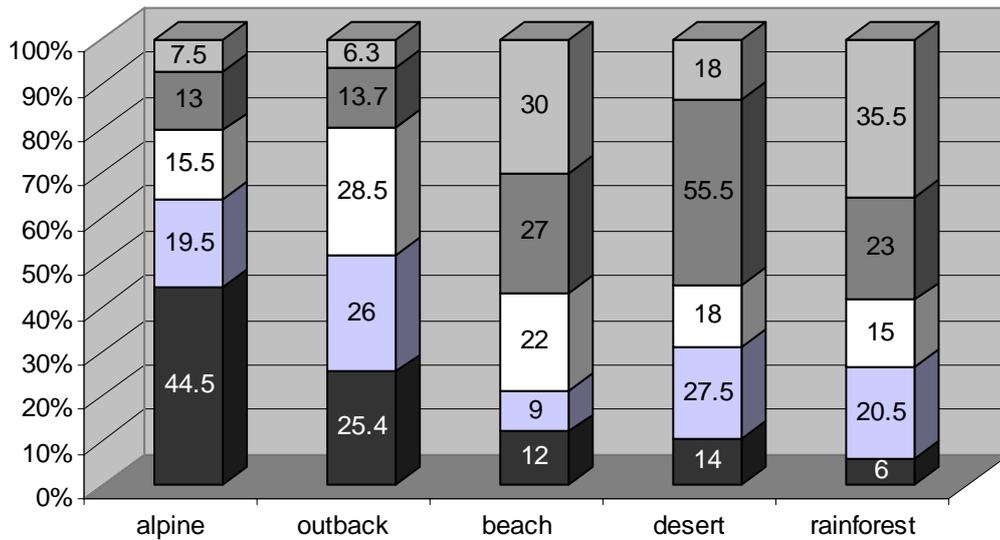


Figure 6: The preferred 4WD driving environments of respondents, the stacks represent rankings, where the lowest stack is the preferred environment (black) to the fifth most preferred environment (light grey)

To determine the information sources most commonly used respondents were asked to rank by order of importance the information sources used when planning trips. The most common source of information consulted when trip planning was other 4WD drivers (52.5%). This was followed in order of priority by commercial maps (40%), the internet (36%), prior knowledge (30%) and club newsletters (24.5%).

When asked about overall route planning 68% of respondents said that they plan at least part of their route prior to their trip. A large number of respondents (41.5%) said that they always plan their complete route while 23% said that they never plan on a day to day basis. When asked about planning visits to specific attractions or activities 75% indicated that they will sometimes plan all their visits to attractions and participation in specific activities. However the majority of respondents (82%) were also willing to visit attractions or undertake activities they had not originally planned visiting. 63% said that they would always undertake some activities during their trip, whilst 30% said that they sometimes have no or very little interest in visiting attractions or participating in non 4WD activities.

Respondents were also asked if the rising price of fuel affected their travel planning. Almost a third (30%) of respondents said that fuel prices affected travel, with the most common impact being that trips were reduced in length (N=8), fewer trips were undertaken (N=3), or they were selective with their routes, i.e. more planning/saving (N=3). Finally, respondents were asked if they preferred to travel at a particular time of year. In response to this, it was found that some distinct travel patterns exist based on holidays and seasons, with a peak in April (Easter holidays), smaller peaks over the winter period (school holidays) and in September and January. There was however, no discernable low period of travel for 4WDDrivers.

Respondents' motivations and activities:

Relatively little is known about the motivations and activities of 4WDDrivers. From a marketing perspective this is an important dimension and respondents were asked to rate the importance of fifteen motivators on a scale of 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important). The fifteen motivators were drawn from the results of the focus group with 4WD club members. Clearly, the escape motivator is very important to the respondents. The most important motivation was "*experiencing the freedom of being out of the city*" while "*Gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD*" was also an important motivation for respondents scoring a ranking of 3 (Table 2). Other important motivators include discovering new places, landscapes and nature highlighting a strong tendency to be drawn towards natural heritage attractants. The lowest ranked motivators including visiting indigenous communities (15) and meeting the locals (13). Social and personal achievement and discovery aspects of 4WDrive trips scored low on the list, with motivations such as developing a greater sense of self ranked 14 out of 15, testing driving skills ranking 9 and understanding how the vehicle performs under different conditions ranking 11.

Table 2: The motivations of 4WDDrivers as ranked on a 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important) scale.

Motivation	Mean
Experiencing the freedom of being out of the city	4.7
Experiencing different landscapes	4.6
Gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD	4.5
Visiting new places	4.5
Experiencing new & different things you would not see otherwise	4.4
Experiencing nature	4.3
Experiencing the challenge & variety of driving conditions	4.3
Spending time with like-minded people	4.2
Testing your driving skills	3.9
Meeting new people	3.9
Understanding how the vehicle performs under different conditions	3.9
Strengthening existing relationships	3.8
Meeting the locals	3.5
Developing a greater sense of self	3.5
Visiting indigenous communities	2.9

To examine the motivations of 4WDDrivers in more detail, a factor analysis of the 15 motivations was undertaken using principle component analysis (PCA) in SPSS version 14. To check that the data was suitable for PCA, a correlation matrix was constructed, revealing many coefficients over 0.3. The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was 0.79, exceeding the recommended value of 0.6 (Kaiser, 1970) and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Three factors were extracted with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 31.5%, 12.2% and 10% of the variation. The way that the motivations loaded onto the different factors are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: A factor analysis of respondents' motivations revealing three factors.

MOTIVATION	FACTOR		
	1	2	3
Meeting new people	.737		
Meeting the locals	.736		
Strengthening existing relationships	.690		
Experiencing nature	.661		.359
Visiting indigenous communities	.610		
Spending time with like-minded people	.591		
Developing a greater sense of self	.570	.322	
Experiencing new & different things you would not see otherwise	.560		.549
Testing your driving skills		.823	
Understanding how the vehicle performs under different conditions		.818	
Experiencing the challenge & variety of driving conditions		.731	
Gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD		.397	.706
Visiting new places			.696
Experiencing different landscapes			-.549
Experiencing the freedom of being out of the city			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Three motivations loaded onto more than one factor and only one motivation “Experiencing the freedom of being out of the city” did not load onto any factor. As this motivation was ranked highest by respondents it can be considered separately from the other three factors. The first and largest of the three factors correspond to those noted in the tourism and recreation literature, including social motivators (“meeting new people”, “meeting the locals”, “strengthening the existing relationships”, “spending time with like-minded people”), heritage values (“experiencing nature”, “visiting indigenous communities”) and learning and introspection (“developing a greater sense of self” and “Experiencing new & different things you would not see otherwise”). The second factor corresponds to specific 4WD driving experiences (“Testing your driving skills”, “Understanding how the vehicle performs under different conditions”, “Experiencing the challenge & variety of driving conditions”, “Gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD”). The final factor corresponds to an exploration factor (“Gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD”, “Visiting new

places”, “Experiencing different landscapes”, “Experiencing new and different things you would not see otherwise” and “Experiencing nature”).

Next, the preferred activities of 4WDDrivers were investigated (Table 4). The top four ranking activities included camping, visiting national parks, spend time developing your 4WD skills and visiting local places of interest. These activities represent a range of the recreational, exploratory and 4WD specific motivations described above. The activities that were the least appealing were activities focusing on indigenous culture, art galleries and bird watching. The results also indicate that there are some differences between the preferred activities of respondents based upon their age. These results are illustrated in Table 5.

Table 4: Respondents’ preferred activities whilst on a 4WD trip.

Activity	Mean
Go camping	4.6
Visit National Parks	4.2
Spend time developing your 4WD skills	4.1
Visit local places of interest	4.1
Test the vehicle’s capabilities	3.9
Buy local produce	3.9
Do some photography	3.9
Get to know new people	3.8
Visit historical or heritage sites	3.8
Go swimming in rivers and/or falls	3.7
Invest time in food preparation	3.5
Go fishing	3.3
Go bushwalking	3.3
Spend time with locals	3.2
Seek out local pubs	3.0
Visit local galleries	2.9
Visit Aboriginal cultural sites or communities	2.8
Go bird watching	2.7

A similar factor analysis to that undertaken on respondent's motivations was carried out on preferred activities. In order to check that the data was suitable for PCA, a correlation matrix was constructed, and again many coefficients over 0.3 were noted. The Kaiser-Meyer-Okin value was 0.7 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity reached statistical significance, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Three factors were extracted with eigenvalues exceeding 1, explaining 21.5%, 14.3% and 8% of the variation. The way that the motivations loaded onto the different factors are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: A factor analysis of respondents' motivations revealing three factors

Activity	Component		
	1	2	3
Buy local produce	.756		
Visit local places of interest	.711		
Visit historical or heritage sites	.632		
Visit Aboriginal cultural sites or communities	.589		.386
Invest time in food preparation	.575		
Do some photography	.435		.392
Test the vehicle's capabilities		.691	-.348
Spend time developing your 4WD skills	.313	.630	-.303
Spend time with locals		.593	.306
Go swimming in rivers and/or falls		.571	.370
Go fishing		.562	
Get to know new people	.423	.531	
Seek out local pubs		.499	
Go camping		.401	
Go bird watching			.742
Visit local galleries	.334		.666
Go bushwalking			.658
Attend Aboriginal cultural performances	.428		.516
Visit National Parks			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

The results of this factor analysis reveal some interesting combinations of activities that might be more difficult to interpret than the motivation list. The first factor may represent 4WDDrivers with an interest in heritage, whilst the second factor indicates more of a social/adventure tendency, including those activities that relate specifically to 4WDDriving including spending time developing 4WDDriving skills, and testing the vehicles capabilities. Finally, the third factor includes those activities that scored the lowest on the Likert-scales, such as visiting local art galleries, go bird watching and attending Aboriginal cultural performances.

By combing the two sets of data into a new factor analysis, a clearer pattern emerged (Table 6). The procedure used was the same as that used in the previous analysis (The Kaiser-Meyer-Oklin value was 0.75 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was <0.05) with three factors explaining 20.5%, 12% and 6% of the variation.

Table 6: A factor analysis of respondents' motivations and activities combined

Activities (in italics) and motivations combined	Component		
	1	2	3
Meeting the locals	.719		
Testing your driving skills	.694		.382
Meeting new people	.660		
Understanding how the vehicle performs under different conditions	.636		.326
Spending time with like-minded people	.634		
<i>Spend time developing your 4WD skills</i>	.588		.422
<i>Get to know new people</i>	.584		
Developing a greater sense of self	.573		
<i>Test the vehicle's capabilities</i>	.569		.522
Strengthening existing relationships	.549	.330	
<i>Spend time with locals</i>	.548		
Experiencing the challenge & variety of driving conditions	.505		.468
<i>Go swimming in rivers and/or falls</i>	.377		
<i>Visit Aboriginal cultural sites or communities</i>		.651	
<i>Visit historical or heritage sites</i>		.650	
<i>Attend Aboriginal cultural performances</i>		.637	
<i>Visit local galleries</i>		.615	-.372

<i>Do some photography</i>		.582	
<i>Buy local produce</i>		.577	
Experiencing nature		.542	
Experiencing new & different things you would not see otherwise		.528	
<i>Visit local places of interest</i>		.524	.395
Visiting indigenous communities	.425	.514	
<i>Go bushwalking</i>		.486	
<i>Go bird watching</i>		.469	-.325
<i>Invest time in food preparation</i>		.461	
<i>Visit National Parks</i>			.585
Experiencing the freedom of being out of the city			.516
Visiting new places			.444
Gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD	.386		.441
<i>Go camping</i>			.338
<i>Go fishing</i>			.307
<i>Seek out local pubs</i>			
Experiencing different landscapes			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

It appears that the three factors correspond to the social factor, including motivations such as meeting the locals and new people, spending time with like-minded people and strengthening existing relationships as well as testing the car and driving skills, experiencing the challenge and variety of driving conditions, developing a greater sense of self and going swimming in rivers and/or falls. The second factor represents the heritage (cultural, historical and natural) aspects of travel and 4WD trips, with activities such as aboriginal cultural sites, communities and performances, local galleries, experiencing nature, heritage and historical sites/visiting places of interest and experiencing new and different things. Interestingly, photography as an activity falls into this category, perhaps representing an instrumental rather than intrinsic value for respondents. The final factor relates to the escape/exploration factor including activities such as experiencing the freedom of being out of the city, visiting new places, gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD, going camping and fishing.

Respondents' desert 4WD driving experiences

Using the data presented thus far, it becomes apparent that many of the respondents' motivations and preferred activities may be satisfied through a desert experience, with adequate information channels, product marketing and packaging. In this section, we investigate some more specific aspects of desert 4WD experiences and preferences. In order to investigate their 4WD driving experiences, respondents were asked whether they had undertaken a 4WD trip to the desert in the last two years and where they had been. As previously noted, desert environments tended to be ranked third as a preferred environment for 4WD trips. Just under 50% (46.5%) had undertaken a 4WD trip in the last two years. Using a chi-squared test ($\chi^2 = 59.867$, $p < 0.005$), it was found that couples and empty nesters were proportionally more likely to undertake desert trips, as well as older respondents.

It was also noted that respondents who belonged to the higher income brackets, were self-employed, professionals, retired or in management were also more likely to have undertaken trips to the desert in the last two years. Having ascertained that the older, wealthier, dependent-free respondents were the most likely to undertake desert trips, the same respondents were also asked if they agreed with the statement that desert trips are usually undertaken by older generations who have more time and money. Whilst it was previously noted that the older generations did tend to take longer trips, it was found that the level of agreement for this statement was 51.5% and that there was no significant differences between the various socio-demographic groups with regards to this statement. The most popular desert destinations for respondents were the Simpson desert, Canning Stock Route, the Kimberley region, and Central Australia.

Improving respondents' 4WD driving experiences:

Respondents were asked a range of questions about their 4WD experiences including: their best and worst 4WD driving experiences; their level of agreement with a series of statements about 4WD experiences drawn from the focus group; and asked to rank the five most important improvements to 4WD experiences from a set of eight statements. When asked directly about improving 4WD experiences, it was found that most respondents ranked great access to areas/routes within Australia as their number one priority. The least important improvements were to provide better information on local attractions (ranked 7th) and to

provide increased support from rescue services, rangers, etc in remote areas (ranked 8th). More responsible 4WD practices were also considered fairly important, both in terms of more responsible media portrayal of 4WD activities (ranked 3rd) and by providing more education for inexperienced drivers (ranked 2nd).

DISCUSSION

One objective of this research was to develop a profile of the motives and activities of 4WD club members visiting desert regions. Because the sample was drawn from members of 4WD clubs, results may not necessarily fully reflect the profiles, motives and activities of other groups of all 4WD tourists. Overall the most significant findings of this research are the visitor profiles that have emerged and the motives and activities that were identified.

One significant finding is that there appears to be three major groups of motives for respondents from 4WD clubs. These were found to be:

- social motivators which included meeting new people, meeting the locals, strengthening the existing relationships and spending time with like-minded people
- heritage motivations which included experiencing nature and visiting indigenous communities, and
- learning and introspection motives that included developing a greater sense of self, and experiencing difficult landscapes, experiencing new different things you would not see otherwise and experiencing nature.

These motives were reflected in the itineraries constructed for club members and in the activities they undertook. After conducting a factor analysis of the activities undertaken by respondents three factors were identified and found to be closely related to the motivation factors outlined previously. The main activity factors were:

- *social*. These included meeting the locals and new people, spending time with like-minded people, and strengthening existing relationships,
- *activities factor* which paralleled the motivation factor termed heritage and included activities such as: visiting aboriginal cultural sites, communities and performances; visiting local galleries; experiencing nature, heritage and historical sites; and visiting places of interest, and

- *escape/exploration factor* including activities such as experiencing the freedom of being out of the city, visiting new places, gaining access to remote places only accessible via 4WD, going camping and fishing.

It is apparent that many of the motivations for 4WD travel were concerned with specific activities thus there was a close parallel between motivational factors for travel to the desert and the activity factors identified. This alignment of motivations and activities reflects the considerable pre trip planning that is undertaken by club officials involved with organising club drives and the effort that is taken to ensure that members are able to participate in the range of activities that they find the most satisfying. The findings also revealed a travel segment that spent considerable effort in pre planning and who were interested in travelling to new places.

From the general overview of the motivations and activities preferred by 4WD club members, it is apparent that a match may be found in desert 4WD tourism activities, products and services. From a marketing perspective, therefore, the findings reveal that there is some scope for developing a range of experiences and activities that may be used to attract this specific group of 4WD tourists to Desert Australia. While not a large market the motives and activities identified indicate the potential opportunities that there may exist in developing products and services for independent 4WD tourists. Marketing strategies could capitalise on important motivations such as “experiencing the freedom of being out of the city”, “experiencing different landscapes”, and gaining access to places only accessible by 4WD. Assessing suitable market strategies built around either social motivators, heritage values and personal development, or 4WD skills, or exploration and travel, or a combination of these elements could usefully advance the development of 4WD tourism in the desert.

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