A five-year content analysis of articles in the American Resort Development Association's *Developments* magazine (2002–2006)

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Abstract

This study serves as baseline research for the industry to follow in terms of analysing historical trends so as to expand the knowledge base surrounding the vacation ownership industry through a content analysis of the American Resort Development Association's *Developments* magazine from the years 2002 to 2006. Further, this study classifies the articles into eight management functions in a proposed model based on the Chon *et al.*'s study. Further, based on the studies of Sheldon and Jogaratnam *et al.*, the study will determine the intensely contributing authors to *Developments* magazine. The study also examines the range and scope of management functions based on the proposed model that is focused upon in the articles from *Developments* magazine during the years 2002–2006 as well as the intended audience of the articles.

Keywords:

vacation ownership industry, content analysis, *Developments* magazine, American Resort Development Association

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INTRODUCTION

The vacation ownership industry, formerly known as the timeshare industry, has evolved over the years from its inception in the 1960s. As of January 2006, there were 154,439 vacation ownership units located at 1,604 resorts

in the United States alone, in addition to other global destinations 4.1 million households who owned at least one vacation ownership unit either through weekly intervals or points-equivalents (ARDA, 2005, 2007a).

The American Resort Development Association (ARDA), the industry's lobbying representative in Washington, DC, is a trade association established in 1969 that embodies both the vacation ownership and resort development industries. Today, ARDA boasts over 1,000 corporate members which range from companies that are privately held to those that are publicly traded and international corporations all of whom share the expertise of vacation ownership interests under the leisure real estate umbrella (ARDA, 2005, 2007a).

ARDA's membership base incorporates industry vendors, suppliers and consultants, resort management companies, owner associations (HOA's), in addition to the owners in conjunction with the ARDA Resort Owners Coalition (ARDA-ROC). Also included in the membership base are hospitality educators and students with an interest in the vacation ownership industry (ARDA, 2005, 2007b). In an effort to disseminate information specific to the vacation ownership industry to these respective stakeholders, ARDA publishes a trade journal titled *Developments*.

Problem statement

At present there is a paucity of information profiling research concerning the vacation ownership industry and to this end the information published in *Developments* has not been profiled to date. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis research is to capture the body of knowledge as reported by ARDA within this publication. In particular, the metrics collected in this study concerns who the authors of articles contained in the ARDA's *Developments* magazine are and the topics they are writing about using a proposed model that adapts the 1989 study conducted by Chon, Evans and Sutherlin and the 1992 study conducted by Crawford-Welch and McCleary. These studies were utilised in combination with the 1991 study conducted by Sheldon and the 2005 study conducted by Jogaratnam, Chon, McCleary, Mena and Yoo. As such, these studies have been chosen to as the model by which to evaluate the content reported in *Developments*. It should be understood that the adaptation of the combination of these studies is based on the research in the hospitality industry of which vacation ownership is a part.

Purpose of the study

There has been limited research in the area of the vacation ownership industry as to whom the leading authors are for *Developments* magazine and there has not yet been an in-depth analysis of the concentration of interest that has been written about over the years. The net result is that academics and practitioners do not have a firm knowledge base on which to make strategic or operational decisions. As a result, an analysis of the journals' content may show patterns and trends that may have been overlooked by the industry as a whole.

Chon *et al.* (1989) developed a model that classified articles from four hospitality journals into six management function areas:

administration, operations/property management, marketing, human resources, research and development, and finance. Within each management function area, there were associated topics. Crawford-Welch and McCleary (1992) replicated this study. These studies, however, did not specifically address the vacation ownership industry. As a result, there are two significant pieces of information that have yet to be captured concerning the categorisation of (a) the broader management functions of developing and operating vacation ownership and (b) the specific operational activities concerning the vacation ownership resort and operations. The proposed adaptation of the Chon *et al.* (1989) model to reflect the broader management functions of developing and operating vacation ownership resorts (in italics) and their associated activities is depicted in Table 1. The reader should note that a seventh and eighth management function has been added to the proposed model since salesmanship and convention planning and awareness are important management functions in the vacation ownership industry. Note that the associated activities are a further delineation of article content under the broader management function areas and are based on *The Timeshare Industry Resource Manual* (ARDA, 2005).

Significance of the study

The significance of the study is that it will serve as baseline research for the industry to follow in terms of analysing historical trends so as to expand the knowledge base surrounding the vacation ownership industry. In turn, this analysis will also show whether there are patterns and trends emerging from the articles so that the ARDA and the industry as a whole may make certain the needs of *all* members are being addressed. Lastly, this study will also be an addition to the theoretical literature for both the vacation ownership industry and the hospitality industry as a whole. The findings should show that the vacation ownership industry has a management function that is somewhat unique to the industry as well as show where the concentration of interest in the articles lies relevant to the vacation ownership industry.

Table 1: Proposed model based on Chon *et al.* (1989)

<i>Administration:</i>	Risk management, crisis management, strategy planning, accounting, organisational structure, communication, environmental trends, federal regulation, state regulation, ethics, benevolence, international regulation
<i>Operations/property management:</i>	Land management, resort amenities, homeowners associations, property inventories, rental management, safety and security, sanitation, owner satisfaction, exchange services, architecture and design, preventative maintenance
<i>Marketing:</i>	Vacation ownership marketing mix (place, product, price, promotion, people and distribution channels), market research, branding, alliance, consumer education
<i>Human resources:</i>	Recruitment strategies, training and employee development, employee benefits, job satisfaction, employee retention
<i>Research and development:</i>	Technological advancement, information gathering and analysis, innovations
<i>Finance:</i>	Project financing, appraisals, financial statements, consumer financing, resale financing
<i>Salesmanship:</i>	Sales process, purchase contracts,
<i>Convention planning and awareness:</i>	Workshops, philanthropy, awards, interaction, planning

LITERATURE REVIEW

Information dissemination to ARDA members — *Developments* magazine

In April of 1983, ARDA began a newsletter named *Developments* for its members in an effort to disseminate news from both the association and from the industry. Over the years, the industry grew and so did *Developments*. In January of 1986, *Developments* transformed from a newsletter into a monthly trade magazine for the vacation ownership industry (R. Upchurch, personal communication, 2 February 2007).

Developments magazine is published ten times per year with extended coverage on both the ARDA Annual Convention and Fall Conference. *Developments* magazine is available exclusively to members of the ARDA whose subscriptions are funded through membership dues (ARDA, 2007c). Some of the recurring columns in specialised areas are written by members who offer expertise within those areas. Examples of this include legal and regulatory, finance and technology. Other regular columns are written by the staff of the ARDA. All members are, however, encouraged to submit articles to the magazine.

There have been many changes made to *Developments* magazine over the years. The Editor-in-Chief has changed, regular columnists have come and gone, industry issues have changed, as has the layout of the magazine. Today, *Developments* is the leading trade magazine with columns addressing leaders, trends and special events of the vacation ownership industry (ARDA, 2005).

Content analysis in the hospitality and tourism industry

In the hospitality and tourism industry, there are several well-known studies involving content analysis. These studies began to appear in the hospitality literature in the late 1980s. For example, a content analysis was conducted of academic contributors based on what was, at the time, four major hospitality journals. These journals included the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Hospitality Education & Research Journal* and *FIU Hospitality Review* (Weaver and McCleary, 1989). This topic was later revisited in 1990 (Weaver *et al.*, 1990). The latter provided a table of 20 of the most active colleges based on the number of names appearing on publications in the four journals between the years 1983 and 1988.

Chon *et al.* (1989) conducted a content analysis using articles from four hospitality journals between the years 1967 and 1986. The four journals included the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *Hospitality Education and Research Journal*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management* and *FIU Hospitality Review*. They examined the focus of the articles by functional area by journal. The functional areas included marketing, finance, administration, operations, research and development, and human resources.

One study examined research in tourism utilising three journals (Sheldon, 1991). These journals included *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Travel Research and Tourism Management*. She examined the

rankings of universities based on the number of instances authors appeared either as a primary or other author in the three journals, repeat author contributions based on the number of contributions to each of the three journals and geographical region of the contributions.

A study was conducted (Rutherford and Samenfink, 1992) to ascertain the rank of academic contributors in four journals by tabulating the number of total and adjusted appearances in each journal. These journals were the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Hospitality Research Journal* and *FIU Hospitality Review*. A follow-up study was conducted ten years later (Samenfink and Rutherford, 2002).

The study conducted by Chon *et al.* (1989) was replicated by examining the subject areas and research techniques used in five hospitality-related journals between the years 1983 and 1989. The five journals utilised were the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *FIU Hospitality Review*, *Hospitality Education and Research Journal*, and *Journal of Travel Research* (Crawford-Welch and McCleary, 1992).

Another study examined academic influence based on the results of a citation analysis they conducted (Woods and Schmidgall, 1995). This study utilised the five major hospitality management journals at that time: *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *FIU Hospitality Review*, *Journal of Hospitality Management*, *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education* and *Journal of Hospitality and Management Research*. In order to perform the citation analysis, they maintained a database that contained references in a main article. A follow-up study was conducted six years later (Woods and Schmidgall, 2001).

A content analysis of five hospitality journals was conducted from the years 1990 to 1996 utilising the *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *Hospitality Research Journal*, *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *FIU Hospitality Review*, and *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. The study examined the subject matter of the main articles from the selected journals and the research methodology utilised in each article (Baloglu and Assante, 1999).

Lucas and Deery (2004) performed a content analysis of five hospitality journals from the years 2002 to 2003. The journals utilised were the *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly*, *International Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Administration* and *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*. This study used key words in an effort to describe human resource issues emerging from the literature.

In an effort to replicate the work of Sheldon (1991), Jogaratnam *et al.* (2005) conducted a study using three major academic tourism journals from the years 1992 to 2001. These three journals were *Annals of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Tourism Research* and *Tourism Management*. They too examined the rankings of universities based on the number of instances authors appear either as a primary or other author in the three journals, repeat author contributions based on the

number of contributions to each of the three journals and geographical region of the contributions.

Research questions

1. Who are the leading authors of articles in *Developments* magazine between the years 2002 and 2006?
2. What is the distribution of author contributions by geographic region based on the location of the institution with which the author is associated?
3. What are the range and scope of management functions based on the proposed model that is focused upon in the articles from *Developments* magazine during the years 2002–2006?
4. What are the range, scope and evolution of management function activities based on the proposed model reported in the articles from 2002 to 2006?
5. Which states are represented in the articles from 2002 to 2006?
6. Is there a difference between the management functions when filtered by type of property?

METHODOLOGY

The sample for this study is all issues of *Developments* magazine from the years 2002 to 2006 inclusive. Even though *Developments* magazine came into existence in the 1980s, the years 2002–2006 inclusive were readily available for statistical purposes.

The sample of articles to be analysed for this study was determined by criterion purposive sampling. The reason for this type of sampling is a result of the popularity of purposive sampling in qualitative research. This type of sampling selects subjects due to a common characteristic such as theme (Patton, 1990). For this study, the criterion for selection was only those articles that were of full length, were noneditorial and were nonadvertisement.

The study analysed a total of 613 articles from the ARDA's *Developments* magazine from the years 2002 to 2006 in two phases. The first phase of the study was qualitative in nature where each article was classified by management function and its related subtopic as per the proposed model based on the Chon *et al.* (1989) study.

The second phase focused on the quantitative portion of the study. The concept behind quantitative content analysis is to answer research questions and to test relationships between the variables. Therefore, this phase included descriptive analysis of the data in an effort to answer research questions one to five. In addition, chi-square tests of independence were performed to determine whether there was a statistical significance between each management function and the type of property (branded versus independent) focused upon in the article (research question six).

Each article was read and categorised on an index card listed data as shown in Table 2. The researchers examined the presence of underlying patterns and trends affecting the vacation ownership industry through the

Table 2: Listing of data extracted from each sample article

Management function
Related management function subtopic
Focus on branded or independent property
Author origin
States represented in the article

utilisation of the management functions and related activities based on the proposed model. It was believed that the management functions and related activities that are drawn from the articles based on the proposed model illustrated this. To maintain reliability and validity, the researchers consulted with experts in the vacation ownership industry as well as the ARDA offices in Washington, DC and Orlando, FL for any discrepancies in categorisation.

Based on the Sheldon (1991) and Jogaratnam *et al.* (2005) studies, to determine the intensely contributing authors (those authors with greater than five occurrences), the articles were tabulated by author occurrence. An *occurrence* was considered an article written by an author either solely or in a group. For example, if John Doe wrote one article solely and another article with Jane Doe, John Doe would have two occurrences. In order to determine the number of article contributions by geographic location, the geographic location of the author’s institution was the determinant.

Additionally, other generalised descriptive analysis was conducted including the following:

- Frequencies of management functions
- Frequencies of management functions activities
- Frequencies of the states represented in the articles

In order to confirm the frequencies of the proposed management functions, each management function was assigned its own variable and assigned a ‘1’ for present in the article and a ‘2’ for not present in the article and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The results were to answer research question three ‘what are the range and scope of management functions based on the proposed model that are focused upon in the articles from *Developments* magazine during the years 2002–2006?’

Additionally, all management function activities have been assigned their own variables and assigned a ‘1’ for present in the article and a ‘2’ for not present in the article and entered into the SPSS. The results were to answer research question four.

To ascertain which states are most frequently represented in the articles, the content analysis table had a column for each state including the District of Columbia. Those states that are represented in the article were assigned a numeric value of ‘1’. Those states not represented in the article were assigned a numeric value of ‘2’. The data were then entered into the SPSS. The results were to answer research question five.

In order to ensure whether the property focused upon in the articles was branded or independent, the property followed classifications as per

the ARDA's timeshare handbook. The term 'branded' is designated by ARDA to signify a recognised, national or international hotel/resort company such as Marriott, Disney, Hilton, Wyndham and such *or* a timeshare brand such as SunTerra, BlueGreen, TrendWest (R. Upchurch, personal communication, 15 May 2007). The articles were assigned the numeric value of '1' for branded, '2' for independent, '3' for both and '4' for not present. The data were then entered into the SPSS.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on both the Sheldon (1991) and Jogaratnam *et al.* (2005) studies, the intensely contributing authors (those authors with greater than five occurrences) have been listed in Table 3. Most of the intensely contributing authors are from staff members of the ARDA offices in Washington, DC and Orlando, FL. The majority of the contributors not listed here were one-time authors because they were professionals within the vacation ownership industry. It is interesting to note, however, that there were 147 out of 613 articles (24 per cent) with no author listed.

The distribution of author contributions by geographic region based on the geographic location of the author's institution was 606 articles (98.9 per cent) written by national authors, six articles (1 per cent) written by international authors and one article (0.2 per cent) by one national author and one international author. While the total number of articles written by international authors was low, it is important to note that articles focusing on Mexico and the Caribbean only began to surface in 2003 with one issue dedicated to Mexico in 2003. We believe that this trend will continue as the vacation ownership industry becomes increasingly global.

The range and scope of the eight management functions based on the proposed model that is focused upon in the articles from *Developments* magazine during the years 2002–2006 are depicted in Table 4. While the number of articles and percentage of salesmanship represented was low, it

Table 3: Leading contributors to *Developments* magazine

Rank	Author	Number of occurrences
1	Goodhope, Randy	27
2	Zanini, Darla	22
3	Wells, Christina	19
4	Zentis, Jennifer	16
5	Tostevin, Jason	15
6	Boesch, Christine	13
6	Lennon, Marge	13
8	Madsen, Stephany	10
8	Rotondo, Chantal	10
10	Woolard, Sandra	9
11	Sancrainte, Joseph	7
12	Bohrod, Georgi	6
12	Funk, W. John	6
12	Kenninger, Judy	6
15	Duff, Victoria	5
15	Jones, Timo	5
15	Mullan, Kathryn	5
15	Rock, Brian	5
15	Scavo, James J.	5

Table 4: Range and scope of management functions

Management function	Frequency	Per cent of articles
Administration	198	32.3
Operations/property management	66	10.8
Marketing	77	12.6
Human resources	61	10.0
Research & development	74	12.1
Finance	36	5.9
Salesmanship	12	2.0
Convention planning and awareness	89	14.5

Table 5: Range and scope of management function activities

Activity	Articles	Per cent	Activity	Articles	Per cent
Risk management	7	1.1	Branding	5	0.8
Crisis management	4	0.7	Consumer education	6	1.0
Strategy planning	40	6.5	Recruitment strategies	5	0.8
Accounting	5	0.8	Training/employee development	48	7.8
Communication	23	3.8	Employee benefits	4	0.7
Environment trends	2	0.3	Job satisfaction	5	0.8
Federal regulation	30	4.9	Employee retention	1	0.2
State regulation	30	4.9	Technological advancement	44	7.2
International regulation	4	0.7	Information gathering/analysis	18	2.9
ARDA code of ethics	2	0.3	Innovations	12	2.0
Benevolence	14	2.3	Project financing	16	2.6
Resort amenities	15	2.4	Appraisals	1	0.2
Homeowners associations	7	1.1	Financial statements	3	0.5
Property inventories	1	0.2	Consumer financing	14	2.3
Rental management	6	1.0	Sales process	12	2.0
Safety and security	7	1.1	Workshops	20	3.3
Sanitation	1	0.2	Philanthropy	12	2.0
Owner satisfaction	10	1.6	Planning	7	1.1
Exchange services	4	0.7	Awards	27	4.4
Architecture/design	12	2.0	Interaction	22	3.6
Vacation ownership marketing mix	56	9.1			

is important to note that sales and marketing has been combined. Only recently has salesmanship begun to emerge on its own.

The range and scope of the management function activities based on the proposed model that is focused upon in the articles from *Developments* magazine during the years 2002–2006 are depicted in Table 5. It is important to note that the management function activities are listed in the order of their corresponding management function.

As can be seen in the above table, there is a heavy emphasis on the vacation ownership marketing mix, training and employee development, technological advancement and strategy planning. The ARDA prides itself on the various training and educational programmes for those professionals in the vacation ownership industry. The representation for information gathering and analysis is, however, low. This suggests that there is an opportunity for academia and the vacation ownership industry to collaborate more closely in the future.

An interesting finding is that articles on federal and state regulation only account for 4.9 per cent of the total articles. This suggests that there

may be a window of opportunity for further information dissemination to the ARDA members.

Another interesting finding is the emergence of consumer education articles in the last year or two. While this is only 1 per cent of the total articles, this is an area of interest that will continue to grow over time.

Table 6 depicts the representation of each individual state and the District of Columbia. It should come as no surprise that Florida, California, Nevada, Hawaii and South Carolina top the list as they are the five leading destinations in the vacation ownership industry.

Finally, a chi-square test of independence examined whether there was a significant difference between each management function when filtered by the property type. There was a statistically significant difference between the administration management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2 (3, $N=613$) = 9.19, $p=0.027$, $\phi=0.122$. There was a statistically significant difference between the operations/property management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2 (3, $N=613$) = 17.59, $p=0.001$, $\phi=0.169$. There was a statistically significant difference between the marketing management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2 (3, $N=613$) = 12.07, $p=0.007$, $\phi=0.140$. There was no statistically significant difference between the human resources management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2 (3, $N=613$) = 1.827, $p=0.609$, $\phi=0.055$. There was no statistically significant difference between the finance management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2

Table 6: States by referenced articles

State	Referenced Articles	Per cent	State	Referenced Articles	Per cent
Florida	167	27.2	Ohio	11	1.8
California	99	16.2	Maryland	11	1.8
Nevada	98	16.0	Oregon	10	1.6
Hawaii	58	9.5	Maine	8	1.3
South Carolina	48	7.8	Kansas	7	1.1
Arizona	44	7.2	Alaska	7	1.1
New York	42	6.9	Vermont	6	1.0
Colorado	39	6.4	Montana	6	1.0
District of Columbia	33	5.4	Arkansas	6	1.0
Texas	32	5.2	Alabama	6	1.0
Missouri	24	3.9	Mississippi	5	0.8
Illinois	24	3.9	Minnesota	5	0.8
Virginia	22	3.6	New Mexico	4	0.7
New Hampshire	22	3.6	Kentucky	4	0.7
Massachusetts	22	3.6	Rhode Island	3	0.5
Utah	20	3.3	Nebraska	3	0.5
Pennsylvania	20	3.3	Iowa	3	0.5
New Jersey	16	2.6	Delaware	3	0.5
North Carolina	15	2.4	Connecticut	3	0.5
Georgia	15	2.4	West Virginia	2	0.3
Washington	14	2.3	South Dakota	2	0.3
Tennessee	14	2.3	Oklahoma	2	0.3
Indiana	13	2.1	North Dakota	2	0.3
Louisiana	12	2.0	Michigan	2	0.3
Wisconsin	11	1.8	Idaho	2	0.3
			Wyoming	1	0.2

(3, $N=613$) = 7.525, $p=0.057$, $\phi=0.111$. There was no statistically significant difference between the salesmanship management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2 (3, $N=613$) = 0.264, $p=0.967$, $\phi=0.021$. Finally, there was a statistically significant difference between the convention planning and awareness management function when filtered by property type; Pearson χ^2 (3, $N=613$) = 15.708, $p=0.001$, $\phi=0.160$.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study was conducted on articles written post-September 11, 2001. It is highly recommended that research on articles prior to 11 September 2001 be performed in an effort to compare and contrast the patterns and trends of the vacation ownership industry. Further, it is recommended to determine whether this model is generalisable among past *Developments* magazine articles as well as those in 2007 and beyond. Additionally, it is suggested to determine who the intensely contributing authors were from the 1980s to 2001. It would also be advisable to watch for new international authors to emerge as the vacation ownership industry continues to globalise.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study were that only those issues from January 2002 to December 2006 were readily available to the researchers for statistical analysis.

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