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**Understanding Motor Vehicle-Based Travel: Examining the  
Experiences of Yukon Tourists**

**By**

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**Bachelor of Environmental Studies (Honours), York University, 2013**

**THESIS**

Submitted to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies  
Faculty of Arts

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Master of Environmental Studies in Geography degree  
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2019

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## **Abstract**

In the past several decades, scholarly research has simultaneously expanded in three research areas: northern tourism, drive tourism and the tourist experience. This study used an exploratory approach to understand the relationship between those three areas through a case study of the Yukon. Lead by four guiding questions 1) what are motor vehicle-based tourists' expectations of Yukon? 2) how do Yukon tourists' expectations influence their motor vehicle travel? 3) how does the motor vehicle influence tourists' experience in the Yukon? and 4) how is Yukon reflected in the narratives of motor vehicle-based tourists? a mixed methods approach was used to collect data, and both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyze the results. Thirty-nine participants completed semi-structured questionnaires on-site and in-person. Through a combination of content analysis and descriptive statistics, this study answered the guiding questions using the quantitative results and the themes and categories that were derived from tourists' narratives.

Participants from this study were largely repeat visitors to Yukon who started their trip from within Canada seeking nature-based experiences as much as they sought motor vehicle-based travel. Key instrumental and affective motor vehicle attributes were found to be central to the motor vehicle-based tourist experience including convenience, independence, freedom, reliability and road access while the nature environment and personal development were also important motivations. This study also found seven categories to represent the tourist experience in the Yukon including 'unique opportunities and service expectations', 'travel adventure', 'pristine nature', 'engaging places', 'meaningful interrelationships and solitude', 'unexpected weather', and 'sharing



stories'. Meaningful interrelationships and solitude were found to be the most consequential of the narratives because of the lasting impression they left in participants' narratives. As visitor numbers increase in the Yukon by way of various marketing strategies, changes in tourist demand and the onset of climate change and warming temperature, this travel market will likely increase. Diversifying the drive tourism market in the Yukon by developing different products to match the different needs of various subgroups will be beneficial to tourism businesses as well as fostering sustainable practices. More studies like this one will be needed to track changes in tourists' travel patterns and preferences.



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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Motorized vehicle-based travel exceeds any other transportation method used by tourists in North America for day or over-night trips (Prideaux & Carson, 2010). This travel style is also prevalent in Europe, Australia, and China with emerging markets in Russia and India (Hardy, 2006; Prideaux & Carson, 2010). This transportation method includes the use of private or rented vehicles when travelling to a destination and allows tourists control over their travel itineraries (Hardy, 2005). Yet despite its popularity and society's car-driven culture, the relationship between the three phase of the trip experience and the transportation method is not well understood. In fact, the deficiency in this area of interest has been noted in several disciplines including tourism studies, leisure studies, transportation studies, environmental management, human geography, sociology, and most recently, drive tourism (Morgan, Lugosi, Ritchie, 2010; Prideaux & Carson, 2010, Carreira, Patricio, Jorge, Magee & Hommes, 2013; White, 2007; Cresswell, 2006; Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Despite being understudied, the role of the motor vehicle is a significant component of the the three phases of the trip experience. Motorized vehicles connect tourists to the destination's residents, environment and culture; they offer tourists the freedom to control their movements and the independence to change their travel routes; vehicles also support a visual experience, as well as one in motion; and they provide accommodation and protection. Furthermore, the collective hours tourists spend in a vehicle while travelling to and within a destination can sum up to days, weeks, and for long-distance travel, even months. Based on these apparent connections, many aspects of motor vehicle-based travel help shape the tourist experience. As a result, those aspects



also contribute to how tourists perceive the places they visit, and how others perceive those tourist destinations because of the stories that tourists share about their travel.

Tourism in the Yukon is dominated by motor vehicle-based tourists who make up more than three-fourths of visitors. The trip purpose of nearly half of those visitors is to visit Alaska (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). It has been clear to Yukon's tourism managers that capturing those visitors would increase their value to the Yukon's economy (Marketing Unit, 2015). Unfortunately, the services along roads, as well as the self-contained vehicles many tourists use, provide Alaska-destined tourists the means to zip through the territory using public services without contributing significantly to Yukon's economy. The supporting services en-route allow drive-by tourists to engage with the territory in a superficial way, potentially limiting their ability to develop a strong connection to the region. A shallow connection to the region is a risk not just to Yukon's reputation, but also to its sustainable development.

The Government of Yukon is putting significant financial resources into branding itself and selling its image to future tourists. "Yukon Now" is the territory's largest tourism marketing investment with a budget of \$3.6 million every two years. The investments made in the Yukon's tourism sector are the largest they have ever been in the territory's history (Government of Yukon, 2018a). As global interests in nature-based tourism and ecotourism increase, according to some scholars, places like the Yukon will become more important to Canada's tourism economy (Eagles, 1992; Balmford, Beresford, Green, Naidoo, Walpole, & Manica, 2009). In 1996, 300 million visits were recorded in national parks – an important component of nature-based tourism – across Canada and the US (Scott, Jones & Konopek, 2007). Therefore, activities that support



nature-based tourism, including motor vehicle-based travel should be re-examined. This is especially so in light of changes to the climate which can be expected to shape the tourism market in Canada, as well as globally.

The Yukon offers the opportunity for exploring the relationship between tourists' experiences and motor vehicle-based travel because the industry is dependent on the underlying concept of movement – to see Yukon's vast beauty requires moving through it. Understanding that relationship does pose challenges because of the complexity of understanding the tourist experience. However, theories and approaches from drive tourism and general tourism research can help illustrate some of the key variables that are central to the motor vehicle experience.

### **1.1 Guiding Questions**

It is the aim of this research to understand the choices, experiences and activities of Yukon motor vehicle-based tourists and the narratives they create about their Yukon experience by asking four guiding questions:

- 1) What are motor vehicle-based tourists' expectations of the Yukon?
- 2) How do Yukon tourists' expectations influence their motor vehicle travel?
- 3) How does the motor vehicle influence tourists' experiences in the Yukon?
- 4) How is the Yukon reflected in the narratives of motor vehicle tourists?

### **1.2 Literature Introduction**

Recent tourism projections in northern regions have identified emerging markets in “eco-tourism, experiential tourism, adventure tourism, cruising, Aboriginal tourism,



and learning or cultural tourism”, as well as opportunities in “sport hunting, fishing and general touring travel” (Northern Development Ministers Forum, 2008, p. 1).

Unfortunately, research is falling behind the increasing interests in tourism opportunities available in the North. Over a decade ago, Stewart, Draper & Johnston (2005) identified two gaps in northern tourism research: studies that looked at the tourist experience, and studies about global changes and large-scale influences. In the latter literature cluster, information has since grown extensively with particular focus on climate change, cruise tourism, adaptation and governance (Hall & Saarinen 2010; Muller, Lundmark & Lemelin, 2013). Research on the tourist experience has also grown but still requires further investigation. Decision-makers and tourist operators require baseline data in those research clusters to prepare for fluctuations in the tourism market, and to cultivate sustainable practices (Stewart et al., 2005). Since this study concentrates on the market segment of motor vehicle-based tourists and their perceived experience, it has the potential to at least partially contribute to one of those gaps.

Considering that climate change will decrease ice coverage, and expand the tourism market to new, accessible areas in northern waters and coastal areas, it is no surprise that current research has concerned itself with ship travel; although air travel, because of its significant contribution to greenhouse emissions, has also been paid some attention (Hall 2010; Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin & Scott, 2010). Consequently, the less novel, vehicle-based travel, which manifests an element of control and security because of the already developed and reliable infrastructure, has been of less interest in northern tourism studies. Yet, road transportation has almost exclusively shaped human-landscape dynamics in the sub-arctic regions and continues to do so since most established



communities are near a road network, as are buildings, mining sites, and many parks (Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, 2017). The development of road networks and all that comes with them is often tolerated and any far-reaching implications, particularly with respect to tourism, are examined thoroughly.

In the past two decades interest in the transportation system and its relationship with tourism has surfaced in the form of drive tourism research. Prideaux & Carson (2010) explain drive tourism by looking at the spatial relationship and infrastructure between the place of origin and the destination. They also explain drive tourism through the context of the experience by looking at the components that create it (Prideaux & Carson, 2010). This research considers some of the components mentioned by Prideaux & Carson (2010) including the travel route, travel duration, and vehicle use. While the fundamental task of drive tourism research is to understand the supply and demand market, the role of narratives as an important pull factor that can drive demand has largely been excluded from drive tourism research (Prideaux & Carson, 2010). Thus, this study would not only expand the knowledge base of northern tourism, but also contribute to research in drive tourism which has largely excluded the role of narratives in generating tourism demand. Exploring drive tourism in a northern environment through the perspective of a motor vehicle user may expand discourse in drive tourism literature, thus research about the structure, literature, and areas overlooked in drive tourism research are reviewed in Section 2.2.

The final section in the literature review explores the current state of knowledge about the tourist experience – which is central to this research study. The tourist experience is predominantly explored using Morgan et al., (2010) edited book: *The*



*tourism and leisure experience*. Topics in the book include the tourist perspective, the management of experiences, and scholars' approach to researching experiences, which makes this book a valuable source of insights for this study. The three phases of the trip experience (pre-trip planning experience, the trip experience and post-trip experience), which is the way that most studies look at the tourist experience, dominate the literature review for this section. Found within those phases are concepts like motivation, evaluation, perception and stories, all of which help tourists formulate meaning about their experience and their place perception (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Moscardo, 2010). Those meanings are especially important because of their potential in shaping the destination image. For example, continued growth and popularity of online travel blogs and diaries gives the tourist's perspective value since their experience can influence the places people visit as well as the choices they make within the destination (Moscardo, 2010). However, if the experiences of a former tourist are shaped solely by the opportunities that a vehicle allows, activities that are beyond the transport network will not be communicated to the public. Current research regarding tourist behaviours and the types of experiences that scholars believe should be supported by the tourism sector in the North, are also reviewed.

### **1.3 Methods and Case Study**

In this thesis, a mixed methods approach, using a case study explores the motor vehicle-based experience of the Yukon tourist. Secondary sources were used first to obtain background on northern tourism, motor vehicle use, and the tourist experience. Specifically, secondary sources identified the key characteristics and preferences of Yukon tourists using the Yukon Visitor Tracking Program (YVTP) survey. The YVTP



survey comprised 53 questions, 22 of which were incorporated into this study. The questionnaire for this study comprised a total of 33 questions, five focusing on pre-trip planning, sixteen targeting the trip experience, eight focusing on the post-trip experience, and four asking about tourists' demographics. To obtain tourist data, the questionnaire was posted to online travel boards. Additionally, participants were recruited in-person at various locations throughout the Yukon where they were asked to fill out the questionnaire online through an online host. By following the structure of the YVTP survey, this research acquired data that could be related to previous Yukon research, while at the same time expanding that research through the inclusion of questions developed from transportation and tourism studies. The questionnaire was the main method for collecting tourist data for this research.

Questions that were influenced by transportation disciplines inquired about the types of transportation used, the time spent using automobiles and the instrumental and affective benefits related to automobile use. Literature from general tourism research helped organize and segment the collected data according to three phases of the trip experience, including: pre-trip planning, trip experience and the post experience (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Under the first two phases of the trip experience, data were collected using 29 close-ended questions. The choices and activities of Yukon tourists were examined in the first part of the questionnaire by looking at motivations and behaviours – a strategy used in many tourism studies. The last phase of the trip was explored by examining the meaning tourists give their experience by extracting themes from tourists' responses. This approach was also borrowed from general tourism research. A total of four open-ended questions allowed tourists to put their experience in



their own words. Content analysis was the most suitable method for analyzing tourists' stories because of its ability to reduce complex responses into relatable themes. Finally, to maintain the focus of this research, four guiding questions were used to reach the study's objective.

#### **1.4 Outline of Thesis**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The first chapter introduces the topic and gives a blueprint of how that topic is approached. The second chapter discusses the literature reviewed according to three categories: northern tourism, drive tourism, experience and narratives. The strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies used in those studies are highlighted, together with the significance of the motor vehicle travel method to the tourist experience.

Chapter 3 provides an explanation of the methodology that was used for this study, including how it was developed. The chapter ends with background on the Yukon and its image. Chapter 4 presents the results from the semi-structured questionnaire that are presented according to the trip phases, while the last portion of the chapter looks at the results from the YVTP survey. Chapter 5 discusses the results, first by looking at how the questionnaire results compare with the YVTP survey and noting the key differences. Second, the narratives are looked at through several themes that were identified in Chapter 5. Third, the guiding questions are answered by referring to the questionnaire and the literature that was reviewed. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the thesis, exploring the role of motor vehicles in the three phases of the trip experience. Recommendations for tourism management and future research are made, and concluding remarks complete the study.



## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

This chapter reviews literature that can be categorized into three sections: northern tourism, drive tourism, and experiences and narratives. Section 2.1 begins by looking at the current state of research on northern tourism, while areas that need more attention complete this section. A detailed examination of tourism in the Yukon is presented in Section 2.2. Drive tourism is introduced in Section 2.2 as are areas that need to be investigated because of their influence on the tourist experience. Section 2.3 goes into detail about the tourist experience and the significance of narratives to the tourism industry.

### **2.1 Northern Tourism**

There are numerous definitions used to reflect various aspects of the North making it hard to build a cohesive frame of reference for researchers. For example, the North can be referred to as the Circumpolar North, the northern region, the Arctic and Sub-Arctic, Polar Region, frontier, periphery and remote region (Stewart et al., 2005; Hall & Saarinen, 2010; Muller, Lundmark & Lemelin, 2013). This study avoids making a clear choice between those titles for two reasons. Firstly, to avoid using a definition that is interpreted differently by different scholars, and secondly, to recognize the fluidity of tourism and the transport network which can cut across the boundaries set by those definitions. Nevertheless, in this thesis the terms North and northern regions are used interchangeably to refer to areas north of 60 degrees latitude, which in western Canada lies near above the provincial/territorial border between British Columbia and the Yukon. That area is also commonly referred to as the subarctic. At times, terms like the Arctic or



polar regions are also used in this thesis as a result of the reviewed literature which uses those broad terms.

Research on northern tourism did not become a serious area of inquiry until the 1990s. As tourist interest in destinations on the periphery grew, so too did the interest of researchers who were able to identify the difficulties and challenges in developing remote places. *Polar tourism in the Arctic and Antarctic regions*, released in 1995, was one of the first scholarly works about tourism issues in the North, establishing northern tourism as a legitimate area for inquiry (Stewart et al., 2005). Since then the interest in northern tourism has both shifted and grown in response to the noticeable effects of climate change – which is expected to have the most significant impacts in polar regions (Muller, Lundmark & Lemelin, 2013).

According to the high-level intergovernmental forum, the Arctic Council, those changes will have significant consequences on regional and global scales, and some of those changes will include: warming temperature in the Arctic as a whole, decreasing areas of sea ice, warmer and shorter winter season, thawing permafrost, coastal erosion, shifts in vegetation zone, impacts on indigenous people, and wildlife population and habitat changes (Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, 2004). In response to the issues faced in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, publications have flourished with respect to climate change in areas such as cruise tourism, attractions like polar bear viewing, community resilience, and business perspectives (Hall & Saariner, 2010; Muller, Lundmark & Lemelin, 2013).

Studies have indicated that a change in climate will impact tourist spatial and temporal patterns, since climate and weather are an important influence on the destination



choice. Studies using the Tourism Climate Index (TCI), which is a rating determined by five sub-indices (the daytime comfort index, daily comfort index, precipitation, sunshine, and wind), combined with scenario building, projected a higher TCI score for northern regions in the summer months (Amelung, Nicholls & Viner, 2007; Scott & McBoyle, 2014). A high TCI represents climatic comfort associated with tourism activities. Studies using scenario building, have projected that TCI scores would also be higher across more months, thus potentially increasing the length of the tourism season (Amelung, Nicholls & Viner, 2007). An extended tourism season could encourage tourism over a longer period of time, into the shoulder seasons. At the same time, better temperatures during the peak season might simply increase visitor numbers, thus putting a strain on environmental and economic resources rather than distributing tourism pressures over a longer period (Amelung, Nicholls & Viner, 2007).

Many changes in tourism can be expected in the face of climate change. Changes to the spatial and temporal patterns can affect competition between destinations (Scott & McBoyle, 2014). Some studies have shown that different optimal climatic conditions exist in different tourist environments, and those can be favoured differently depending on the visitors' trip origin (Scott, Gossling & Freitas, 2008). Other studies have found that new tourism opportunities have developed as a result of climate change such as last chance tourism. In last chance tourism, tourists seek out places that are vulnerable to the changing climate like polar bear tourism for example (Groulx, Lemieux, Dawson, Stewart & Yudina, 2016). Nature-based tourism in particular will be vulnerable to changing opportunities in the North.



For example, winter-based tourism has already been impacted by the inconsistencies in the weather. Skiing businesses in Finland have on several occasions been forced to temporarily shut down because of the warmer weather during the winter season (Lundmark, 2010). Studies have suggested that adaptive approaches, where flexibility, proper knowledge and support from all levels of government are present, be prioritized (Lundmark, 2010). However, according to Lundmark (2010), many tourism stakeholders and researchers see climate change still as a minor problem compared to more immediate issues concerning tourism entrepreneurs. In Nunavik, Quebec, adaptability and resilience have been natural responses to issues such as visitor pressures on the environment, economic challenges and political changes, more so than the issues of climate change (Lemelin, Johnston, Dawson, Stewart & Mattina, 2012). Having diversified tourism to cultural-based activities, from dog sled racing, festivals like the Aqpik Jam, traditional throat singing and specialized tours, tourism in Nunavik, Quebec is an example of the possibilities and innovations that can be found as a result of cooperatives between local stakeholders (Lemelin et al., 2012).

De la Barre (2005) comes to a similar view of how sustainable tourism might be best approached. De la Barre (2005) suggests that a paradigm shift first needs to occur in the discussions on sustainable tourism in order for meaningful changes to take place. By enabling different local perspectives to guide the evolution of what ecotourism means to local groups, de la Barre (2005) sees an opportunity to frame the human and nature relationship in a way that is in line with local stakeholders.

Traditionally, through a scientific approach, at least two forms of visitor management strategies exist, referred to as the 'hard' and 'soft' approaches. Hard



approaches aim to regulate unwanted behaviour. They use regulatory measures to control and prevent unwanted visitor behaviour by adapting and modifying tourism resources (Mason, 2005). This can include, using wardens and other park officials, placing restrictions on certain areas, reinforcing structures such as footpaths, or even creating replicas of heritage buildings. This type of management can be difficult to police particularly in areas as extensive as the North (Mason, 2005).

Soft approaches are educational and require interpretation by the visitor (Mason, 2005). Interpretation aims to nudge visitors to change their behaviour by creating understanding or empathy that cultivates interest in the tourism product. Examples of soft visitor management strategies include using signage, or guidelines like visitor codes of conduct, or guidebooks, and tour guides (Mason, 2005). Consequently, Mason (2005) states that the usefulness of either approach is largely unknown, and this is especially true in places where visitor impacts are not clear.

A large gap of knowledge in northern tourism was noted in the work of Stewart et al. (2005). Stewart et al. (2005) identified six areas of focus in northern tourism research that are driving the attention of scholars: tourist impacts, tourism policy and management issues, tourism development, tourist patterns, tourist experience, and global changes and large-scale influences. Stewart et al. (2005) point to one area in particular where information in both the Arctic and Antarctic polar regions is limited and not detailed enough, the quality of tourists' experiences (Stewart et al., 2005). The tourist experience according to Stewart et al. (2005) includes the nature of, and quality of the tourist experience, visitor expectations, the pre-trip and post-trip knowledge, the on-site experience, visitors' trip satisfaction and post-visit behaviour. Some of the studies



available on the tourist experience are discussed in Section 2.3. Some of those studies point to the role of education which could encourage stewardship behaviour to promote sustainability.

One of the most important components of tourism in the North, and the tourist experience, is transportation, because as travel is integral to tourism, the experience is dependent on travel. The relationship between tourism, transportation and the environment has never been more evident than what is being observed in polar tourism today. The impact of ice melt has already increased the number of cruise tours through routes like the Northwest Passage. Between 2005 and 2012, the number of cruise itineraries has more than doubled in Arctic Canada, resulting in visits to communities as far north as Grise Fiord (Johnston, Johnston, Dawson & Stewart, 2012; Stewart, Draper & Dawson, 2010). It is not surprising that the response from scholars has been geared towards cruise tourism, more than other transportation methods (Stewart, Howell, Draper, Yackel & Tivy, 2007; Stewart, Tivy, Howell, Dawson & Draper, 2010; Lück, 2010; Lamers & Amelung, 2010). In places like Alaska where 51% of visitors travel by cruise ship, or in the Antarctic and high Arctic regions where cruise tourism is the largest source of GHG emissions, interest and research on that transportation style is especially needed (Resource Development Council for Alaska Inc., n.d; Hall, 2010).

When it comes to motor vehicle-based travel, polar tourism research has been slower to progress. In one study, greenhouse gas emissions from motorized vehicles and air travel were calculated for polar bear viewing (Dawson, Stewart, Lemelin & Scott, 2010), and the influence of tundra vehicles on polar bear behaviour has been explored (Dyck & Baydack, 2004). In the Yukon, automobile transportation still outweighs the use



of air travel, thus an exploration into this transportation method is necessary (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016a).

## **2.2 Drive Tourism**

According to the International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA), in 2015 there were 9.47 million cars on the road. In the same year, 68,539,516 cars were manufactured globally, and Canada manufactured 888,565 of those vehicles (OICA, 2015). In 2016, 22 million cars were registered in Canada (Statistics Canada, n.d.-a). On average there are approximately 500 cars per 1,000 people in North America, where for example in the most populous nation on Earth – China – car ownership is 26 cars for 1,000 people (Prideaux & Carson, 2010). While these statistics should illustrate people's dependence on the automobile, especially in North America, they do not explain how this dependence is shaping how tourists interact with, and how they view places.

In the last few decades researchers have begun to appreciate the importance of road transport to tourism, which has resulted in a new field of research called drive tourism. Drive tourism has been defined as “travel by any form of mechanically powered, passenger-carrying road transport, with the exclusion of coaches and bicycles” (Prideaux & Carson, 2010, p. 3). According to drive tourism literature, certain patterns can be attributed to motor vehicle-based travel, although those patterns are still emerging as this new field of research evolves (Prideaux & Carson, 2010).

Some of those patterns include travelling independently, without much reliance on structures set by agencies such as set schedules for departure and arrival times (although automobile clubs draw many enthusiasts who group themselves in many hobby clubs which in turn set rules for their members) and travelling in small travel parties.



Often pursuing an explorational-type of experience in which many travel methods are used including cars, recreational vehicles, motorcycles and off-highway vehicles, which can be either private or rented (Carson & Prideaux, 2010). There are two main reasons why self-drive tourists prefer this method of travel. First, is the affordability and practicality of motor vehicle travel. Second, the travel goals are dependent on that type of transportation, as in the case of driving tours (Carson & Prideaux, 2010). Also, self-drive tourists usually visit multiple destinations and use a variety of products. The transportation method also helps users realize their goals (Carson & Prideaux, 2010). An example of how the transportation method would define the experience is seen in RV travel which would favour vehicle camping, and off-road rest areas as a source of accommodation throughout the trip.

For provinces and territories that serve as the destination for self-drive tourism, the main challenge has been deriving economic benefits from this market because many motor vehicle-based travellers are self-sufficient. Motor vehicles, especially RVs, can be self-containing providing accommodation, food, entertainment and fully equipped bathrooms which makes it difficult to develop products that will interest these tourists (Carson & Cartan, 2010). There is limited information about tourists' needs and preferences, which could be making it difficult to develop products and services that fall in line with the needs of this travel group.

The mismatch between service provisions and tourist needs has been researched in McClymont, Thompson & Prideaux's (2010) in their study on the caravan market in Queensland Australia. The authors emphasize the shift in demand which is moving away from family-style vacationing, to older, retirees described as 'empty-nesters' (p. 211).



Consequently, the authors discovered that most park owners do not take into account this new surge of older tourists who have different needs and preferences than traditional family-based vacationers. For instance, empty nesters are less likely to use facilities like swimming pools and playgrounds, but may require safety features like hand rails instead (McClymont et al., 2010).

To understand those changes, McClymont et al. (2010) examined the attitudinal variables (expected benefits, preferences and perception) of caravanners by segmenting them into subgroups to identify the needs and benefits being sought from park accommodations. Three subgroups emerged: the basics group, who made up 23% of their respondents were identified as self-reliant, between the ages of 51-70 years old, mainly travelling as couples and spending four weeks on their trip; the blue-ribbon group, making up 36% of their participants, including those who prefer traditional services in caravan parks, are between the ages of 18-50 and 70 years or older, travelling with families and children and spending four weeks on their trip; and the most common group, 41% of respondents, were the basic extras group whose park preference falls between the other two groups, are between 51-70 years old, travelling as singles or couples and spending between 3-12 months on their trips (McClymont et al., 2010). McClymont et al. (2010) state that park operators could target individual subgroups by advertising and offering the amenities most important to each, rather than mass advertising.

Many studies on drive tourism have found that motor vehicle-based tourists are older and financially secure. For example, Walker (2010) found the average motorcycle user was financially secure, older, and near retirement age, and spends significant amounts of money on motorcycle accessories and activities. When motorcyclists travel in



groups that potential is further extended (Walker, 2010). Hardy & Gretzel (2010) whose study focused on the motivations of recreational vehicle users also noted that RVers tend to be middle class, making \$56,000 US or more and 49 years of age or older. The study by Tourism British Columbia (BC) (2005), which collected data on the characteristics and visitor volumes of tourists travelling along the Alaska Highway, found that 53% of travellers were 55 years of age or older, 32% were between 32 to 54 years old and 15% were under the age of 35. That study also noted that 61% of travellers had at least a post-secondary education (Toursim BC, 2005).

Similar to McClymont et al. (2010), Hardy & Gretzel (2010) also found diversity within their study sample. The authors explored visitors' motivations for choosing RVing over other accommodation choices by looking at two groups, the independent RV users and caravanners (those travelling in groups). Based on their study subjects' motivations, the independent RVers were the fiercely independent group that avoided any travel constraints, and to whom freedom was the ultimate goal. While social independent RVers enjoyed meeting people, staying in RV parks and feeling connected to others. The distinction made between the RV subgroups reinforces the idea that summary statistics alone do not provide insights about tourists' motivations and how they differ (Hardy & Gretzel, 2010). Thus, if park operators want to accommodate different subgroups, as was suggested by McClymont et al. (2010), they may also wish to consider visitors' personal experiences which may be more telling of what services to provide.

Consequently, the primary data collection method used in drive tourism studies is similar to the information being collected by governments, like data from Visitor Exit Surveys. That type of information helps define the tourist segment, and such data can be



applied in management strategies for regulation purposes or for market strategies (Hardy, 2006). However, market segmentation does not convey the social, economic and environmental impacts of drive tourism making it difficult to challenge current tourist practices (Hardy, 2006). Therefore, it becomes difficult for tourist operators to identify the motivations of drive tourists, and to target specific areas for management that would be beneficial for reducing unwanted behaviour.

To fully understand motor vehicle users' needs it is important to recognize how movement is experienced. Travel in tourism research has often been explored through the experience of the destination rather than the experience in motion (Cutler, Carmichael & Doherty, 2014). Travelling is more than getting from point A to point B, it is also about the journey to the destination. A travel journey focuses on the process of travel more than the trip destination. For example, the mindset determines where travellers focus their attention, on the destination, or on the journey (Dahl & Dalbakk, 2015). A journey mindset is about "being there", and a destination mindset is about "getting there" (Dahl & Dalbakk, 2015, p. 22). There are also different styles of movement through places. Haldrup (2004) identified three forms of movement which he refers to as a performing art: inhabiting places by experiencing the sights and sounds; navigating by doing; and drifting by obtaining pleasure from movement itself (Haldrup, 2004). Mobility studies on the other hand, see movement as political and use it for theory construction about social relations such as gender, ethnicity and nationality (Cresswell, 2010; Vannini, 2011).

As noted by the work of Dahl & Dalbakk (2014) and Haldrup (2004), there are different ways of being in space, or in a landscape, and the travel method is largely responsible for that. For example, mountain biking in the Arctic requires time and



financial investment, which builds the expectation for a unique experience (Rowsell & Maher, 2017). Rowsell & Maher (2017) state that mountain bikers have a strong attachment to their home trails, therefore, mountain biking destinations need to focus on the uniqueness of the trail to encourage visitors. Different factors will contribute to making mountain biking unique (trees, trail surfaces, or scenery), and one indication the experience is unique is whether it excites mountain bikers to tell others about it (Rowsell & Maher, 2017).

According to Prideaux & Carson (2010), a person chooses a vehicle for their travel needs based on the experience they perceive to be important. For example, they may choose to travel by RV, because of the comfort it offers, or by motorcycle, for the thrill of the experience. Similarly, a mountain biker chooses a mountain bike because they are interested in experiencing excitement, and experiencing different trails (Rowsell & Maher, 2017). That choice can be made long before the trip, yet it may affect individuals' trip patterns for many years (Prideaux & Carson, 2010).

An important element of the investments placed in motor vehicle use (planning, time, money) is what Sheller (2004) calls, automotive emotions. Automotive emotions are the feelings in a car and their entanglement with family, sociability, work, and space (Sheller, 2004). For example, cars are integrated into the family routine where feelings of taking care of loved ones as parents move children between places to support the needs of the family are commonplace (Sheller, 2004). For others, the automobile is an expression of social status (Sheller, 2004). Sheller (2004) suggests that the feelings associated with car use are invoked and regulated from the combination of expectations, patterns and



anticipation. Therefore, the strong emotional ties between the individual and driving, and social and economic factors can lead to lasting preferences.

Researchers have identified two types of vehicle attributes that contribute to individual's travel mode choices, instrumental (convenience, cost, flexibility, health and fitness, predictability, speed, comfort, reliability, road access, protection and privacy) and affective attributes (independence, relaxation, no stress, excitement, control, freedom, status, feelings of power and independence) (Steg, Vlek & Slotegraaf, 2001; Anable & Gatersleben, 2005; White, 2007; Butler & Hannam, 2014; Dahl & Dalbakk, 2015). Most studies conclude that both instrumental and affective attributes are important. Anable & Gatersleben's (2005) study compared the importance of instrumental and affective attributes across different transportation modes (car and public transport) for individuals travelling to work or for leisure trips. They found that people pursuing leisure day trips, regardless of the travel mode, identified both instrumental and affective aspects as equally important to their trip. For work trips, instrumental factors were more important, particularly convenience (Anable & Gatersleben, 2005). Steg et al. (2001) found similar results for car users in the Netherlands. Having used three different methods to analyze their data (similarity sorting, Q-sorting and semantic-differential method), the authors concluded that both symbolic-affective and instrumental-reasoned aspects were behind the motivation to use the car.

Anable & Gatersleben (2005) state that the link between vehicle attributes and behavioural intentions requires further research. The authors do propose that affective and instrumental attributes might be used by car users to evaluate the trip experience. In any case, understanding which instrumental or affective factors are preferred by vehicle



users creates the potential to exploit and influence individuals' choices (Anable & Gatersleben, 2005). For sustainable transportation policies, identifying what travel motivations are important can help create targeted solutions. Furthermore, if the journey itself is the purpose for the trip, when it is not achieved it can affect visitors' level of satisfaction (Anable & Gatersleben, 2005).

In Hardy & Gretzel's (2010) study, the importance of instrumental-affective attributes on tourist travel choices and trip motivations was apparent. RVing provided convenience and flexibility that supported the preference for open itineraries which made it possible to be spontaneous (Hardy & Gretzel, 2010). For RVers, the vehicle made them feel safe and secure while travelling and when deciding where to stop, but also when interacting with other RVers. Feeling safe was also important to caravanners, but they were also strongly motivated to connect with likeminded people, thus influencing their decision to travel in groups, and their interest to participate in RV rallies (Hardy & Gretzel, 2010). Thus, following Anable & Gatersleben's (2005) suggestion, tourism managers supporting RV travel can create targeted opportunities by providing group options for caravanners, or they might promote remote locations for independent RVers.

What those studies suggest is that using the automobile might not be as benign to how tourists visit and view their destination as might be otherwise assumed since this technology allows tourists to manifest their motivations and desires. Fortunately, those motivations might be an area for tourist managers and operators to focus on for capturing visitors, and offering tailored products. Certainly, as the case-study reflects, and self-drive tourism illustrates, relying on the motor vehicle for tourism has stimulated social and economic activity. However, finding more efficient ways to monitor motor vehicle-



based visitors is important to the expansion of the drive tourism industry, but also for understanding tourism in the North, and the possible implications for the region.

In any case, gaining further insights into any form of tourism in the North requires an understanding of the tourism experience. The tourist experience offers a window into the tourists' choices and behaviours that are otherwise difficult to track in this style of travel in a region as vast as the North.

### **2.3 Experiences and Narratives**

The dynamic nature of the tourist experience is seen today in two stages which Cutler & Carmichael (2010) identify as the moment-to-moment lived experience state, and the evaluation state. The choices, behaviours, activities and use of services are part of the moment-to-moment state where literature on those topics is less concerned with the result of the experience or its meaning (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Topics covered within this state explore the pre-trip and lived experience components of the tourist experience. Such research is best reflected in marketing studies which use segmentation methods to determine different needs and desires of consumers, including studies initiated by governments.

Literature focused on the moment-to-moment state tends to be centered around the destination image because of its influence on destination choices (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Topics include the motivations for travel, sociodemographics and the types, and amount of information sources that influence visitors' perception formation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999). The variety of information sources such as advertisements in print or media help foster the image of the destination, but other information sources also include professional advice from tourist operators and travel agents, word-of-mouth



from friends, relatives or social clubs, books, movies and newspapers (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999).

The evaluative state receives the most attention from researchers because it offers a way to measure the outcome of the experience. In tourism marketing research, motivations, expectations and satisfaction tend to be looked at together to evaluate tourism products and services (Culter & Carmichael, 2010). However, these studies are focused on the decision to take a trip, the decision to engage in a particular activity, and the satisfaction with those decision outcomes. One popular method of doing this is found in recreation and leisure studies which uses Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales. REP scales measure the perceived psychological benefits of recreational activities when participants rate them using Likert scales (Driver, 1983). REP scales developed by Driver (1983) and his associates are used extensively in studies related to recreation (Dawson, Newman & Watson, 1997; Raadik, Cottrell, Fredman, Ritter & Newman, 2010; Smith & Burr, 2011).

For instance, Dawson, Newman & Watson (1997) developed 41 wilderness-specific experiences that captured the recreational pursuits of visitors to the Adirondack Wilderness areas in New York State. Raadik et al. (2010) adopted those wilderness experiences to examine the motivations of visitors to the Fulufjallet National Park in Sweden. The researchers used factor analysis to examine the results of 35 REP wilderness-based experiences that asked how important each motivation was to their visit. The results were four extracted factors which explained the primary reason for their visit, including self-discovery, to experience places, to seek solitude and to challenge oneself (Raadik et al., 2010).



In another study, Smith & Burr (2011) surveyed off-highway vehicle (OHV) users in Utah. Twenty-one activities were rated by individuals in their study. The authors found ‘enjoying natural scenery’ was the highest rated motivation item, followed by “getting away from the demands of life”, “experiencing personal freedom”, “experiencing solitude” and “releasing or reducing built-up stress” which were rated at least important by the majority of OHV users (Smith & Burr, 2011, p. 889).

Instead of simply looking at the outcome as the evaluation of the trip motivations and satisfaction, one study looked at how the tourist experience can promote visitor conservation. Powell, Kellert & Ham (2008) investigated the influence of education on tourists’ immediate and future knowledge, attitudes and behavioural intentions. To do this, Powell et al. (2008) administered a questionnaire to visitors from eight Antarctic cruise ship tours during the pre-visit, post-visit and three months after the experience. The questionnaire measured changes in visitors’ knowledge of Antarctica, changes in attitudes towards the management of the continent, and changes in visitors’ behavioural intentions towards environmental action (Powell et al., 2008).

A significant increase in visitors’ knowledge of Antarctica was noted immediately after the trip. This knowledge was also retained by a large number of visitors’ three months after the experience (Powell et al., 2008). The authors also found that the visitors’ behavioural intentions (measured by the intention to: join organizations that support the environment, donate to the protection of Antarctica, avoid the use of products that are a threat to the environment, vote for the protection of the environment during elections, and participate in environmental meetings) increased immediately after the trip experience. This was not the case after three months when visitors’ behavioural intentions did not



significantly increase compared to the pre-visit experience (Powell et al., 2008). No changes were noted in visitors' attitudes towards the management of the Antarctic immediately after, or three months after the trip (Powell et al., 2008).

The tourism experience offers a lot of value. It offers tourist managers and tour operators an opportunity to provide educational awareness about environmental issues. Additionally, it also has the ability to shape potential tourists' perception and expectation of the destination.

### **2.3.1 Narratives**

Storytelling is a historical tradition in the Yukon stemming from indigenous culture, but also used by explorers, governments, scientists and visitors (Cruikshank, 2008). It is the combination of stories from those different groups, and different techniques used to share those stories which make up Yukon's history (Cruikshank, 2008). Narratives are present in various parts of the tourist system including in the stories of residents, the themes associated with the destination which are exposed through marketing, and the stories of other tourists (Moscardo, 2010). Moscardo (2010) separates the stories told by other tourists into three categories including stories from service personnel, stories from friends and family, and other tourists' stories.

The stories of other tourists are of great importance. According to Singh, Veron-Jackson & Cullinane (2008), over 60 million blogs exist online with thousands being added daily and most coming from the United States. Travel blogs may only make up a small percentage, but the ease of access to an unfiltered internet makes accessing such blogs enticing (Moscardo, 2010). The influence of those blogs, Moscardo (2010) states,



can impact the destination image, and even shape tourists' behaviours when bloggers' opinions and experiences are absorbed by potential tourists.

Tourists' stories can be used not only to decipher the meaning tourists give their experiences, they also offer a way to examine the relationship between the promotion of the destination image, and the tourists' perception of their experience. Moscardo (2010) goes so far as to claim that stories can encourage sustainable behaviour if stories are interpreted in a way that encourages conservation like behaviour.

### **2.3.2 Meaning of Experience**

How do visitors actually define their trip events and their experience of the destination, and what part of their travel becomes a part of their trip narrative? Exploring this can provide insights for targeted educational strategies, that may ultimately get passed down through stories. Prazeres & Donohoe (2014) explored this partially by focusing on how the sensescape is experienced by visitors in Kluane National Park and Reserve, Yukon. The authors found that visual perception was emphasized the most when visitors talked about their experience in the northern environment (Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014). The authors concluded that visual attractions, such as National Parks, can be used as the focus for educational opportunities, helping to enhance the visitor experience while at the same time increasing the long-term sustainability of natural areas by developing environmental stewards (Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014).

Prazeres & Donohoe (2014) interviewed visitors who spent at least one night in the Kathleen Lake campground in the Yukon. Interviews were conducted on site and asked broad questions that were designed to be inclusive of a wide range of sensory experiences (Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014). Content analysis was used to obtain themes



that were representative of visitors' experiences. This was initiated by identifying manifest content in participants' responses through keywords which were then organized into tangible and non-tangible themes. The authors explored how those themes were communicated in relation to the sensory experience (Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014). Six themes emerged from their study but they were not limited solely to the sensory experience. Those themes included: "uniqueness, solitude, naturalness, scale, education and climate change" (Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014, p. 6).

For example, the uniqueness noted in Prazeres & Donohoe's (2014) study, was a distinguished part of visitors' experience because it contrasted with visitors' memories of urban life. Uniqueness was also used to represent nature-based experiences in other studies. For example, Farber & Hall (2007) examined what made an experience special or extraordinary along the Dalton Highway in Alaska. Extraordinary experiences are those which elicit strong feelings. The authors found that uniqueness, or novelty, was one of the top five important factors that determined if an experience was considered special or extraordinary (Farber & Hall, 2007). In one case, the element of surprise that came with driving was considered unique. In another case, uniqueness came from a feeling that had never been experienced before (Farber & Hall, 2007). Such was the case for an individual who felt a connection to historical explorers. Consequently, Farber & Hall (2007) stated that extraordinary experiences were often spontaneous and difficult to plan for.

Farber & Hall (2007) also used content analysis to obtain six factors that represented the narratives of their subjects. Those included the scenery, wildlife, recreation, social interactions and novel experiences. To obtain those themes, the



researchers had administered a questionnaire to 400 participants and used qualitative data analysis through QSR N\*Vivo to code those narratives.

Another way experiences were represented in narratives was as solitude. Prazeres & Donohoe's (2014) visitors noted the absence of crowds along trails, or in campgrounds. The representation of solitude in those narratives was expressed as a comparison to different places like urban centres. In Bricker & Kertetter's (2002) study, several of their white water rafter subjects wrote about places where they thought crowding and environmental degradation may occur. Other subjects wrote about their concern for future development which could cause negative environmental or social impacts (Bricker & Kertetter, 2002). In both studies the importance of solitude was represented differently, but in both studies, solitude was seen in a positive light.

Farber & Hall (2014) noted that social interactions generally contribute to the quality of special experiences, but the authors did not find this to be the case in their results. They did identify a few exceptions where social interactions were considered important but not necessarily extraordinary or special. Firstly, building closeness with family members was extremely important to some, and secondly some of their participants mentioned that local residents were considered interesting or inspiring (Farber & Hall, 2014). The authors suggest that the importance of social interactions to a quality experience may vary according to the trip type and trip length (Farber & Hall, 2014).

The theme naturalness, used to express a variety of keywords ("unspoiled, wild, rugged, untouched, undisturbed, pristine") in Prazeres & Donohoe's (2014) study, was also a defining experience and alluded to the pristine aspect of campgrounds (p. 6). While



weather helped influence the mood of visitors, it also affected their activity participation. Scenery was also one of the top-rated special experiences identified by Farber & Hall's (2007) subjects, but unlike naturalness (pristineness), the scenery theme was representative of a large number of different components including spectacular views and open spaces that were breathtaking, the mountains and ephemeral aspects like the colour or contrast of the scenery, or weather events including rain, snow and clouds (Farber & Hall, 2007). Which of those components made those experiences special or extraordinary largely depends on the individual. Unfortunately, many of those types of those components fall outside of the control of management, and therefore cannot be planned (Farber & Hall, 2007).

Bricker & Kerstetter (2002) in their study, identified the environmental-landscape category to represent the beauty of nature and serenity, wildness, remoteness and natural features. Other categories developed by those scholars included human-social dimension, recreation dimension, heritage-historic dimension and commodity dimension. To obtain those dimensions, Bricker & Kerstetter (2002) asked their study subjects to follow detailed instructions that would guide them to describe meaningful places they encountered along their recreational route. Detailed narratives were created and the researchers explored those narratives through an iterative process. This process involved creating categories that captured the essence of individual experiences, adjusting those categories to include broader representations, and using a qualitative data analysis system to code results.

Recreation was also representative of visitors' experiences in Bricker & Kerstetter's (2002) study, and to a small extent Farber & Hall's (2007) study. For the



former researchers, the recreation dimension represented learning or skill testing, and the enjoyment of the activity (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002). For the latter, recreational activities were only slightly considered extraordinary. Those activities included hiking camping, or visiting settlements (Farber & Hall, 2007). Other ways in which visitors expressed their experience related to: scale (the grandness of the landscape), education and commodity including what facilities and amenities were offered in places (Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014; Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002).

Common themes exist in how nature-based experiences are represented by visitors pursuing different activities in the natural environment (camping activities, white water rafting and extraordinary experiences). The representations which were found in those three research studies, included: nature, wildlife, solitude, human interactions, recreation, heritage, novelty, grandness, education, climate change and protection, and commodity. Based on those themes and diverse definitions, it is evident how dynamic the tourist experience is, but it also identifies which experience is prevalent in nature-related pursuits (Prazeres & Donhoe, 2014).

Additionally, those studies also highlight the importance of tourism, therefore strengthening the need for protecting places that offer those opportunities (Farber & Hall, 2007). As Bricker & Kerstetter (2002) conclude, more research needs to identify the representations of different activities to determine the different representations made between activities. One of those activities that should be explored is that related to drive tourism.



## **2.4 Summary**

Three areas of literature were reviewed in this chapter including tourism in northern regions, drive tourism and tourist experiences. Detailed information about tourism in the North, the areas where research has been concentrated, and where research falls short with particular attention to sustainability and road transportation are presented in Section 2.1. This section also reflects on the usefulness of collecting data on tourists' personal insights about their experience.

Section 2.2 presents research on drive tourism noting that this travel style can be difficult to monitor. This section also looks at the economic challenges of drive tourism and the push for tourist operators to try and influence this market by creating targeted products and services. It was also noted that most research on drive tourism seems to collect data that are similar to what governments collect. Therefore, to capture these tourists, understanding their needs and preferences is the way forward, and this includes understanding the influence of instrumental-affective components of motor vehicle use.

Section 2.3 reviewed the literature on the tourist experience and the different ways that it is studied. This section also looked at the potential for the tourist experience to promote conservation through education and the sharing of stories. This section ends by looking at how the meaning of the tourist experience can be looked at using themes.



### **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

This chapter describes and justifies the approaches and methods used in this case-study. The overall aim of this exploratory research was to understand the experience of motor vehicle-based tourists in the Yukon by exploring the three phases that make up the experience: pre-trip planning, trip experience and post experience. Additionally, the objective of this research was to explore the narratives that result from those experiences. Four guiding questions guided this research: 1) What are motor vehicle-based tourists' expectations of the Yukon?, 2) How do Yukon tourists' expectations influence their motor vehicle travel?, 3) How does the motor vehicle influence tourists' experiences in the Yukon?, and 4) How is the Yukon reflected in the narratives of motor vehicle tourists? A comprehensive examination of the literature was used to develop a semi-structured questionnaire that would help answer the guiding questions. The questionnaire was administered to Yukon tourists in-person and online. Closed-ended questions focused on the pre-trip planning and trip experience while the open-ended portion of the questionnaire targeted the evaluation of the trip; in other words, the post-travel experience. Context analysis was used for the open-ended questions.

This chapter first discusses case study analysis in qualitative research, including the benefits and challenges of its use, and the rationale for its application in this research. Section 3.2 explains the methods that were employed in this research: academic literature, document analysis and the questionnaire. The aims and constraints of the questionnaire, the data collection and analysis are also explained in this section. Finally, background on the study area concludes this chapter in section 3.3.



### 3.1 Methodology

This research uses a mixed methods approach. The mixed methods procedure incorporates both qualitative and quantitative methods into the research design where one method is used to enhance the results of the other method (Creswell, 2009). The qualitative aspect of the questionnaire identify the concepts and relationships representative of the study and the quantitative data will help verify those relationships (Creswell, 2009). Although both qualitative and quantitative data are incorporated in this research, this study mainly used a qualitative approach.

A qualitative approach aims to interpret things like events, behaviours or society, where these things are studied within their natural setting (Della Porta & Keating, 2008; Davies & Hughes, 2014). The common characteristics of qualitative research, which are explained in the following paragraphs, include (Creswell, 2009; Yin, 2014):

- Collecting data at the site of inquiry
- Relying on participants for the meaning of the issues
- Research being interpretive
- Utilizing the researcher as a key instrument for collecting data
- The design being emergent
- Using inductive analysis
- Collecting data by multiple sources

A qualitative approach uses a constructivist worldview, which is founded on the belief that reality is a social construct, and many perspectives define its meaning (Esterberg, 2011; Creswell, 2013). The meaning of the phenomenon comes from participants' perspectives, and from those perspectives, cultural values, the diversity of



society and human behaviour are made visible (Creswell, 2013; Della Porta & Keating, 2008). However, meaning needs to be interpreted which makes the researcher a key instrument in data collection, thus contributing to the subjective nature of the data (Creswell, 2009). Consequently, because qualitative research is largely based on subjective meaning, replicating the research project can be difficult.

It is natural for a qualitative study to be exploratory because each event, program, individual or community is inherently different, and often there is limited, or incomplete knowledge about the phenomenon. As a result of that uncertainty, the research design would require some adjustments, as new, emerging information became apparent. Since qualitative research is often applicable when little is known about a topic or a population, inductive reasoning is appropriate for analysis. In inductive analysis, general observations are made about the phenomenon from the data that were collected (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, because of the diverse perspectives about a phenomenon, small-scale qualitative research projects are often more practical, and in many instances the results are not generalizable to the greater population (Esterberg, 2011). Some common strategies used in a qualitative study include grounded theory, ethnography, narrative research, observational studies, case studies and phenomenological research (Creswell, 2013). It is also common for qualitative studies to use more than one of those strategies for collecting data to increase data possibilities. Using multiple sources can strengthen the emerging patterns by offsetting biases of the other methods (Creswell, 2009).

For instance, in this study, a quantitative approach was used to clarify the results found in the open-ended questions, providing important details and explanations to



participants' responses. Using a qualitative and quantitative approach together can also take the form of mixed methods. In mixed methods, data that are collected by qualitative and quantitative approaches are almost done as separate studies since each approach has its own questions and purpose that would later be used to validate the other approach or to provide missing data that could not be collected using the other approach (Creswell, 2013).

### **3.1.1 Case Study Approach**

This research used a case-study procedure to inquire about the research problem. Cases can be events, programs, processes or they can look at a single individual (Creswell, 2013). There are many definitions of what constitutes a case-study, but a useful definition can be found in the work of Robert Yin who has written extensively about case-study research, "a case is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (2009, 18). In other words, using the case-study method allows the researcher to look closely at a phenomenon by looking at specific examples of that phenomenon, and very importantly, within the context that the phenomenon occurs.

According to Yin (2009), there are four types of case-study designs: single-case holistic, single-case embedded, multiple-case holistic and multiple-case embedded. In a single-case study, a phenomenon such as an event, program or individual will be looked at whereas a multiple-case study looks at multiple phenomena. Yin (2009) compared the multiple-case study to that of multiple experiments, where the experiments can replicate one another, or they can be different and the cases can then be compared to each other or



used to build the subsequent case-study (Robson, 2011). Multiple-case studies should not be mistakenly considered equivalent with the number of participants responding to a survey (Yin, 2009).

A holistic-case study looks at a case in a global context where no subunits of analysis are evident. Consequently, with the holistic design, a case-study may become too abstract (Yin, 2009). In an embedded case design, subunits that are defined within the case can make the phenomenon easier to tackle. Having subunits within the case gives the opportunity to examine the data between and across the subunits (Yin, 2009). One challenge of the embedded design is to maintain the focus on the research problem rather than on the subunits (Yin, 2009).

Research questions that are considered appropriate for case-study design ask “how” and “why” (Yin, 2009). Such questions are not simply interested in the frequency of an event, rather they investigate the “operational links” that are woven within the phenomenon (Yin, 2009, 9). To answer such questions detailed information and a variety of data types are required in case-study research (Creswell, 2013). There are a variety of research methods that can be used to collect, analyze and interpret data for a case-study. For instance, participant observations, interviews, focus groups and unobtrusive measures, such as texts or court transcripts, are typical in qualitative research (Esterberg, 2011). Methods more often used in quantitative studies can also be applied in a case-study design (Creswell, 2013). In this research three methods were used and are explained in more detail under the 3.2 Methods section. Those methods include: academic literature review, document analysis, and the questionnaire.



The mixed methods approach, which was predominantly qualitative in nature, with an embedded case-study strategy was suitable for this research since the common characteristics associated with this approach were in line with the objective of this study. For example, the context was very important to the study because of the subjective nature of tourists' experiences that can only be understood by knowing the context of their trip; the meaning of participants' travel experience was the key interest in this research; experience is composed of various subunits, and in this research those subunits were divided according to the three phases of travel, justifying the use of embedded design; participants' trip experience required interpretation by the researcher; the research design was constantly being adjusted to the emerging information about the topic; the data analysis was inductive in that various components of participants' experiences were examined to understand the experience in general (through content analysis); and multiple sources of data were used in the form of secondary sources and the questionnaire. Since detailed data was necessary to understand the experience, only a single-case study was manageable for a masters' thesis.

### **3.2 Methods**

This section looks at the questions guiding this research and the two methods used to meet the objective of the case study: documents and a semi-structured questionnaire. Before this research was undertaken, it was approved by Wilfrid Laurier University's Research Ethics Board, # 4856. Since research was conducted in the Yukon, a Yukon Scientists and Explorer's License, # 16-65 S&E, was also obtained.

In August 2013, I had spent a month in the Yukon as a motor vehicle-based tourist. During my travel, I engaged in many recreational activities and visited many



communities in the Yukon. My experience started in Ontario with a small sedan. It took me approximately three weeks to arrive to the Yukon since I made stops along the way. These experiences should be taken into account by the reader as they have undoubtedly shaped my views of this travel style, and have most likely made their way into the pages of this thesis.

### **3.2.1 Secondary Sources**

Secondary sources such as academic journals, government reports and archival documents can provide useful information about a topic. Reviewing the literature from secondary sources allows existing theories to be explored, and the context of the phenomenon becomes familiar (Esterberg, 2011). Simultaneously, this review uncovers gaps and obstacles that are rooted within the topic (Esterberg, 2011). For this research, secondary sources were used for several reasons. Initially, background information was obtained about the study area and about motor vehicle-based travel. This included the role of tourism in the North, and in Yukon, as well as the current knowledge of motor vehicle-based travel. There is ample information about Yukon tourists on the Government of Yukon website ([http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/isu\\_vtp.html](http://www.tc.gov.yk.ca/isu_vtp.html)), however that information is geared toward businesses and industry, rather than academic research. Yukon's Indicator Reports illustrate data about border crossings on a monthly and annual basis (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2017). However, those reports do not always use the same format, nor do they always collect the same data which makes comparison a bit challenging. Instead, the Visitor Tracking Program survey, which collects the most detailed information about tourists, was used to provide information regarding motor vehicle tourists. One drawback of using this data is that it is collected once every five



years (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Additionally, the reports from the YVTP played a central role in developing a questionnaire for this study. Guiding questions were designed using secondary sources to guide the research, the aim was to answer those questions using a questionnaire. The guiding questions and their rationale include:

**1) What are motor vehicle-based tourists' expectations of Yukon?**

**2) How do Yukon tourists' expectations influence their motor vehicle travel?**

Specifically, these questions were interested in participant's initial expectation of the Yukon, and thus reflect the pre-trip planning phase. In other words, what were participants' expectations based on the purpose of their travel, who they travelled with, what resources they used for planning their travel and what motivated them? As well, what vehicle did they use to travel to the destination and how long did they travel?

**3) How does the motor vehicle influence tourists' experiences in the Yukon?**

This question was interested in the trip experience, especially the motor vehicle-based experience including: what vehicle(s) were used to travel within Yukon, how many hours were spent in a motor vehicle each day, how important were instrumental and affective factors to participants' motor vehicle use, what activities did participants engage in, which accommodations were preferred and how many places were visited?

**4) How is Yukon reflected in the narratives of motor vehicle tourists?**

The final question looked at tourists' experience in Yukon, and how they viewed their experience. Tourists' experiences were explored by looking at the places they recalled and the meanings they gave those places, their level of satisfaction, the reflection of their experience and their least favourite experience. Additionally, the guiding question



explored the implications of those experiences by looking at how often, and with whom tourists shared those experiences.

The guiding questions were designed around the three phases of travel that make up the trip experience, which has been summarized in the work of Cutler & Carmichael (2010). Other publications that helped build the guiding questions included: Chen & Tsai (2007), Moscardo (2010), Pitkanen (2010) and Cruikshank (1998), for their insights into the role of destination image, stories and narratives on place perception; Haldrup (2004), Urry & Larsen (2011), O'Neill (2001) and Gnoth (1997), on tourism patterns, experiences and motivations; Prideaux & Carson (2010), Hardy (2006), Steg et al., (2001), Sheller (2004), Anable & Gatersleben (2004) and White (2007), regarding drive tourism, and instrumental and affective motor vehicle components. A fuller review of the literature used in this research can be found in Chapter 2. The guiding questions were answered using more specific questions in the questionnaire.

### **3.2.2 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire is a type of survey method. The survey method is often considered a quantitative technique, but its application can be found in social science disciplines as diverse as environmental science, planning, psychology, behaviour, attitudinal, leisure and tourism studies (Veal, 1994). The most well-known survey methods include questionnaires and interviews. Interviews are often applied in qualitative research and include a face-to-face encounter between interviewer and interviewee. They can be a very useful data collection tool since they help keep participants engaged, provide opportunities to clarify answers and questions, and offer interviewers the chance to incorporate non-verbal cues otherwise missed through phone conversations, email



correspondence or other indirect interactions (Esterberg, 2011). However, there are notable disadvantages of this technique which made it impractical to apply in this study. Those disadvantages included: the time and financial costs of face-to-face interactions, access to interviewees, the number of participants that can be interviewed and the dependence on the interviewer's skills and abilities (Esterberg, 2011).

Questionnaires on the other hand, are a simple way to reach large numbers of participants, and they are financially feasible and less time consuming. They can be applied through online or paper formats, and they require participants to choose the best possible response from a set number of structured answers. Structured questions are an easy and quick way to filter through participants that are not suitable for the study, or to obtain a general understanding of the sample being studied. For example, using structured questions to inquire about participants' demographics or logistical questions can help illustrate commonalities between participants quickly. The questionnaire results can be categorized using codes, while statistical software makes descriptive statistics easy to illustrate. Consequently, structured questions limit the type, and the extent of the answers, resulting in data that excludes the context contributing to the phenomenon (Davies & Nathan, 2014). Fortunately, when open-ended questions are included, the limit on the answers is overcome, and participants can recall a personalized account of their experience. Questions that explore subjective topics such as values, mindsets, motivations or experiences can benefit from unstructured responses.

This research used a semi-structured questionnaire for the reasons already mentioned. The questionnaire largely referenced the survey structure of the YVTP (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a) survey for several reasons. Using the YVTP survey would



have been an opportunity to compare a specific group such as motor vehicle-based travellers, with other Yukon tourists who participated in the YVTP survey.

Unfortunately, because of Yukon's small tourist population, and the small sample that responded to the YVTP survey, the Department of Tourism and Culture would not release detailed data for this research from the YVTP to protect the privacy of the respondents. Although the questionnaire developed for this research could not be used as initially hoped, it was a useful guide in formulating the questionnaire for this research. Particularly because the YVTP is organized around the three phases of the travel experience; just like this research. Additionally, applying the framework of the YVTP survey was thought to be beneficial because it was designed by experts from the tourist industry, senior tourism and marketing staff and committees, and the Tourism Industry Association of Yukon (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). In summary, using the YVTP survey as a framework for the questionnaire would serve one of the objectives of this research.

However, the questionnaire for this research diverged from the YVTP in several areas. Unlike the YVTP, the questionnaire did not include questions related to: language, financial spending, comparing destinations, time spent deciding about the destination, technologies used, cruise ships or ferries, exits, airlines, or rewards programs as a way to keep the questionnaire relatively short. Furthermore, this research used the Recreation Experience Preference (REP) scales to assess tourists' motivations, while the YVTP simply asked *What two things most motivated or inspired you to take this trip* (Driver, 1983; Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). REP scales are commonly used for understanding motivations of outdoor recreationists (Raadik et al., 2010). Using the REP



scale, rather than explicitly asking participants about their motivations, kept the responses to a workable load by restricting unrelated motivations.

Applying the REP model involves listing a series of experiences that represent certain interests, desires, motivations, expectations and other push and pull forces. Participants then choose which of those experiences are representative of their underlying expectations. Thus, as Driver (1983) warns, REP scales should only be used on participants with previous experience with the activity. One important component of REP is that they constitute 235 experiences which, for this research, were reduced to a manageable size using studies that were compatible with the objective of this paper. The studies referenced for that purpose were Smith & Burr (2011), who examined the desired social-psychological benefits of off-highway vehicle riders in the US, and the work of Dawson, Newman & Watson (1997) and Raadik et al., (2010), whose research explored the desired experience of US and Swedish wilderness users. The result was 38 experiences that were employed in the questionnaire.

Additionally, to ensure that the adopted REP experiences would not exclude pleasures and attributes related to motor vehicle use, a list of motor vehicle-related experiences were obtained from: Steg et al., (2001), Sheller (2004), Dant (2004), Anable & Gatersleben (2004) and White (2007). This list of motor vehicle-specific motivations was included in a separate question asking participants *How important were the following factors to your motor vehicle use in the YUKON?*

Another objective of this research was to obtain personalized accounts of motor vehicle-based tourists' experiences, and four questions were used to obtain those accounts. Participants were asked to rate their level of satisfaction to get a sense of the



overall outcome of their trip (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). However, because satisfaction is a personal evaluation that reflects on emotions and self-identity, using satisfaction as a blanket term to understand the experience has been criticized by scholars (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Therefore, subsequent questions were asked that would fill in the complexity of the tourist experience.

Tourists' expectations of the Yukon were important to this study, therefore one of the questions asked was: *Reflecting on your experience in Yukon, select from memory a place that was memorable, special or important to you and EXPLAIN WHY?* The work of Bricker & Kerstetter (2002) helped formulate this question. Bricker & Kerstetter (2002) examined the place attachment of white water recreationists to nature-based places. They used the word 'special' to illustrate that a place had value, and the interpretation of that value was called upon, like in this study. Another objective of this research was to identify how tourists identify or recollect their experience, thus the questionnaire asked: *Imagine you are writing about your experience on a personal blog or telling your closest friend or relative about your trip, how would your story go?* To account for the negative experiences that can affect perception and memory, the questionnaire also asked participants: *What was your least favourite experience in Yukon?* Finally, how and to whom participants would reflect their experience was captured in a series of multiple choice questions.

The questionnaire was revised several times and piloted to five graduate students at Wilfrid Laurier University. Students were asked to provide feedback about their experience in responding to the questionnaire. The graduate students had no previous experience in the Yukon, therefore they were asked to reflect on their most recent long



distance trip using a motor vehicle. Overall the students provided positive feedback, however several of the questions were not applicable to them and as a result were omitted. The questionnaire was finally approved by the thesis supervisor, and Wilfrid Laurier University's Research Ethics Board, #4856. Input was also received from a Research Analyst from the Government of Yukon's Department of Tourism and Culture.

### **3.2.3 Data Collection**

After the questionnaire was approved, several means were used to collect the data. First, the Information Letter and Consent Statement and the questionnaire (see Appendix A), were uploaded to Simple Survey, an online survey agent that hosts the questionnaire and stores the data on computer servers in Canada. Next, a list of travel forums was created using Google's search engine. An account was made on eighteen of those travel forums and blogs. A Summary of Important Information (see Appendix B) that was approved by the REB, was posted on those forums explaining the questionnaire and the actions participants need to take to participate. A link was included in the post which brought participants to the Information Letter and Consent Statement. If they agreed to the terms, participants were connected to the questionnaire. If a participant did not agree, they would be disqualified from the study. Consequently, many forums flagged the accounts that were used, or they simply disabled them since posting questionnaires and recruiting participants was considered soliciting and went against forum policies. As a result, further postings were not possible. In some instances, forums only allowed for one



posting that quickly became outdated. After several months, with fewer than 15 participants, another strategy for recruiting participants had to be applied.

Another strategy to recruit participants for the study involved the distribution and the placement of posters (see Appendix C) at relevant locations in the Yukon. Once a Yukon Scientists and Explorer's License was obtained and on-site research was approved, on-site research started in July 2016, and was completed in August 2016, for an approximate two-week span. Single-page posters were distributed along the Yukon's major highway artery, the Alaska Highway. Posters were left in several private accommodation structures including: lodges, motels, campgrounds or RV parks (Junction 37 Services RV Park, Baby Nugget RV Park, Rancheria Lodge, Robert Service Campground, Yukon Motel and Lakeshore Rest, Johnson's Crossing Lodge and Spirit Lake Wilderness Campground). Posters were also left in Yukon campgrounds that had a bulletin board. Other places where the posters were located included coffee shops in Whitehorse, as well as at a bakery in Haines Junction. Additionally, posters were left at the three main Alaska Highway government Visitor Information Centres in Watson Lake, Whitehorse and Haines Junction. Participants were also approached at two of those Visitor Centres, where they were handed a poster if they showed interest in the study.

A total of 39 responses ultimately were collected on the Simple Survey server. Fifteen from the online forums, and the remaining 24 came from in-person recruitment. An additional 25 questionnaires had been attempted online but were not completed. Incomplete questionnaires were not accessible and therefore not included as part of the study sample. Participants were given approximately four months to complete their questionnaires, after which point questionnaires were no longer accepted.



### 3.2.4 Analysis

The results from the questionnaire were interpreted in two ways, but first the data had to be coded and input into an excel spreadsheet. Each individual case was coded from IP 1 to IP 39. The close-ended questions that relied on quantitative responses were examined using descriptive analysis, such as central tendency. Also, since the sample of individuals was small (under 40 cases), the results were presented in detail and as frequencies. Percentages were not used because they can be misleading, since a small change in data can result in noticeable changes in percentages (Healey & Prus, 2010).

Open-ended questions, on the other hand, were interpreted using content analysis. Content analysis occurs when textual information is systematically analyzed (Esterberg, 2011). For example, themes within the textual data are extracted by the researcher and the frequency of those themes is obtained (Esterberg, 2011). In this study, four questions were interpreted using content analysis. The response for each question was looked at individually, and the topics that were evident in each response were noted. According to Esterberg (2011), researchers can count words in the text directly which she refers to as manifest content, or another approach is to look at the meaning that is implied in the text, which is referred to as latent content. Both types of content analysis were used in this study, mostly manifest content, however in a few cases latent content had to be used as the ideas in the text were implied.

The content analysis process is illustrated using Q 18: *Are there any activities or experiences in Yukon which you would have liked to have participated in, but were not able to?* Each individual response was looked at and categorized according to four basic topics that were apparent: transportation-related activities, cultural-based activities, heritage-related activities and nature-based activities/natural features (see Appendix D for



individual responses). From the responses within each basic topic, key ideas became noticeable, and key words were used to simplify those ideas, some of which could be grouped together (see Table 1). The simplified key words were also compared across the basic topics to make sure similar ideas were grouped together. Once themes were derived from the grouped key words, definitions were also created to maintain clarity and distinction between the themes (Table 1). Table 1 illustrates the key words, themes, and associated definitions derived for Q 18. The last part of the content analysis, which was to define the themes, was especially important because some responses could be grouped into more than one theme.

**Table 1: Derived themes and definitions**

<b>Simplified Key Words (Frequency)</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>General and Specific Definition</b>
-Summer solstice (1) -First Nations activities (1) -Music festival (1)	<b>Culture</b>	Engaging in “the set of values, conventions, or social practices associated with a particular field, activity, or society characteristics” (Merriam-Webster, 2017).
-More nature contact (1) -Wilderness camping (2) -Hike (3) -Rock climbing (1) -Canoeing/rafting/paddle sports (6) -Flight see (4)	<b>Recreation</b>	Participating in leisure activities during a person’s spare time. Recreation encompasses outdoor recreation (activities near one’s community), adventure tourism (activities that require travelling some distance to engage in them) and nature tourism (experiences that depend on the natural environment) (Webster, 2014).
-Mt. Logan/glacier flight (4) -Wildlife (3) -Northern lights (2)	<b>Observe nature</b>	Engaging with the natural environment predominantly through the ocular senses.
-Parks lecture (1) -Guided walk (1)	<b>Education</b>	The process of acquiring knowledge about a destination during the trip.
-Gold panning (5) -Museum (1)	<b>Heritage</b>	Engaging with “valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and



-White Pass (2) -Chilkoot hike (1)		cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations” (Heritage, n.d.).
-Drive to Inuvik (1) -Drive the North Canol Rd. (1) -Drive Highway 4 (Robert Campbell) (1) -ATV travel (1) -Drive the Dempster Highway (3)	<b>Motorized vehicle travel</b>	Activities related to the use of motorized vehicles.
- <i>My husband wanted to find a catholic school that he and a group of volunteers built 50 years ago. We didn't find it in the time we had in Whitehorse...</i> (1)	<b>Other</b>	Activities that do not clearly fit within any other theme.
-None (6)	<b>None</b>	When no activities were listed.

The responses for the remaining open-ended questions were much more elaborate and took a significant amount of time to sort through. The process used for Q 18 had to be repeated several times for the remaining questions to make sure that the same ideas were grouped together and that the same types of themes developed.

One of the criticisms of content analysis is the subjective interpretation of data. To some, this flaw fits into the constructivist worldview supported by the qualitative approach, which recognizes that the researcher is an active part of the research study (Esterberg, 2011). In exploratory research, content analysis is an excellent way to identify the variables that are important to the phenomenon, which are otherwise unknown or unclear. This was the case in this study.



**Figure 1: Map of the Yukon Territory and Important Features**





### **3.3 Case Study Background**

The Yukon (Figure 1) covers 484,000 square km, with a population of approximately 38,000 residents living within 16 Yukon communities (Executive Council Office, 2017). The Yukon's attracting features include mountains, tundra, wilderness, wildlife, the remnants of the gold rush period, native culture, and the northern lights. Passive visitors are the most common types of tourists in Yukon, where wilderness viewing and the natural scenery are the most popular attractions (Johnston & Madunic, 1995). Eleven different highways spanning approximately 5,000 km of well-maintained roads support a passive experience (Travel Yukon, 2016).

The Yukon was used as the study site for this research for several reasons. First, tourism in Yukon is expected to grow (Marketing Unit, 2015). Contributing to this growth is the increasing global interest in natural areas, and northern regions like the Yukon are the epitome of the wilderness experience that can satisfy such interest. Furthermore, tourism is the Yukon's second largest industry, and significant investments continue to expand that market (Government of Yukon, 2016). For example, self-driving tours, and other 'rubber-tire traffic' have been noted in the Yukon's 2015-2016 Marketing Plan as areas for future investment. In addition, Yukon's vast wilderness, and the territory's dispersed communities, make vehicle travel the optimal way to view the region. It is also evident that the Yukon caters to the motor vehicle-based tourist group when looking at the 42 government campgrounds offered along 11 highways, at the affordable price of \$12 a night (Environment Yukon, 2017). Campgrounds are scattered along highways, making them distant enough from cities, towns and villages that they require a vehicle to access. Personal or private vehicle users make up the Yukon's



dominant visitor base, and Americans made up 63% of Yukon visitors (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013b). American tourists are especially significant because a large portion of those travellers, 43%, are destined for Alaska (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). If they can be enticed to visit Yukon specifically, they offer an opportunity to expand the tourist market. Finally, Yukon's image, having been shaped by the territory's legacy and myths, has the potential to be molded by current tourism consumers because of the global trends in documenting and sharing experiences on travel blogs, forums and other online social mediums.

Investment in the Yukon's tourism marketing have been substantial since 2016 when the Government of Canada renewed the biennial \$3.6 million investment in the Yukon Now marketing program (Government of Yukon, 2016). The Yukon Liberal Party announced it will maintain the biennial investment by taking over the Federal government's contributions to maintain the yearly \$1.8 million investment (Government of Yukon, 2018a). Those marketing investments are the largest they have ever been in the territory's history, and have been attributed to the increase in tourist visitation in 2017. Tourist air arrivals increased by 18% since 2016 and international border crossings had increased by 4% from 2016 (Government of Yukon, 2018a).

### **3.3.1 Tourism in Yukon**

In the Yukon, research on motor vehicle-based travel is challenging to find. One study dating back to 1995 looked at the environmental impacts of waste disposal in the Yukon in relation to recreational vehicles. The authors found that 33% of tourists using a recreational vehicle had problems finding or disposing the contents of their vehicle's holding tanks (Johnston & Madunic, 1995). Their study also found that six percent of



participants witnessed illegal dumping of tank content (Johnston & Madunic, 1995).

Visitor impacts are difficult to monitor and regulate because of the territory's vast landmass, and with different jurisdictions across borders it becomes next to impossible to collect and monitor accurate data. This is especially the case along trans-territorial, provincial and national highways (Stewart et al., 2005).

The Government of Yukon uses various sources of information to collect data about transportation activity. The sources of data used to collect that information include, border crossings, visitor estimates, data from Visitor Information Centres and air travel information (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016a). That information is presented in monthly Yukon Tourism Visitation Reports. Year-End Reports summarize that information, while including data points from other sources like the Yukon Bureau of Statistics, Statistics Canada, the Canadian Tourism Research Institute, Bank of Canada, the International Monetary Fund, and other sources (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016b). Since Year-End Reports include different sources of data, the results are different from the results presented in the visitation reports. Also, the information that is presented in Year-End Reports can vary from year to year, which makes it difficult to compare across years. Furthermore, the format of Year-End Reports also changes from year to year, which also makes it difficult to compare between years.

As a result, the Yukon Tourism Visitation Reports provide more consistent and comparable data across years and months which makes them more useful for understanding tourists' transportation activities. Thus, in this study a background about Yukon's motor vehicle-based visitors was obtained from those visitation reports.



Transportation data that are collected by Yukon's tourism industry includes tourists' place of entrance and exit to and from the territory, the communities visited, place of origin, time spent in the territory, and the types of travel methods used (motorcycle, car, truck, RV, train, airplane or boat) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Air travel increased by nearly 40% between 2003 and 2008 (Maher, 2010). However, vehicle tourists still make up most of the market (Table 2). Private vehicle use declined after 2013, but in 2016 the numbers surpassed what was recorded in 2013 (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2014; 2015; 2016a). Motorcoach travel has continued to decline since 2013, decreasing by 13% in 2016 (Table 2). Air travel increased by 214% in 2014, a result of a tour operator that switched from transporting passengers by motorcoach to using air travel. As a result, motorcoach travel decreased by 8,314 people while air travel increased by 9,802 people in 2014 (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2014). However, in 2016, air travel decreased by 6% from 12,742 flights in 2015, to 11,997 flights in 2016. In any case, air travel still only makes up approximately 4% of total border crossings (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016a).

This information differs significantly from what is presented in the 2016 Year-End Report which notes that 169,448 arrivals were recorded at the Erik Neilson Whitehorse International Airport and that those numbers have been steadily increasing since 2013 (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016b). Although those numbers include both business and local traffic, the inconsistencies between those reports make it challenging to get an accurate reflection of accurate visitor numbers. Motor vehicle-based travel within the territory is inevitable because Yukon's main tourist attraction is the landscape, representing nearly 5% of Canada's landmass (Government of Yukon,



2015). Travel is central to understanding the tourism sector in the Yukon, but information about vehicle-based tourism is inconsistent and provides limited insights about tourists' interaction with the destination.

**Table 2: Yukon border crossing statistics by transportation method obtained from the Yukon Tourism Visitation Reports**

<b>Crossings by vehicle type</b>	<b>Jan to Dec 2013</b>	<b>Jan to Dec 2014</b>	<b>Jan to Dec 2015</b>	<b>Jan to Dec 2016</b>	<b>% change 2013-2014</b>	<b>% change 2014-2015</b>	<b>% change 2015-2016</b>
Total Border Crossings	350,095	341,707	327,778	335,490	2	4	2
*Total Private Vehicles	200,434	190,558	176,752	203,560	-5	7	15
Total Motorcoach	145,076	136,762	138,284	119,933	-6	1	13
Total Air	4,585	14,387	12,742	11,997	214	11	6

\*Private vehicles include automobiles, cyclists and pedestrians.

Sources: Department of Tourism and Culture (2014); Department of Tourism and Culture (2015); Department of Tourism and Culture (2016a)

The following information was obtained from the December 2016, Yukon Tourism Visitation Report. In 2016, 335,490 automobiles, cyclists and pedestrians crossed the Yukon border. Nearly 66% of those visitors came from the United States, 13% travelled from countries overseas, 12% were Yukoners and 10% came from Canada (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016a). In 2016, most tourists (59%) travelling to the Yukon entered at the border between Fraser, B.C and Yukon, but 13% of them were Yukoners. This was followed by Beaver Creek (21%), Pleasant Camp (11%), Little Gold (5%) and the two airports in Whitehorse (2%) and Dawson City (2%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016a). The most common transportation used to enter the territory



was private vehicles, used by 61% of travellers, while 36% of individuals entered by motorcoach and 4% by air. Fifty-nine percent of tourists travelling from overseas and the US left Yukon the same day, while 41% stayed for one or more nights (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016a).

The most common accommodation style was some form of camping, which 59% of visitors used. Thirty percent of camping occurred in RV park/commercial campgrounds, and this increased by 6% from 2004. Other tourists, 20%, stayed in government campgrounds and 9% used pullouts (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Sixty-five percent of those who camped did so in an RV/camper/trailer, 32% used a tent, while 3% used both. Hotels and motels were used by 42% of visitors, 9% stayed in B&Bs/lodges/cabins/hostels, 9% relied on family or friends and nearly 20% visitors were there just for the day, or with a cruise (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

From the Pathways Report of the YVTP, in the summer of 2012, the most popular trip routes based on visitor's origins, included: Yukon's Western Region, visited by 73% of visitors from the United States while less than 30% of Canadians and overseas visitors included this region on their trip; the Northern Region was included on the route of 58% of visitors from Canada, and nearly 30% of US visitors and 14% of overseas visitors; while the most popular route for overseas tourists was the Southern Region which was included by 16% of overseas visitors (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013b).

Current data being collected by tourism managers specifically about motor vehicle-based tourists offers little insights about tourists' perspectives on how they view and experience the destination. As a result, limited information about the long-term



implications of this transportation method is being collected. Also, motor vehicle-based tourists are not observed separately, rather information about all tourists is collected together which makes it difficult to track the patterns of that tourist market.

Although the Department of Tourism and Culture does offer personal cross-tabulations of the existing data, data that has less than 100 responses will be suppressed, according to the Research Analyst. This makes cross-tabulation a challenge because of the relatively small visitor population. When using more than one filter to cross-tabulate data (ie: mode of transportation, visitor origin, age, etc...), the number of responses can be low. Releasing raw data is a violation of Yukon's Access to Information and Protection of Privacy (ATIPP) Act which protects against identifying information that could publicly identify an individual (Yukon Highways and Public Works, 2016). Therefore, not only is information collected about motor vehicle-based tourists limited there is also a restriction on the type of information that can be released to the public, which further limits the available data specifically about motor vehicle-based tourists.

One of the challenges for this research was to obtain a sample that was representative of the Yukon's tourist population. A comparison of this study's questionnaire and the YVTP survey, which resulted in over 3,800 completed surveys illustrates that there are a lot of similarities between tourists' characteristics in both projects (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). For example, the most common age group of participants in both studies was 55 or over, and most of the participants had at least a college or university degree. Where the two studies differed was tourist origins. Most tourists from the YVTP came from US, while this study received an overwhelming response from Canadians.



It is unclear why American tourists were less common in this study. If American tourists were heading towards Alaska, spending their time participating in a study might not have been the best way to spend their time. Also, participating in the questionnaire was encouraged after the trip, thus tourists who travelled far could have forgotten, or simply been unwilling to participate after their vacation was over. Another reason could be that fewer American tourists were near the recruitment locations. Major events like the Dawson City Music Festival that took place on July 22-26 could have kept tourists in Dawson City, where recruitment did not take place.

**Table 3: Comparing tourist characteristics between YVTP and this study**

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>YVTP</b>	<b>This study</b>	
	Percentage	Percentage	Frequency
<b>Age:</b>			
65+	20 %	24 %	9
55 – 64	31 %	41 %	15
45 – 54	25 %	5 %	2
35 – 44	14 %	16 %	6
25 – 34	6 %	14 %	5
Under 25	3 %	0	0
<b>Education:</b>			
Post Graduate University	33 %	51 %	20
College or University	50 %	46 %	18
Vocational or Technical	10 %	3 %	1
Up to High School	7 %	0	0
<b>Employment Status:</b>			
Employed or self-employed	58 %	49 %	19
Semi-retired or retired	38 %	41 %	16
Not currently employed	4 %	10 %	4
<b>Place of origin:</b>			
USA	63%	13%	5
Canada	25%	79%	30
Overseas	12%	8%	3

(Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).



This research brings the motor vehicle-based tourist to the forefront of the YVTP survey by using many of the questions from the YVTP. Also, this research asks questions that are relative specifically to the motor vehicle-based experience and, finally, this research looks at the significance of those experiences by exploring the narratives that the motor vehicle-based experience supports.

### **3.3.2 Parks and Protected Areas in the Yukon**

As travellers to the Yukon often visit and stay in many of the Territorial Parks operated by the Government of the Yukon, it is important to outline the policies governing those parks as they are important for the development of tourism in Yukon, but also for the protection of Yukon's unique landscapes. Currently, those parks operate with park-specific mandates which range from protecting pristine wilderness to providing recreational opportunities (Government of Yukon, 2018b). Six overarching guidelines support the management of Yukon Parks, including: a vision for Yukon Parks and campgrounds that considers the First Nations and Inuvialuit Final Agreement; a commitment to healthy people; a commitment to healthy campers; environmental protection that supports traditional lifestyles and ecological integrity; thriving communities that attract tourism businesses; and a sustainable future that can accommodate growing visitor numbers (Government of Yukon, 2018b).

One of the challenges for the Government of the Yukon is that parks do not recuperate their operational costs from visitor fees which might prompt the Government of Yukon to raise those fees in the future. Considering the popularity and convenience of the Government of Yukon's parks, and the currently low fees compared to most other park systems, it is unlikely an increase in park fees would decrease the number of tourists



visiting those parks. Hence, a fee increase would contribute to the long-term sustainability of those parks without impacting Yukon tourism.

Parks Canada also operates some key attractions in the Yukon such as the S.S. Klondike and a number of Historic Sites in Dawson City. Those sites also draw large numbers of visitors every year, and as Parks Canada puts it, “there is a genuine sense of curiosity, pleasure and surprise”, as visitors explore those sites (Parks Canada, 2010). The national management of those sites, and their popularity among visitors strengthens their image as the key symbols of Yukon, which makes those sites important for Yukon tourism.

### **3.4 Summary**

In this chapter, a detailed explanation was given of the methods used for this research. The goal and guiding questions, and the use of secondary sources, helped develop the four guiding questions guiding this research. Secondary sources were also used to develop the questionnaire that would help answer the guiding questions. This chapter specified how the questionnaire was applied for this study and finally broad background about the study site, including parks and protected areas in the Yukon was provided to illustrate the significance of this research. The results and the methods discussed in this chapter are found in Chapter 4.



## **Chapter 4: Results**

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section examines participants' demographics. The last three sections reflect the phases involved in the travel experience: pre-trip planning, trip experience, and post travel. A total of 39 questionnaires were completed and the following paragraphs will look at the results. The full questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. This chapter concludes with a summary of the YVTP survey.

### **4.1 Demographics**

The demographics section of the questionnaire helps answer who the motor vehicle travellers were. Looking at this section first will provide some background about the participants, making it easier to understand the responses that follow. The following demographics were collected: age, level of education, employment status and annual household income. Since travelling to the Yukon tends to be more expensive and time consuming than many other tourist destinations, it is expected that tourists will be of a certain demographic. Retirees, with post-secondary education and financial independence are the bulk of the travellers who visit the Yukon (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). This study is consistent with those findings.

#### ***Q 30. In what year were you born?***

Questionnaire participants' ages ranged between 25 and 76 years old, however the most participants were between the ages of 45 and 64 (17 respondents). Looking at the median value shows that age 60 was the middle age of participants, however two participants did not provide their age. Nine participants were over the age of 65 and 13 were under the age of 45.



***Q 32. What is your employment status?***

Close to half of the participants (16 respondents) were either retired or semi-retired. Only one participant who responded retired or semi-retired was under age 60, at age 46. There were however, slightly more participants employed or self-employed (19 respondents), than retired or semi-retired, and four participants were unemployed.

***Q 33. What is your best estimate of your TOTAL HOUSEHOLD income last year?***

For 2015, participants' median income was \$90,000 to \$109,999, however almost half of the participants (16 respondents) made \$110,000 or over. Six participants made \$49,999 or less. Consequently, it is unclear which currency (e.g.: Canadian, American or other) was used to report the total household income. Also, there was no follow up question asking how many people contributed to the total household income, therefore it is unknown whether participants who identified a lower income lived alone. The generally higher income of participants also reflects their level of education.

***Q 31. What is the highest level of education that you have completed?***

Aside from one participant whose highest level of education was vocational or technical school, the remaining participants (38 respondents) were college or university educated; and twenty of them completed postgraduate education.

## **4.2 Pre-Trip Planning**

The questions in the pre-trip planning section asked travellers why they visited the Yukon, with whom they travelled, and the type of information they used when planning their trip. The aim of those questions was to explore the types of resources

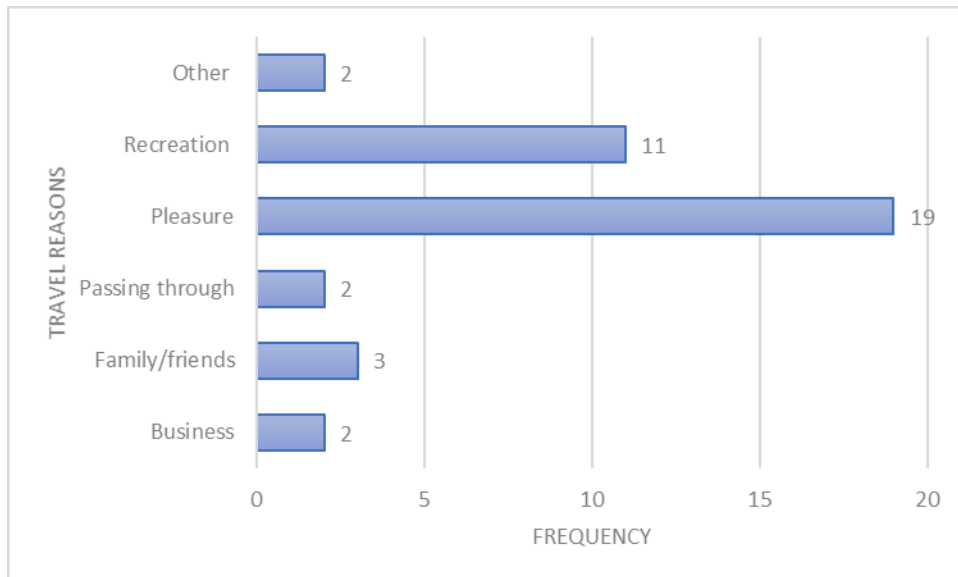


travellers used, the information they expected from online resources, and what motivated them to embark on their trip – which would indicate the types of experiences they sought, and their initial perception of the Yukon.

***Q 1. What was the primary reason you travelled to Yukon (Please select only one option)?***

From a list of six options (Figure 2), almost half of participants chose pleasure (19 respondents), and more than a quarter chose recreation (11 respondents). Two or three participants chose the remaining categories which included: family/friends, business, passing through and other. The reasons participants specified under the other category were: school placement and job search.

**Figure 2: Primary reasons participant travelled to the Yukon**



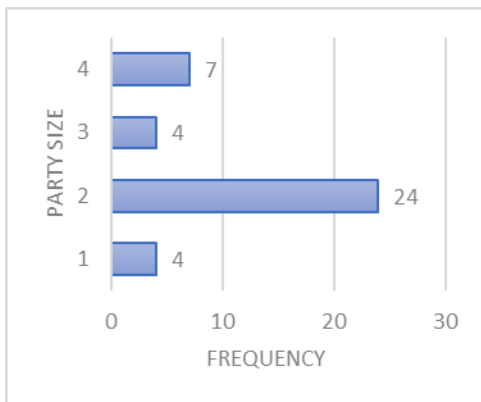
***Q 2. During your trip, including yourself, how many people in total did you travel with? Number of adults (ages 16 +)?***

***Q 3. Number of children (under the age of 16)?***

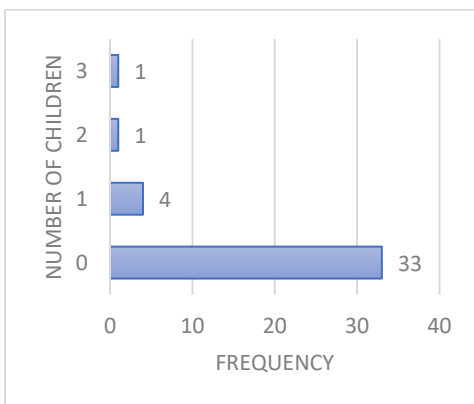


More than half of participants (24 respondents) travelled in pairs, while four travelled solo. Two of the solo travellers identified recreation as their primary travel reason, while the other two did so for business and job search. Only six participants travelled with children. Three of them identified pleasure as the primary reason for travelling to the Yukon, and the other three did so for recreation, friends/family, and passing through.

**Figure 3: Size of the travel party**



**Figure 4: Number of children**



The next two questions relate to the information participants used when planning their trip. The first question asked:

***Q 4 What type of information did you expect/desire to find on tourism destination websites when planning your Yukon trip? (e.g., TravelYukon.com, DawsonCity.ca, Tripadvisor.ca etc.)?***



A list of sixteen types of information sources that can be found on destination websites were listed (see Appendix A for full description of Information Type) and participants were asked to rate them according to a 4-point Likert scale, from least expected to most expected (1-3), and not applicable (4), illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4: Type of information expected/desired from tourism destination websites**

<b>INFORMATION TYPE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>				<b>MEAN</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
	Least Expected	Somewhat Expected	Most Expected	Not Applicable	
General information about attractions, museums, historical site, city tours, festivals, etc.	0	5	32	1	<b>2.89</b>
Contact information – visitor information centre (email, telephone numbers, location, hours of operation, etc.)	3	8	23	4	<b>2.73</b>
Calendar of events, festivals and activities to browse and search	1	13	21	3	<b>2.68</b>
Shopping and dining information	1	17	16	4	<b>2.6</b>
Recreation activities (including rentals: car, bicycle, canoes, skates, skis, etc.)	4	13	17	4	<b>2.55</b>
Weather, climate, temperature, environmental warnings	6	10	20	2	<b>2.47</b>
Self-guided tours – walking, cycling, etc.	6	14	13	5	<b>2.44</b>
Transportation, directions and parking, including link to online reservations	10	11	9	8	<b>2.39</b>
Accommodations with a direct link for reservations (hotels, motels, B&Bs, campgrounds, etc.)	8	11	15	4	<b>2.39</b>
Seasonal destination information – high season versus off-season; times of year to visit and why (local/insider secrets; off the beaten path)	6	13	17	2	<b>2.39</b>



Traveller/explorer types, itineraries and suggested routes of discovery – built based on a mini-analysis of a visitor's vacation style and personal preferences	9	12	13	4	<b>2.31</b>
General destination information [language(s) spoken, currency, driving and liquor laws, sales tax, banking, lost/stolen credit cards, Internet access, postage, important telephone numbers – emergency, customs, embassies, etc.]	10	11	13	4	<b>2.28</b>
Government-issued warnings regarding specific areas of travel (advisories, health warnings, restrictions, visa and medical requirements for travel destination, etc.)	14	10	11	3	<b>2.07</b>
Ticket booking for events/activities, concerts/shows and city tours	17	11	3	7	<b>2</b>
Virtual tours, web cams, videos, other multimedia elements	18	10	4	5	<b>1.89</b>
Personal reviews (e.g. blogs, user-posted images and videos, etc.) – travellers' evaluations of aspects of their personal experiences at the tourism destination	19	9	8	2	<b>1.81</b>

The most expected information sources in order of highest frequency included: general information on attractions, museums, historical sites, city tours, festivals, etc. (32 respondents); contact information- visitor information centre (email, telephone numbers, locations, hours of operation, etc.) (23 respondents); weather, climate, temperature, environmental warnings (21 respondents); and calendar of events, festivals and activities to browse and search (20 respondents). For the last two of those experiences, 10 or 13



respondents also identified those information sources as somewhat expected. Those information sources are important for planning purposes and for setting expectations and can be expected to rate high on the expect/desire scale.

Information regarding recreational activities (including rentals: car, bicycle, canoes, skates, skis, etc.) and seasonal destination information – high season versus off-season; times of year to visit and why (local/insider secrets; off the beaten path) were most expected by nearly half of the participants (17 respondents for each information source), and somewhat expected by over one third of participants (13 respondents each).

Information sources relating to shopping and dining information were almost equally distributed between somewhat expected (17 respondents) and most expected (16 respondents). A similar trend was seen for self-guided tours – walking, cycling, etc. (PDFs for download) – for which 14 respondents somewhat expected the information while another 13 most expected it. This last information type is slightly surprising since self-guided tourism is cost effective and allows for a personalized experience, thus a higher expected rating could have been assumed.

Accommodation with a direct link for reservations (hotels, motels, B&B, campgrounds, etc.) was most expected by 15 respondents, 11 somewhat expected it, and 8 least expected it. This response is also slightly surprising because of the limited services (compared to other places) available in the Yukon. Therefore, it seems reasonable to think that accommodation information would be most expected by tourists. However, the wording of this information type was a bit misleading and may have affected the participants' responses.



There was an even frequency distribution across three of the Likert scales (least expected, somewhat expected, most expected) for other information types: traveller/explorer types, itineraries and suggested routes of discovery – built based on a mini-analysis of a visitor's vacation style and personal preferences; general destination information such as language spoken, currency, laws, internet access, emergency contact information; transportation, directions and parking, including direct link to online reservations (by plane, train, bus, airport, shuttle, car); and government-issued warnings regarding specific areas of travel. It is unclear why those information types, particularly the last three did not have a higher frequency distribution for most expected. For example, it seemed intuitive that long-distance travellers would expect information related to government-issued warnings regarding specific areas of travel, yet this information type was rated least expected by more than one third of participants (14 respondents). Some fault for those ratings might be attributed to how the information was phrased, while another issue could have been the phrasing of the Q 4 which asked about websites specifically – a resource that the tourist sample may be less comfortable with.

The least expected information types were: personal reviews (e.g. blogs, user-posted images and videos, etc.) – travellers' evaluations of aspects of their personal experiences at the tourism destination; virtual tours, web cams, videos, other multimedia elements; and ticket bookings for events/activities, concerts/shows and city tours. Half, or nearly half of participants rated those information types between 17 - 19 for being least expected, and between 9 - 11 participants also ranked them as somewhat expected. Interestingly eight people most expected personal reviews. The frequency distribution



for those three information types was not surprising because of the older demographic group which tends to be less technically advanced. Also, booking tickets for events online could be a deterrent for an older population sample who may be more concerned about the security of their personal information. At least seven people identified booking tickets as not applicable.

***Q 5. Indicate the resources you used for planning your trip (Please select all that apply):***

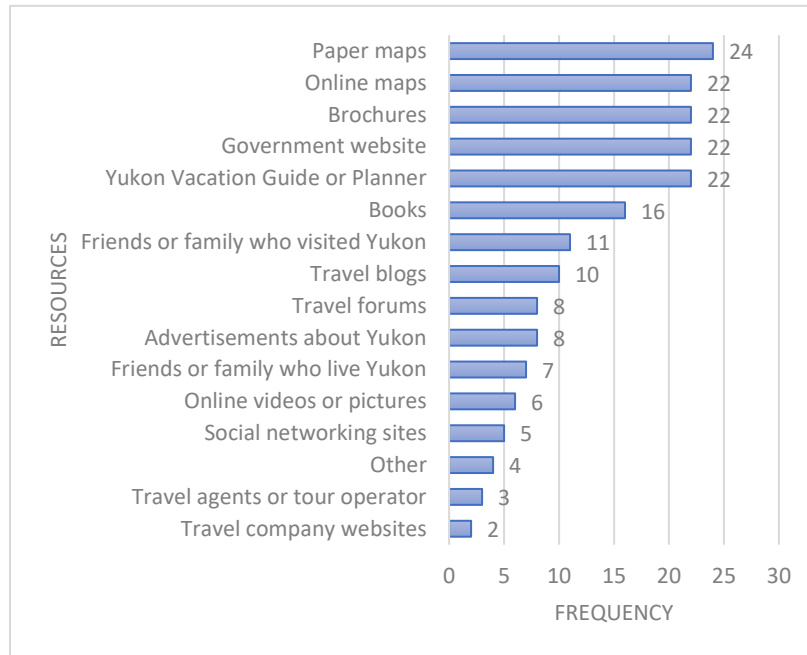
Based on the frequency of responses found in Figure 5, the most common resource used was paper maps (24 respondents). Online maps, government websites, brochures and the Yukon Vacation Guide or Planner were each used by more than half of the respondents (22 respondents used each resource). Books were used by more participants (16 respondents) than online information sources (excluding online maps) such as travel blogs, forums, social media sources, and online videos and pictures, which could be expected because of the sample demographics. After tangible resources like books and vacation guides, family and friends who visited Yukon were the next most used planning resource (11 respondents) compared to online travel blogs (10 respondents) and forums (8 respondents), advertisements about Yukon (8 respondents), friends and family living in the Yukon (7 respondents), videos (6 respondents) and social networks (5 respondents). Other information sources participants used included “prior personal experience”, “Milepost”, and “magazines”.

The smallest number of participants used travel agents and travel company websites. It may have seemed intuitive that participants from more distant locations, such as overseas, would have used travel agents and travel company websites, but that



was not necessarily the case. Travel agents were used by participants from Vancouver (did not specify if they were en-route from UK), Alberta and New Brunswick. One participant using travel company websites originated from Ottawa, while another was a local tourist from the Yukon.

**Figure 5: Resources used for planning trip**



To get a better understanding of why participants chose to travel to the Yukon and what motivations led them to take their trip, participants were asked to rate the level of importance of a series of experiences on a 5-point Likert scale from not important to extremely important (Table 5).

***Q 6. Prior to your trip, how important was it for you to (Please RATE each EXPERIENCE):***



**Table 5: Participants' rated experiences**

<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>					<b>MEAN</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Extremely Important	
<b>Physiological</b>						
Physically exert yourself	8	5	11	8	4	<b>2.86</b>
Move at a slower pace	14	2	10	8	2	<b>2.5</b>
Recreate in a primitive environment	14	6	4	9	3	<b>2.47</b>
Test your skills and abilities	8	11	13	4	0	<b>2.36</b>
Take Risks	13	9	9	4	2	<b>2.27</b>
Test the capacities of your vehicle	26	3	7	0	1	<b>1.57</b>
<b>Social</b>						
Do something with your friends and family	6	3	8	16	4	<b>3.24</b>
Do something friends and family could do together	7	5	5	15	5	<b>3.16</b>
Talk to new and varied people	3	12	8	9	5	<b>3.03</b>
Feel connected with others who value wilderness	9	8	7	10	3	<b>2.73</b>
Observe other people in the area	8	12	6	8	3	<b>2.62</b>
Have others recognize and admire you for doing it	26	8	3	0	0	<b>1.38</b>
<b>Solitude</b>						
Experience solitude	8	6	11	5	6	<b>3.11</b>
Get away from people	10	6	9	6	5	<b>3.03</b>
Escape crowds	7	6	7	8	8	<b>2.86</b>



Get away from civilization for a while	8	5	8	8	7	<b>2.72</b>
<b>Spirituality</b>						
Reach tranquility and peace	12	7	8	7	3	<b>2.51</b>
Feel connected to a place that is important	12	8	7	9	1	<b>2.43</b>
Reflect on life	15	11	5	4	2	<b>2.11</b>
Get in touch with true self	22	5	5	3	2	<b>1.86</b>
<b>Personal Development</b>						
To experience new and different things	1	3	8	13	13	<b>3.89</b>
Have a sense of discovery	2	4	10	15	6	<b>3.51</b>
Develop knowledge of the place	2	5	14	12	3	<b>3.25</b>
Release or reduce some built up tension	10	8	8	8	2	<b>2.56</b>
Gain a new perspective on life	15	9	8	1	4	<b>2.19</b>
Develop a sense of self confidence	15	6	11	5	0	<b>2.16</b>
Do something impressive	15	9	8	4	1	<b>2.11</b>
Develop self sufficiency	18	9	6	4	0	<b>1.89</b>
Have the chance to think and solve problems	18	10	7	2	0	<b>1.81</b>
Think about your personal values	19	10	6	2	0	<b>1.76</b>
<b>Natural Environment</b>						
Experience the scenic quality of nature	0	1	3	12	21	<b>4.4</b>
See different landscapes	0	1	2	14	20	<b>4.4</b>
Observe the scenic beauty	0	1	2	14	20	<b>4.4</b>



Observe/hear wildlife	1	0	6	11	19	<b>4.3</b>
Learn more about nature	2	1	11	10	13	<b>3.8</b>
Get to know the lay of the land	2	4	9	12	10	<b>3.6</b>
Get a better appreciation for nature	4	5	9	9	10	<b>3.4</b>
Develop oneness with nature	9	9	9	4	6	<b>2.7</b>

The most important motivations to the longest number of participants were grouped under the natural environment experiences which had the highest mean frequency of 4.4 (very important), and a low mean of 2.7 (slightly important). Four types of motivations, to *experience the scenic quality of nature*, *see different landscapes*, *observe the scenic beauty* and to *observe/hear wildlife* were rated extremely important or very important by the most number of participants. For those first three experiences, no individuals considered them not important. However, to *observe/hear wildlife* was noted by one participant as not important.

To *learn more about nature*, *get to know the lay of the land* and to *get a better appreciation for nature* were also important to more than half of participants. Only one of the natural environment experiences, to *develop oneness with nature*, was considered not important, slightly important or moderately important, by nine people each. The results for that experience show some consistency with the responses to the spirituality domain which were not important for most participants.

Motivations under the solitude experience domain were most evenly distributed, thus having the most diverse responses. To *escape crowds* and to *get away from civilization* were rated slightly higher than to *experience solitude* and to *get away from*



*people*. Therefore, to some individuals, solitude motivations were important when planning their trip, while to others it was not.

Other experiences with even distributions which fell under the social domain, included *talk to new and varied people* and *feel connected with others who value wilderness*. Preferences for both experiences were almost equally identified between not important to very important. For one social experience, the majority of participants agreed that to *have others recognize and admire you for doing it* was not important. Half of participants were not interested in observing other people in the area, and half of participants wanted to *do something with your friends and family* and to *do something friends and family could do together*.

Even distributions were also found under the physiological domain for motivations including, to *physically exert yourself* and to *move at a slower pace*. However, the remaining motivations within this domain, including *take risks* and *test the capacities of your vehicle*, were the least important. Interestingly, over one third of participants did consider to *test your skills and abilities* as moderately important.

As previously mentioned, solitude experiences were some of the least important motivations for participants. However, just over a quarter of participants considered to *reach tranquility and peace* and to *feel connected to a place that is important* to be important. Similarly, experiences under the personal development domain were also some of the least important motivations. Those included, to *think about your personal values*, *have the chance to think and solve problems*, *develop self sufficiency*, *do something impressive*, *develop a sense of self confidence* and *gain a new perspective on*



*life*. Just over one quarter of participants did consider to *release or reduce some built-up tension* as important.

Experiences under the personal development domain that were important to over half of participants included, to *experience new and different things* and to *have a sense of discovery*. While, to *develop knowledge of the place* was moderately important to over one third of participants.

#### 4.3 Trip Experience

The next set of questions examined participants' trip experience including when their trip took place, the length of their trip, the transportation they used, activities they participated in, their accommodation choices, and the places they visited in the Yukon. The aim of those questions was to map out the routes participants took in the Yukon, and to explore the activities and engagements of motor vehicle-based travellers.

Table 6 captures the responses from the following questions:

*Q 7. In what year did you travel to Yukon?*

*Q 8. In what month?*

*Q 10. Was this your first trip to Yukon?*

**Table 6: Year and season of trip**

<b>Year of visit</b>	<b>Season</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Parties re-visiting</b>
2016	Spring/Summer Summer	31	13
2015	Summer/Fall	2	0
2013	Spring/Summer Summer/Fall	2	0
2012	Summer/Fall	1	0
2010	Spring	1	0
2007	Summer/Fall	1	0



The majority of participants travelled in the summer season, one participant travelled between April and June, and September was the last month that a reported travel experience occurred. Thirteen participants had been to the Yukon in previous years, four in the past 2-7 years, another four travelled within the past 9-15 years, and five travelled to the Yukon for the first time 29 years ago or more. One person did not state if this was their first trip.

This research assumes that the time spent travelling to a destination is part of the tourist experience, which may affect how much time travellers spend within the destination; thus, participants were asked:

***Q 9. How much time did it take you to reach Yukon? (e.g. hours, days, weeks).***

The travel time it took participants to reach the Yukon varied (Table 7). Almost half of the participants who responded to the question took under two days to arrive to the territory. Ten more participants took three to seven days, and one participant travelled a year before reaching the Yukon.

**Table 7: Travel duration to reach Yukon**

<b>Travel Duration</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
< 24 hours	7
1 to 2 days	10
3 to 7 days	10
14 to 21 days	6
1 month+	3
1 year	1

***Q 11. From which Canadian province and city did you start your trip? (If outside of Canada, also state the country).***

Table 8 illustrates where participants started their trip. Many participants travelling to the Yukon started their trip from British Columbia or Ontario. Ten participants started their



trip from BC, however three participants, who started their trip from the United Kingdom, entered Canada through Vancouver. Additionally, five people travelled from Vancouver, while other cities in BC that tourists started from were Victoria and Kamloops. Five participants started their journey from Canada's prairies (Alberta and Saskatchewan). Eleven participants travelled over 5,000 km from Ontario from cities such as Ottawa and Toronto. Two participants started their journey in Quebec and one participant started as far away as Prince Edward Island. Another participant drove from New Brunswick, although they flew first from California – their place of origin. Four other US participants started their journeys from Massachusetts, Kansas, Colorado and Alaska. The one individual who started from Alaska was not a resident of that State, and their origin was not specified.

**Table 8: Origin of trip**

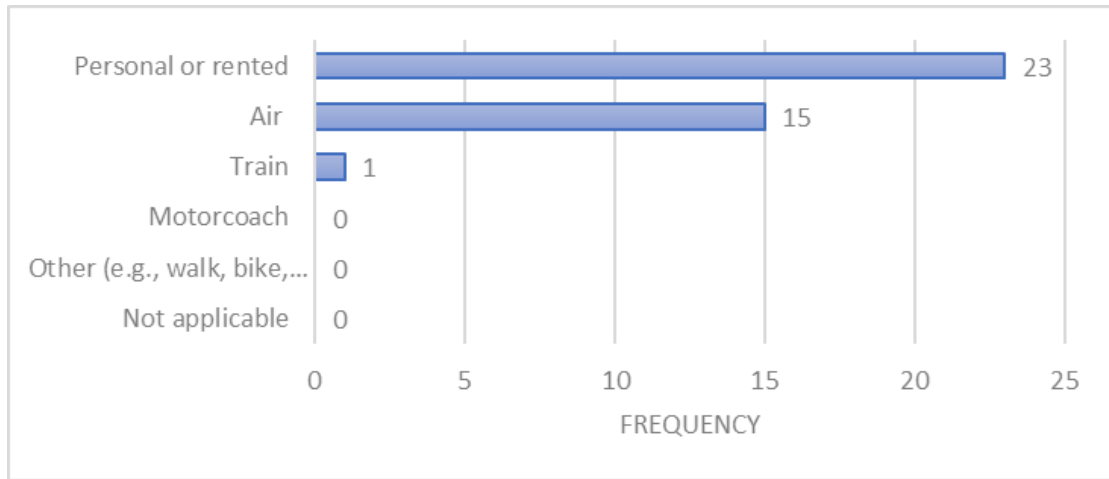
Origin	Frequency
BC	10
Alberta	4
Saskatchewan	1
Ontario	11
Quebec	2
PEI	1
Yukon	1
USA	5
United Kingdom	3

***Q 12. By what mode of transportation did you FIRST ENTER Yukon? (Please select only one option).***

The majority of participants travelled to the Yukon using a personal or rented vehicle which is seen in Figure 6. The remaining participants reached the territory by air. One participant arrived by train.



**Figure 6: Transportation method used to reach the Yukon**

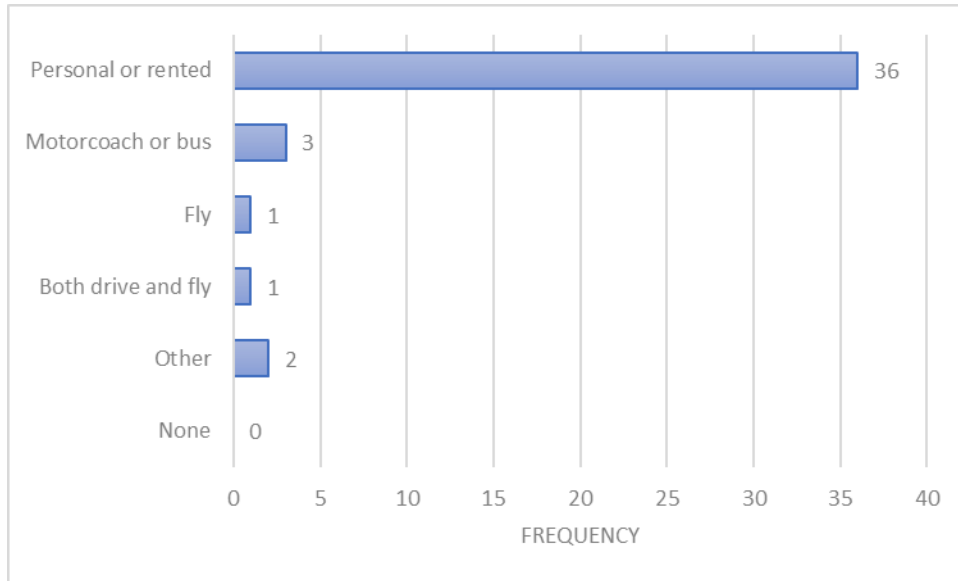


***Q 13. After arriving to Yukon, to travel AROUND Yukon, did you use (Please select all that apply):***

Within the territory, almost all participants used a personal or rented vehicle to travel within the territory (Figure 7). One person both drove and flew as a means of travel, while the two remaining participants that did not use a personal or rented vehicle, used a motorcoach or bus. These two individuals were not excluded from the study since they identified using a car in the Other category for Q 15. In the Other category, one participant stated they used a motor boat, while another person hitchhiked to get around.



**Figure 7: Transportation method used within the Yukon**



***Q 14. Approximately how many hours a day would you spend in a motor vehicle while in Yukon? (Please select only one option).***

Table 9 presents the amount of time participants spent in a motor vehicle each day. The majority of participants spent at least three hours of their day in a motor vehicle, and five participants spent at least 12 hours or more. Two of the participants that spent 12 or more hours were heading to Alaska. It was evident that those participants, IP 26 and IP 38, were heading towards Alaska because of their responses to some of the other questions. The other three participants were travelling for pleasure, and arrived from BC. At least two of those participants, IP 22 and IP 24 stated they were travelling from the U.K. through Vancouver. The other participant started their trip from Victoria, BC.

**Table 9: Time spent in a motor vehicle each day while in the Yukon**

Hours	Frequency
0-3	11
3-6	20
6-9	3



12 or more	5
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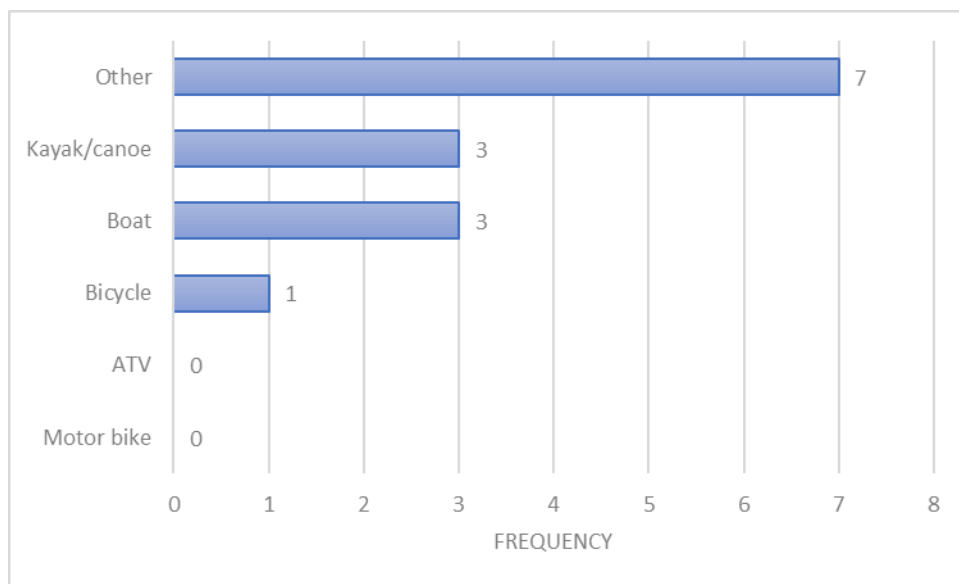
***Q15. During your trip, did you use (Please select all that apply):***

To determine how else participants were travelling during their trip, a list of five alternative transportation methods to cars, buses and planes, were listed (Figure 8).

Water travel using boats, kayaks and canoes, was done by six people during their trip.

Only one individual used a bicycle. Other transportation methods mentioned included: train, bus, RV, cars, and two people stated they did not use other transportation methods.

**Figure 8: Other transportation methods used during trip**



***Q 21: Indicate all the places you visited during your trip (Please select all that apply):***

Yukon communities are dispersed widely from each other, thus participants need to spend time travelling to visit them. The questionnaire listed twenty-five Yukon, and outside the Yukon, communities, with the 'other' option (see Appendix A). Data was



represented as both the top most popular places visited by frequency and the number of places visited per individual in Table 10 and Figure 9.

**Table 10: Most popular places visited by Yukon visitors by frequency**

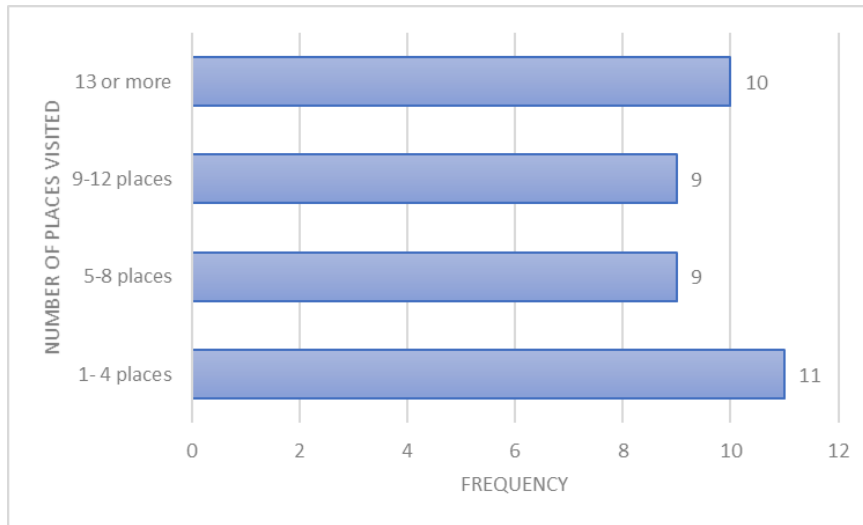
<b>Places</b>	<b>Total Frequency</b>
Whitehorse	37
Haines Junction	31
Carcross	27
Dawson City	27
Carmacks	22
Skagway	20
Watson Lake	19
Haines, Alaska	19
Tombstone	15
Destruction Bay	14
Pelly Crossing	14
Teslin	14

Locations with the highest visitation included locations along the Alaska Highway including: Whitehorse and Haines Junction with over 30 individual visits. This was followed by Carcross, Dawson City and Carmacks which were visited between 22 and 27 individuals which is between 55% to nearly 70% of visitors. Locations in Alaska including Skagway and Haines, Alaska were also in the top ten most visited places by participants. Just over one third of participants visited locations Destruction Bay and Pelly Crossing.

The number of places that were visited by each participant was presented in Figure 9. Just over a quarter of participants (11 respondents) visited between one and four places during their trip. However, a far greater number of individuals had visited five places or more (28 respondents) which is approximately 70% of participants. Nearly half of the participants visited nine or more places in the Yukon.



**Figure 9: Number of places visited by frequency**



Research suggests that people attach instrumental and affective attributes to the act of travelling which can influence the type of travel method used (Steg et al., 2001; Sheller, 2004; Anable & Gatersleben, 2005). The questionnaire explored the attributes participants considered important when using a motor vehicle. Seventeen attributes, or factors, were used in the questionnaire because they have been shown to relate to motor vehicle travel. They included convenience, vehicle's carrying capacity, flexibility, shelter, excitement, protection, safety, independence, comfort, freedom, road access, reliability, relaxation, car aesthetics, speed, control, cost of using the vehicle for the trip (Steg et al., 2001; Sheller, 2004; Dant, 2004; Anable and Gatersleben, 2005; and White, 2007).

***Q 16. How important were the following factors to your motor vehicle use in YUKON?***

Participants were asked to rate the factors on a 5-point Likert scale: not important, slightly important, moderately important, important and very important. The results are found in Table 11.



**Table 11: Factors important to motor vehicle use in the Yukon**

<b>MOTOR VEHICLE FACTORS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>					<b>MEAN</b>
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	
	<b>Not Importa- nt</b>	<b>Slightly Importa- nt</b>	<b>Moderat- ely Importa- nt</b>	<b>Impor- tant</b>	<b>Very Important</b>	
Independence	1	3	4	12	18	<b>4.1</b>
Convenience	0	2	9	10	17	<b>4.1</b>
Freedom	1	4	8	10	15	<b>3.9</b>
Reliability	2	3	8	10	15	<b>3.9</b>
Road access	1	4	10	11	12	<b>3.8</b>
Flexibility	5	4	12	6	11	<b>3.4</b>
Vehicle's carrying capacity	4	4	11	9	9	<b>3.4</b>
Comfort	2	6	13	8	9	<b>3.4</b>
Safety	3	6	9	12	8	<b>3.4</b>
Cost of using the vehicle for the trip	3	10	7	15	3	<b>3.1</b>
Shelter	12	5	4	8	9	<b>2.9</b>
Protection	8	8	6	8	7	<b>2.9</b>
Control	6	11	7	8	5	<b>2.9</b>
Relaxation	7	6	10	10	2	<b>2.8</b>
Excitement	16	7	4	9	2	<b>2.3</b>
Speed	18	8	9	1	2	<b>2</b>
Car aesthetics	22	5	9	2	0	<b>1.8</b>

Instrumental and affective factors that stood out as the most important were: convenience and independence, which were rated by 30 and 27 respondents as either important or very important. Freedom, reliability and road access received an average frequency of 3.8 or more, nearing the important Likert scale rating. Motor vehicle factors that were considered moderately important were flexibility, vehicle carrying capacity, comfort and safety which had an average frequency of 3.4. Factors which showed the least distinctive response pattern were protection, shelter, control, relaxation and cost, although the latter factor did show a slightly higher rating towards being important. At



the end of the spectrum, the factors which were considered least important by the majority of participants (between 22 and 26 respondents) included: car aesthetics, speed and excitement.

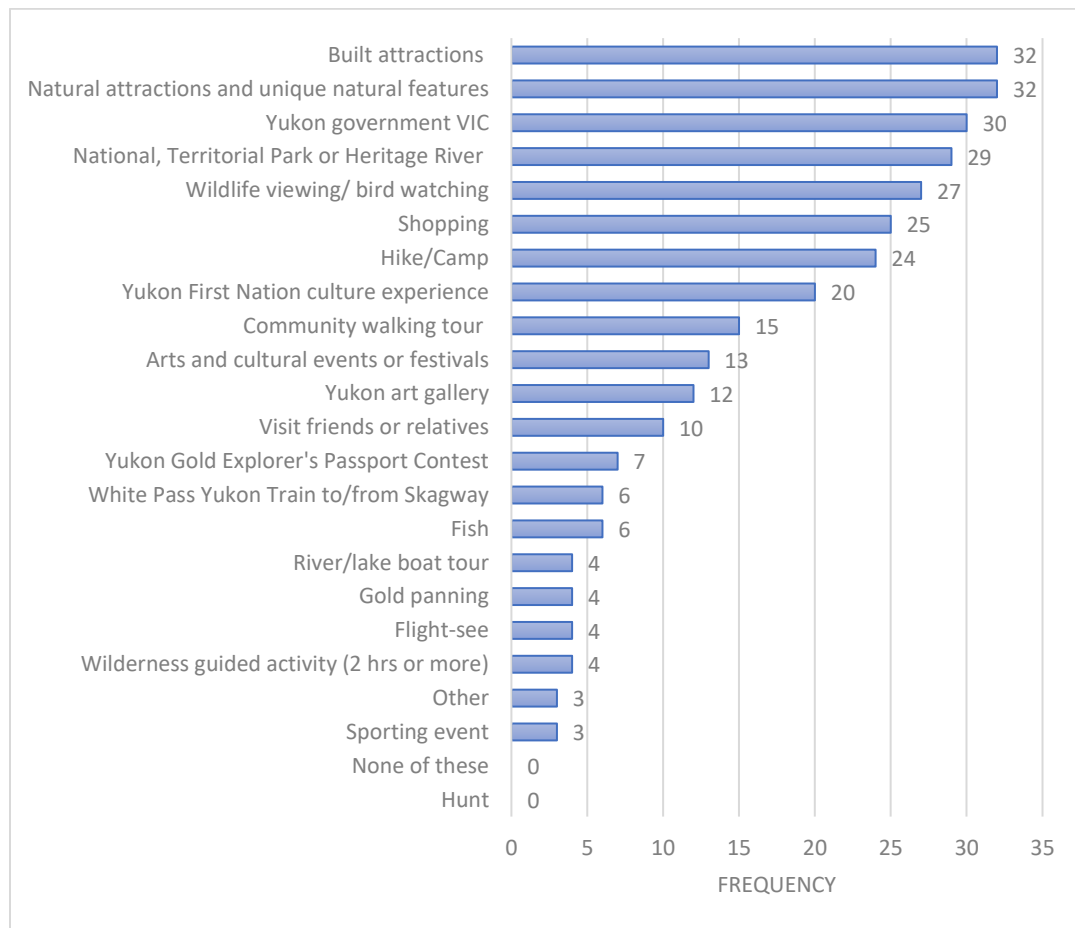
***Q 17. Indicate all of the activities you did while on your most recent trip to Yukon (Please select all that apply):***

To get a better understanding of what participants' experience was like in the Yukon, 22 activities were listed in Q 17 that participants could select, with a *none of these* option.

Looking at Figure 10, the most popular activities included: visiting built attractions like museums or historical sites, and visiting natural attractions such as mountains, waterfalls or lakes where 32 respondents indicated doing those activities. Other activities that were done by more than half of the participants, 20 to 30, included visiting Yukon's Visitor Information Centres, visiting a national park or heritage river, viewing wildlife, shopping, hiking/camping and experiencing First Nations culture.



**Figure 10: Activities done on trip**



Participants were also asked about the activities they missed out on.

***Q 18. Are there any activities or experiences in the Yukon which you would have liked to have participated in, but were not able to? (Please list at least one).***

Six themes were used to represent participants' responses, the definition of those themes and their simplified groups are presented in Table 12. How those themes were developed can be found in Table 2, while participants' full responses can be found in Appendix D. The responses to open-ended questions are verbatim, therefore punctuation, spelling or grammatical errors have not been corrected except during the beginning of a sentence when the first letter of the first word was capitalized or changed to lower case to suit the



need of the sentence. In a few instances, an ellipsis in square brackets is used to omit a section of the quotation that is not relevant to the theme, but which does not alter the meaning of the quotation.

Since Q 18 inquired about specific activities, responses with multiple activities in the same theme were counted twice. This is reflected in Appendix D where more than one activity in a theme is bolded to indicate that it was counted twice. Two reoccurring activities, flight-seeing and Tombstone were included in both themes, recreation and observe nature.

**Table 12: Activities participants would have liked to participate in:**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Recreation	18
Observe Nature	10
Heritage Activities	9
Motorized Vehicle Travel	7
None	6
Culture	3
Education	2
Other	1

Nearly half of respondents identified missing out on recreation activities such as: camping, hiking, water-based activities (canoeing/kayak, rafting and boating/paddle sports), rock climbing, flight-seeing, nature contact, and Tombstone. Some of the explanations provided for those missed experiences included bad weather, lack of experience and expensive guides, and being unable to participate because of elderly parents.

Nine participants would have liked to observe nature such as wildlife viewing, northern lights, and to see Mt. Logan. One participant would have liked to have seen the northern lights and wildlife thus they were counted twice. Reasons for missing those



activities included bad weather and time availability which prevented a flight to Mt. Logan and not being fortunate to see wildlife or the northern lights.

Eight participants would have liked to engage in heritage activities including riding the White Pass train, gold panning, visiting the Jack London museum and hiking the Chilkoot trail. One participant included two of those activities. Some of the reasons participants gave were: time constraints and unavailable activities.

Two participants missed out on activities relating to education: a guided walk and Yukon lecture, in which the latter was unavailable. Six participants identified missing out on motorized vehicle travel because of road conditions, road closures, and car rentals that did not permit driving on the Dempster Highway. One individual was counted twice because they wanted to travel to Inuvik, and to drive the North Canol road. The individuals who did provide an explanation stated that weather was the primary factor in preventing their motor vehicle travel, while one participant mentioned insufficient mileage provided by the car rental company.

Three participants said they missed out on cultural activities such as solstice celebration, First Nations activities, and participating in a music festival. Participants did not give any reasons for missing those activities. One participant hoped to reconnect to their past by visiting a structure they helped build five decades ago. Unfortunately, they were unable to locate it during their time there. Six individuals stated that they did not miss out on any activities.



***Q 19. During your stay in Yukon, how many nights did you spend (Please select the amount of NIGHTS spent at each ACCOMMODATION):***

Participants were asked about their accommodation choices. The most common type of accommodation, used by 26 participants, was some form of camping in which RV camping was used only slightly more than tent camping. Hotels or motels were also a common choice of accommodation, used by 22 participants. The amount of time spent in a hotel or motel by most of those participants fell in the 2-6 nights range. Thirteen participants used non-camping accommodations such as road-side pullouts or parking lots, while backcountry camping as well as friends or family were the least common accommodations. However, more than half of the participants, 24 respondents, used more than one accommodation type during their stay in the Yukon. Fifteen participants stuck with one type of accommodation, nine of whom were in the Yukon for one night. Facility qualities and services that were important when participants were making their accommodation choices were explored in the next question.

**Table 13: Most popular types of accommodations used**

ACCOMMODATION TYPE	FREQUENCY
Hotel/motel (B&B and Lodges)	22
RV/motorhome/trailer camping	14
Non-camping (parking lot, road side pullout etc.)	13
Car camping (tenting)	12
Backcountry camping	7
Friends/family	5
None	2



**Table 14: Number of types of accommodations used by participants**

NUMBER OF ACCOMMODATIONS USED	FREQUENCY
One type	15
Two types	15
Three types	5
Four types	1
Five types	1
Six types	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

***Q 20. While in Yukon, how important were the factors identified below to your accommodation choice? (Please RATE each FACTOR)***

Participants were asked to rate aspects that influenced their accommodation choices.

Thirteen factors along a 5-point Likert-scale from Not Important to Important, with a Not Applicable option were listed. The results can be found in Table 15.

**Table 15: Factors important to accommodation choice**

FACTORS	FREQUENCY						MEAN
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important	N/A	
Location	0	0	3	17	16	3	4.5
Access to nature	3	1	5	12	13	4	4.1
Safety	3	6	5	13	8	4	3.7
Cost of accommodation	4	4	9	11	8	3	3.6
Drinking water access	6	7	6	6	7	7	3.6
Showers/toilets	7	9	8	7	4	4	3.1
Waste and water disposal	14	4	5	4	4	8	3.1
Recreational opportunities	12	6	7	7	4	3	2.8
Electrical outlets	18	5	4	2	3	7	2.7
Overall communications	18	6	6	3	2	4	2.4



Large campsites	20	5	6	2	1	5	2.3
Group options	27	1	1	1	0	8	2.2
Laundry	21	8	4	1	1	4	2.1

Participants seemed to agree with each other since many considered the following factors least important as they rated them between not important and slightly important: laundry, group options, large campsites, overall communication, and electric outlets. Those same six factors however were rated as very important by seven respondents. The seven participants who rated those factors positively, used RV/motorhome/trailer camping accommodation which implies they travelled by a recreational vehicle or a trailer. Those types of vehicles are more likely to require larger spaces to fit the vehicle, electrical outlets to power generators, and a place to dispose of waste collected by RVs. The factors most participants considered most important were: location, access to nature, safety and cost. When participants were accommodated by friends or family, or by a hotel/motel, access to nature was rated not important.

#### **4.4 Post Travel**

The post travel experience is the outcome of the tourist experience which is carried back with the tourist to their place of origin, and potentially shared with others. To obtain data about the post-travel experience participants were asked to evaluate their trip satisfaction, to reflect on the most memorable place of their experience, to reflect on the entirety of their trip, and to identify the least favourite part of their experience. The purpose of these questions was to illustrate the types of stories that travellers might share with the public about the Yukon. Another purpose of those questions was to examine their connection to motor vehicle use. The final part of the post-travel section asked



participants to identify how they would share their Yukon experience, with whom and how often.

***Q 23. Indicate the level of satisfaction with your overall Yukon experience  
(Please select only one option):***

A simple multiple-choice question asked participants to rate the outcome of their experience from completely dissatisfied to completely satisfied (Table 16).

**Table 16: Satisfaction with the Yukon experience**

<b>Satisfaction</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Completely Dissatisfied	2
Mostly Dissatisfied	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	0
Neither Dissatisfied nor satisfied	0
Somewhat Satisfied	3
Mostly Satisfied	14
Completely Satisfied	19

Half of the participants were completely satisfied with their trip experience while almost all of the remaining half were mostly satisfied. Three participants' responses, who chose mostly to completely dissatisfied, were inconsistent with their responses to the rest of the questionnaire. It is believed that the order of the Likert-scale, which lists completely dissatisfied first, had a role in those ratings. Three participants were somewhat satisfied. One of those participants provided very limited responses to the open-ended questions, which made it difficult to determine the reason for that satisfaction rating. Another participant disliked their experience with US border agents, but they also noted that they would have liked to have "more nature contact". Both of those reasons could have affected their satisfaction with their Yukon experience. The third participant that was only somewhat satisfied with their overall experience disliked the rain and cold weather



during the first half of their trip. This unfavourable aspect of their experience was reiterated in the other narratives, thus implying that poor weather influenced their overall satisfaction.

In an open-ended question, participants were asked to identify the places that were most memorable to their trip.

***Q 22. Reflecting on your experience in Yukon, select from memory a place that was memorable, special or important to you AND EXPLAIN WHY?***

Participants responded by identifying a variety of different types of places that could be grouped into the following themes: towns, natural areas and features, historical places and activities, and highways. Some responses were included in the same theme more than once if they identified more than one place. Two participants did not identify a location, but rather one individual wrote about people, and another individual simply stated “it was lovely”. These participants were not included since they did not address the question.

The number of times each type of place was specified is included in Table 17. What made each type of place memorable is examined below, but participants’ exact responses can be found in Appendix D

**Table 17: Memorable, special or important places grouped into five themes**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Town	20
Natural Areas and Features	13
Historical Places and Activities	5
Highways	6



Participants referenced specific towns as their memorable place and those included Dawson City, Whitehorse, Carcross, Watson Lake, Carmacks, Teslin and Fort McPherson. The reasons those places were memorable to participants were as follows: Dawson City offered “lots to do”, things like live performance, hiking, dining, the dome, farmers market and Parks Canada. Whitehorse was mentioned for its culture, street pattern, museum, and one participant had their first job in Whitehorse. Three participants mentioned Carcross for its ease of access, natural features, hikes and welcoming communities, and one participant simply stated it was interesting. Watson Lake was remembered for its sign forest and one participant had a good experience with the local people. Another participant remembered Carmacks because of a memorable encounter with a bear, and Teslin was mentioned because of its museum. Fort McPherson which was considered as part of the Yukon experience despite being in the Northwest Territories, was remembered for its First Nations cultural experience.

Another theme that was evident in participants’ responses was Natural Areas and Features, the Natural Areas mentioned included: Kluane National Park and Reserve, Kathleen Lake (which is in Kluane National Park and Reserve) and Tombstone Territorial Park. The natural features included the northern lights, landscape and a waterfall. The three Natural Areas were remembered for various reasons. When participants wrote about their experience, they mentioned the hikes and guided tours they went on, the remoteness and natural features and visual appeal. In Kluane one participant wrote at length about their grizzly bear encounter as a solo traveller, another reflected on the importance of Kluane National Park *“because it represents a vast track of land and glaciers and most importantly a wilderness experience that is disappearing from most*



*southern locales*". One participant wrote about a hike at Kathleen Lake that was postponed by rainy weather. Four participants identified Tombstone Territorial Park as their memorable place. Participant IP 6 recalled their driving experience to the park, and North of it. IP 31 had a trailer break down and stayed there for three days, but they mentioned being helped by campers and staff. Another participant recalled their experience viewing the northern lights "*at 1am in an open field and yurt for shelter was one of the most incredible experience. I've never seen anything like it*". One participant wrote about the landscape, particularly without humans.

Five participants found places with historical appeal worth remembering, particularly when participants were engaging in some form of activity. Topics included hiking, the historical significance of the place, and the aesthetics of a place. IP 21 remembered the Ashihik Bridge and recalled the "*great view when you climb the hill*". Another recalled the Robinson Roadhouse Historic Site because of its connection to the past and still not being a "*tourist hot spot*". Chilkoot Trail was mentioned by two participants for its connection to history, the physical challenge of it and its natural features. While the Auriol Trail, in Kluane National Park and Reserve offered an individual an accessible opportunity to experience wilderness.

Participants also identified specific highways when recalling memorable experiences. Those highways included the Top of the World Highway, Dempster Highway and North Canol Road. One participant recalled the Top of the World Highway because of its terrible conditions, another two participants recalled its visual appeal, and because it was a personal goal. Driving on the Dempster Highway was remembered as "*great*", "*challenging, interesting and very scenic*", while IP 12 remembered it because



of an unforgettable encounter with a black bear. Lastly one participant remembered the North Canol Road for its visual appeal, its challenging road and because of its limited use by people.

***Q 24. Imagine you are writing about your experience on a personal blog or telling your closest friend or relative about your trip, how would your story go?***

In Q 24 the topics participants wrote about could be grouped into seven themes. Those themes included: travel, people, nature, places, activities, method of sharing their story and weather (Table 18). Participants' responses were counted only once for each theme, unless themes had subthemes (see Appendix D), in which case some responses were included in more than one subtheme. Responses for each theme are included in Appendix D, and the themes are explored in more detail next.

**Table 18: Themes of participants' Yukon story**

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Nature	20
People	15
Travel	11
Activities	11
Places	8
Sharing story	5
Weather	4

The most popular theme that emerged in participants' stories referred to nature. The theme nature was referenced by 20 participants and was divided into two distinct subthemes. The first subtheme encompassed topics related to: the landscape, scenery, natural features and wilderness since those topics can be used to mean the same thing. Detailed reflections on nature experiences were not included in participants' responses, rather the focus was put on general characteristics of nature such as: the outdoors,



aesthetics, sunset, the frontier feel, access to wilderness and peacefulness. Two individuals mentioned the texture of the outdoors such as the ruggedness and the colours, although three participants did comment on the need to engage with the natural environment to truly appreciate it. The second subtheme was wildlife where five participants commented on them generally. Three participants identified specific animals including lynx, bears, moose, bald eagles and one individual wrote at length about ravens.

Thirteen participants mentioned people in their response. A few subthemes emerged, one of which included friends and family where two participants mentioned a wedding, visiting friends, and the impacts of the midnight sun on the sleeping habits of a child. Nine participants were included in the subtheme residents and staff members. Individuals commented on the lifestyle of Yukon residents, as well as their friendliness, helpfulness and their hospitality. One individual mentioned temporary student workers. Lastly four participants reflected on the few people in the territory which was viewed as a positive Yukon quality.

Participants referred to several topics related to travel, which were included under that theme. Eleven participants reflected on travel-related experiences, from which two subthemes emerged: road type/quality, and travelling/driving. Their travel experience referred to types of roads, road quality and repairs, vehicle protection, driving to and from various locations, the state of travelling which was implied by the idiom “*slow down and smell the roses*”, the driving distance between places, and vehicle service such as free parking. Only one participant briefly mentioned an alternative travel method,



referring to the use of a ferry to get to Dawson City. The rest of the participants did not refer to travel methods other than automobiles.

Participants also included in their written stories the activities they participated in. Two subthemes emerged, unspecified activities in which participants made general remarks about doing things, or about the outdoors. While the second subtheme included comments about specific activities including: live entertainment, participating in heritage activities, visiting heritage centers (museums, First Nations cultural centres), treasure hunting and shopping. Responses were only counted once in this subtheme even if many activities were included. Also, while the travel theme that was previously examined can be considered an activity, such as driving or travelling on a specific highway, it was looked at separately because it applied to the automobile system which is a key interest in this research.

Often participants identified the places they had been to. Specifically, this theme tried to capture whether participants were prone to connecting their experience with communities. Parks or built attractions like those looked at in the nature theme and activity theme were not considered here. Also, since Q 22 looked at places in detail, responses that included more than one place were not counted more than once. Eight participants referred to specific place locations including Whitehorse, Dawson City, Carcross and Watson Lake. Alaska was also included in some responses, particularly Skagway and Haines, Alaska. Except for one participant, IP 10, all participants identified a specific activity or attraction associated with the communities they mentioned. For example, IP 19 wrote about Whitehorse where the Visitor Information Centre offers free parking, and where tourists should stock up on groceries. IP 18 commented on Parks



Canada in Dawson City. Other comments made about specific locations included visiting friends, heritage centres, events, people and the characteristics of the communities such as the “quirky nature of Dawson City” or its heritage appeal.

Another topic that manifested in the open-ended question was how some participants would share their stories. Photographs and written material in blogs or using Facebook were the main presentation of their experience. While one individual, IP 37, perceived sharing their experience as a threat to the experience they appreciate, “*I would not write a blog, I want to keep this place to myself*”.

In four cases, weather was included in participants’ stories. For one individual weather affected or determined their activity participation. Another participant did not appreciate the rain or cold weather, and two participants referred to weather in a positive light. IP 25 wrote, “a welcome break from the heat wave in Ontario”, and for IP 30 the weather conjures a positive memory, “from our 1st sunny day at Watson Lake, I felt welcomed. With its quaint towns, beautiful mountain scenery and surprisingly warm temperatures, Yukon had a lot to see & do”.

***Q 25. What was your least favourite experience in Yukon?***

When participants wrote about their least favourite experience, those experiences fell under four categories: people, automobile and roads, weather, services and activities. Four participants referred to their encounters with the public as part of their least favourite experience. Their dissatisfaction included: intoxicated locals, “*rude US border agents*” and one participant found it “*difficult to find areas with no people*” because of the hunting season.



**Table 19: Themes of participants' least favourite experience**

Themes	Frequency
People	4
Automobile and Travelling/Driving	12
Weather	4
Services and activities	10

More than a quarter of the participants identified unfavourable experiences relating to automobiles or travelling and driving. Those experiences included: vehicle troubles, dissatisfaction with recreational vehicles, distance between communities, unfavourable road conditions, road structures and road repairs.

Four participants noted weather conditions, specifically rainy days and cold weather as their least favourite experience. Other participants experienced unfavourable services, including: the rental car's millage allowance, gas station service in a remote area, technological issues and service, dining options and accommodation conditions. Additionally, one participant was not satisfied with the available gold panning sites while another participant felt dissatisfied with the information about Atlin, BC, which they noted was not worth the drive.

The next few questions try to capture the importance of tourists' experiences by reflecting on how those experiences will be shared with the general public.

***Q 26. How did you primarily record/capture your travel experience? (Please select all that apply)***

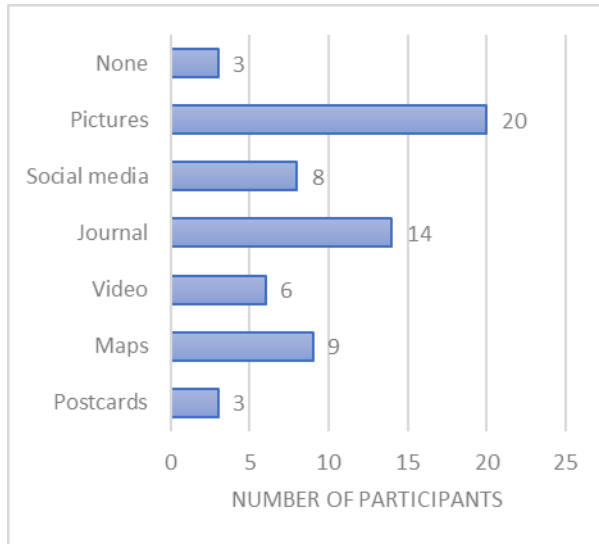
***Q 27: How did you primarily share/reflect on you travel? (Please select all that apply)***



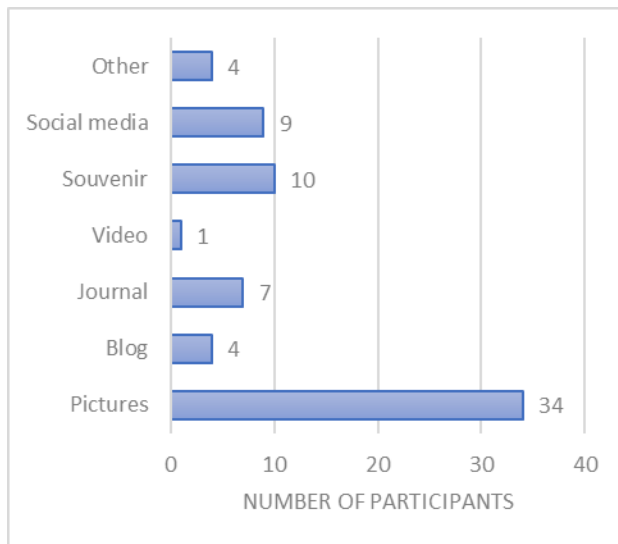
Questionnaire participants were asked how they recorded/captured their experience and how they would share their experience with others. Looking at Figures 11 and 12, pictures were the number one method by which participants recorded/captured and shared/reflected their travel experience. Twenty-two (65%) individuals who shared their experience with pictures were 55 years or older. Over one-third of participants also used a journal to record/capture their experience. Only seven participants used a journal to share/reflect the travel experience, and six of them were 55 years or older. Social media was used by eight participants to record/capture the travel experience. However, nine participants used this method to share/reflect that experience and the age of those individuals ranged between 25 years or older (Figure 12). Ten individuals also used souvenirs to share their travel experience with others. Individuals between the ages of 55 and 64 used this method only slightly more than the other age groups, while individuals between 35 and 44 did not use this method.



**Figure 11: Method used to record/capture the travel experience**



**Figure 12: Method used to share/reflect travel experience**

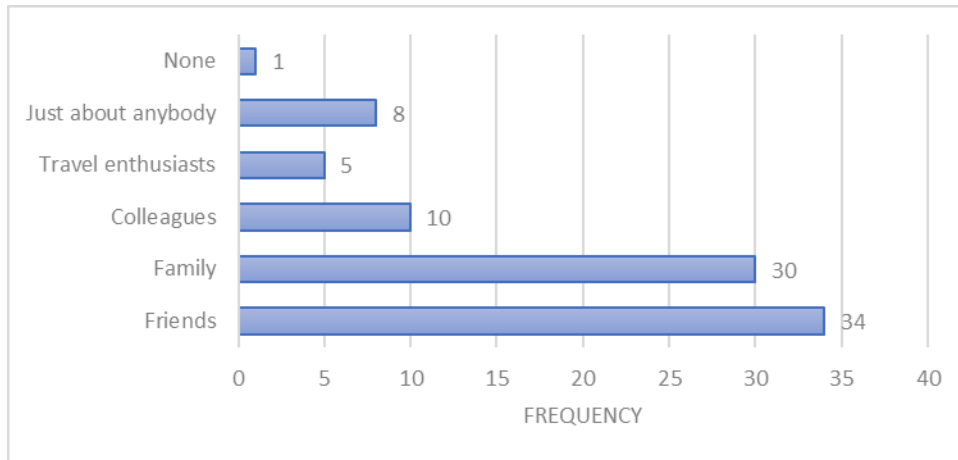


***Q 28. Who did you primarily share your Yukon experience with? (Please select all that apply)***

When participants were asked who they shared their experience with, the majority of participants chose to tell their friends and family. However, 23 participants also told colleagues, travel enthusiasts, and just about anybody.



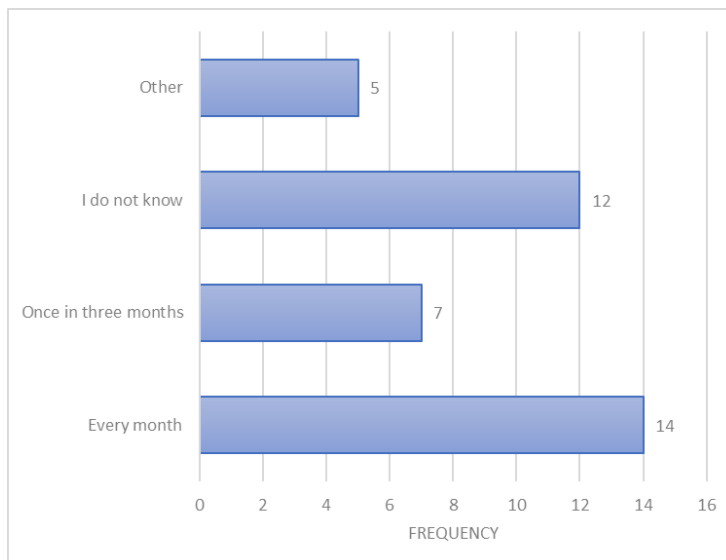
**Figure 13: People travellers will share their experience with**



***Q 29. How often do you recall/share your experience? (Please select only one option)***

How often participants would share the experiences varied. Fourteen respondents chose every month, seven would share it once every three months, and twelve individuals did not know. Other participants would share their experience daily, hourly, every two days or whenever asked.

**Figure 14: How often travellers will recall their experience**





#### **4.5 Results from the Yukon Visitor Tracking Program**

To explore any differences between this sample of motor vehicle-based tourists and Yukon's general tourist population, this section will provide a summary of the results found in the YVTP survey.

The most up-to-date Yukon Visitor Exit Survey was conducted between 2012 and 2013 to evaluate visitor characteristics, their travel and expense patterns. The purpose of the exit surveys is to provide the tourism industry information about Yukon's tourism sector which influences the decisions of marketers, tourist operators, as well as the Government of Yukon (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The exit survey, called the Yukon Visitor Tracking Program (YVTP) resulted in several reports including the Summer and Winter Reports, the Visitor Segmentation, Pathways Report and the Methodology Report. This study was focused on summer visitors; thus, the results of the Summer Report are mainly discussed here, however in some instances the Pathways Report was also looked at.

Tourists for the YVTP survey were intercepted at key locations in the Yukon and Alaska, including: hotels, Visitor Information Centres, terminals of cruise ships, train stations, and the Erik Nielsen International Airport (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Visitors were asked a few questions, and if they were interested, they registered for the detailed online YVTP survey. Visitors were also contacted if they ordered the Yukon Vacation Planner, if they participated in the Yukon Gold Explorer's Passport activity, and if they registered for the survey (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The incentive to complete the survey was a draw for a chance to win a \$1000 gold nugget (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).



#### **4.5.1 Pre-Trip Planning**

In the summer of 2012, 317,200 people came to the Yukon, the number of visitors had increased by 26% since 2004 (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). For most, the primary trip purpose was to visit Alaska according to 46% of visitors, which is not surprising considering that 63% of visitors came from the United States (see Section 3.3). Others travelled to visit the Yukon (20%), to drive the Alaska Highway (14%), to take a cruise (11%), while 9% chose the other option. Only 7% of visitors travelled to the Yukon for business, while 93% travelled for leisure/personal reasons (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Leisure/personal reasons included wilderness travel (12%), visiting friends or relatives (8%), festival or event (2%) and other leisure /personal reasons (78%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Unfortunately, it is unknown what other leisure/personal reasons were driving visitors.

Most visitors travelled in parties of two (55%), but solo travellers made up 13% of visitors, parties of three made up 10% of visitors, groups of four made up 11% of visitors, and visitors travelling with five or more people made up 9% of visitors (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Seventy-eight percent of visitors travelled without children (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). These results are expected based on the demographics. Retirees do not usually have young children to travel with, and they would be more likely to travel with their spouse who is also retired and can afford the same time off.

Various types of planning resources were used by visitors. The most common visitor resource was the Yukon Vacation Planner (73%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). This was followed by travel books (68%), advertisements about the Yukon (67%), and Yukon newspapers or magazine stories (59%). It is noteworthy that



more than half of visitors were influenced by people who previously visited the Yukon (56%). The Territory's tourism website, Travel Yukon (55%), and travel agents (52%) were used by more than half of visitors, but travel sites and review sites were each used by 42% of visitors. Over 75% of tourists started their trip outside of Canada so it is not surprising that travel agents would be used. Friends or relatives living in the Yukon were referenced by 41% of visitors (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Booking sites, local travel or outdoor show, video and photo sites and social networking sites were used by 24%-33% of visitors.

When asked which information source influenced their trip decision most, 51% identified Yukon advertisements. This was followed by the Yukon Vacation Planner (48%), while other high rated sources included Travel Yukon (45%) and travel guides and books (44%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Friends and relatives previously visiting the Yukon were influential to 44%, while 43% identified them as a low influence. Not knowing someone who has visited the Yukon may account for some of those numbers (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). In comparison, friends or relatives living in the Yukon were a high influence for 26%, while 70% found them to be a low influence. Review sites were also rated as having a high influence by 44% (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). News or magazine stories were rated by 33% as having a high influence, while another 37% considered it a low influence. Travel company (55%), booking sites (56%), and travel agents (63%) were rated as a low influence (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The least influential information sources included travel and outdoor shows (81%), video or photo sites (70%), and social media websites (76%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).



#### **4.5.2 Trip Experience**

Visiting the Yukon was done predominantly by personal/rented vehicle since 53% chose this transportation style. The types of vehicles used included, car/truck/van (57%), recreational vehicles (40%), and motorcycles (4%). Other transportation included motorcoach (24%), air (12%) and train (10%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). When asked about travelling around the Yukon, 83% of visitors drove only, 8% stayed in one community, 6% drove and flew within the Yukon, 2% travelled by other means and no visitor flew between the Yukon communities (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Visitors were asked how many nights they spent in the Yukon, and most spent 1-3 nights (30%), 23% stayed 4-7 nights, 15% stayed 8-13 nights, 14% travelled just for a day trip, 10% stayed between 14-20 nights and 6% stayed for 21+ nights (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

Visitors were asked about their accommodation choices and the most common accommodation was camping (59%). Camping meant using commercial campgrounds (30%), government campgrounds (20%), or other camping options like parking lots and pull-offs (9%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The vehicles that were used for those camping accommodations included, RV/camper/trailer (65%), tenting (32%) and both types of camping (3%). Hotel/motel were used by 42% of visitors, while 19% travelled for a day trip and did not use any accommodation (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The least used accommodation choices were: B&B, cabin or hostel (9%), and friends or family home (9%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

The types of activities that visitors participated in while on their trip were diverse, but the most common activity noted by 48% of visitors was visiting natural attractions and unique natural features. Forty-two percent visited museums and historical places, and



41% went shopping, between 32%-37% of visitors went to a Yukon Visitor Information Centre, participated in a community walking tour and went wildlife viewing (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Between 20%-24% visited a National Park, went hiking/camping, or took a motorcoach or van tour. Fifteen to sixteen percent visited an art gallery, a Territorial Park or Heritage River, or participated in Yukon First Nation culture activity (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The least participated in activities included: gold panning (12%), guided wilderness tours (12%), visiting friends or relatives (11%), and participating in arts and cultural events or festivals (10%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

The highest-rated nature-related activities were viewing natural scenery (48%) and viewing wildlife (37%). This was followed by community walking tours (34%), hiking or camping (21%), visiting National Parks (20%), visiting Territorial Park or River (15%) and participating in a guided wilderness trip (12%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). Visitors were also asked about their primary Yukon destination, and 35% did not have a destination since they were just passing through. Their primary destinations were Dawson City (29%), Carcross (17%) and Whitehorse (15%), while their favourite destinations included Dawson City (23%), Whitehorse (17%), Carcross (17%), Haines Junction (5%) and Watson Lake (4%) (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

#### **4.5.3 Post Trip Experience**

Visitors were asked to rate their satisfaction with Yukon in comparison to other destinations they visited. Sixteen percent of visitors identified the Yukon as their favourite destination, 53% identified it as their strong favourite, 31% identified it as somewhat favourite and 1% of visitors noted that Yukon was not their favourite



destination (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). When asked about their likelihood to recommend the Yukon, 53% said they definitely will, 23% were somewhat likely, 23% were unsure, and 2% were not likely. When asked if they would visit again, 28% would definitely likely revisit, 27% were very likely, 36% were somewhat likely, 7% were not very likely and 3% were not at all likely to visit the Yukon again (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

#### **4.5.4 Summary**

Most visitors travelled to the Yukon for leisure or pleasure, although it is not clear what such experience entails, at least 12% identified wilderness travel as their travel purpose. More than half of visitors were destined for Alaska which reflects the origin of most tourists who were American.

Tourists travelled mostly in parties of two without children, which at least partially reflects the demographic age group. However, 20% of visitors travelled in parties of four or more. It is not uncommon for vehicle-based tourists to travel together as part of travel clubs (see Prideaux & Carson, 2010).

As expected, the Yukon Vacation Planner, the most well-known Yukon tourism resource, was referenced by the majority of visitors during the planning stage, but its influence on the trip decision was low in comparison. Other important resources used by nearly 60 to 70% of participants included textual material such as travel books, and Yukon newspapers and magazine stories. Those resources only influenced the trip decision of 33-44% of visitors. This trend was also seen with the information source of friends and family who previously visited the Yukon. That resource was used by more visitors but only influenced 44% of their trip choices. Review sites on the other hand,



which were used by less than half of visitors, had a higher influence on the trip decision. Trade shows, multimedia and social networking sites were used the least, and had the least influence on trip choices.

Vehicle-based travel made up 77% of the transportation choice, while 80% of visitors got around the Yukon by driving. Over 50% of visitors used self-drive vehicles which were mainly cars/trucks/vans and recreational vehicles. Using a motor vehicle to travel to, and in the Yukon had also influenced visitors' accommodation choice since 65% of visitors used vehicle-based camping while thirty percent tented.

When it came to activity participation the most common activity was viewing natural scenery. Viewing wildlife was also rated at the top of activities as were community walking tours. As the activities required more engagement with nature, such as visiting a park or participating in a prolonged wilderness trip, such activities were less common. Rather indoor or historical activities were preferred including visiting a museum or historical site, shopping, visiting a Yukon Visitor Information Centre, or participating in a vehicle tour. In comparison with other destinations, Yukon was a strong favourite for over half of visitors, while for others it was a somewhat favourite experience. Just over half of visitors would recommend it to others while 40% were somewhat likely or unsure if they would recommend it.



## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

This chapter discusses the research results from Chapter 4. Starting with Section 5.1, the results from the YVTP and this case study are compared. The next section looks at the meaning of the Yukon tourist experience in seven categories. A detailed look at the narratives and several insights that resulted from their analysis are presented in Section 5.3.2. Suggestions for tourist managers and tourist operators in the Yukon were also provided in this section. However, before discussing the importance of narratives and their potential contribution to management strategies, Section 5.3 explores drive tourism. In this section, the similarities between the results of this study and other literature are also reviewed. Additionally, subgroups in Yukon's drive tourism were looked at based on the motivations of motor vehicle-based tourists. Finally, a summary reviewing each section completes this Chapter.

### **5.1 This Research and the YVTP**

In this study a total of 33 questions were used to collect data about motor vehicle-based tourists in the Yukon Territory. The case-study explored tourists' choices and behaviours during the pre-trip planning and trip experience, and open-ended questions were used to collect deeper insights about those experiences. Thirty-nine participants responded, most of whom had travelled in 2016 during the spring and summer seasons, which aligns with the season that the YVTP survey was conducted. There were more similarities between the two studies' questions than differences. For clarity, participants from the questionnaire sample will be referred to as motor vehicle-based tourists, but this should not suggest that many YVTP participants were not also travelling by motor



vehicle. The data from the YVTP Summer Report can be accessed from the 2012-2013 YVTP Summer Report (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a).

### **5.1.1 Demographics**

One of the greatest differences between the YVTP results and this study sample was that Canadians made up nearly 80% of the study sample (Table 3). It is unclear what accounts for this difference, but looking at the number of border crossings by private vehicles when this study was conducted in 2016 (July and August), 14% were from Canada, 14.7% were from overseas, 10% were Yukon residents and 61% were from the US (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2016c; 2016d). Therefore, there were no notable differences in visitors' trip origin that year which could account for the amount of inconsistency in the study sample compared to the 2016 visitor population. The end of Section 3.3.1 does provide some possible reasons for this difference. In any case, participants' origin of travel in 2016 did explain why only 5% of visitors were primarily passing through the Yukon, whereas 46% of the YVTP population were primarily headed to Alaska.

The participants in this study and the YVTP were similar in age, education and household income. Participants' average age was 55 years old from the case-study and 52 years old from the YVTP. In both studies most participants were between the ages 55 to 64 years old, 31% from the YVTP and 41% (17 individuals) from this study. More participants from this study were older, 65 years or more, and younger, under 33 years of age. Nearly all participants from the case-study, 38 respondents (97%) had a college degree or completed higher education, which exceeded the 83% of YVTP visitors that had a degree. Seventy percent of participants from the YVTP made \$60,000 or more



annually, and 75% (16 individuals) from this study made \$70,000 or more. For comparison, in 2016 the median total income of the Canadian population was \$63,900, therefore, 75% of participants made more than the average Canadian (Statistics Canada, n.d.-b).

Fourty one percent (16 respondents) of individuals from this study sample were retired or semi-retired, which is slightly more than the 38% of visitors from the YVTP. More participants that were employed or self-employed, in both studies, 58% from the YVTP and 49% from this study. However, when considering that the age of participants was over 50 in both studies, participants were about a decade from regular retirement age.

### **5.1.2 Pre-Trip Planning**

Repeat visitors made up 33% of YVTP sample, and 64% (25 respondents) of participants in this study. In both studies over half of visitors travelled in parties of two, which was slightly higher in the case-study. The majority of people did not travel with children in both studies, and this was more common in the case-study.

The most important pre-trip planning resources used by participants from this case-study included the Yukon Vacation Planner, government websites and books, and in the YVTP study, the Yukon Vacation Planner, advertisements, friends or family who visited the Yukon and government websites. The resources used in both studies are products created by the Government of Yukon, thus giving the government influence over their image. However, in the YVTP study, word-of-mouth from previous visitors was also influential.

The greatest difference between the studies was the use of travel agents, tour operators and travel company websites, which was important to nearly half of visitors in



the YVTP but less than 10% in this case-study. The reason for those differences could be attributed to visitors' place of origin. Most visitors in the YVTP started their trip from the US.

When considering tourists' primary reason for travelling to the Yukon, in the YVTP results, visiting Alaska was rated the highest (46%), and leisure/personal reasons (which included wilderness travel, visiting friends and relatives, festival/event or other) were tourists' dominant travel purpose (93%). The wording of the question differed in the case-study, however similar results were noted except in the case of visiting Alaska. Nearly half of the participants (19 respondents) travelled for pleasure, 28% (11 respondents) chose recreation and 8% (3 respondents) were visiting family or friends. Although Alaska was not explicitly asked in the questionnaire, the options: passing through, and other (please specify), were listed in the question. Only two participants chose the former, while no participants mentioned Alaska in the latter option.

There was one open-ended question about motivation asked in the YVTP survey which asked: *What two things most motivated or inspired you to take the trip?* However, those results were not presented in the YVTP report, nor was it easily obtained from the Department of Tourism and Culture. Since those results were not obtained, they cannot be compared to the motivations found in the case-study, thus the motivations of motor vehicle-based tourists are looked at separately in Section 5.3.



### 5.1.3 Trip Experience

The modes of transportation used to travel to the Yukon varied between the YVTP and the questionnaire sample.

**Table 20: Comparing transportation methods used for travelling to, and within the Yukon**

MODES OF TRAVEL		CASE STUDY FREQUENCY	CASE STUDY %	YVTP %
<b>Travel to the Yukon</b>	Personal/rented vehicles	23	59%	48%
	Air	15	38%	12%
	Motorcoach	0	0	24%
	Train	1	3%	10%
<b>Travel within the Yukon</b>	Personal/rented vehicles	37	95%	53%
	Air	1	3%	Unknown
	Motorcoach	3	20%	Unknown
	Train	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown

In both studies, personal or rented vehicles dominated the transportation used to arrive to the Yukon, 48% by YVTP visitors, and 23 (59%) participants from this study. In this study, more participants used personal or rented vehicles within the Yukon while only half of YVTP visitors used this method. Air travel was the second most important method to reach Yukon in this study but only 12% of YVTP visitors used this method. As the cost of air travel continues to lower each year, air travel to the Yukon from certain places of Canada can be worth the financial cost in exchange for the amount of time that is saved by driving to the Yukon. Therefore, justifying the 38% of visitors from this study who flew to the Yukon.

It was not stated how many individuals travelled by air between communities in the YVTP, however one individual did so in this study. Motorcoach was more common for YVTP visitors travelling to the Yukon than air travel. This is most likely a reflection



of cruise ship tourists, or other day trippers often travelling from Haines, or Skagway Alaska. In this study no one travelled by motorcoach, although 20% (3 respondents) did use this method within the Yukon.

Nearly 60% of participants (23 respondents) from this study visited between five and eight regions in the Yukon. Two individuals (5%) identified only one community they stayed in. From the YVTP survey, eight percent of visitors stayed in only one community. The difference in activity participation between both studies is presented in Table 21.

**Table 21: The top-rated activities in order of participation**

CASE STUDY	CASE STUDY FREQUENCY	CASE STUDY %	YVTP %
Visit natural attractions and features	32	82%	48%
Visit built attractions (museums and historical places)	32	82%	42%
Yukon Visitor Information Centres	30	77%	32%
Visit National Park, Territorial Park or Heritage River	29	74%	20%
Wildlife viewing	27	69%	37%
Shopping	25	64%	41%
Hike/camp	24	62%	21%
Yukon First Nation Culture	20	51%	16%
Community walking tour	15	38%	34%
Arts and cultural events or festival	13	33%	10%
Yukon art gallery	12	31%	15%
Visit friends and relatives	10	26%	11%

In both studies, visiting built attractions and natural attractions and features were the most common activities. However, a higher percentage of individuals from the case-study visited those attractions. Shopping was also common in both studies.



Where the studies differed included: visiting parks or heritage river, Yukon Visitor Information Centres, and hiking/camping where more participants from this study engaged in those activities. Additionally, one third of participants engaged in educational activities. Those included: visiting arts and cultural events or festivals, and visiting the Yukon art gallery, which was greater than the 10-15% of YVTP visitors. Additionally, over one third of visitors from both studies participated in community walking tours, while taking motorcycle or van tour was one of the top ten activities that YVTP participants engaged in.

The accommodations that were used in both studies are presented in Table 22. The total percentage for both studies surpasses 100% because subjects used more than one accommodation during their trip.

**Table 22: Accommodation most used by participants in the YVTP and this study**

ACCOMMODATION TYPE	CASE STUDY FREQUENCY	CASE STUDY %	YVTP %
Hotel/motel (B&B and Lodges)	22	63 %	51 %
RV/motorhome/trailer camping	14	36 %	38 %
Car-camping (tenting)	12	31 %	32 %
Non-camping (parking lot, road side pullout, other etc.)	13	18 %	9 %
Backcountry camping	7	18 %	Unknown
Friends/family	5	13 %	9 %
None (day-trip/cruise)	2	5 %	19 %

Three accommodation styles were most common in both studies. Firstly, hotels, motels, B&Bs and lodges were used by over half of participants in both studies. That style of accommodation tends to supplement other accommodation choices and is therefore used by a greater number of individuals but for a shorter period of time. The second accommodation used by nearly 40% of the study subjects included various



recreational vehicle camping. The third most common accommodation type used by nearly one-third of subjects included car-camping. The difference in accommodation types related to family and friends, which was most common in this study. Nineteen percent of YVTP visitors did not use any accommodation because they visited the Yukon for one day.

#### **5.1.4 Post Experience**

In the post experience phase, participants in both studies were asked about their experience satisfaction. In the case-study, nearly half of respondents were completely satisfied with their trip experience, while over one-third were mostly satisfied. According to the 2012-2013 Summer Report from the YVTP, “over two-thirds of visitors were satisfied with their Yukon experience” (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a, p. 39).

In the YVTP survey, over half of respondents (53%) considered Yukon their strong favourite (the second highest option), while only 16% considered it their most favourite (highest option) when compared to other destinations. When considering revisiting, 36% of participants would somewhat likely revisit, 28% would definitely likely, and 27% would very likely revisit. Motor vehicle-based tourists, the majority of who started their trip from Canada, had a higher satisfaction rating than did visitors from the YVTP survey.

### **5.2 Narrative Themes**

The responses to open-ended questions 22, 24, and 25, were diverse and complex, highlighting different aspects of the Yukon experience. Several themes emerged from those responses and were presented in Section 4.4. Similarities between those themes also



became evident, and they were grouped into seven categories, some of which were combination categories. Those categories represent the Yukon experience and are presented in Table 21. They include unique opportunities (both human and ecological) and service expectations, the travel adventure, engaging places, pristine nature, meaningful interrelationships and solitude, unexpected weather, and sharing the experience through stories.

**Table 23: Categories derived from Q 22, Q 24, and Q 25 and their combined frequencies**

	<b>Open-Ended Questions</b>			
<b>Categories</b>	<b>Q 22 <i>Reflecting on your experience in the Yukon, select from memory a place that was memorable, special or important to you AND EXPLAIN WHY?</i></b>	<b>Q 24 <i>Imagine you are writing about your experience on a personal blog or telling your closest friend or relative about your trip, how would your story go?</i></b>	<b>Q 25 <i>What was your least favourite experience in the Yukon?</i></b>	<b>Combined Frequencies</b>
Unique Opportunities and service expectations	Historical Places and Activities (5)	Activities (11)	Services and Activities (10)	<b>26</b>
Travel adventure	Highways (6)	Travel (11)	Automobile trouble (12)	<b>29</b>
Engaging places	Towns (20)	Places (8)		<b>28</b>
Pristine nature	Natural Areas and Features (13)	Nature (22)		<b>35</b>
Meaningful interrelationships and solitude		People (15)	Solitude (4)	<b>19</b>
Unexpected weather		Weather (4)	Weather (4)	<b>8</b>
Sharing stories		Sharing stories (5)		<b>5</b>



### **Engaging places**

The category engaging places came up 28 times in the open-ended responses from the subordinate themes: towns and places. This category refers to participants' level of involvement with Yukon's highway communities, towns, city and nature. Participants' interacted with Yukon's history through built attractions, activities related to the Klondike era, or authentic entertainment that resembled what was expected in the past. For some, sightseeing, hiking and wildlife connected them to places. For others, it was their engagement with Yukon's culture or with the people that worked there.

How detailed or specific the narratives were, varied by individual. Some participants made general remarks about places regarding the people, food, or the type of activity they engaged in. An example of this was written by IP 28, "Dawson City was wonderful. Great museums and historical buildings".

Others elaborated in their narratives and wrote about their emotional state. For example, IP 12's narrative included the time of their experience, the activity they engaged in, the names of locations they visited, and how they felt:

*...I spent a night sleeping in my car at a rest area 40Km north of Carmacks on Hwy 2. About 10AM the next morning (I was really tired from my trip up the Dempster) I woke to find my car shaking. When I roused myself enough to look outside to see what was going on, I found myself nose-to-nose... with a curious black bear. After he had left, I got out to discover toothmarks on my rear bumper. That sort of thing sticks with you." - IP 12*

Participants' also included the specific locations they visited. In Q 22 and Q 24, the specific locations mentioned were: Dawson City, Whitehorse, Watson Lake and Carcross. Those places were also the most popular based on visitor numbers. Other



highway towns included, Carmacks, Teslin, Destruction Bay, and the Northwest Territory's Fort McPherson.

According to Farber & Hall (2007), five factors contribute to extraordinary experiences: scenery, wildlife, recreation, social interactions and novel experiences. Places that were engaging had those extraordinary qualities identified by those authors. At the same time, the narratives reflecting those extraordinary experiences included specific information about the experience, and they were often greater in length. They included: an encounter with a bear, participating in a live event, or reflected on the hospitality of Yukon staff.

### **Meaningful interrelationships and solitude**

The friendliness and overall receptive nature of residents and workers represent the meaningful interrelationship category. The importance of this category was also notable when interactions with Yukon residents were disruptive or unpleasant, thus emphasizing how impactful interactions can be to the experience.

Eleven participants identified their friends, family, Yukon residents or staff in topics related to the hospitality, lifestyle, helpfulness and chattiness of the people they met. At the same time, interactions with people that were rude, disruptive or who harassed visitors for money, resulted in unpleasant experiences.

Interestingly, there were more narratives that included strangers, than participants' family or friends. That was the case even though most participants had travelled with at least one person they knew during their trip. This was interesting considering their experience preference to do things with family or friends surpassed their preference for doing things with people they did not know. This illustrates that even if



tourists are able to satisfy their needs and preferences, it does not mean that acquiring those needs will result in them being incorporated into narratives. Therefore, motivational statements and experience evaluations both have limitations in how they represent the tourist experience.

In Farber & Hall's (2007) study, social interactions were an important component for tourists travelling along the Dalton Highway. Specifically, when those interactions helped build stronger connections with family members, or when social interactions with local residents were interesting or inspiring. Therefore, while the influence of travel party members may be excluded in tourists' narratives, as was found in this study, the influence of residents on the tourist experience should not be underestimated.

In contrast to meaningful interrelationships, is the experience of solitude. In places where low volumes of people might be expected like in the North, and in the outdoors, the absence of people and solitude is important. Four participants wrote about the absence of people which helped enhance their impression of the wilderness. For example, IP 17 wrote, "[t]he ruggedness, wilderness, and lack of people in the Yukon is amazing" and IP 29 wrote, "North is wonderful, magical and must be visited. It is also a great wilderness experience and you can get away from technology and people quite easily".

Prazeres & Donohoe (2014) also found the absence of crowds in the narratives of campers in Kathleen Lake. Their participants wrote about solitude by comparing it to previous experiences such as those in urban centres. Bricker & Kertstetter's (2002) participants who engaged in white water rafting along a waterway, expected the absence of people, to the point that they felt the need to protect it in order to prevent potential



overcrowding and development. One individual from this study also noted their dissatisfaction when their solitude experience was affected. IP 33 wrote, “Once hunting season started was more difficult to find areas with no people”.

In natural settings, where lower volumes of people can be expected, experiencing solitude is important. How one relates to solitude can vary. It can enhance the quality of wilderness, or the quality of the activity such as a walk along a trail. If the experience of solitude is not obtained, it can leave individuals dissatisfied, and for others it can be perceived as a threat to the environment. This has important implications to the Yukon as visitor numbers increase. It may become increasingly difficult to find remoteness in the Yukon along highways. For older individuals, searching for solitude inland might not be feasible. For those who travel to Alaska, if solitude is not experienced along Yukon’s highways or trails, it is unlikely that those visitors will be searching for this experience in the Yukon. This raises the questions, if motor vehicle-based tourists are seeking solitude along road networks, how will tourist managers respond to the pressure for creating more remote roads? Tourist managers will need to decide how to respond to those possible scenarios.

### **Travel adventure**

The travel adventure category evolved from 28 narratives that were grouped into themes: highways, travel, automobile, and travelling/driving. This category represents the travel occurrences both positive and negative which motor vehicle-based tourists experience while travelling to new or less familiar places. Half of participants spent three or more days reaching the destination by motor vehicle, and the meaning of that travel manifested in participants’ narratives as: excitement, risks and challenges of driving



along unique roads, the thrill, and contrasting boredom experienced from driving long distances through landscape devoid of people or services, and even facing the anticipation or frustration of car trouble from which a sense of accomplishment ensued.

The fact that elements related to travel were included in participants' narratives 29 times, and because many of those narratives were expressed using emotions, the travel adventure category does suggest that participants' drive experience was a journey. This was also evident since both affective and instrumental vehicle attributes were important to participants' motor vehicle use. Travelling to the Yukon was not just about reaching the destination because of the convenience, reliability or the accessibility offered by the automobile, travel was also about freedom and independence. The trip to the Yukon starts days before the destination is reached, since over half of motor vehicle-based tourists took three or more days to arrive to the Yukon. Thus, to fully understand the drive experience, tourist managers need to take this into account, which raises the question, how does this time prepare individuals for the time spent in the Yukon? And, can this time be leveraged in some capacity?

While it is unclear how this can be accomplished, marketing strategists should consider the instrumental and affective motor vehicle attributes most important to drivers. For RV users in Hardy & Gretzel's (2010) study, safety and security were important and as a result this influenced how they travelled – in caravan groups. This preferred method of travel provided them the security they were looking for, and at the same time it presented tourism opportunities such as RV rallies.

One potential option is to provide better opportunities in alternative transportation like boating, kayaking/canoeing, bicycling, travelling by train, flight, motorcoach, or



even hitchhiking. This would be done by targeting the instrumental and affective attributes that participants preferred. Although those transportation methods were not representative of the travel adventure category, since they were not included in participants' responses to Q 22, Q 24, Q 25, they were present in other questions, including Q 18 *Are there any activities or experiences in Yukon which you would have liked to have participated in, but were not able to?* In any case, future research may take interest in how those transportation methods might expand the travel adventure.

### **Pristine nature**

Pristine nature had the most mentions in participants' narratives. This category evolved from the 35 narratives that were separated into the themes: natural areas and features, landscape, scenery, wilderness and wildlife. Those themes represented topics related to the landscape, geology, ruggedness and wildlife diversity, all of which conveyed participants' admiration for Yukon's intact wilderness area – otherwise representing Yukon's pristine nature. Similar keywords including unspoiled, undisturbed and pristine were represented by the naturalness theme used by Prazeres & Donohoe (2014).

The most popular natural locations mentioned included Kluane National Park and Reserve and Tombstone Territorial Park. Park visitation was the fourth most common activity (Q 17) during the trip, where 29 participants visited a National or Territorial Park or a Heritage River. What made those experiences memorable seemed to be reflected in Q 22 as: hiking or walking, visual aesthetics, remoteness, wildlife experience and vehicle trouble near the park. Similar keywords including beauty, serenity, wilderness and remoteness, were mentioned by white water rafters in Bricker & Kertstetter's (2002)



study, however they referred to those experiences as part of their environmental-landscape category.

The most common activity participants engaged in was visiting natural attractions and unique natural features, which were visited by 32 participants (Q 17). The specific natural features that were the most meaningful based on their inclusion in the narratives, included: Northern Lights, Mount Logan, the midnight sun and National and Territorial Parks. What made those features unique was the visual aesthetics, the grandness in size of those features, and its remoteness. Farber & Hall's (2007) scenery theme which included visual attributes, open spaces, natural features and less tangible experiences that relate to changes in colour or weather also contributed to extraordinary experiences.

Additionally, many participants engaged in wildlife viewing/bird watching (27 participants) and hiking/camping (24 participants) during their activity engagements (Q 17). Expectedly, encounters with wildlife was one of the most mentioned experiences – identified by six individuals. While three individuals stated that they did not see any animals or hoped to see more of them (Q 18).

Common engagements like hiking or camping were largely absent from participants' narratives, despite over half of participants engaging in those activities during their trip. Instead narratives focused on seeing the landscape, scenery and wildlife, and those experiences are the potential outcomes of hiking and camping.

Recreation was another theme that was included in Bricker & Kerstetter's (2002) study, and to a small extent Farber & Hall's (2007) study. For the former researchers, the recreation dimension represented learning or skill testing, and the enjoyment of the activity (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2002). For the latter, recreational activities were only



slightly considered extraordinary. Those activities included hiking, camping, or visiting settlements (Farber & Hall, 2007).

In this study as well as the work of Prazeres & Donohoe (2014), Farber & Hall (2007) and Bricker & Kertstetter (2002), each study emphasized different attributes of nature, resulting in very different themes. Therefore, which components of nature are considered important varies across activities and between individuals. In any case, nature was always the central focus of nature-based experiences in the narratives.

### **Unexpected weather**

As an outdoor destination, weather played an important role in participant's direct experience with the Yukon. In eight individual narratives, weather variability, the surprising coolness or warmth of the destination, and rainy days made up the unexpected weather category.

Weather is an important theme particularly to the long-distance traveller because it is difficult to prepare for. In the Yukon, weather plays a dominant role in experiencing attractions that are largely visual or which require outdoor physical engagement. Aspects of weather have appeared eight times in participants' narratives, mainly as a least favourite experience because of the cold and rain. For one participant (IP 12), the weather affected their opportunity to flight-see Mount Logan, and to travel along the Robert Campbell Highway. For another individual, IP 17, the rainy weather days before a hike made their stay at Kathleen Lake memorable, but weather became a topic of interest in their story and was identified as their least favourite experience.

In other cases, weather seemed to enhance the perception of the destination. IP 30 wrote, "from the 1<sup>st</sup> sunny day at Watson Lake, I felt welcomed. With its quaint towns,



beautiful mountain scenery and surprisingly warm temperatures, Yukon had a lot to see & do”.

Only one closed-ended question touched on the weather topic when participants were asked about what they expected/desired from destination websites. Information regarding weather, climate, temperature, or environmental warnings, the fourth most expected type of information, following, first, general information about attractions, second, various contact details, and third, calendar of events and activities. The importance of weather and climate in the pre-trip planning stage became evident when looking at the implications of inclement weather on the trip outcome.

Those results confirm what other studies found about weather and its effects on the experience. In Farber & Hall’s (2007) study, the importance of the short-lasting colours, contrasts, clouds and rain influenced which experiences were considered extraordinary or special. In Prazeres & Donohoe’s (2014) work, weather influenced individuals’ moods, while affecting activity participation. Unexpected weather will most likely be one of the most pressing issues facing management in the North because of climate change and the spontaneous weather events that will result. This will make it difficult to control tourists’ experience, but creating accurate expectations will be vital to maintaining tourists’ satisfaction.

### **Sharing stories**

Five narratives are represented by the sharing stories category. When thinking about sharing their experiences, three individuals referred to their blogs and Facebook posts, and another stated the methods they would use to present their experiences – through photos and text. However, to one individual, the idea of presenting their



experience to the public would threaten what they appreciated about their experience, which was their escape from civilization.

Pictures and journals were the main ways for recording experiences, followed by maps and social media. Pictures did dominate how individuals would share their experience with others, most commonly with family and friends. As stated in Section 5.1.2, 56% of YVTP tourists consulted their friends and family during trip planning, while over a quarter of participants did so in this study. Also, nearly half of participants would share their experience with their colleagues, or with just about anybody. Therefore, those shared resources, particularly visual information, could be used to influence future visitors.

Additionally, nine participants recorded their individual experiences using maps, making it possible for prospective tourists to seek out similar, if not exact routes. Especially if those maps were made accessible online. Eight participants, for instance used social media outlets to post their experience on blogs and Facebook. As previously stated, in three cases those outlets were used during the trip experience. Travel blogs were consulted by ten individuals, and another eight used travel forums to obtain their pre-trip planning information.

Thus, the detailed and descriptive information tourists collect has significant potential in influencing future tourists. Maps were also one of the top-rated information resources used by participants during the trip planning stage. This further emphasizes their importance especially for first time, long-distance visitors. Also, the sharing stories category provides an opportunity for promoting the Yukon. Therefore, making online resources available in the Yukon should be a priority.



### **Unique opportunities and service expectations**

Connecting with the past, both human and ecological, the aesthetics and outdoor recreation as well as the expectations for services represent this combination category. Represented in 26 narratives, the unique opportunities and service expectations category refers to the historical built attractions, the history of the region including its ecological history, the aesthetics of the landscape and the outdoor opportunities available, as well as the expectations that were not met by services.

In this study, uniqueness is experienced through historical and ecological elements. In Prazeres & Donohoe's (2014) study, the unique environment of Kluane National Park and Reserve was expressed through a comparison to other environments. While in Farber & Hall's (2007) study, uniqueness had more to do with novelty, particularly events that had an element of surprise which made those experiences extraordinary.

When participants were writing a story about their trip in Q 24, topics fell into two subthemes, unspecified activities and specified activities. Five participants made vague references to activities, IP 7 wrote, "would highly recommend anyone to travel to the Yukon especially if you enjoy the outdoors", IP 11 stated, "unfortunately not enough time to do all we wanted to do", IP 14 mentioned, "we were taken away by the geology, history both oral and written, scenery, things to do as well as the quality of the roads", IP 20 noted, "there are endless opportunities to experience this land", and IP 23 wrote, "to truly appreciate the beauty of the area you need to get out and explore". While nature and the outdoors were central components of those narratives, they tended to refer to



broad engagements, and therefore were grouped under the unspecified activities subtheme.

This is different from the narratives that fell within the specified activity subtheme where six participants mentioned specific activities such as hiking, the salmon run, visiting museums, heritage centres and sites, taking the ferry, dinning, shopping, live events, gold panning and geocaching.

Although a link between the types of information participants used during their pre-trip planning phase and the types of activities they referred to when writing about their stories might not be direct, looking at those two types of data does illustrate some potential connections. For instance, the most expected/desired information from destination websites included general attractions like museums, historical sites, city tours and festivals, and the third most used information source included calendar of events, festivals and activities. When looking at the types of activities in participants' stories, they wrote about museums, heritage centres, historical sites, live events, gold panning and geocaching.

Additionally, online information about recreation activities, shopping and dining information was considered important by nearly half of participants during pre-trip planning, and similarly some of those experiences were mentioned in the stories. IP 18 stated, "Tombstone Territorial Park is beautiful although the weather didn't allow us to do any real hiking", while IP 26 wrote, "we also enjoyed the quirky nature of Dawson City, from getting there via ferry to dining at and enjoying the Can-Can shows at Diamond Gertie's". IP 28 mentioned, "[...] authentic businesses, the goods for sale are produced locally or feature local authors from the past". Furthermore, many of the



activities mentioned in the narratives were some of the most common activities participants engaged in, including visiting natural attractions and unique natural features, visiting built attractions, a National or Territorial Park or Heritage River, going shopping, hiking or camping. Thus, recognizing the influence of specific information participants collect during their pre-trip planning stage, how it translates into activity participation and the direct outcome of those experiences would be an interesting future study.

Ten individuals identified activities or services as the least favourite part of the Yukon trip. In some instances, the lack of services impacted the types of activities individuals participated in, which is why services and activities were grouped into a combination category. Those responses are a good example of how expectations and conditions might influence participants' experience. For example, IP 19's travel was restricted because of limited mileage on a rental car. Their expectation to be able to travel wherever there was road access, is a consequence of the motor vehicle factors people associate with car use. Poor internet access cost IP 34 an hour of their day, causing them to travel back to the Visitor Centre for better online access. Their dependence on internet access, and Yukon's remoteness cost them an hour of their time. IP 30 was unable to gold pan because of limited panning sites, an expectation that is potentially reinforced by marketing which encourages tourists to participate in this activity without providing the opportunities to do so meaningfully. In a different case, the accessibility of the road network took IP 27 to Atlin, BC, only to disappoint them with the lack of activities available there. An expectation also reinforced by motor vehicle factors.



### **5.3 Drive Tourism in the Yukon**

Based on the patterns that Carson & Prideaux (2010) identified as being reflective of self-drive tourists, it appears that tourists in the Yukon are representative of this industry – if not fully, based on the YVTP visitors' travel patterns, then at least partially, based on the patterns of this study group. For example, Carson & Prideaux (2010) identified the following travel patterns as characteristic of self-drive tourists:

- Travelling independently without the structure set by agencies
- Travelling in small travel parties
- Pursuing an explorational-type of experience where many travel methods can be used
- Visiting multiple destinations
- Seeking affordable and practical transportation, or
- Using the transportation method to achieve travel goals

There is some uncertainty as to whether the YVTP visitors satisfied the first travel pattern – independent travel without the structure set by agencies. Less than half of YVTP visitors travelled to the Yukon by personal or rented vehicle, and just slightly more than half travelled by this method within the Yukon. Additionally, travel agents and tour operators which often provide a structured experience were an important information resource during the pre-trip planning phase for nearly half of the YVTP visitors. Also the YVTP did not identify the number of destinations tourists in the Yukon. Still, the majority of YVTP visitors did travel in small travel groups, thus satisfying another travel pattern. Camping was the primary method used during the trip and therefore provided an affordable style of travel.

In this case-study, the motor vehicle-based tourists did satisfy the first travel pattern, since almost all visitors used a personal or private vehicle during their travel within the Yukon. Additionally, travel agencies and tour operators played a minimal role



for motor vehicle-based tourists during the pre-trip planning phase. Lastly, when participants from this study were asked about the motor vehicle factors that contributed to their vehicle use, independence was the most important motor vehicle attribute that influenced participants' travel method. The results from this study also satisfy the characteristics identified by Carson & Prideaux (2010).

Much of the drive tourism found in the Yukon is reflective of the trends found in other studies, therefore making Yukon a suitable location for exploring this tourism sector. In this study, tourists were older, more financially secure, and tended to favour freedom and flexibility, as documented in other studies (Tourism BC, 2005; Hardy & Gretzel, 2010; McClymont et al., 2010; Walker, 2010). In Hardy & Gretzel's (2010) study, it was found that some tourists preferred the security of travelling in groups or the social opportunities of meeting likeminded travellers (Hardy & Gretzel, 2010). Participants from this study did consider safety to be an important motor vehicle attribute. Also, many participants were motivated by social experiences during trip planning.

Research explored in the literature review brought attention to the heterogeneity that exists in drive tourism. Hardy & Gretzel (2010) and McClymont et al. (2010) both identified different subgroups in their study groups. The first scholars found that subgroups existed in RVers and they included the caravan group, independent RVers and the social RVers. Those subgroups were distinguished by motivations connected to the transportation method. For the latter, McClymont et al. (2010) identified three different subgroups according to their preferred accommodation preferences – the basics group, the blue-ribbon group and the basics extras groups. Although this research had a small study sample, subgroups were also evident based on participants' motivations.



### **5.3.1 Motivations**

McClymont, Thompson & Prideaux (2010) identified a mismatch between the service provisions in park businesses and the needs of caravanners. This mismatch was a result of a shift in demand from family-focused trips to empty-nesters, as a result the unique needs of empty-nesters were not being serviced. A mismatch also exists for Yukon motor vehicle-based tourists who showed diverse interests in three categories (domains) of experiences. Those three domains included solitude experiences, social experiences and physiological experiences.

Nearly half of participants stated that they missed out on recreational activities such as hiking, canoeing, and camping, and more challenging activities such as rock climbing or paddle sports. Those activities would provide the physical exertion that was sought by those strongly motivated by physiological experiences. In this case study, there was sometimes a mismatch between what tourists were able to do and what was available as a consequence of bad weather, lack of experience, cost of guides and travelling with elderly parents. Many of those consequences are out of the control of agencies such as Yukon Parks and Parks Canada. Yet, those agencies will be faced with those impacts as things like the inconsistencies in weather patterns as a consequence of climate change increase.

In response to climate change, Lundmark (2010) suggested that adaptive approaches should be made a priority which favour flexibility, knowledge and partnerships between stakeholders. One way to increase the flexibility of tourism activities is through diversification (Lemelin et al., 2012). For example, activities such as experiencing First Nations culture, which might be offered in an indoor environment, could be enticing during bad weather. However, accesses to First Nations culture, as well



as knowledge and preparedness by stakeholders would be necessary during those unfavourable weather events. Park agencies should also take into account that motor vehicle-based tourists travel with open itineraries, may also have limited awareness of the activities being offered in the Yukon. Therefore, the single most useful provisions that can be offered to motor vehicle-based tourists is accessible information. Campgrounds, hotels/motels, gas stations and Visitor Information Centres are the most important locations for these tourists and should be used as placements for spreading knowledge about the activities and opportunities offered in the Yukon. Accurate information will be vital in building trust and dependence on those hubs, and therefore partnerships between service providers will be essential.

Motivations related to the solitude experience were the most consequential since several participants included their discontent with not achieving solitude in their narratives. Based on the Tourism Climate Index from several studies, the spatial-temporal tourism patterns in northern regions will change, likely expanding the tourist season. This expansion may be an opportunity to promote solitude during an early start to the tourist season, or a later end to it in the Fall. Most participants travelled during the Spring-Summer or the Summer season, therefore an expansion into the early Spring season may be possible. However, with a potential increase of visitor numbers in Yukon's future, for those interested in visiting during the peak tourist season, the solitude experience may be more difficult to offer, particularly along main road arteries. Park agencies and tourist operators will need to be creative in supporting those needs. For example, setting aside designated areas that are accessible for these types of tourists by setting visitor limits, or encouraging one direction travel along certain travel routes to



help prevent tourist saturation and to maintain a sense of remoteness may be something to consider for the future.

At the same time, many participants were driven by similar motivations to those found in both wilderness-based experiences, identified by Dawson, Newman & Watson (1997) and Raadik et al. (2010), and social-psychological benefits of OHV users, identified by Smith & Burr (2011). For example, the items in the natural environment domain which came from the wilderness-based experiences in Raadik et al. (2010) and Dawson, Newman & Watson (1997) study, were rated highest by participants from this study. In Smith & Burr's (2011) study, where only a few natural environment-related items were listed, the highest rated experience was 'enjoying natural scenery'.

The next highest rated domains which fell from moderately important to extremely important, including personal development, followed by social and solitude experiences, were obtained mostly from Smith & Burr's (2011) study where they were also highly rated. While wilderness-based motivations were expected, this study confirms that vehicle-based motivations, particularly related to off-highway vehicle use, were also important. Therefore, the Yukon needs to consider both nature-based experiences and motor vehicle-based experiences if it hopes to gain a clear understanding of tourists' motivations. Unfortunately, what motivates participants is not the same as the meaning participants' obtain from their experience. Therefore, using motivations to determine tourists' destination choices might be suitable, but it is not sufficient to use motivations to measure the trip outcome.



### **5.3.2 Narratives**

Section 5.2 looked at the meaning of their motor-vehicle Yukon experience. The tourist experience was reflected as seven categories which provided several interesting insights that could be important for tourist managers. Firstly, motor vehicle-based tourists engaged with the Yukon in a variety of ways that were greatly individualized. What became evident was that the quality of the Yukon experience could potentially be measured by the level of detail, and the extent of thoughts and emotions that were included in the narratives. This study did not use narrative analysis to provide an elaborate exploration of this, however, using narratives to understand the level of engagement with places provides an exciting opportunity for future studies to explore.

It was also apparent that the more extraordinary or novel and unique the experience was, the greater the detail that was included in participants' narratives, and the greater in length it was. Unfortunately, extraordinary experiences are often spontaneous, according to Farber & Hall (2007), therefore it would be difficult for tourist managers to create those opportunities. However, encouraging tourists to participate in activities that are to them unique or different from their everyday activity might increase the chances for extraordinary experiences to occur. From an educational perspective, the more engaging a place is, the more invested or attached a visitor may become to those places. Therefore, it would be in the best interest for the Yukon to cultivate such experiences, and understanding how to do that might be possible through a deeper narrative analysis.

Another useful insight found in the themes was the importance of Yukon staff and residents who helped to enhance or diminish motor vehicle-based tourists' time spent in the region. While it is not possible to regulate those interactions, there is opportunity for Yukon officials to educate their citizens about sustainability and best practices, and to



heighten citizens' sense of pride for the region. Also, familiarizing residents and especially Yukon staff who might not be of local origin, with the places and opportunities offered in the region would be a good way to reduce unwanted behaviour and visitor dissatisfaction. Informed individuals would be able to advise visitors about opportunities, creating accurate expectations about places and what they offer.

One of the biggest contributions to research made by this study was finding the extent to which the travel adventure is incorporated into the outcome of the trip experience. Although many drive tourism and transportation studies have noted that motor vehicle-based trips can be pursued for the journey, and not just for the purpose of reaching a destination (Anable & Gatersleben, 2005; Dahl & Dalbakk, 2015), this study found to what extent that journey becomes incorporated into tourists' narratives. It was found that most narratives were built around the driving experience that was made up of all aspects of travel: the automobile, the quality and structure of the roads, the distance and the directions that were taken. At the same time, the large majority of participants visited five or more places during their trip, which was perhaps one reason why participants wrote about multiple places and activities rather than focusing on single events.

This information provides practical insights for tourist managers. For one, roads give tourist managers extensive opportunities to provide interpretation programs along routes using signage. Signage can be used to nudge drivers to learn more about a particular issue in any given community. By combining signage with the Yukon Vacation Planner—which was the most used trip resource for participants from this study and the YVTP study—tourist managers would be able to provide educational resources that



promote positive tourist behaviours. One way of doing this is to promote Yukon's cultural heritage – storytelling.

Storytelling offers many opportunities for connecting the visitor with Yukon and its past and present residents. The three to six hours spent on average in the motor vehicle by participants provide tourist managers or tourist operators opportunities to include educational or promotional information through radio programming, downloadable podcasts or pull-out sites. This can be particularly useful during the long distances between communities. Sharing the stories of indigenous leaders, past explorers, or other inspiring and unique stories along the highway would be one way to diversify cultural tourism in the Yukon. Situating the stories of important figures on commemorative plaques at the location of where important events occurred, could be an affordable way to connect the visitor with Yukon's heritage. While in time of unexpected weather, road closures or road interruptions, radio programming could be used to prepare visitors for such disruptions.

Yukon tourist managers should further assess how technology can be used to address events outside of their control. Although technology was not explored in detail in this paper, its influence on the experience is difficult to ignore as society becomes more dependent on it. The challenge will be to simultaneously service those who seek to escape civilization for a while, while servicing those who expect to be connected with it. Technology also allows individuals to share their experience in real time, en-route, which can be vital to the marketing of the destination. Although social media was not used as much as other methods when sharing the experience with others, this method was also not limited to a certain age group as might have been expected. It is likely that social



media will become more common in the future, therefore tourist managers should take note of how those experiences are being presented to the general public.

This study also verified the importance of both instrumental and affective motor vehicle attributes to tourists' transportation choice thus agreeing with the findings of Steg et al. (2001) and Anable & Gatersleben (2005). Anable & Gatersleben (2005) also suggested that car users might use motor vehicle attributes to evaluate their experience. This study confirms Anable & Gatersleben's (2005) suspicion, since some of the least favourite experiences identified by participants in this study were the result of their inability to access roads. Road access was an important attribute for influencing some participants' transportation choice. Therefore, if tourism managers wish to persuade motor vehicle users to take certain travel routes, managers might find it useful to emphasize specific motor vehicle attributes as a way to encourage that behaviour. This could also be applied to alternative transportation methods. By promoting independence, freedom and accessibility (some of the most important vehicle attributes identified by participants), tourist operators might be able to draw the interest of motor vehicle-based tourists. Especially since several participants had noted their interest in water-based travel activities, including boating, canoeing/kayaking and water rafting.

Several of the categories found to represent participants' narratives, including pristine nature, unique opportunities, service expectations, meaningful interrelationships and solitude, were also found in other studies (Bricker & Kertstetter, 2002; Farber & Hall, 2007; Prazeres & Donohoe, 2014). Therefore, tourist managers and tourist marketers should be focusing on those categories to promote educational opportunities as they would be important to other nature-based experiences in North America. However,



more research is needed to determine the usefulness of such educational initiatives, since Mason (2005) states that soft approaches have not been significantly evaluated. Also, future studies would need to find a systematic approach to analyze tourists' narratives since the most common methods used to understand them have been through theme and category development using content analysis. Themes and categories are highly subjective and depend on the researchers' interpretations of the experience.

One opportunity to determine the potential for allocating educational strategies towards those themes or categories could be explored through the YVTP survey by asking participants which themes or categories were most important to them during the start of their trip. If the stories told by other tourists have a significant influence on potential tourists' decisions, as was suggested by Moscardo (2010), it might be expected that themes which are most common in the trip outcome would be most important to the destination decision. Research with a larger study sample would be required to explore these ideas further. In any case, the YVTP should incorporate motor vehicle-specific questions that provide a better reflection of this tourist market which could help tourist operators prepare better products and services.

### **5.3.3 Parks and Protected Areas**

This study found that four important preferences exist in participants' accommodation choices. Those included location, access to nature, safety, and the cost of accommodation. With those in mind, some important considerations should be taken by Yukon Parks and Parks Canada when servicing those needs. Firstly, and the most important is the location of accommodation. While camping was identified as an important accommodation choice, one-third of individuals also stayed in non-camping



areas, resulting in lost revenue for the parks, as well as for the costs associated with maintaining pull-out sites or other non-designated camping areas. Something that can be done to help promote Yukon campgrounds is proper and clear signage. For example, signage for campgrounds along the highway would provide reassurance to drivers, while reducing the temptation to make overnight stops at the side of the road. Also, since access to nature is important, campgrounds should promote those features clearly, while emphasizing their uniqueness. Campgrounds should always make visitors feel safe, therefore necessary information about safety in case of wildlife encounters, environmental disasters, and social disturbances should be clearly displayed in campgrounds and easy to find. Also, Rowsell & Maher's (2017) study should be taken into consideration when providing tourist opportunities, including accommodations. Time is an important investment made by motor vehicle-based tourists, therefore the services provided should match the expectation developed as a result of the time spent reaching those services.

### **5.3.4 Guiding Questions Summary**

**What are motor vehicle-based tourists' expectations of the Yukon?**

**How do Yukon tourists' expectations influence their motor vehicle travel?**

Tourists' expectations of the Yukon were shaped for many by the resources they used during the pre-trip planning phase, since motor vehicle-based tourists' motivations were a reflection of what the Yukon offers. Where visitors started their trip also determined the types of planning resources they used, but so did their age demographics. Motor vehicle-based tourists expected nature-based experiences as much as they expected motor vehicle-based opportunities. To them, Yukon was almost as much a place to seek



out recreation opportunities as it was to seek out pleasure that was strongly tied to the natural environment as a visual experience. The open itinerary that the transportation method allowed them was a travel style that was strongly affected by instrumental and affective motor vehicle attributes which also determined where they went and what they did. Visitor's expectations in the Yukon were rooted in individualistic lifestyles that existed long before the trip, and left some disappointed when those expectations were not met. In those disappointments, as well as in the instrumental and affective motor vehicle attributes, signs of Sheller's (2004) automotive emotions might be found.

### **How does the motor vehicle influence tourists' experiences in the Yukon?**

### **How is the Yukon reflected in the narratives of motor vehicle tourists?**

The motor vehicle makes it possible to merge convenience with nature, while at the same time maintaining affordability for recreational activities and accommodation choices. The ease with which those three elements can be found may be responsible for setting the stage for other activities since opportunities that are easy to find were also the most popular. While more challenging activities such as wilderness hiking, boating tours, hunting, and fishing showed little to no activity participation. Motor vehicles made it possible for individuals to visit many places in the Yukon however the time spent each day in the vehicle also reduced the amount of time available for other activities.

Motor vehicle-based tourists are satisfied with their Yukon experience. Yukon will be remembered mostly for the specific places that individuals visited and its natural areas and features. A mixture of activities and extraordinary experiences made experiencing the Yukon memorable. Nature-based experiences, including wildlife viewing, are the most common ways in which motor vehicle-based tourists will



remember the Yukon. Yukon will also be remembered for the people, the travel adventure as well as the activities. Both images and written reflections will be important in sharing the Yukon experience to those closest to motor vehicle-based tourists.

## **5.4 Summary**

This chapter started with a review of the case study and the YVTP survey results. A discussion of the similarities and differences between these two studies, as well as where they fit into drive tourism literature were explored in Section 5.3. In this discussion the first two guiding questions including, what are motor vehicle-based tourists' expectations of the Yukon? and how do Yukon tourists' expectations influence their motor vehicle travel? were addressed by looking at the motivations and preferred motor vehicle attributes of study participants. Section 5.2 and 5.3.2 discussed participants' narratives, thus addressing the last two guiding questions, how does the motor vehicle influence tourists' experience in the Yukon? and how is Yukon reflected in the narratives of motor vehicle tourists? The narrative categories that were similar to what other nature-based studies found, were also identified in those sections. Section 5.3.2 also identified several insights found from the narratives that tourist managers and tourist operators should consider for educational purposes and for increasing the drive tourism market in the Yukon.



## **Chapter 6: Summary and Conclusions**

In previous chapters, the thesis goals and guiding questions, the literature review, methodological approach, results and discussion were presented. This chapter starts with Section 6.1, summarizing the guiding questions presented in the first chapter and how they were fulfilled. Section 6.2 presents the study's limitations and offers suggestions for future research on this topic. In Section 6.3, the value and implications of this research to a changing tourism market in the North are looked at. Recommendations to the Government of Yukon are made in Section 6.4, and suggestions for future research studies are made in Section 6.5. Section 6.6 follows with concluding remarks.

### **6.1 Summary of Thesis**

This research looked at a topic that Stewart et al. (2005) called up over a decade ago, the tourist experience. By looking at various tourist characteristics specific to the self-drive market, this research was able to provide a detailed account of that market segment, expanding the knowledge of the YVTP survey, by providing personal accounts of the Yukon experience.

The goal of this thesis was to gain an understanding of the motor vehicle-based tourist experience in the Yukon by exploring the moment-to-moment lived experience and the evaluative phase of the experience. A mixed methods approach made it possible to understand how participants' choices and activity participation contributed to the trip outcome in individual narratives through the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The methodology used in this study proved successful in obtaining insights about the motor vehicle-based experience. The narratives offered a rich source of data that not only helped to answer the guiding questions, but also helped identify



areas where future research attention should be focused to support the needs of the destination. Quantitative data provided context of the trip experience, which helped clarify some explanations of visitors' narratives.

It was found that drive tourism in the Yukon appeals to older, financially secure individuals, for whom experiencing the Yukon meant finding pristine nature and a travel adventure – one that starts days before reaching the territory. Yukon is a place where unique opportunities can be found in its rich history and natural features, and the quality of those experiences can be influenced by Yukon staff members and local residents. By taking on a soft management approach like the one Mason (2005) wrote about, storytelling could be used to strengthen tourists' interpersonal relationships with staff members. Yukon managers will also need to take into account the influence of social media, and the demand for better online access. The challenge for Yukon managers will be to maintain a nature-based destination without isolating those who have strong preferences to connect with the online world.

This study also found that participants' travel patterns were reflective of the characteristics of self-drive tourists found in other regions. Those characteristics included the preference of travelling independently, with open itineraries and the opportunity to explore the destination through further road travel. In order to understand their tourists better, the Government of Yukon may wish to deepen its understanding of this tourist market further through studies with larger study samples to obtain a more accurate representation of tourists' experiences. The need for those studies is important to have data samples that can be compared overtime. As changes to the climate begin to shift



tourists' spatial and temporal patterns, it will be important to have that baseline data as points for comparison.

The recreation experience preference scales illustrated that different motivations brought participants to the Yukon. Some sought solitude, others favoured social experiences, and still others were interested in physically exerting themselves. This illustrated the diversity within this study sample, and the potential for servicing those motivations. However, what became noticeable in this study was that motivations that were attained did not always become reflected in participants' narratives, thus verifying the complexity that exists in understanding the experience through narratives.

## **6.2 Limitations**

A limitation to this study was the sample size, where 39 participants were recruited for the questionnaire. This sample size did not provide a completely accurate reflection of the Yukon motor vehicle-based tourist population. As a result, an full depiction of motor vehicle-based tourists' preferences and needs for products and services was not obtained. However, the smaller study sample obtained for this project made it possible to provide a deeper, qualitative exploration of the motor vehicle-based tourist experience which would not be possible in a larger study sample.

The length of the questionnaire most likely affected the number of participants willing to partake in it. Considering there were 25 incomplete questionnaires that were not including in the study illustrates this limitation. In future studies, greater attention needs to be paid to the length of the data collection method and the age group of the study sample.



Based on the two methods used to administer the questionnaire, online and on-site, the latter approach proved to be more useful. If future projects wish to collect information from tourists, it is suggested that collecting data on-site would yield more timely results than using indirect methods such as online platforms, particularly for this age demographic. A result of this small sample was the disproportionate number of Canadians, 30 participants that responded. Thus, the case-study results reflected a part of the Canadian tourist population. In the Yukon, Canadians make up 25% of the market according to the YVTP survey, therefore their importance cannot be overlooked (Department of Tourism and Culture, 2013a). The comparison between the YVTP and the case-study illustrated that the resources used between the two studies varied, particularly in the pre-trip planning phase. Former Yukon visitors played a larger role in influencing YVTP survey participants than they did for those in this study.

Another limitation to this study was in the analysis. The interpretation of the themes relied on the researcher thus making the results subjective which would make the study difficult to reproduce in the future. However, some of the themes were comparable to other studies where participants engaged in similar activities. Therefore, the commonalities found between the themes from those studies and this one validated some of the results.

Additionally, using themes to understand the narratives limited the amount of analysis that could be made about the structure and even the tone of the narratives. Using different types of narrative analysis would have offered more value to a small study sample where many of the responses were limited to a few words. Future research could



benefit from using interviews instead of a questionnaire which would allow participants to clarify their answers.

### **6.3 Narratives and Implications**

One of the concerns of this study was the implications that narratives can have for the destination image, particularly through word-of-mouth and social media. It was found that nearly one quarter of individuals would share their experience with others using social media. Although social networking sites were used less than other planning resources, in combination with blogs and travel forums, these methods for sharing information will most likely increase in the future. Some participants had already illustrated the importance of this. While other individuals stated their preferred sharing methods, one individual felt Yukon's tourism resources were threatened by this type of sharing.

Further analysis and investigation can use these insights for several purposes. Firstly, service expectations, and sharing stories categories illustrate the changing needs of visitors who are more reliant on technology. Visitors' needs for technology are not limited to finding contact information or place locations. Visitors are also looking to connect others with their experience as they happen, making it possible for them to convey information without the filter of time. As a result, the push for greater access to technology in the Yukon will become more apparent in the near future, and the Yukon should consider the positive and negative outcomes of this.

On one hand, this seemingly instant transfer of a visitor's experience to online consumers may lead to more accurate information about the Yukon. Thus, providing an opportunity for tourist managers to create educational information in places where that



technology is accessible. On the other hand, being able to instantly share one's experience with the world could be a burden to tourist operators who might have to contend with set expectations of prior tourists' experiences. This burden may also be extended to tourist managers who may need to enhance the quality standards of facilities and services to prevent dissatisfaction that can be quickly posted on review sites. With these possibilities in mind, special attention would need to be given to areas where dissatisfaction can result. Based on this study, the areas where unfavourable experiences were evident related to the travel adventure, unexpected weather, service expectations, meaningful interrelationships and solitude.

Secondly, from a sustainability perspective, the seven narrative categories illustrate areas where it might be suitable to interject educational information, or to target resources. For example, meaningful interrelationships, which resulted from narratives that were largely centered around Yukon residents, might be used as an incentive to reinforce local residents' understanding and sense of culture, history and environmental-best practices. By educating locals about such opportunities, it might be expected that such knowledge would get transferred back onto the tourist. Therefore, more research about the impacts of education on the future knowledge and behaviour, similar to the work of Powerll et al. (2008) is needed. A good place to start would be examining how educational information is passed down by service personnel to visitors.

#### **6.4 Recommendations to the Government of Yukon**

A number of recommendations to the Government of Yukon can be made for understanding the drive tourism market better. Firstly, the data being collected monthly in Yukon Tourism Indicator Reports should be consistently formatted and provide the same



information as much as possible to make cross referencing easier and more accurate between reports. This should also be extended to the Year End Reports. Secondly, the YVTP survey should consider collecting additional information related specifically to motor vehicle-based travel. Possible types of information to collect were presented in this study.

Additionally, the narratives were a source of insight on how Yukon's destination image is being shaped. For example, the travel adventure was an important component of to the tourist experience, highlighting that the trip to the Yukon may have more to do with the travel journey than the destination itself. As a result, the outcome of those experiences are the foundation for building Yukon's image as one that is on the move and based on four-wheel travel. Therefore tourist operators may be able to benefit by providing services in partnership with other businesses to support that type of experience. Alternative travel methods on the other hand were some of the most missed activities. Yukon's tourism managers may consider this as an opportunity to focus attention away from road-based travel by offering easy, accessible water-based activities or off-highway vehicle opportunities.

Finally, weather was a reoccurring challenge affecting activity participation. Since experiencing the natural environment was the most important motivation for participants, this poses significant challenges for tourist operators to help satisfy those motivations during unfavourable weather events. However, tourist operators may consider providing opportunities that better align with other motivations, like the personal development motivations previously mentioned. For instance, built attractions were the most common activities engaged in during the trip, therefore investing to expand those



attractions whether into museums, enclosed heritage sites, opportunities offered at Visitor Information Centres and greater shopping opportunities, would be appreciated during inclement weather

## **6.5 Recommendations to Yukon Parks and Parks Canada**

There are at least two main challenges of motor vehicle-based travel. For tourists, the challenge is to maintain interest while in the motor vehicle. The second challenge is consequential to the destination, because of the financial costs associated with maintaining and servicing roads. Mason's (2005) soft management approaches through storytelling might offer Yukon Parks an opportunity to mitigate those challenges. For example, installing more information plaques along highway pullouts and parks could further engage the motor vehicle-tourist while simultaneously informing them about Yukon's heritage and ecological challenges. Thus, supporting Yukon Parks' commitment to traditional lifestyles and indigenous culture (Government of Yukon, 2018b). At the same time, by engaging those same tourists through storytelling using information plaques, Yukon Parks would be reinforcing the value of the protected areas, while maintaining demand for protected areas even if fees were raised. Additionally, better signage, and more access to information could help visitors formulate accurate expectations of the opportunities that are available in the parks.

Using hard approaches to regulate and prevent unwanted behaviour will also be necessary. Both Yukon Parks and Parks Canada will need to offset the stress imposed by an increase in the number of visitors. It will be especially important to balance the impacts caused by the changes in climate that will potentially prolong the tourist season and extend the peak tourist season. To combat these impacts, both Yukon Parks and



Parks Canada should increase user fees to help reduce some of the pressures imposed by large visitor numbers. Additionally, limiting visitor numbers, including motor vehicle-based tourists, especially those with recreational vehicles, to heavily used parks will be important to reduce the pressure on nature areas. Lastly, a shift towards sustainable tourism, one that is driven by tourism stakeholders could help diversify tourism products and services that could potentially disperse visitors across the region or reduce pressure on natural resources.

## **6.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

Future studies will need to determine a systematic approach for creating and interpreting themes if the results are to be used for practical purposes. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies use similar coding and analysis techniques for understanding the tourist experience. This would make it possible to compare the changes in the tourist experience overtime in similar regions. A systematic approach to theme formation would also make it possible to compare the tourist experience between different travel methods such as motor vehicle-based travel and cruiseship travel. This could help tourist managers determine which part of the destination offers the most value to visitors which could provide a competitive advantage for the drive tourism market.

In order to understand drive tourism in the North, more research on drive tourism is needed in those regions. There are many types of self-drive tourists that were not accounted for in this study. For one, there are individuals that travel by private vehicle and those that rent a vehicle, consequently this study did not distinguish between these types of travellers. This study also did not include any motorcycle tourists who would have a different experience than RV users for example. Furthermore, some individuals



travelling from Europe also bring their vehicle from overseas, how these types of visitors experience the Yukon may be different than those who rent a vehicle. Thus, there is a lot of opportunity to explore the drive tourism market in the North.

As tourism patterns begin to shift as a result of a changing climate, recognizing the differences and similarities between drive tourism in the Yukon and other regions will be important to prepare management for what to expect. To do so will require baseline data to notice subtle changes. Therefore, more studies of this nature are encouraged.

## **6.6 Conclusion**

In conclusion, there is a need to understand how the tourism market in the North has been established, and how it continues to unfold. This research suggests that the tourist experience can be the guiding method for tourist managers, researchers and government officials for understanding that market. Furthermore, the transportation methods used to service that industry should not be taken for granted. Cruiseship travel, a completely different way of experiencing the North, is another area where the tourist experience can be looked at for insights into the industry. Future research may also consider the shift towards electric vehicle usage which might eventually outpace the usage of combustion engine-powered vehicles. The sooner the Yukon and other northern regions begin to reflect on how such changes can influence the very nature of the tourist experience and its influence on the destination, the better prepared and more certain the tourism industry will be to realize its sustainable goals.



## Appendix A: Questionnaire

### Understanding Motor Vehicle-Based Travel: Examining the Experiences of Yukon Tourists

#### INFORMATION LETTER

You are invited to participate in a highway research study conducted by Natalia Wegrzyn, a graduate student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University. This survey is under the supervision of Scott Slocombe, Professor, WLU Geography and Environmental Studies.

#### INFORMATION

Present research suggests that motor vehicle travel shapes how people experience places, simultaneously transforming the communities and landscapes encountered. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between place perception and vehicle-based travel by examining the motor vehicle tourism experience in Yukon, and measuring the outcome through stories of the experience.

If you decide to participate you will be asked to complete an electronic questionnaire. The questionnaire is composed of multiple choice and short answer questions which should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your answers to open-ended questions may be quoted in the research paper but since no identifying information is collected your anonymity will be maintained.

#### RISKS AND BENEFITS

There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study beyond those risks faced in everyday life. While there are no expected personal benefits from participating in this study, the information you provide will be of value to furthering knowledge about driving tourism. Your participation is voluntary and you may refuse to participate or to withdraw from this study at any time without incurring any consequences by not submitting the responses.

#### CONTACT

If you require any assistance, please contact the principle investigator, Natalia Wegrzyn at: [wegr0510@mylaurier.ca](mailto:wegr0510@mylaurier.ca) with your questions or concerns.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board, **file number: REB 4856**. If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair,



University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca).

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

This survey is facilitated by SimpleSurvey.com where your information will be stored and secured by a password only accessible by the principal investigator. SimpleSurvey.com may automatically collect data without the researcher's knowledge (e.g., IP addresses), but this information will not be used or saved. Since no identifiable information is collected, your participation is completely confidential. The raw data from the questionnaire will be coded and kept by the principal investigator until the end of the study. The raw data will remain protected on the SimpleSurvey.com servers which are protected by Canada's privacy laws, until the research is complete at which time the raw and coded data will be deleted. Your responses will be held for no more than a year after it is collected.

## **CONSENT STATEMENT**

The research results will be written up in a thesis and are expected to be completed early 2017. If you would like to receive a summary of the results from this study, please contact the principal investigator, [wegr0510@mylaurier.ca](mailto:wegr0510@mylaurier.ca). You may print a copy of this consent form for your records.

By completing the online survey you agree to the use of your data for the research paper. Selecting the 'Yes' option indicates that:

- I have read and understand the above information
- I voluntarily agree to participate
- I am 18 years of age or older

\*Please indicate your response.

☐ Yes

☐ No



## Pre-Trip Planning

Please indicate the option that best reflects your **Yukon** travel experience.

1. What was the primary reason you travelled to Yukon? (Please select only one option)
  - ☐ Business
  - ☐ Pleasure
  - ☐ Family/friends
  - ☐ Passing through
  - ☐ Recreation
  - ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
2. During the trip, including yourself, how many people in total did you travel with?
  - ☐ Number of Adults (age 16+) \_\_\_\_\_
3. Number of Children (under the age of 16) \_\_\_\_\_
4. What type of information did you expect/desire to find on tourism destination websites when planning your Yukon trip? (e.g., TravelYukon.com, DawsonCity.ca, Tripadvisor.ca etc.).

INFORMATION TYPE	Least Expected	Somewhat Expected	Most Expected	Not Applicable
General information on attractions, museums, historical sites, city tours, festivals, etc.				
Shopping and dining information				
Weather, climate, temperature, environmental warnings				
Calendar of events, festivals and activities to browse and search				
Ticket bookings for events/activities, concerts/shows and city tours				
Transportation, directions and parking, including direct link to online reservations (by				



plane, train, bus, airport shuttle, car)				
Accommodation with a direct link for reservations (hotels, motels, B&Bs, campgrounds, etc.)				
Seasonal destination information – high season versus off-season; times of year to visit and why (local/insider secrets; off the beaten path)				
Traveller/explorer types, itineraries and suggested routes of discovery – built based on a mini-analysis of a visitor’s vacation style and personal preferences				
Self-guided tours – walking, cycling, etc. (PDFs for download)				
Contact information – visitor information centre (email, telephone numbers, location, hours of operation, etc.)				
Recreational activities (including rentals: car, bicycle, canoes, skates, skis, etc.)				
Virtual tours, web cams, videos, other multimedia elements				
General destination information [language(s) spoken, currency, driving and liquor laws, sales tax, banking, lost/stolen credit cards, Internet access, postage, important telephone numbers – 911, dental emergency, customs, embassies, etc.]				
Government-issued warnings regarding specific areas of travel (advisories, health warnings, restrictions, visa				



and medical requirements for travel destination, etc.)				
Personal reviews (e.g. blogs, user-posted images and videos, etc.) – travellers' evaluations of aspects of their personal experiences at the tourism destination				

5. Indicate the resources you used for planning your trip (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Yukon Vacation Guide or Planner
- ☐ Travel agents or tour operator
- ☐ Friends or family who visited Yukon
- ☐ Friends or family who live in Yukon
- ☐ Advertisements about Yukon
- ☐ Travel company websites
- ☐ Government website
- ☐ Travel forums
- ☐ Travel blogs
- ☐ Social networking sites (e.g., Facebook, Pinterest, Tumblr, Twitter)
- ☐ Brochures
- ☐ Books
- ☐ Paper maps
- ☐ Online maps
- ☐ Online videos or pictures
- ☐ Others (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

6. Prior to your trip, how important was it for you to: (Please RATE each EXPERIENCE):

EXPERIENCE	RATING				
	Not important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
<b>PHYSIOLOGICAL</b>					
Take risks					
Experience new and different things					
Test your skills and abilities					
Physical challenge					



Move at a slower pace					
Recreate in a primitive environment					
Test the capacities of my vehicle.					
<b>SOCIAL</b>					
Do something with your friends and family					
Do something friends and family could do together					
Talk to new and varied people					
Observe other people in the area					
Feel connected with others who value wilderness					
Have others recognize and admire you for doing it					
<b>SOLITUDE</b>					
Experience solitude					
Get away from other people					
Escape crowds					
Get away from civilization for a while					
<b>SPIRITUALITY</b>					



Tranquility and peace					
Get in touch with true self					
Reflect on life					
Feel connected to a place that is important					
<b>PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>					
Release or reduce some built up tension					
Develop self sufficiency					
Develop knowledge of the place					
Chance to think, solve problems					
Have a sense of discovery					
To experience new and different things					
Thinking about your personal values					
Gain a new perspective on life					
Do something impressive					
Develop a sense of self confidence					
<b>NATURAL ENVIRONMENT</b>					



Experience the scenic quality of nature					
See different landscapes					
Observe the scenic beauty					
Observe/hear wildlife					
Learn more about nature					
Get to know the lay of the land					
Get a better appreciation for nature					
Develop a oneness with nature					

### **Trip Experience**

7. In what year did you travel to Yukon? \_\_\_\_\_

8. In what month? \_\_\_\_\_

9. How much time did it take you to reach Yukon? (e.g. hours, days, weeks)  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. a) Was this your first trip to Yukon?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

b) In what year did you first visit Yukon? \_\_\_\_\_

11. From which Canadian province and city did you start your trip? (If outside of Canada, also state the country)

\_\_\_\_\_



12. By what mode of transportation did you FIRST ENTER YUKON? (Please select only one option)

- ☐ Air (e.g., commercial, charter, private plane)
- ☐ Personal or rented vehicle ( e.g., car, van, RV, camper, motorcycle)
- ☐ Motorcoach or bus
- ☐ Train
- ☐ Not applicable
- ☐ Other (e.g., walk, bike, commercial truck, river)\_\_\_\_\_

13. AFTER ARRIVING to Yukon, to travel AROUND Yukon, did you use: (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Personal or rented vehicle (e.g., car, RV, motor bike)
- ☐ Motorcoach or bus
- ☐ Fly (to Yukon communities)
- ☐ Both drive and fly within Yukon
- ☐ None -stayed in just one community
- ☐ Other (Please specify)\_\_\_\_\_

14. Approximately how many hours a day would you spend in a motor vehicle while in Yukon? (Please select only one option)

- ☐ 0-3 hours
- ☐ 3-6 hours
- ☐ 6-9 hours
- ☐ 9-12 hours
- ☐ 12 or more
- ☐ Not applicable

15. During your trip, did you use: (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ ATV
- ☐ Boat
- ☐ Kayak/canoe
- ☐ Motor bike
- ☐ Bicycle
- ☐ Other (Please specify):  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. How important were the following factors to your motor vehicle use in YUKON?

MOTOR VEHICLE FACTOR	RANKING				
	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important



Convenience					
Vehicle's carrying capacity					
Flexibility					
Shelter					
Excitement					
Protection					
Safety					
Independence					
Comfort					
Freedom					
Road Access					
Reliability					
Relaxation					
Car aesthetics					
Speed					
Control					
Car cost (fuel, water dumping, mechanics)					

17. Indicate all of the activities you did while on your most recent trip to Yukon (Please select all that apply):

- ☐ Visit any friends or relatives living in Yukon
- ☐ Do a wilderness guided activity that lasted more than 2 hours
- ☐ Visit a National Park, Territorial Park or Heritage River (Kluane National Park, Chilkoot Trail, Tombstone Territorial Park, Herschel Island, Bonnet Plume, etc.)
- ☐ Do wildlife viewing or bird watching, guided or non-guide
- ☐ Fish



- Flight-see
  - Hike/Camp
  - Hunt
  - Visit any natural attractions and unique natural features, like mountains, waterfalls or lakes
  - Visit any built attractions such as museums or historical sites
  - Experience Yukon First Nation culture or traditional ways
  - Go shopping
  - Take a community walking tour either guided or non-guided
  - Go gold panning
  - Attend/participate in any arts and cultural events or festivals
  - Take the White Pass Yukon Train to/from Skagway
  - Participate in the Yukon Gold Explorer's Passport Contest
  - Take a River/lake tour boat
  - Visit a Yukon art gallery
  - Visit a Yukon government Visitor Information Centre
  - Attend/participate in any sporting event
  - None of these
  - Other (Please specify):
- 

18. Are there any activities or experiences in Yukon which you would have liked to have participated in, but were not able to? (Please list at least one):

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19. During your stay in Yukon, how many nights did you spend: (Please select the amount of NIGHTS spent at each ACCOMMODATION):

ACCOMMODATION	1	2-6	7-13	14-20	21-27	1 month or more	None	N/A
Backcountry camping								
Car camping (e.g. tenting)								



RV/motorhome/trailer (etc...) camping								
In a hotel/motel								
Staying with friends or family								
B&B								
Lodge								
Non-camping (e.g., parking lot, roadside pullout, etc.)								

If other, please specify:

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20. While in Yukon, how important were the factors identified below to your accommodation choice? (Please RATE each FACTOR).

FACTOR	RATING				
	Not Important	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Important	Very Important
Cost of accommodation					
Location					
Access to nature					
Recreational opportunities available (pool, trails, playground, etc...)					
Safety					
Group options					
Showers/toilets amenities					



Large camp sites					
Laundry					
Overall communications (public phones, internet access)					
Waste and water disposal					
Drinking water access					
Electrical outlets					

21. Indicate all the places you visited during your trip (Please select all that apply):

- ☐ Beaver Creek
- ☐ Burwash Landing
- ☐ Carmacks
- ☐ Carcross
- ☐ Dawson City
- ☐ Destruction Bay
- ☐ Eagle Plains
- ☐ Faro
- ☐ Haines Junction
- ☐ Keno
- ☐ Jakes Corner
- ☐ Mayo
- ☐ Old Crow
- ☐ Pelly Crossing
- ☐ Ross River
- ☐ Stewart Crossing
- ☐ Teslin
- ☐ Tombstone
- ☐ Watson Lake
- ☐ Whitehorse
- ☐ Tok, AK
- ☐ Skagway, AK
- ☐ Haines, AK
- ☐ Atlin, BC
- ☐ Inuvik, NWT
- ☐ Other(s) (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



## Post Travel

Reflecting on your experience in Yukon, select from memory a place that was memorable, special or important to you AND EXPLAIN WHY?

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22. Indicate the level of satisfaction with your overall Yukon experience (Please select only one option):

- ☐ Completely dissatisfied
- ☐ Mostly dissatisfied
- ☐ Somewhat dissatisfied
- ☐ Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied.
- ☐ Somewhat satisfied
- ☐ Mostly satisfied
- ☐ Completely satisfied

Imagine you are writing about your experience on a personal blog or telling your closest friend or relative about your trip, how would your story go?

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23. What was your least favourite experience in Yukon?

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24. How did you primarily record/capture your travel experience? (Please select all that apply):

- ☐ Postcards
- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Pictures
- ☐ Video
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- ☐ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_



25. How did you primarily share/reflect on your travel? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Pictures
- ☐ Blog
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Video (e.g., YouTube)
- ☐ Souvenir
- ☐ Social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- ☐ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

26. Who did you primarily share your Yukon experience with? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Friends
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Colleagues
- ☐ Travel enthusiasts
- ☐ Just about anybody
- ☐ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

27. How often do you recall/share your experience? (Please select all that apply)

- ☐ Every month
- ☐ Once in three months
- ☐ Once in six months
- ☐ Once a year
- ☐ I do not know
- ☐ Other (Please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Demographics**

28. In what year were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

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

- ☐ High school or less
- ☐ Vocational/Technical school
- ☐ College/University
- ☐ Post Graduate University

30. What is your employment status?

- ☐ Employed or self-employed (full time or part time)
- ☐ Semi-retired
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Not currently employed (student, unemployed, parenting, unable to work)
- ☐ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_



31. What is your best estimate of your TOTAL HOUSEHOLD income last year?

- ☐ Under 49,999
- ☐ 50,000 – 69,999
- ☐ 70,000 – 89,999
- ☐ 90,000 – 109,999
- ☐ 110,000 or over
- ☐ Do not know
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

**Thank you** for participating in this survey! Your feedback is extremely valuable.

If you have any general comments or would like to receive a summary of the results when this study is complete please contact the principal investigator at [wegr0510@mylaurier.ca](mailto:wegr0510@mylaurier.ca).



## **Appendix B: Summary of Important Information**

### **WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

Graduate Student Survey: Understanding motor vehicle-based travel: Examining the experiences of Yukon tourists

Dear Sir/Madame,

You are invited to participate in a research study. This research is being conducted by Natalia Wegrzyn, a graduate student in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Wilfrid Laurier University.

#### **INFORMATION**

Present research suggests that motor vehicle travel shapes how people experience places, simultaneously transforming the communities and landscapes encountered. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between place perception and vehicle-based travel by examining the motor vehicle tourism experience, and measuring the outcome through stories of the experience.

#### **SUMMARY**

To help you make your decision on whether or not you would like to participate in this study, important information has been summarized in the following list, and is outlined in more detail on the questionnaire itself.

- The survey will take between 15-20 minutes to complete.
- Your involvement is completely voluntary and participation can be withdrawn at any point without any consequences.
- This survey has been reviewed and approved by Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board, file # REB 4856.
- You will not receive any direct benefits from participating in this study.
- There are no anticipated risks to participating in this study beyond those risks faced in everyday life.
- Quotations from this survey may be used in the final research paper but they will not identify you in anyway.
- If SIMPLESURVEY.com makes available any identifying web based addresses, the research team will neither collect or use such information.
- Your individual raw data will be destroyed within one year of completing the survey.
- You must be at least 18 years or older.

Follow the link to continue to the questionnaire:

<http://questionnaire.simplesurvey.com/Engine/Default.aspx?surveyID=da6ce12f-aebc-43e5-845f-759a79ae219e&lang=EN>

Thank you for your interest.



## Appendix C: Recruitment Poster

Department of Geography and Environmental Studies  
Wilfrid Laurier University

Have you driven to, or in the Yukon?  
Are your experiences still fresh in your memory?  
Are you 18 years or older?

# You are invited to participate in a Highway Travel Survey

## Take the Survey!

- \*Online
- \*Anonymous
- \*Only 15-20 minutes
- \*Share your experience

For more information about this study, or to volunteer,  
please CONTACT: Natalia Wegrzyn at [wegr0510@mylaurier.ca](mailto:wegr0510@mylaurier.ca)

This research has been approved by Wilfrid Laurier University Research Ethics Board. File # 4856



## Appendix D: Open-Ended Questions

**18. Are there any activities or experiences in Yukon which you would have liked to have participated in, but were not able to?**

**Table D- 1: Activities related to culture**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>Summer solstice celebrations</i>	7
<i>First Nations activities</i>	18
<i>I suppose i would liked to have tied my trip in with a local music festival</i>	39

**Table D- 2: Activities related to recreation**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>More nature contact</i>	1
<i>Would have liked to camp/stay overnight in a wilderness location.</i>	2
<i><b>More hiking</b>, drive to inuvik, see <b>mount logan</b>, drive the north canol rd</i>	4
<i>Flight over Mount Logan</i>	6
<i>Canoeing/kayaking</i>	7
<i>Marked hiking trails</i>	9
<i>Rock Climbing</i>	10
<i>Rafting</i>	11
<i>I wanted to fly out to Mt. Logan, but bad weather prevented me. I considered driving Hwy 4 to get from Watson Lake to Carmacks, but the government-reported road conditions scared me off.</i>	12
<i>Canoeing the Yukon River</i>	16



<i>Backcountry camping, glacier flight</i>	17
<i>Canoe trip - lack of experience to go unguided but too expensive to go with guide for family of four</i>	19
<i>Lots - <b>water rafting or canoe, hiking.</b> but were travelling with my elderly parents.</i>	23
<i>Tombstone</i>	34
<i>Boating esp paddle sports</i>	38

**Table D- 3: Activities related to observing nature**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>See mount logan</i>	4
<i>View elk herd</i>	5
<i>Flight over Mount Logan</i>	6
<i>I want to fly out to Mt. Logan, but bad weather prevented me.</i>	12
<i>Backcountry camping, glacier flight</i>	17
<i>No chance for wildlife viewing, we had 3 days in Denali, after leaving Dawson. That would have been great to experience in the Yukon.</i>	28
<i>Not fortunate enough to view the Northern Lights</i>	32
<i>Tombstone</i>	34
<i>Seeing the <b>Northern Lights</b>, gold-panning, seeing more of the <b>wildlife</b> there.</i>	36

**Table D- 4: Activities related to education**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>No yukon parks lectures available</i>	22
<i>Guided walk (for one day) for one person or a small group of individuals</i>	24



**Table D- 5: Activities related to heritage**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>Gold panning</i>	14
<i>Gold panning</i>	15
<i>Time constraints kept us from visiting Dredge #4 outside Dawson City.</i>	25
<i>I would have liked to have visited the Jack London museum in Dawson City, but we needed to leave before it opened (I think it didn't open until 11 am).</i>	26
<i>The one disappointing thing was unavailability of places to pan. We did gold pan at Claim 6 but there should be other places tourists can pan on their own without paying for a 'guarantee' to find gold. We spoke with a number of tourists who felt the same. When we 1st arrived in Yukon, we assumed there would be river banks that anyone could pan but in asking around Dawson City we soon found out everything is claimed.</i>	30
<i>Ride the White Pass, again</i>	31
<i>Seeing the Northern Lights, gold-panning, seeing more of the wildlife there.</i>	36
<i>Take a train (<b>White pass</b>) hike the <b>chilcoot trail</b></i>	37

**Table D- 6: Activities related to motorized vehicle travel**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>More hiking, <b>drive to inuvik</b>, see mount logan, drive the <b>north canol rd</b></i>	4
<i>I wanted to fly out to Mt. Logan, but bad weather prevented me. I considered driving Hwy 4 to get from Watson Lake to Carmacks, but the government-reported road conditions scared me off.</i>	12
<i>ATV trip</i>	21
<i>I wanted to drive the Dempster Highway, but the car rental company doesn't allow its small cars on it</i>	27
<i>Unable to drive the dempster Hwy as it was closed due to a washout. Was not fortunate enough to view the Northern Lights</i>	32



<i>Fall colour on the Dempster. Road was closed at the time due to washouts</i>	33
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**Table D- 7: Other activities**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>My husband wanted to find a catholic school that he and a group of volunteers built 50 years ago. We didn't find it in the time we had in Whitehorse.</i>	28

**Table D- 8: No activities specified**

<b>TYPES OF ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>None</i>	3
<i>None</i>	8
<i>No</i>	13
<i>None</i>	20
<i>No</i>	29
<i>None</i>	35

**22. Reflecting on your experience in Yukon, select from memory a place that was memorable, special or important to you AND EXPLAIN WHY?**

**Table D- 9: Towns that are memorable, special or important to motor vehicle-based visitors**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>WHY?</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Dawson City</b>	<i>Dawson City - historic appeal</i>	4
	<i>Dawson City</i>	14
	<i>Dawson City, because of the people, great food, and great hiking</i>	16
	<i>Dawson City was wonderful. Great museums and historical buildings.</i>	25



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	<i>Diamond Tooth Gerties in Dawson. My husband was invited to participate on stage by one of the dancers. At the conclusion of the dance he was invited to remove her garter any way he pleased. He used his teeth and I have the video. He just turned 80!</i>	28
	<i>Enjoyed Dawson City the most. Loved the small town Canada Day parade; Diamond Tooth Gerties; Yukon Gold Panning Championship which we participated in the no experience category (so much fun); the people both locals and tourists were all friendly; the town and its building keeping the Klondike look; The Dome is a wow moment.</i>	30
	<i>Dawson city amazing! Friendliness of people! At national parks site info ctr and farmers market</i>	34
	<i>Whitehorse/dawson city- great culture</i>	39
<b>Whitehorse</b>	<i>Whitehorse street pattern weird</i>	1
	<i>Whitehorse where I got my first job in Canada</i>	10
	<i>Whitehorse was nice but the smaller towns are Yukon's treasures. Participated on the Yukon Passport. What a great idea! Brought our attention to attractions we wouldn't have known about otherwise and was fun collecting the stamps. My husband is a rock hound and enjoyed panning, copper museum at Whitehorse and looking for rocks along rivers.</i>	30
	<i>Whitehorse/dawson city- great culture</i>	39
<b>Carcross</b>	<i>Carcross Desert - cool natural feature.</i>	4
	<i>Carcross and Skagway, Alaska had great hikes and welcoming communities.</i>	13
	<i>Robinson Junction - connection to the past yet not a tourist hot spot and same name as my husband. Carcross lot of different points of interest and compact to good for my elderly parents to experience.</i>	23
<b>Watson Lake</b>	<i>I think that Watson Lake had the most impact on me, because of one person working at the Visitor's Center by the name of Rena. We were interested in adding a sign to the Sign Post Forest, and she directed us throughout this endeavor, telling us where to get the wood for the sign, loaning their art supplies (paint and templates for example) to paint it, and</i>	26

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	<i>then loaning a hammer, nail, screws and battery-operated screw driver so that we could install our sign. She also used her telephone to help us reserve a room at a motel for the next evening, since we could not use our own phone in Canada. Without her help we would not have had a place to stay the following evening as we were going to travel the Cassiar Highway, and options were few, and filled fast.</i>	
	<i>Watson Lake was the 1st town we arrived at in the Yukon and Sign Forest had a nice welcoming feeling. Made and put up our own sign too.</i>	30
<b>Carmacks</b>	<i>Going with memorable: I spent a night sleeping in my car at a rest area 40km north of Carmacks on Hwy 2. About 10AM the next morning (I was really tired from my trip up the Dempster) I woke to find my car shaking. When I roused myself enough to look outside to see what was going on, I found myself nose-to-nose (albeit through the window glass) with a curious black bear. After he had left, I got out to discover toothmarks on my rear bumper. That sort of thing sticks with you.</i>	12
<b>Teslin</b>	<i>Enjoyed the George Johnston Museum in Teslin, really well done.</i>	30
<b>Fort McPherson</b>	<i>Fort McPherson - Were able to attend a first nations music / dance celebration which we were almost the only people from outside of the community</i>	5

**Table D- 10: Natura areas and features that are memorable, special or important to motor vehicle-based visitors**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>WHY?</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Kluane National Park</b>	<i>Kluane National Park was memorable. I did a 4 days hike alone and saw a grizzly bear from pretty close. I knew exactly what to do, thanks to Parks Canada staff at the visitor center of Haines Junction, so I wasn't (too) scared. I also took a flight on a small plane to see the Park from the sky. Amazing!</i>	27
	<i>Place that was very important was Kluane National Park. It was important to see parts of this park by hiking and we flew around Mt. Logan because it represents a vast track of land and glaciers and most importantly a wilderness experience that is disappearing from most southern locales.</i>	29
	<i>Kluane Park Because of its natural beauty and because I was able to escape from people</i>	37



	<i>Park outside of destruction bay.</i>	39
<b>Kathleen Lake</b>	<i>Kathleen Lake. Spent three rainy days there before having a beautiful hike up King's Throne on the fourth xday</i>	17
<b>Tombstone Provincial Park</b>	<i>Tombstone Park - fall colours and hiking.</i>	4
	<i>We especially liked Tombstone Territorial Park - we had a great drive north up the Dempster, we did a very short edible plants walk with one of the rangers and drove about an hour north of the park - just the solitude was amazing.</i>	6
	<i>Tombstone - Trailer broke down. Fellow campers helped fix it. Also, campground was full so staff said we could stay in the parking lot, which we did for 3 days.</i>	31
	<i>Tombstone- all absolutely stunning (visually)</i>	39
<b>Natural Features</b>	<i>Seeing the Northern Lights at 1am in an open field and a yurt for shelter was one of the most incredible experiences. I've never seen anything like it.</i>	7
	<i>Landscape - incredibly beautiful and pristine. Seeing nature without human contamination or at least at a minimum is a treat for the eyes.</i>	20
	<i>Million Dollar Falls - impressive natural site with good access</i>	24
	<i>Yukon Gov Campgrounds are just what we look for in a campground (except the bugs), good value.</i>	30

**Table D- 11: Historical places and activities that are memorable, special or important to motor vehicle-based visitors**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>WHY?</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Aishihik Bridge</b>	<i>The Ashihik Bridge-historical, great view when you climb the hill</i>	21
<b>Robinson Roadhouse</b>	<i>Robinson Junction - connection to the past yet not a tourist hot spot and same name as my husband.</i>	23
<b>Trails</b>	<i>Chilkoot Trail a fascinating glimpse of history, an enormous accomplishment physically, spectacular geography</i>	11
	<i>Completed the Chilkoot Trail. It was lifelong dream and finally had a chance to tackle it. It was an amazing</i>	32



	<i>experience and an excellent combination of human history and nature.</i>	
	<i>Haines In Auriol walk - relatively easy walk but with a feel of wilderness.</i>	19

**Table D- 12: Highways that are memorable, special or important to motor vehicle-based visitors**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>WHY?</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Top of the World</b>	<i>Totally enjoyed all of our Yukon experiences except the drive on the Top-of-the-World highway. The road conditions were terrible, on both the Canadian and U.S. side.</i>	9
	<i>Top of the world highway - long held ambition</i>	22
	<i>Top of the World Highway</i>	39
<b>Dempster</b>	<i>We especially liked Tombstone Territorial Park - we had a great drive north up the Dempster, we did a very short edible plants walk with one of the rangers and drove about an hour north of the park - just the solitude was amazing.</i>	6
	<i>Dempster Highway experience was challenging, interesting and very scenic.</i>	18
<b>North Canol</b>	<i>North Canol Road. Beautiful landscapes and no people. Not as accessible as many of the roads.</i>	33

**24. Imagine you are writing about your experience on a personal blog or telling your closest friend or relative about your trip, how would your story go?**

**Table D- 13: Participants' Yukon experience relating to travel**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Road Types/ Road Quality</b>	<i>Driving different structure roads (in mountains)</i>	1
	<i>We were taken away by the geology, the history both oral and written, scenery, things to do as well as the quality of the roads</i>	14
	<i>The road repair season is short, and coincides with the tourist season. Slow down and 'smell the roses' and to protect your vehicle.</i>	25
	<i>Dawson city was amazing! It makes Skagway look like a glitzy yacht goes city. Here you experience dirt roads and</i>	34



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	<i>understand board walks, it retains much of what I imagine these Cities would have felt like in years past.</i>	
<b>Travelling/ Driving</b>	<i>Cold and rainy weather for the first half of the trip along with a toddler who wouldn't go to sleep because of the late sunset. Beautiful locations in Kluane Lake, the drive to Haines, Alaska, and Carcross. The ruggedness, wilderness, and lack of people in the Yukon is amazing. A lot of driving with not much in between cities and towns. The best part of the trip was visiting friends in Whitehorse.</i>	17
	<i>We drove the Dempster and managed to avoid a flat tire.</i>	18
	<i>Distances between centres in Yukon are quite large so stock up with food in supermarket e.g. in Whitehorse as food is quite expensive out of town.... Appreciated the free parking permits at Whitehorse...</i>	19
	<i>Traveling thru Yukon was a once in a lifetime type experience. Seeing such beautiful landscape, animals in their natural state and interaction with wonderful people. There are endless opportunities to experience this land. Want to make this trip again . . . soon!</i>	20
	<i>Went places and saw stuff - scenery, wildlife etc</i>	22
	<i>We traveled through Yukon both going to and returning from Alaska. I had no expectations as to what we would see or experience, but I was pleasantly surprised at the overall experience. I enjoyed stopping at the Tilsin Tlingit Heritage Center for an hour or so, and the hospitality of the people there. We also enjoyed the quirky nature of Dawson City, from getting there via ferry to dining at and enjoying the Can-Can shows at Diamond Gertie's</i>	26
	<i>I traveled alone in the Yukon, but I was almost never alone... I drove 2500 kms in two weeks and would do it again anytime!</i>	27

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**Table D- 14: Participants' Yukon experience relating to people**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Family/ Friends</b>	<i>The story would revolve around the family wedding and generally the lifestyle of yukon residents.</i>	2
	<i>Cold and rainy weather for the first half of the trip along with a toddler who wouldn't go to sleep because of the late sunset [....] The best part of the trip was visiting friends in Whitehorse.</i>	17
<b>Residents/ Staff</b>	<i>The story would revolve around the family wedding and generally the lifestyle of yukon residents.</i>	2
	<i>Unfortunately not enough time to do all we wanted to do. The landscape is incredible and the people lovely. Look forward to another visit.</i>	11
	<i>I enjoyed stopping at the Tilsin Tlingit Heritage Center for an hour or so, and the hospitality of the people there.</i>	26
	<i>I traveled alone in the Yukon, but I was almost never alone. I met amazing people, saw beautiful animals and spectacular landscapes.</i>	27
	<i>Definitely friendly people - just look like you have a question and you have someone helping you with an answer. Meeting many 'transplanted' Ontarians who will never go home. Talking the numerous summer students who spend 4 or 5 months here, work 2 jobs, and go back south in the winter.</i>	28
	<i>Dawson city was amazing! It makes Skagway look like a glitzy yacht goers city [...]. And nowhere did we meet people who were more friendly or excited to share their town.</i>	34
	<i>Other than my amazement with the Ravens, I found the people in Whitehorse to be quite friendly and loved to chat.</i>	36
	<i>All Information Centres found to be excellent with very helpful staff. Appreciated the free parking permits at Whitehorse and the staff even lent us a Bear Spray for the duration of our stay (which we returned).</i>	19
	<i>Traveling thru Yukon was a once in a lifetime type experience. Seeing such beautiful landscape, animals in their natural state and interaction with wonderful people. There are endless</i>	20



	<i>opportunities to experience this land. Want to make this trip again . . . soon!</i>	
<b>No people</b>	<i>The ruggedness, wilderness, and lack of people in the Yukon is amazing.</i>	17
	<i>North is wonderful, magical and must be visited. It is also a great wilderness experience and you can get away from technology and people quite easily.</i>	29
	<i>The access to wilderness with no people which is getting harder to find, that was the best part and the reason why We would return.</i>	33
	<i>I would not write a blog, I want to keep this place to myself</i>	37

**Table D- 15: Participants' Yukon experience relating to nature**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Landscape/ Scenery/ Natural Features/ Wilderness</b>	<i>I would highly recommend anyone to travel to the Yukon especially if you enjoy the outdoors. The landscapes and views were breathtaking.</i>	7
	<i>Unfortunately not enough time to do all we wanted to do. The landscape is incredible and the people lovely.</i>	11
	<i>We were taken away by the geology, the history both oral and written, scenery, things to do as well as the quality of the roads.</i>	14
	<i>Cold and rainy weather for the first half of the trip along with a toddler who wouldn't go to sleep because of the late sunset [...] The ruggedness, wilderness, and lack of people in the Yukon is amazing.</i>	17
	<i>The Yukon is an incredibly beautiful place with a real frontier feel.</i>	18
	<i>Seeing such beautiful landscape, animals in their natural state and interaction with wonderful people.</i>	20
	<i>Went places and saw stuff - scenery, wildlife etc</i>	22
	<i>The access to wilderness with no people which is getting harder to find, that was the best part and the reason why We would return.</i>	33



	<i>To truly appreciate the beauty of the area you need to get out and explore. If you do, the landscape will change often and seemingly right before your eyes. The colours and the textures will leave you in awe. And, if you are lucky you will see wildlife even the elusive Lynx - like we did!</i>	23
	<i>Excellent trip, fantastic scenery, very peaceful - saw bears, mousse and bald eagles.</i>	24
	<i>Slow down and 'smell the roses' and to protect your vehicle...This trip was totally different than the one we took 2 years ago, but just as thrilling. It's a big change from our home which is in the flattest place in all of North America.</i>	25
	<i>I met amazing people, saw beautiful animals and spectacular landscapes.</i>	27
	<i>North is wonderful, magical and must be visited. It is also a great wilderness experience and you can get away from technology and people quite easily.</i>	29
	<i>It was an experience of a lifetime, one that cannot be described. The vistas were amazing but to actually be 'in' them was life altering.</i>	32
	<i>Yukon had some very scenic parts. Would consider returning and spending additional time.</i>	38
<b>Wildlife</b>	<i>Went places and saw stuff - scenery, wildlife etc</i>	22
	<i>To truly appreciate the beauty of the area you need to get out and explore. If you do, the landscape will change often and seemingly right before your eyes. The colours and the textures will leave you in awe. And, if you are lucky you will see wildlife even the elusive Lynx - like we did!</i>	23
	<i>Excellent trip, fantastic scenery, very peaceful - saw bears, mousse and bald eagles.</i>	24
	<i>I met amazing people, saw beautiful animals and spectacular landscapes.</i>	27
	<i>I didn't have much time to explore while I was in the Yukon, but while I was in Whitehorse I made a point to stop and take a picture of the Ravens. I love Ravens for many reasons, but the Ravens in Whitehorse are the size of turkeys! I swear they could pick up a small child and fly away with them. Other</i>	36



*than my amazement with the Ravens, I found the people in Whitehorse to be quite friendly and loved to chat.*

**Table D- 16: Participants' Yukon experience relating to activities**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Unspecified Activity</b>	<i>Would highly recommend anyone to travel to the Yukon especially if you enjoy the outdoors.</i>	7
	<i>Unfortunately not enough time to do all we wanted to do. The landscape is incredible and the people lovely. Look forward to another visit.</i>	11
	<i>We were taken away by the geology, the history both oral and written, scenery, things to do as well as the quality of the roads</i>	14
	<i>There are endless opportunities to experience this land. Want to make this trip again . . . soon!</i>	20
	<i>To truly appreciate the beauty of the area you need to get out and explore. If you do, the landscape will change often and seemingly right before your eyes.</i>	23
<b>Specified Activity</b>	<i>Tombstone Territorial Park is beautiful although the weather didn't allow us to do any real hiking.</i>	18
	<i>We missed every salmon run in both Alaska and Canada, but we didn't miss too many museums along our route.</i>	25
	<i>We traveled through Yukon both going to and returning from Alaska. I had no expectations as to what we would see or experience, but I was pleasantly surprised at the overall experience. I enjoyed stopping at the Tilsin Tlingit Heritage Center for an hour or so, and the hospitality of the people there. We also enjoyed the quirky nature of Dawson City, from getting there via ferry to dining at and enjoying the Can-Can shows at Diamond Gertie's</i>	26
	<i>A welcome break from the heat wave in Ontario, authentic businesses, the goods for sale are produced locally or feature local authors from the past.</i>	28
	<i>In planning the trip we always said we were going to Alaska but in talking about it now, I say we went to the Yukon. Alaska was nice but the Yukon is Canada. From our 1st sunny day at</i>	30



	<i>Watson Lake, I felt welcomed. With its quaint towns, beautiful mountain scenery and surprisingly warm temperatures, Yukon had a lot to see &amp; do. Dawson City has done a wonderful job in keeping &amp; honouring it's Klondike history. Visited many Native cultural Cent.</i>	
	<i>And the history and sites are rich and run deep, from the paddle boat graveyard to museum sites and gold panning. Oh and if you ask geocach</i>	34

**Table D- 17: Participants' Yukon experience relating to places**

<b>THEME</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Place</b>	<i>Whitehorse the adventure travel capital of Canada</i>	10
	<i>Beautiful locations in Kluane Lake, the drive to Haines, Alaska, and Carcross [...] A lot of driving with not much in between cities and towns. The best part of the trip was visiting friends in Whitehorse.</i>	17
	<i>Parks Canada does a wonderful job at Kluane and Dawson City and I learned a lot. Tombstone Territorial Park is beautiful although the weather didn't allow us to do any real hiking</i>	18
	<i>Distances between centres in Yukon are quite large so stock up with food in supermarket e.g.in Whitehorse as food is quite expensive out of town. All Information Centres found to be excellent with very helpful staff. Appreciated the free parking permits at Whitehorse and the staff even lent us a BearSpray for the duration of our stay (which we returned).</i>	19
	<i>We traveled through Yukon both going to and returning from Alaska. I had no expectations as to what we would see or experience, but I was pleasantly surprised at the overall experience. I enjoyed stopping at the Tilsin Tlingit Heritage Center for an hour or so, and the hospitality of the people there. We also enjoyed the quirky nature of Dawson City, from getting there via ferry to dining at and enjoying the Can-Can shows at Diamond Gertie's</i>	26
	<i>I traveled alone in the Yukon, but I was almost never alone. I met amazing people, saw beautiful animals and spectacular landscapes. I had a lot of fun in Dawson City and felt at home in Whitehorse. I drove 2500 kms in two weeks and would do it again anytime!</i>	27



	<i>In planning the trip we always said we were going to Alaska but in talking about it now, I say we went to the Yukon. Alaska was nice but the Yukon is Canada. From our 1st sunny day at Watson Lake, I felt welcomed. With its quaint towns, beautiful mountain scenery and surprisingly warm temperatures, Yukon had a lot to see &amp; do. Dawson City has done a wonderful job in keeping &amp; honouring it's Klondike history. Visited many Native cultural Cent</i>	30
	<i>Dawson city was amazing! It makes Skagway look like a glitzy yacht goers city. Here you experience dirt roads and understand board walks, it retains much of what I imagine these Cities would have felt like in years past.</i>	34

**Table D- 18: Participants' Yukon experience relating to weather**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Activity Participation</b>	<i>The weather is variable and this determines what outdoor activities are available [...] Tombstone Territorial Park is beautiful although the weather didn't allow us to do any real hiking.</i>	18
<b>Temperature, Rain/Sun</b>	<i>Cold and rainy weather for the first half of the trip along with a toddler who wouldn't go to sleep because of the late sunset.</i>	17
	<i>A welcome break from the heat wave in Ontario</i>	28
	<i>From our 1st sunny day at Watson Lake, I felt welcomed. With its quaint towns, beautiful mountain scenery and surprisingly warm temperatures, Yukon had a lot to see &amp; do</i>	30

**Table D- 19: Participants' Yukon experience relating to sharing stories**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>STORY</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Photos/Text</b>	<i>Tell the story with photos and short write ups of the highlights</i>	4
	<i>Visit our blog - <a href="http://venturing4th.blogspot.com">venturing4th.blogspot.com</a> for July 18 - 27, 2016</i>	9
	<i>On at length. I was posting descriptions and pictures on Facebook when I could get internet access; your character limit here does not begin to accommodate what I wrote, and there's far more to cover from times when such access was unavailable.</i>	12
	<i>Home is where you park it. @ramblindawgs</i>	15



<b>Withholding Stories</b>	<i>I would not write a blog, I want to keep this place to myself</i>	37
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## 25. What was your least favourite experience in Yukon?

**Table D- 20: Least favourite experiences related to people**

<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>Dealing with rude US border agents</i>	1
<i>Being surrounded by drunks in the parking lot of the pub in carmacks on a friday night with vehicle trouble.</i>	4
<i>Whitehorse had way to many drunks and people harassing you for money. They really need to clean that up.</i>	13
<i>Once hunting season started was more difficult to find areas with no people.</i>	33

**Table D- 21: Least favourite experiences related to automobiles and travel/driving**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Automobile</b>	<i>Being surrounded by drunks in the parking lot of the pub in carmacks on a friday night with vehicle trouble.</i>	4
	<i>16 day 5th wheel break down in Whitehorse. Not Yukon's fault but was least favourite.</i>	30
	<i>Waiting for the ferry at Dawson whilst a wagon trail of large American motorhomes went across - hogging the whole ferry</i>	22
	<i>Seeing RVs in the forest</i>	37
<b>Travel/Driving</b>	<i>Trying to drive on the Top of the World Highway</i>	9
	<i>Drive to /from Whitehorse -Dawson City: Too long for one day.</i>	25
	<i>Driving from Whitehorse to Dawson City was long and boring.</i>	26
	<i>Long distance between services and then when there is some it is quite expensive. Realize this is due to a small population.</i>	16
	<i>Road repairs along our travels</i>	18
	<i>We were traveling the Alaska Highway on the first leg of our journey, and the last 45 miles or so before we crossed over into Alaska was extremely rough--the worst section of our entire 11,500-mile journey.</i>	20



*One the plus side, we were awarded by a Grizzly Bear mom and her cubs on the roadside along that section.*

*Roads under construction. Don't mind gravel at all. Lot of delays waiting for construction on certain sections.* 29

*Gravel, wet roads* 31

**Table D- 22: Least favourite experiences related to weather**

<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<i>Cold summer days</i>	10
<i>I have been in Canada 50 consecutive days now. To the best of my recollection, I have been rained on for at least part of every single one of those days. At this point, I would even welcome snow as a break in the tedium.</i>	12
<i>The rain and cold weather we had during the first half of our trip</i>	17
<i>Rainy days</i>	35

**Table D- 23: Least favourite experiences related to services and activities**

<b>SUBTHEMES</b>	<b>EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>IP #</b>
<b>Services</b>	<i>Mileage restriction on Budget car rental. Need lots of miles to cover the ground.</i>	19
	<i>Trying to figure out how to get gas at the place at the juncture between the main highway and the Dempster - no attendant there!</i>	6
	<i>IPad locked and couldn't find address of BnB on arrival.</i>	2
	<i>Poor internet access</i>	14
	<i>Hmm hmm.....trying to find wifi.....that's how we ended up driving over an hour back to vis. Ctr....</i>	34
<b>Activities</b>	<i>The motel in Whitehorse - not very clean.</i>	28
	<i>No espresso brownies at the bakery-all sold out.</i>	21
	<i>The dining options</i>	24
	<i>The one disappointing thing was unavailability of places to pan.</i>	30



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*The southern lakes. Not so much things to do, activities were not well advertised. I drove a lot to go to Atlin, but ultimately felt like it was not worth it, even though the road was beautiful.*

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