Towards an understanding of the grey nomad consumer

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Towards an understanding of the Grey Nomad consumer

Mandy Pickering
Bachelor of Business

This thesis is presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Business (Honours in Marketing)

Faculty of Business and Public Management
School of Marketing, Tourism and Leisure

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Program: Bachelor of Business (Honours)
Supervisor: Dr Simone Pettigrew
USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.
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ABSTRACT

This exploratory study applied a grounded approach to the collection and analysis of data. The study investigated the consumption behaviours utilised by a sample of Grey Nomads who subscribed to an eco-camping philosophy and who occupied their own caravans for accommodation whilst travelling. The aim was to examine the growing phenomenon of Grey Nomads who travelled in Western Australia in order to obtain insight into the group as consumers.

Thirty nine informants (n=39) were interviewed where an understanding of the primary concerns of informants could be achieved. Informants were recruited who were over 60 years of age, travelled for a minimum of three months of the year; and accommodated themselves in their own caravan. Informants were approached at a campground that is popular with Grey Nomads in Western Australia’s Northwest. Data gathered in situ ensured the capturing of a wide range of authentic responses from informants. The study provides an insight into the culture of Grey Nomads, who engaged in a lifestyle, and how this directed the factors that Grey Nomads considered most relevant when selecting goods and services needed to undertake their travels.

Grey Nomad research is limited within Australia and none appears to have been directly related to the understanding of the Grey Nomad as a consumer group. The knowledge generated by this study provided a list of characteristics to describe the Grey Nomad, the consumer behaviours of Grey Nomads with an emphasis on what they considered important in purchase decisions, a description of the drive tourism lifestyle they seek out and that the Grey Nomads looked to consolidate their identity by a process of on-going and continuing nomadic travels within Australia. A proposed model that demonstrates the links that represent the Grey Nomad consumer has been developed with a number of identified research opportunities being proposed to consolidate understanding of the Grey Nomad consumer. The findings may also assist in the development of government policy in the areas of tourism, healthcare and land access issues. Additionally, they may also assist caravan park and resort operators in a better understanding of this group.
DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

i. incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

ii. contain any material previously or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

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Date: 31st December, 2004.
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I would like to personally thank Doctor Simone Pettigrew for her patience and perseverance throughout the preparation of this Honours thesis submission. Providing assistance to digest review and reshape the thesis, while providing invaluable feedback has been painstaking for Dr. Pettigrew and invaluable to the researcher. The journey has required many rewrites to extrapolate the ‘themes’ of this work. It has been her continual encouragement that allowed for an arrangement that was succinct and meaningful in its content.

Thanks needs to also be extended to my invaluable editor, Sue, for her unpaid sacrifice assistance to allow a tight schedule to be met.

To my parents, Norm and Sally, who provided my original interest in wishing to understand their continual desire to head ‘out bush’ and undertake eco-camping, I can report that I now understand what it is you do.

To my little mate, and man’s best friend, Reg; the best research assistant dog a person could want. For your faithful companionship while driving a 2,400 kilometre road trip when I’d only had you a week.

Thanks also need to be extended to the many informants who happily contributed their experiences and reflections on what it means to be an Australian Grey Nomad. Their contributions have allowed a better understanding to be derived; and for others, the meanings behind their travels and consumer behaviours.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the lack of academic reporting on the undertakings of Australian Grey Nomads. What may have been viewed as an impediment has only made the journey that more exciting, fulfilling and enjoyable for myself. Being able to uncover and provide some ‘real’ understanding and insight into the consumer behaviours of Grey Nomads, where little was known, has fanned my interest to undertake further academic research to attempt to uncover the answers to those questions that have now arisen from this thesis.
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### CHAPTER 4

**THE CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS OF THE GREY NOMAD**

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- Summary of informants who participated in the study
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Background to the study

Grey Nomads (GNs) are commonly defined as elderly travellers who spend extended holidays, or part of their retirement, travelling an area by motor vehicle (Carter, 2002; Golik, 1999). Carter (2002, p33) reported that GNs are identified because they exhibit common traits that are observable in both a physical and behavioural sense. These include being independent; undertaking self-learning and exploration; and seeking adventure and new experiences in natural settings. Westh (2001, p77) defines GNs in the Australian context as “retirees who travel around the country each year in caravans and motor homes”.

The GNs studied in this research were Australian seniors who travelled around the country in caravans' eco-camping. Eco-camping is defined as “responsible travel that conserves natural environments and sustains the well being of local people” (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2000, p.1). Informants were GNs over the age of sixty years, who self-reported that they travelled with their caravans for periods of more than three months per year and subscribed to an eco-camping philosophy. Informants sought were actively undertaking eco-camping at the time of interviewing. This was judged by observable self-sufficient camping behaviours being undertaken in a remote location, and confirmation from informants that they considered themselves to be eco-camping. The sample of the population investigated for this study was confined to those GNs travelling with caravans (as opposed to campervans, camper-trailers, mobile homes, tents etc).

Of the Australian population almost 3 million (16%) are seniors (over 60 years of age) and nearly 75% of this group undertake domestic travel within Australia (Golik, 1999), predominately by car (Prideaux, Wei and Ruys, 2001). In 1999 seniors spent an estimated $986 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999) of the total $16 billion that Australians spent on domestic travel (Australian Bureau of Statistics, September, 2000). This demonstrates that senior travellers', who constitute just over 16% of domestic travellers, are already a significant portion of the domestic travel market. Current estimates place seniors growing to comprise 24% of the total Australian population by 2051, up from 16% in 2000 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999). Forecasts of aging support a large increase in the senior sector of the consumer market.
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The caravan and camping industry is one of the fastest growing tourism sectors with a reported annual turnover of $1.5 billion in 2001-2002 (Brown, 2002). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2002) shows that the number of new caravans registered increased by 38% in 2000-2001, with approximately 269,000 caravans registered in Australia in late 1999. These figures demonstrate the growing significance of the caravan market. Seniors, as an age segment, have the highest percentage of disposable income to spend on travel (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999). They are reported to budget carefully and to be conscious of the value of money when travelling (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002; Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001).

Senior travellers have been found to report that barriers to travel exist in the forms of health, disabilities and finances (Golik, 1999; Irwin, 1999). Specifically reported health limitations include vision loss, hearing loss and impaired mobility (Irwin, 1999; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002). Impaired mobility from arthritis and other ails of aging impact on the ability to easily manoeuvre a vehicle (Irwin, 1999; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002). With GNs this is likely to include the added challenge of manoeuvring the attached caravan. Financial limitations result in tight budgetary controls which impact on the purchase decisions of senior travellers (Golik, 1999; Irwin, 1999). These financial limitations have implications for the marketers of products that seniors select.

Current research on senior travellers is mainly descriptive in nature, and is predominantly from the USA and Europe. Little research originates from Australia with the exception of a few studies (Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002; Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001; Walker, 2002). Very few studies look at the multi-dimensional nature of travel behaviour amongst seniors. While demographic characteristics are often researched, this does not extend to include preferences, psychographic, demographic characteristics and travel motivations. More specifically very few researchers' have applied results to the types of products or facilities most desired by senior travellers (Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein; 2002).

Various tourism industry reports criticise tourism providers for a lack of understanding of the market in which they operate and suggest that tourism growth over the next decade will actually be constrained because of it (Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002; Irwin, 1999; Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001). Criticism is made of providers of products not being conversant with the consumer behaviour patterns of tourists (Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002; Irwin, 1999; Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001).
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A better understanding of consumer behaviour has implications for the providers of the products and services used by GNs. As little investigation has been directed to understanding the GN; firstly as a consumer, and secondly within an Australian context, an opportunity existed for academic investigation of this phenomenon. The figures demonstrating significant growth in the caravan industry are important as this study looked to investigate those GNs who specifically travel towing a caravan.

1.2 Research aim

The research aim of this study was to undertake a grounded study of the behaviours associated with Australian GNs who specifically subscribed to an eco-camping philosophy. The purpose was to gain an understanding of these GNs as consumers.

1.3 Location of study

The location of the study was Point Quobba (located in the Shire of Carnarvon in the Mid West of Western Australia), which is approximately 1000 kilometres north of Perth and 70 kilometres north of Carnarvon. The study site had the characteristics required of both the informants under study and the type of location they prefer to eco-camp in. This is discussed subsequently in the Methodology section (Refer to Chapter 3) with detailed justification.

1.4 Key research issues

Given the rapidly aging population and increasing new caravan registrations, an opportunity existed to identify the consumer behaviours of the group of older eco-campers who travel with caravans. The objective was to generate findings that could provide answers for firms who are looking to improve their efforts to service this group of travellers.

As information is also lacking about the domestic tourism requirements and contributions of this particular senior segment, the second objective was to generate findings that could be of use to industry, tourism commissions, public policy makers and GNs themselves.

Findings were generated by:

i. Exploring and identifying the important factors those GNs who subscribe to an eco-camping philosophy consider when undertaking their travels
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ii. Exploring the purchase and service requirements of GNs; and

iii. Examining why and how GNs make their purchase decisions

1.5 Overview of methods used

Informants (n=39) were interviewed to gain an understanding of the social process under examination. Informants comprised 15 couples, two individuals and two family groups. The family groups comprised of two sibling couples and an adult nephew travelling with his aunt and uncle. Informants were those GNs over the age of 60 years, who self-reported that they travelled by caravan for periods of more than three months per year and who subscribed to an eco-camping philosophy.

Informants were selected on the basis of judgement sampling. Judgement sampling is defined as:

“A purposive, non-probability sampling design in which the sample subject is chosen on the basis of the individual’s ability to provide the type of special information needed by the researcher (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2000, p458).”

Judgement sampling was considered the most appropriate approach as the informant GNs were in a position to provide the required information. Undertaking the social phenomenon under investigation, they provided detailed firsthand information. The information gathered was of a kind that would not be available from a cross-section of the general population. The study used a grounded approach to collect the information sought.

A grounded approach involves the collection of data leading to an understanding of the phenomenon prior to analysis and comparisons to existing literature (Johnson, 1990; Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Goulding, 1998). This approach allows the research question to gradually emerge from the broader research area under study. A purist view of this approach deems it to be ideal when no predetermined questions are considered by the research. Instead of imposing a set of explicit questions that could negate the revelation of important findings, by ‘directing’ informants into providing ‘expected’ outcomes, they should be allowed to emerge from contributions naturally offered by informants (Wuest, 1995; Glaser, 1992). In order to ensure that appropriate data was obtained, a more liberal view of collection of the data that allows such tools as an interview guide was deemed more appropriate (Corbin and Strauss, 1990).
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Research was undertaken by collecting data from informants using an interview guide (Refer Appendix 1). The interview guide was designed to address the research aim and was based on the findings of the preliminary literature review.

Data collection was conducted by way of individual interviews initially expected to be of at least one hour's duration (Goodenough, 1980); however, these often took two to three hours. Undertaking the study in the setting where informants were located, and where their behaviours occurred, allowed for useful information to be derived (Huberman and Miles, 1994) not only for academics but members of industry and also for the GNs engaged in eco-camping (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Annells, 1996).

Transcripts of completed interviews were assessed for convergent data to identify emergent themes, in order to explain the social phenomena that occurred surrounding the information that the informant GNs provided. Theoretical categories were derived via the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hamersley, 1989) in which the researcher compared the contents of individual interviews against one another to identify underlying themes (Wells, 1995). This allowed for any resulting similarities in data to be extracted in order to produce theoretical categories to assist in explaining the outcomes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992), which in this study were the culture, lifestyle and travel behaviours of GNs. While the use of grounded approach research is not common, studies that have successfully used a grounded approach in analysing consumption behaviours include: Kimle and Damhorst (1997); Mick and Fournier (1998); Phillips (1997); and Hirschman and Thompson (1997).

1.6 Overview of dissertation

This chapter provided an overview of whom the GNs are, what is meant by eco-camping, and the current understandings and criticisms of providers of products used by this group of senior travellers. Further, it looked at the current state of the caravan industry, reported barriers to travel by seniors and the type of research that has previously been conducted. The key research issues and methods employed relating to the research were also cited in this chapter.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the preliminary literature pertaining to a number of areas that were considered to be relevant in providing an understanding of GNs. It gives an overview of drive tourism, Australian senior travellers and more specifically those known as GNs who look to travel around
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Australia. It provides a summary of who are senior travellers; why they undertake travel; how they are defined in the market place; and any gaps that exist in useable information. Additionally, it provides a brief summary of the studies on GNs and includes related areas of importance including the challenges to senior drivers, the motivations of ecologically minded campers and the requirements of marketing to seniors. A conclusion to the preliminary literature review concludes the chapter.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach used to undertake the research. It provides a justification of the approach used to undertake the research and how the informants were selected for the sample. It provides a description of the qualities required of the research site, and provides a description of the reasons why the study was eventually undertaken at the research site known as Point Quobba. Data collection techniques that were used to undertake the study are discussed. These include fieldwork, observations and face-to-face long interviews. The data analysis explains and identifies why manual line-by-line coding was used. It concludes with an examination of the constraints that were experienced by the researcher in conducting the study.

Chapter 4 provides a summary of the informants who undertake eco-camping, why this was attractive to them and the costs involved. It reveals their preference to eco-camp, the hardships they face and why they consider this to be attractive. The most relevant findings are organised to show links reported by informants of their journey in becoming a GN. The GN journey is discussed in terms of a culture which identifies a common ideology, characteristics, values and norms, rituals and behaviours. The informants emerge through a number of stages that guide their behaviours. Traits are grouped around how the GNs see themselves, how they believe others consider them and how they believe their undertakings are viewed. The traits provide a reference point of shared characteristics reported by the informants. The values and norms guide the GNs in common understanding. These values and norms are outwardly displayed to others by a set of rituals. Rituals moderate the behaviours of the informants and ensure that group cohesion is met and maintained amongst the informants. Understanding the values and norms of the group explain how these relate to the behaviours the informants engage in.

Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the study that compares and contrasts related literature. The discussion centres on the applicability of lifestyle as a basis of segmentation for the GNs. It highlights the bodies of literature that the findings of this study contribute to and provides a condensed description of the GNs lifestyle. Comparable GNs studies are discussed with findings that are similar
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to those of this study. These include the characteristics, travel motives, psychological needs and
driving concerns of GNs. The comparable discussion suggests that GNs should be considered in
terms of their lifestyle and cohort segmentation. Contrasting GN discussion highlights the informants’
preference for eco-camping often finding caravan parks unattractive. Issues of fear and security were
not raised in this study whose informants undertook travelling both interstate and intrastate. By
undertaking free camping informants look to attain the desired ideology of freedom as a means to
consolidate the GN identity.

Chapter 6 provides a summary of the comparable and contrasting discussion from this study’s
findings to that of the existing literature. Comparable findings include the characteristics, travel
motives and psychological needs of GNs. The contrasting findings reveal the GNs consolidate their
identity by travel that is both intrastate and interstate. Finding caravan parks unattractive they do not
experience security issues. It then goes on to providing a summary of the contemporary findings of
this study which identify that GNs engage in a complex embedded social system that directs their
social relationships and product purchases and responses. It additionally summarises the wants,
needs and responses of the GNs. The chapter then moved to providing a new definition that more
accurately reflects the informants of this study and concludes with several recommended future
academic investigation directions of enquiry.
CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE PRELIMINARY LITERATURE

2.1 Chapter introduction
Chapter 1 provided an overview and context of the study. This chapter provides a preliminary review of the literature relating to drive tourism in Australia, seniors, senior travellers and senior drivers. It also provides a critique of studies relating to GNs, eco-camping and the requirements of marketing to seniors.

2.2 Drive tourism
The driving holiday is an Australian tradition, with the Bureau of Tourism Research (2002) estimating that 78.9% of all holidays are undertaken by vehicle. Seniors are a significant group of road users who undertake drive tourism (Department of Industry, Science & Resources, 2003; Tourism Queensland, 1999 and 2002), however these travellers have received little research attention to date (Prideaux, Wei and Ruys 2001; Prideaux 2001). The findings of the proposed study will add to the knowledge of drive tourism and will thus fill some research gaps about GNs who are undertaking a drive tourism lifestyle.

Prideaux, Wei and Ruys (2001) and Prideaux (2001) recognised that a clear definition of senior drivers is lacking. They reported that many definitions are dependent on retirement age or those put forward to fit government policy definitions. They found that “few studies recognise cognitive age and lifestyle rather than physical age as a basis for segmentation” (Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001, p210). GNs are written about, portrayed and commented on as undertaking a lifestyle choice in popular literature (The Age, 2004; New Dimensions, 2003; GNs, 1997; The Bulletin, 2004; Lawson, 2003).

2.3 Seniors
Of the $16 billion Gross Domestic Product spent by domestic visitors in 1999 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000), seniors spent $986m (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999). With seniors becoming an increasing portion of the population, they are enjoying better health and longer life than previous generations (AC Neilson, 1998). The number of seniors living to 85 years and over increased by a third in the five years prior to 2002 (Colebatch, 2002). Seniors are
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called many names in the literature, including: the older market, the mature market, the senior
market, the grey market, silvers and GNs. Refined marketing strategies are required as tomorrow’s
seniors look to enjoy more regular travel and maintain ‘lifestyle’ as a priority (Colebatch, 2002;
Tourism Queensland, 1999; Eismann, 1993; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Mitchel, 1996; Sherman &
Cooper, 1988).

In general, seniors are reported as having several characteristics. These include

i. That they like to travel, entertain and socialise (Lahue, 2000; Conaway, 1991)

ii. They view themselves as being savvy, affluent, discriminating, loyal, active, productive,
contributing to society and with interests in health, fitness and nutrition (Eisman, 1993; Gruca
& Schewe, 1992; Lahue, 2000; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Moschis, 1996)

iii. They consider themselves in view of their ‘lifestage’ (Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002;
Timmermann, 2000; Eiseman, 1993; Gruca & Schewe, 1992)

iv. Are concerned with issues relating to the possible death of a partner, increasing health
issues and the hopes of longevity (Eisman, 1993; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Lahue, 2000;
Timmermann, 1999); and

v. The issue of ‘lifestage’ results in them not wanting to be placed into one slot and that they
consider it important that recognition is made of their differing ages, cohort groups and life
events (Eisman, 1993; Gruca & Schewe, 1992; Moschis, 1992; Kramer, 1991; Van Gorder,
1991; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Timmerman, 1999; Mitchel, 1996; Sherman & Cooper,
1988).

The literature suggests that acknowledgement of these differing ‘lifestages’ of seniors can be
determined by:

i. Lifestyle segmentation (Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Timmermann, 1999; Eismann, 1993;
Gruca & Schewe, 1992)

ii. Age segmentation (Timmermann, 1999; Sherman & Cooper, 1988; Gruca & Schewe, 1992;
Kramer, 1991; Conaway, 1991; Van Gorder, 1991); and

iii. Cohort segmentation (Timmermann, 1999; Mitchel, 1996; Gruca & Schewe, 1992), and

iv. Cognitive segmentation (Sherman & Cooper, 1988)

While numerous authors advocate these differing ‘lifestages’ of seniors being determined by lifestyle
segmentation, age segmentation, cognitive segmentation and cohort segmentation, Moschis (1992)
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does not support the supposition of lifestyle segmentation alone; but rather gerontographics. Gerontographics refers to a combination of physographics, needs, attitudes, lifestyle and behaviours (Mitchel, 1996).

2.4 Senior travellers

Seniors travellers are generally reported as having several characteristics (Golik, 1999). These include being budget conscious (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002) and spending large amounts of time travelling (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002, AC Neilson, 1998). Senior travellers also enjoy spending time with family and friends (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Romsa and Blenman, 1989) and look to get away from the routine of life (AC Neilson, 1998; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002).

To get away, Australian seniors like to investigate the countryside, areas of natural wilderness and places of local interest (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Backman, Backman and Silverberg, 1999). Seniors also report that they use travel as a means of social interaction and stimulation. By seeking new experiences seniors report that travel satisfies their need for rest and relaxation (Golik, 1999; AC Neilson, 1998; Tourism Queensland, 1999 and 2002; Guinn, 1980; Romsa and Blenman, 1989; Thomas and Butts, 1999; Moisey and Bichis, 1999 and Crompton, 1979). While travelling, seniors have been found to use the car as the main mode of transport to travel to and about their destinations (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001).

Senior travellers have often previously been treated as a homogeneous group by the travel and tourism industry (Strain & Chappell, 1982; Kendig & McCallum, 1986; McPherson, 1991; Cockerell, 1993). Studies conducted since the 1980s have undertaken to incorporate psychographic variables in their considerations to provide a fuller and more substantive understanding of senior travel motivations and the benefits sought. Studies have noted a shift towards more active pursuits undertaken by senior travellers occurred in the late 1990s (Guinn, 1980; Romsa and Blenman, 1989; Thomas and Butts, 1998; Backman, Backman and Silverberg, 1999; Moisey and Bichis, 1999; AC Neilson, 1998; Golik, 1999; Tourism Queensland, 2002). Criticism, however, has still been levelled at the travel industry for its failure to:

i. Correctly identify the preferences of this group (Javalgi, Thomas and Rao, 1992);
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ii. Cater to the diversity of needs of the group (Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002); and

iii. Understand that the senior group of travellers is not a homogenous group (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002).

Senior travellers, like seniors in general, report that they want their differences to be recognised and feel that to be treated only in terms of general demographics does not reflect the diversities that exist amongst the group (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002; McClelland, 2000). The lack of information existing about seniors travel behaviours means that it is possible that the products provided do not match the preferences of those senior travellers (Horneman, Carter, Wei & Ruys, 2002, p1).

2.5 Senior drivers

When specifically looking at senior drivers, Irwin (1999) observed the importance of the ability to drive gave seniors their much-desired independence. In Irwin's study (1999), seniors stated their becoming 'dependent' by not being able to drive as their single biggest fear. It is likely this same fear is relevant to GNs who need to be able to drive in order to undertake their travels.

Concerns expressed by senior drivers in Irwin's (1999) study included the reporting of senior males driving far more frequently than their licensed partner. This may be an issue of concern if a travelling couple experience ill health and the driving is left to the female who is unfamiliar with this task (McClelland, 2000). Health issues were voiced relating to the ability to drive and manoeuvre a vehicle. These drivers also reported that they avoided driving at night. The preference to drive shorter, rather than long distances was also reported. In Prideaux, Wei and Ruys' (2001) study the issue of distance was discussed with higher rates of intrastate than interstate trips being undertaken by senior travellers, supporting the findings of Irwin's (1999) study.

2.6 Grey Nomads

The intense desire of GNs to travel is widely reported in the popular literature and the media (The Age, 2004; New Dimensions, 2003; GNs, 1997; The Bulletin, 2004, Lawson, 2003), with limited knowledge being available from Australian studies. Walker (2002, p.1) suggests that travel undertaken by GNs is used as a "means to extends one's identity" by "travelling slowly in mobile homes and caravans around Australia". McClelland (2000, p.26) reports there is a growing 'cultural
Towards an understanding of the Grey Nomad consumer phenomenon and that GNs "who go off the beaten track" (Lawson, 2002) are being targeted by tourist commissions all over Australia.

Media campaigns that have targeted activities similar to those that GNs like to undertake (McClelland, 2000) have most recently included the "Year of the Outback" campaign in 2002 and "Just Get Out There" in 2003. These campaigns focused on travel being undertaken by caravan within Australia to encourage domestic tourists to explore the interior and remote regions of Australia.

The nearest American counterpart to the GN was classified by Jobes (1984) as the 'seasonal traveller' looking to travel full-time, or who may have rejected, full-time travel after trying it. Counterparts in North America have been reported by Sullivan and Stevens (1982) and Krout (1983). Mainly studies (e.g. Born, 1976; Mings & McHugh, 1995; McHugh & Mings, 1992; Mings, 1997) have concentrated on the North American and Canadian 'snowbird' phenomenon which offers a different category to the GN (McClelland, 2000) and therefore these studies offer little insight.

Pearce (1999) studied the senior self drive tourist market and Chalmers (2000) advised that 'full-timers' stated they were not on holidays, nor tourists. Australian studies are limited that document the seasonal traveller, with the exception of Jobes (1984) and McClelland (2000). Mobility of seniors to warmer areas of Australia has been reported by McPherson (1991), again with a large void existing in the Australian literature.

Studies offer no real insights into Australian GNs with the exception of McClelland (2000) whose South Australian study concentrated exclusively on GNs who stayed specifically in, and undertook to use caravan parks, due to reasons of fear and security (McClelland, 2000). McClelland's (2000) study determined that GNs psychological needs fitted into the framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and that their travel needs met those put forward by Fernandes (1983). The GNs of McClelland's study reported observing GNs undertaking camping on public land campsites. In Born's US study (1976) he concluded that those using public land campsites did so due to the lack of the means to pay and that free-camping or boon docking, was used as a means to save money (Counts & Counts; 1997). McClelland (2000) identified the need to undertake study to investigate and identify why this there-to-unidentified group of GNs undertook this activity, and more importantly their motives.
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McClelland (2000) reported a lack of understanding of the core values of GNs in his, and other studies, and noted this was an area of research requiring to be undertaken as little is known about the ‘what’ they are (McClelland, 2000). The GN literature is mainly descriptive in nature and has little direct use in an application sense (Carter, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002, McClelland, 2000). This lack of reported knowledge does not allow for assessment as to whether the group is being correctly understood and serviced adequately.

2.7 Eco-camping

Bricker and Kerstetter (2001, p1) report that tourism operators believe that ecotourism is the fastest growing sector of the tourism industry. Studies of wilderness campsites specifically sought out by eco-camping GNs show that they are of interest for a number of characteristics. These characteristics include their diverse flora and fauna (Herbig, 1997), having open and level spaces, the lack of thick vegetation, and views and access to water (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2001). These sites are sought in order to provide satisfaction when engaging in the eco-experience (Bricker and Kerstetter, 2001).

The reserves that GNs, and others, seek out for eco-camping are subject to legislative provisions that are perceived by Nomads to be both positive and negative (Jenkins and McIntyre, 2001). The legislative provisions in place either promote or obstruct access to such lands. The issue of access impacts on the users and providers of these areas. This includes GNs who want to be able to access such lands without hindrance (Sinha & Blaydon, 2001; Campervan & Motorhome Club of Australia, 2003). The management standards applied to reserves and those of visitors do not match in assessing the conditions and impacts of visitors (Farrell, Hall & White, 2001).

Individual responses to campsites are likely to be shaped by past experiences, goals, influences of peers and deeply held values (Farrell, Hall & White, 2001). Eco-campers engage in camping as it provides a common bond (Anonymous, 1994) where purism is the desired experience sought (Reiner & Sop, 1993). Eco-campers have a philosophy of leaving no trace so that campsites remain in pristine condition (Riehl, 1993; Reiner & Sop, 1993; Raleigh, 1998). By engaging in primitive camping away from crowded campgrounds, the eco-camper is able to enjoy nature (Luce, 1990). The positive attitudes that eco-campers derive from the experience reveals that the value is in the experience itself (Unknown, 1994).
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2.8 Seniors and marketing in the future

In general, as seniors continue to age they may consider undertaking a dramatic change in lifestyle. This may be driven by economic and social change. These lifestyle changes may include retirement being undertaken later, or choosing a lifestyle that involves a combination of work and long-term travel (Carter, 2002; Tempest, Barnatt & Coupland, 2002; Leventhal, 1997).

Moschis (1992) did not support lifestyle segmentation alone; but rather that Gerontographics were more appropriate, referring to a combination of psychographics, needs, attitudes, lifestyle and behaviours (Michel, 1996). "Psychographics (undertakes to) group people into homogenous segments based on their lifestyles (Townsend, 1986, p213)". Baron and Byrne (cited in Solomon, 2002, p221, p37) defined attitudes as “revolve(ing) around the general evaluation of people, objects, advertisements and issues”. Lifestyle was described by Zablocki and Kanter (cited in Solomon, 2002, p 173) as referring to the “pattern of consumption reflecting a person’s choices of how s(he) spends time and money”. This wider area of segmentation as proposed by Moschis (1992) can be seen to be far-reaching and voluminous in its content. To gain understanding of all the areas proposed by Gerontographics involves a lot of effort and expense. However, the importance of understanding the senior consumer in the market place has never been greater as the size of the market is predicted to swell (AC Neilsen, 1988; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1999; Bryce & Drinkwater, 2002). Responding to this market change, marketers of products are choosing to segment by motives and values (Leversedge, 2004).

Recent research has undertaken to provide guidance to marketers in their efforts to target older consumers. Senior consumers are stated to be set apart from their prior counterparts by psychology; being more interested in purchasing experiences and making careful evaluation of their product selections (Dychtwalt & Flower, 1989). For this emerging group of seniors, marketing efforts should concentrate on the quality of life (Sirgy, Samii & Meadow, 1982). Market research borrows from several disciplines to ascertain how lifestyle and attitudes impact on the product choices of consumers and therefore the performance of product providers (Heller, 1981). Marketers therefore need to undertake to create images of products that stand out rather than merging with the voluminous mass of featureless products to attract the new senior market (Michiels, 1979). Currently research focuses on defining the consumers’ needs. Pincus (2004) comments that the new seniors market requires for understanding of both the met and unmet needs, by investigating and
understanding both the motivations and causality of purchases. Pincus (2004) proposes that a typology of motivational and emotional states can be used as an appropriate tool to determine these met and unmet needs of seniors. The use of Pincus’s (2004) typology allows synthesis between the goals and methods used by seniors to determine product selection. He states that the use of his typology explicitly allows marketers to tap into the motivations of consumers. The use of an appropriate tool that determines the needs of the senior market is still hotly contested. What is not contested, however, is that the marketer needs to be constantly attuned to the marketplace with more funds being required for strategic analysis and research into the senior consumer marketplace.

2.9 Conclusion

The literature supports the need for the collection of information relating to GNs. Investigation is required about the general core values of GNs and the factors they consider important in their travel-related behaviours. This information will commence to provide an understanding of GNs as consumers. As this group, by definition, would be intensive users of the products they purchase to undertake their travels, and little is reported in the literature, the findings of this study will be able to address a number of knowledge gaps identified in the literature review. This lack of understanding of Australian senior travellers who undertake drive tourism supported the need to investigate an understanding of the basic core values of the group; and the lack of specifically Australian research supported the need to conduct this study in the Australian context.

2.10 Chapter summary

Chapter 2 has provided a review of the preliminary literature pertaining to a number of areas that were considered to be relevant in providing an understanding of Grey Nomads. These included drive tourism, seniors, senior travellers, Grey Nomads, eco-camping and seniors and marketing requirements in the future.

Chapter 3 presents the methodological approach used to undertake the research with a justification of the approach, informant selection, site selection, data collection techniques used and an analysis explanation. It concludes with methodological and other limitations that were experienced during the study.
Chapter 2 provided a review of the preliminary literature pertaining to the study. Chapter 3 presents an examination of the methodological approach used in the study with a justification of informant and site selection. Data collection techniques are discussed with discussion of the use of line-by-line coding and will conclude with methodological and other limitations of the study.

3.1 Justification of approach

Some researchers determine qualitative work to be “blatant and interpretative” (Punch, 1986), but its undertaking provides an opportunity to produce work that requires judgement and choice to be executed by the researcher. Examination of the social phenomenon that the GNs were undertaking required an exploratory study to be conducted, as little was actually known about what they did (McClelland, 2000). Smith (1986, cited in Flinders & Mills, 1993, p113) put forward five criteria that a study should strive to provide:

i. “Insightful distinctions that tell something new about the phenomena
ii. Clear definitions of concepts at a theoretical, operational or concrete examples level
iii. A cumulative glossary of these ideas within a specific project
iv. The interrelations of ideas into patterns or concentrations; and
v. Providing findings that are helpful in solving problems in the same broad domain”.

Smith (1986, cited in Flinders & Mills, 1993) advised that the use of these criteria should allow theory generation that is both practical and productive and would allow recognised patterns of behaviour to be revealed. By not knowing the ‘what’ of the phenomena being researched, then it would not be possible to determine the ‘why’ that the study proposed to investigate. This required a methodology to be used that accounted for this lack of information regarding the research aim.

Being an exploratory study, it was felt that the use of a theory in framing observations, data gathering and analysis would taint the research in a largely unrehearsed, and therefore, new area of investigation in the Australian context. The undertaking of a grounded approach allowed for the causal conditions to be identified that influenced the central phenomena that emerged. There was a strong need for the researcher to engage in behaviours similar to the informants in order to be
acknowledged and accepted by the GNs so that immersion into their everyday life was achieved and
identification of their perspectives of their central beliefs could be revealed (McKenzie, Powell &
Usher, 1997; Corbin & Strauss, 1990). By undertaking the research in the field the researcher was
consequently included in their undertakings (Creswell, 1998) which supported Strauss and Corbin
(1990) when they advised the importance of demonstrating the reality of those being studied. Being
in the field, and not having a pre-existing theory that framed the researchers observations, allowed
for examination and verification. This allowed incidents to be viewed and examined that affirmed data
that otherwise may not have been revealed (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Creswell, 1998).

Grounded Theory, as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) proposes that no prior research
should be undertaken to avoid contamination of the collected data while Bulmer (1979) criticised this
approach expressing the importance of being able to conceptualise research problems and verify that
uniqueness of the research being proposed. Glaser (1978, p5) stated that:

... the grounded theorist does not have to convince others of the relevance of his focus... (s)he spends time... searching for and discovering the relevance in his data. Grounded Theory assumes part of the method, itself, is the writing of the theory. The way data is coded, the ideas are minimised, and memos are sorted are all partly focused on designating and facilitating the writing of theory.

Grounded Theory as proposed by Corbin and Strauss (1990) “…provides a procedure for developing
categories of information (open coding), interconnecting the categories (axial coding), building the
’story’ that connects the categories (selective coding), and ending with a discursive set of theoretical

This study was conducted via a number of stages with the incorporating axial coding, forwarded by
Corbin and Strauss (1990) to provide more depth to the picture the researcher develops. These
stages are:

i. Data collection
ii. Transcription of data
iii. Development of categories
iv. Saturation of categories
v. Axial coding
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vi. Theoretical integration; and


In this study, a grounded approach was considered more appropriate whereby a pre-literature review was conducted. Determination of the grounded approach to the collection of data was used due to two main considerations. Firstly, it gave consideration to the researchers personality, interests and intellect; and secondly it gave consideration to the nature of the informal research and the setting in which it was required to be undertaken (Clarke, 1975). A grounded approach provided a flexible methodology for data collection whilst having the elasticity required findings that were exploratory in nature whose nature could not be forecast. Most importantly, the determination to only use a grounded approach was important to let the GNs lead discussions, so as to not hinder them in their revelations. It was important to quickly establish connection, confidence and trust with the informants in order to ease delays or reservations that may have arose (Punch, 1986). Being an honours project a short timeframe existed to gather the required data; and the researcher was aware that the informants were already moving on due to a change in weather pattern. It was also important to be accepted by the GNs, as it was likely the informants would be judging the project being investigated and it was desirable for them not to change their behaviours so that full disclosure could be observed and reported (Denzin, 1978; Strauss & Schatzman, 1985; McCracken, 1998).

The limited pre-literature review had been prepared prior to embarking on the field trip, in line with Glaser's proposition (1978), facilitating some prior sensitivity to the ideas and concepts surrounding the area being researched. This was undertaken only to a limited extent for two reasons. Firstly it ensured analytical sensitivity by the researcher to the data collected (Glaser, 1978). Secondly, it was important to determine the level of attention that had been given to the topic of study in order to visualise the value of undertaking the study (McKenzie, Powell & Usher, 1997; Straus & Corbin, 1994). This initial pre-literature review confirmed the lack of attention to the topic because no existing theoretical investigation had been undertaken into this issue; and supported the use of a grounded approach to the research due to its exploratory nature.

The majority of the literature review was conducted after the field work and generation of findings had occurred. This ensured that data that was observed and examined in the natural settings that the GNs sought out, and was able to be reported and then examined to discover if it confirmed or differed from already published literature (Creswell, 1998). This ensured that the validity, quality and
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credibility of data collected was maintained (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). “The requirement is to identify causal conditions that influence the central phenomena, the strategies for addressing the phenomena, the context and interviewing conditions that shape the strategies and the consequences of undertaking the strategies” (Creswell, 1998, p152).

Identification of themes was required coding to be undertaken so the material could be sorted into categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). After open coding, whereby the initial categories of information offered by informants were segmented, axial coding was used to identify a central phenomenon. This was done in an attempt to identify the conditions that would allow for an explanation of the emerging patterns and themes (Huberman & Miles) that would identify the regularities occurring in the material (Wolcott, 1994) and provided for the eventual identification of their consumer behaviours. Axial coding undertaken provided a matrix, although not common in Grounded studies, which identified the social, cultural and behavioural conditions that influenced the group (Creswell, 1998) and reduced the volume of information (Wolcott, 1994). Verification of the arrangement of the research a number of times allowed the researcher to question and examine in detail the generated categories and supporting re-examination of the collected data for incidents that either supported or negated the research aim. This facilitated examination and verification of the data to be determined and enhanced the refinement of categories leading to extraction of theoretical propositions (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

3.2 Sample

3.2.1 How informants were selected

The Grounded approach chosen allowed informants to be selected who would contribute data for the development of findings. The sample was selected on the basis of the defining category fitting the project’s research definition of a GN, rather than being representative of a particular population (McKenzie, Powell & Usher, 1997). It was desirable to select a group to investigate if they had shared values, beliefs and assumptions (Creswell, 1998). Going out into the field supported the researchers desire not to compromise the value of the data or possibly slant the informants’ insights (Creswell, 1998; Peshkin, 1988; Glaser, 1990). The GNs studied in this research were those Australian seniors who travelled around the country in caravans eco-camping. Informants were GNs over the age of sixty years, who self-reported that they travelled by caravan for periods of more than three months per year and subscribed to an eco-camping philosophy. Informants’ sought were actively undertaking
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eco-camping at the time of interviewing. This was judged on the basis of judgement sampling. Judgement sampling is defined as:

A purposive, non-probability sampling design in which the sample subject chosen on the basis of the individual's ability to provide the type of special information needed by the researcher (Cavan, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2000, p458).

Judgement sampling was determined by observable self-sufficient camping behaviours being undertaken in a remote location, and confirmation was received from informants that they considered themselves to be eco-camping. Multiple individuals were selected who met the criteria and were identified to be undertaking the process being explored so that they could articulate their experiences; which is central to a grounded approach (Creswell, 1998). Thirty nine (n=39) informants had to be interviewed in order to achieve the 'saturation' of information required of a grounded approach (Flinders & Mills, 1993). Informants are detailed subsequently in the findings section (Refer to Chapter 4).

3.3 Location of the study

3.3.1 Selection of suitable research sites

A series of suitable pre-determined sites was selected on the basis of extensive personal camping experience and from a prior field visit that ascertained the ability of sites to demonstrate the following characteristics:

i. Having a large number of GNs in attendance

ii. Being a distance of reasonable access to undertake the study (Many GN destinations are in very remote areas)

iii. Being a destination where GNs congregated during the winter months seeking warmer weather conditions, as this fitted the available time in which research could be conducted

iv. Being widely 'advertised' in free camping booklet publications such as 'Bush camps and rest areas across Australia' and 'Bush camps and rest areas throughout Australia' known to be used by GNs; and

v. Being an eco-camping site where very limited facilities are provided for the provision of camping.
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A prior field visit was undertaken in July 2003 to determine the suitability of a number of selected locations and to assess the expected numbers of available GNs being able to be easily located within the two-week timeframe during which data collection was undertaken. Due to the researcher's prior experience that GNs often had a high propensity to 'move on' with little notice due to their nomadic travel preference, a number of alternative sites were sourced in the event that this did occur.

Pre-determined campsites were desirable to the GNs locating there when they would have to be totally self-sufficient in the provision of all water and energy equipment. Toileting facilities provided by the Shires were generally in the form of 'long-drop' and 'environmentally friendly' toilets, with the provision of dump-points for the disposal of liquid waste products. Consideration of the pre-determined campsites also had to be ratified after considering the time, financial and accessibility constraints of the project that had to be considered if the GNs were suddenly moving. The data collection was to be completed within a two-week research time frame at a campsite that had to be accessible by a conventional two-wheel drive vehicle.

3.3.1.2 Point Quobba research site

Originally Cleaverville Beach (located in the Shire of Roebourne in the North West of Western Australia) was the preferred site of the research project. At the commencement of the research period, enquiries made to the initially selected research site's volunteer ranger confirmed that a period of extended hot and humid weather was being experienced, resulting in strong prevailing winds and an influx of flies. This had resulted in the GNs travelling south to cooler destinations and confirmed the researcher's prior experience of GNs. Previously encountered GNs reported that minimal planning was undertaken to facilitate their nomadic travels for when such conditions arose.

Consideration of the prevailing weather conditions and the likely routes that may have been taken by the now moving GN population resulted in the research for this project being undertaken at Point Quobba (PQ) campsite located within the Carnarvon-Ningaloo coast in the boundaries of the Shire of Carnarvon (Western Australian Planning Commission, 2003). The Shire of Carnarvon was contacted to see if GNs had ventured down as far as the alternative research site of PQ and the researcher was advised their arrival had just commenced.

PQ is approximately 1000 kilometres north of Perth, and 70 kilometres north of Carnarvon. Carnarvon experiences a warm semi-arid climate with temperatures ranging from 25 to 35 Celsius.
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and having a rainfall that averages 300mm per annum. This coastline is also subject to frequent
cyclone conditions, and specifically is known as being subject to strong wind, storm surge and
tsunamis (Western Australian Planning Commission, 2003). The researcher experienced strong
winds and a storm surge when in the field.

The research site is located on a fragile coastal environment and its attractions include its
remoteness and scenic beauty. Accessible by sealed road leading down to a limestone coastal track,
that is usable by all vehicular types, the immediate area encompasses the local attractions of the
Blow Holes, Lake Macleod, Red Bluff, Quobba Point Light House and Cape Cuvier (Western
Australian Planning Commission, 2003).

PQ was accessed by conventional vehicle to set up camp in order to observe and gain in situ insight
of those GNs who were located there. Interviews were conducted by personal approach to those GNs
who were deemed by observation as being able and willing to provide extensive data for the research
project.

A campsite was established in the same areas as informant GNs in order to gain familiarity with the
setting. Recording of observations about informants was used to generate information while the
taping of interviews was also undertaken.

3.4 Data collection techniques

3.4.1 Fieldwork

The researcher had some prior experience of GNs and had engaged with them on occasion whilst on
a 12 month tour taken around Australia. Access to the informants required infiltration to learn the GNs
habits and thoughts. Engaging with the informants in the natural environments they seek out allowed
social relationships to be developed with the researcher. Trust and confidence were facilitated with
the informants, allowing the researcher to overcome delays of acceptance from the informants and
suspicions arising of the researcher's motives. Such difficulties are reported as often being
experienced in fieldwork and the dynamics of GNs were largely unknown; so their approach at a
campsite was required to understand the process they were engaging in (Punch, 1986). Additionally,
this facilitated the determination of whether patterns of recognised behaviours arose (Flinders & Mills,
1993) by the researcher observing and undertaking behaviours alongside the GNs.
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The researcher experienced stress, deep personal involvement and mental effort to gain information (Punch, 1986). Problems were experienced alongside the informants with a large storm front that passed through the area. This caused the researchers tent to become flooded and blow over. Attempting to move sites resulted in the researcher's vehicle becoming bogged with assistance being rendered by nearby male informants who advised that the group under study undertake to help those in need.

As a lone researcher, this allowed for ease of access and the gaining of invisibility and authenticity amongst the GNs. The taking of the researcher's dog when engaging in the fieldwork provided an opening introduction to the informants that appeared to facilitate the success of the researcher (Punch, 1986). A number of researchers advocate the requirement of undertaking full involvement if a social system is being studied (Adler & Adler, 1987; Jorgensen, 1989; Peshkin, 1988; Wolcott, 1988).

3.4.2 Observations and field notes

Observations of the informants were important in order to become 'familiar with their routines and rituals' (Berg, 1995, p.94). Observations were documented via field notes constructed after interactions with the informants as the researcher spent extensive time engaging in the phenomena under study, at the invitation of the informants, than exclusively as an observer. The researcher's prior experience meant that some observation statements presupposed theory discovery. The researcher undertook to be open-minded during the fieldtrip in order that the meanings of the qualitative research undertaken were still emergent and not presupposed by the researcher (Punch, 1986).

3.4.3 Face-to-face long interviews

Access to informants was openly sought by stating up front that the researcher was undertaking the research project. Prior personal experience of the researcher had indicated that a swift resolution of suspicion arising from the GNs was required to guarantee a level of rapport being developed where entrusted disclosure of the GNs perspective about their eco-camping activities would be facilitated. Face to face long interviews were conducted so that as much time as possible listening to the GNs ensured that informants being observed were able to speak for themselves. Interviews were conducted via semi-structured, open-ended interviews that were audiotaped and transcribed. The
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saturation, as recommended by Creswell (1998), was achieved by a total of 39 informants being forthcoming.

The face-to-face long interview was used as it allowed for the capturing of the categories and logic used by GNs. The categories and logic revolved around how they viewed the world, and how their interactions and experiences constituted their daily experiences when travelling. The face-to-face long interview was considered most appropriate considering McCracken's (1998, p17) comments that:

The purpose of qualitative research is to gain access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture constructs the world...it is important to work longer and with greater care, with a few people, than more superficially with many of them.

Having ensured that the clothing and camping undertaken by the researcher was similar to the informants, it forestalled any distance arising between the informants and the researcher by being perceived to be "... unacquainted or indifferent to the complexities and difficulties of the informants lifestyle (McCraken, 1998, p26)". Semi-structured, in-depth interviews to collect the informants' data allowed the researcher to respond to answers and verify responses to any new information that emerged as the interviews progressed. Throughout the interviews an interview guide was used (Appendix 3) to ensure that similar information was obtained from the informants, while not attempting to hinder their leading of interview discussions. After interviews were conducted general observations were recorded in order to note any occurrences that happened during interviews that may have been of interest and relevant to the findings of this research.

While the long interview is considered to be time consuming, emotionally draining and requires informants to be energetic; it allows informants to be candid with the safety of distance from the researcher, which made it interesting and gratifying for the researcher. The benefits of undertaking the long interview allowed the informants to be the centre of attention by talking about themselves, and state what to date had been unheard in academic reporting in an Australian context. The informants expressed their eager release in talking about themselves in such depth. They advised they had never really been in a position to undertake such self-scrutiny and had learnt a lot about themselves and wished to be understood by others. Studies that note simular revelations from
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3.4.4 Recording interviews

The recording of interviews by tape recorder ensured reliability and integrity of the interview occurring during the interview process was maintained and allowed the interviewer to remain attentive to the informants' contributions, rather than relying on memory. Accuracy in data collection is vital to the research process and can be assisted by tape recording interviews. Each informant was advised the interview would be tape recorded and asked for his or her agreement to this. All informants happily agreed. The tape recorder was usually placed on the portable table the researcher had brought for this purpose. Interviews usually took place in the shade near the informant's caravan or annex area in which they were camped. One interview was conducted on the beach while the informant proceeded to fish and another was conducted while the researcher was in the process of cutting the informant's hair. This exchange was considered to not taint the interview as the male informant involved advised that such an exchange was part of the process of the group under study. The use of tape recordings to conduct interviews is advocated by Patton (1980), Taylor and Bogdan (1984) and Henderson (1991).

3.5 Data analysis

3.5.1 Data analysis procedures adopted

3.5.1.1 Manual coding line by line

Manual line by line coding was undertaken by the researcher highlighting each theme as it occurred and manually recording records in some form of organised index (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2000). Theoretical categories were derived via the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hamersley, 1989) in which the researcher manually compared the contents of individual interviews against one another to identify underlying themes (Wells, 1995). This necessitated that the contents of interviews were inspected with attention to detail and was undertaken by colour coding the transcripts and manually arranging a key to organise the contents to be understood by the researcher. This was a long and arduous task that took many hours and relied on the thorough organisational skills of the researcher (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2000). In hindsight a computer aided package such as NUDIST would have been useful in order to save time and allow for speedier analysis (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran, 2000).
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Due to the voluminous amount of data that had been collected from informants, the researcher became aware of the limitations of adopting this procedure, which is why manual line by line coding is often overlooked (Cavana, Delahaye & Sekaran). The researcher undertook to use a balancing matrix for each individual interview and then constructed one to represent the total contents of all transcripts so that a total visualisation of the research was able to be achieved (Strauss, 1987). The balancing matrix used was a grid with x and y dimensions that related the contents of the interviews and allowed for a determination of which various matters were balanced by interactions of the informants (Strauss, 1987).

The use of the balancing matrix allowed for the visualisation of the multi-perspective of the transcripts contents until their arrangement emerged to identify resulting similarities. This allowed for any resulting similarities in data to be extracted in order to produce the theoretical categories that were identified and assisted in explaining the outcomes that have been generated (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1992), which in this study is the culture of the GNs.

3.6 Limitations

3.6.1 Constraints experienced

Challenges due to the researcher's inexperience included:

i. Setting aside previously held notions so that the theory could emerge (Creswell, 1998)

ii. The amount of time the informants wished to spend volunteering to provide information was taxing to the researcher as interviews were of a longer and more intense duration than had been pre-supposed (McCracken, 1988). Planned interview times often had to be rescheduled due to the changing whims of the informants who had a preference for early morning or late evening. This resulted in several hours per day being unproductive, and when engaged in interviews, surrounding informants often thought a social gathering was in progress resulting in many interruptions.

iii. Difficulty was experienced initially in understanding the basic techniques and gaining confidence in using them to enable completion of the published work. It was not until near the middle to later parts of the project did the researcher truly grasp the concepts (Strauss, 1987) by accepting that in reality, it required a very systematic approach to be taken to the analysis of the themes so that they were meaningful of the data collected (Creswell, 1998, p57).
3.7 Chapter summary

Chapter Three has provided the methodology that was used in undertaking this study. Chapter Four provides a summary of informants of the study with findings organised to show the links of the GN journey which are discussed in terms of the culture of the GN. It identifies a number of stages of a BSP that identifies a shared reference point that informants used to moderate their behaviours and group norms.
CHAPTER 4
THE CULTURE AND BEHAVIOURS OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREY NOMAD

4.0 Chapter introduction
Chapter 3 presented the methodological approach, justification, description of the research site, data collection techniques, data analysis techniques and limitations of the study. This chapter provides the findings of the study which explores the culture of the GN to commence providing an understanding of the GN group as consumers.

4.1 Findings Synopsis
This synopsis provides an overview of the findings section to commence the understanding of the Australian GN. Informants undertook eco-camping as it allowed them to be self-sufficient, attain isolation, be non-conformist and locate other GNs who see this perspective as positive. Cost was considered when undertaking to eco-camp. Cost centred on the economy of this type of camping by lowered fees and was legitimised by the GNs who spent large sums of monies in purchasing equipment to undertake eco-camping in a sustainable manner.

The preference for eco-camping did not see this group of GNs considering the hardships as a hindrance. Eco-camping facilitated their desire for freedom as identified by their ideology: being considered free from cost, restriction, and control it facilitates psychological freedom

The most relevant findings have been organised within this section to show links reported by informants of their journey in becoming a GN. Informants reported this as a change within themselves over time as they came to understand what being a GN was all about.

These changes are discussed in terms of the culture of the GNs as the informants reported a common ideology, characteristics, values and norms, rituals and behaviours after emerging through a number of stages that guided their behaviours. These stages have been determined to constitute a Basic Social Process (BSP) as they explain a set of uniform social rules and behaviours that emerged over time (Glaser, 1992).
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A central ideology of 'freedom' emerged that was defined in both a physical and psychological sense. The attainment and understanding of freedom was undertaken via a BSP in a set of five stages (information gathering, training, admitting, becoming and acceptance) that occurred over time. Once emerged through the stages the informants were legitimised as GNs and reported a number of traits that characterise GNs.

Traits were grouped around how the GNs saw themselves, how they believed non-GNs' perceived them and how they believed their undertakings were viewed. The traits provide a reference point of shared characteristics reported by the informants. Values and norms, which are negotiated by informants in the becoming stage, set to unite the group in three common areas of understanding about an ethos of sharing; privacy and independence; and observation of the nature's clock.

Ethos of sharing facilitates the group sharing all knowledge of camping locations, information that will support them and any resources they are able to procure to extend their travels. Privacy is facilitated by a code of conduct that gives guidance to the sharing of this information amongst the group and independence is undertaken by eco-camping. Observation of nature's clock facilitates travel and activities at a leisurely pace that fits with the mature stage of life that most GNs belong to.

The values and norms of the group are outwardly displayed to others by a set of rituals. Rituals that promoted ethos of sharing are the exchanging of gifts, communication and water gathering. The rituals that promoted privacy and independence are the big clean up and caravan park visit. The rituals that promoted observation of the natural time clock are the campfire and happy hour. Rituals moderated the behaviours of the informants by ensuring that group cohesion is achieved and maintained amongst the informants.

Interview extracts have been notated to reflect the sex of the informant and the stage of the BSP that had been attained to assist the reader in understanding the difference occurring amongst informants. The key used is detailed below at Figure 1:
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGS</td>
<td>Information Gathering Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>Training Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AS</td>
<td>Admitting Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BS</td>
<td>Becoming Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AcS</td>
<td>Acceptance Stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGN</td>
<td>Emerged Grey Nomad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GN</td>
<td>Grey Nomad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Guide to notations used

4.2 Summary of the informants who participated in the study

A total of 39 informants participated in the study of whom 21 were males and 18 were females. The informants comprised of 17 couples, two singles and one family group. The informants volunteered information about their personal circumstances during the course of interviews. While this was not asked for directly of the informants, it was often provided as a qualification when they expressed an opinion. This information included the cost of their caravans, the estimated outlay in the equipment they had with them to undertake eco-camping, the number of years they had been travelling, the current trip duration and the average duration of trips undertaken. A summary of this information is detailed below at Figure 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor reported by informants (n=39)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>71.5 years</td>
<td>60 to 83 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan and vehicle outlay</td>
<td>$312,500</td>
<td>$60,000 to $565,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in equipment</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>$13,000 to $37,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years travelling</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>2 to 18 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current trip duration</td>
<td>31.5 months</td>
<td>3 to 60 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average trip duration</td>
<td>10.5 months</td>
<td>3 to 18 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2: A summary of the factors that informants reported about their personal circumstances at the Point Quobba campsite

While age was not asked directly of the informants they reported this during the course of interviews as they discussed the age of their children, or were estimating how much longer they would be able to remain travelling and eco-camping. Many had determined that there would come a day when their travels would cease due to restrictions imposed by aging. ‘Being old’ was considered to occur around the age of 80 years; although those informants already achieving that age appeared to consider old age as occurring at some future and indeterminable time that they were reserved in nominating. When discussions centred on the issue of age, most of the informants talked about this in terms of ten years henceforth from the age they had currently attained. The ages of informants from the study are reported below at Figure 3:
Informants at the PQ campsite included those informants who had come across from the eastern seaboard specifically to look at Western Australia (9 informants), those who were in the process of a round Australia trip (16 informants) and those who were at the campsite escaping the cold of the winter in the south of the state (14 informants). A summary of which State of Australia the informants home was domiciled are reported below at Figure 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domicile state</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WA</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIC</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QLD</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SA</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAS</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=39)

Informants reported they had come to be located at the PQ campsite having heard about it from other informants, having read about the campsite in a popular publication, having stumbled across it and having visited previously. A summary of these findings is detailed below at Figure 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How informants became aware of Point Quobba</th>
<th>Total informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heard about it from other Grey Nomad</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had previously visited</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stumbled on it</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read about it</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n=39)

**4.3 Freedom and how it defines the ideology of the Australian GN**

**4.3.1 Freedom**

Freedom was the major motivation and reason for desiring to be a GN repeated by informants. The GN ideology promoted a system of ideas pertaining to the way of thinking about freedom. Informants looked for adventure, autonomy, security, privacy and the challenge of the outdoors. They sought the sun for renewal and health. How well these were achieved depended on individual informant's
available budget to undertake their travels and their rationalisation of their success in having achieved their own ‘required’ measure of freedom. Freedom was reported as being about having connected with a ‘bigger picture’:

The GN to me is not a tourist. They are lifestyle people that are enjoying the beauty that is there. Not just looking at the specific things, they see the beauty that is there. They see beauty in a lot of other things; more than coral, reef and fish and the scenery. They see the big picture. They see the whole picture: the sand dunes and the landscape. They see everything (F; EGN).

This major motivation was not separated by informants into the desire for physical space or being psychologically removed from everyday constraints. They interchanged between the two forms of freedom. However, the clear distinction existing between the two was revealed by in depth examination of interview transcripts that allowed for a teasing out of the differences between physical and psychological freedom, so that a deeper understanding could be obtained of the GNs.

Physical freedom was having the sense of physical space with the GN surrounded by an abundance of natural landscapes and elements to explore in the nearby vicinity. Physical freedom could still be achieved if other GNs camped close by. This was because they are considered to be like-minded and therefore understood the informants’ desires and behaviours. Remote places in which they camped naturally offered the physical freedom sought.

Psychological freedom was the desire to get back to basics and shrug off any suggestion that they were ‘tied’ into the formalised rules that need to be negotiated in every day life, with physical proximity translating to psychological discomfort:

Another thing we don’t want is suburbia. We’re getting away from that! Some of the caravan parks we got to, it’s all like little boxes. Like pigeonholes! That’s disaster for us. We’ve got to get out! Maybe overnight, and then we’re off. We then come to somewhere like this sort of place. You’re leaving all of that behind and these people have got to realise that they are out in the country now. They have to forget that city lifestyle. What park did we go to? They had your awning right near you and everyone was stacked in... holy Jesus, its suburbia! (M; AS).
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In reality a set of self-imposed social constraints existed amongst the informants. It guided their behaviours through values, norms and rituals. These self-imposed social constraints are required to be adhered too, in order to achieve and maintain membership as a GN and will be discussed in depth in a subsequent section.

Optimum psychological freedom was held by those GNs who had sold the family home to undertake the trip. For others it was being in unstructured campsites that allowed social interaction when desired, in new areas of the countryside that required them to be self-entertaining.

Freedom, then, is achieved by informants when they camp in isolated areas, attaining physical freedom, and are only then able to consider themselves removed from the formalised rules of everyday life. That is that physical freedom is used as a vehicle (means) to attain the desired outcome (end) of psychological freedom and is shown below in Figure 6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical freedom</th>
<th>Psychological freedom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Means)</td>
<td>(End/Outcome)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: The link between physical freedom and psychological freedom of the Australian Grey Nomad

When physical freedom was achieved then the social constraints fell by the wayside and psychological freedom became apparent:

Not having the pressure of other people and that sort of thing; not having to conform. We can wear our old clothes and nobody looks down on us. I always bring all my oldest stuff. It’s totally relaxed. In town you have to be tidy to go to the shops and that sort of thing (F; GN).

You’re freer here, less restricted. Here you can look around and look for a good spot where you want to stop and that is good. I like that. That’s why it’s free. It’s about your own freedom (F; BS).

Freedom is expressed in terms of the restrictions or constraints they had experienced in being able to camp. This included campsite fees, economic rationalisation and security in numbers. This is considered with reference to legitimacy, self-autonomy and being able to camp without constraints (authority) and revolves around the identification and attachment to other GN travellers. GNs do not
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verbalise a distinction between physical and psychological freedom. Rather, by finding places of physical freedom they are assured psychological freedom and undertake guarded exchange as to where campsites exist that will support their ideology of freedom. They do so as to ensure the campsite places are accessible to the GNs group.

4.4 The Basic Social Process of becoming an Australian GN

The BSP of informants becoming an Emerged Grey Nomad (EGN) emerged from they 'actually did' and how they considered themselves in relation to other GNs.

The informants reported identification of changes over time of how they interpreted their experiences and actions, which facilitated a sense of 'becoming'. 'Becoming' evolved over five stages. The five stages were concerned with information gathering, training, admitting, becoming and acceptance and are highlighted as a linear progression in Figure 7:

Information gathering → Training → Admitting → Becoming → Acceptance

Figure 7: The five stages of the Basic Social Process of Becoming an Australian Grey Nomad

Informants had attained various stages of the BSP which was revealed by attainment of the level revealing understanding and meaning of various tasks the informants undertook. The number of informants, who were determined having attained the various reported stages of the BSP, is shown below at Figure 8:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of BSP informant had attained</th>
<th>Number of informants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information gathering stage (IGS)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training stage (TS)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitting stage (AS)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming stage (BS)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance stage (AcS)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerged Grey Nomad (EGN)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 8: The number of informants attaining the determined stages of the Basic Social Process of Australian Grey Nomads

The informants reported undertaking a number of 'rituals' whose meaning is understood by the informant once they have emerged through the acceptance stage of the BSP and become a EGN in order to be called a GN. These rituals appear to outwardly demonstrate to other EGNs the
informants' acceptance of the protection of the ideology that underlies the beliefs of the GNs. These rituals are fully discussed later in a subsequent section.

The stages experienced in the BSP were not obvious to the informants as they only make the distinction between starting and then being a GN. Rather the stages emerged when transcripts were examined and informants talked about their experiences and actions of the past and present. It was from close examination of these that the stages emerged. These stages were repeatedly reported as being contextually driven, where the informant GNs observed, experienced, undertook and then advocated the behaviours of each stage as they passed through and emerged.

4.4.1 Information gathering stage (IGS)

IGS informants saw themselves at a stage in life where they were not subject to time restrictions and they could now travel unhindered by the rigours of everyday suburban life. They reported having dealt with the issues of life: health, aging and rejuvenation; retirement and redundancy; children growing up and the lessening of family responsibility. They were now free to see the countryside, catch up with family and friends and experience the 'real' and 'raw' countryside. Informants strongly advocated this as their 'right and privilege' as they were looking to experience 'adventure in the bush' and advocated this as 'continuing their heritage'. They felt they were an important element to the future of the country as they could protect the natural environment while passing on their experiences to their grandchildren.

IGS informants wanted to see the country, while slowing down the pace at which travel was undertaken to reflect their life stage:

What is the point in coming out and only spending half a day looking at it? You might as well come out and have the time to enjoy what is here (F; IGS).

Informants in the IGS typically reported undertaking an investigatory trip. The investigatory trip was not recognised by IGS informants as part of the process of becoming a GN. It does not appear to become apparent until subsequent trips have been taken and ongoing familiarity ensures that they possess a higher level of shared GN understanding of 'acceptable behaviours', such as getting to camp by late afternoon:
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The first year we ran around and drove hundreds of miles until it was dark and then you’re running around trying to light a fire and cook your tea in the dark. We said this is not much good like this travelling eight to ten hours a day (F; TS).

The investigatory trip was of a short duration of between three weeks and three months. The investigatory trip allowed the informants to ‘kick start’ their familiarity with camping, having often camped in their youth. Uncertainty about their preparedness, unease about being away and how they would feel about the experience was common amongst informants who were yet to become EGNs:

We found out early in the piece on our test run. We went away for three days and we didn’t have any sun, so we lost our lights, but we didn’t loose our fridge...by reading and checking with people...you get conflicting reports. You just pick what’s best for you. It can be trial and error (M; TS).

I didn’t know how I’d go with the caravan when we first started off. So I only lasted six weeks and I wanted to go home. Oh Jesus! I felt great once I first got home. I was still adjusting to this (F; TS).

4.4.2 Training stage (TS)

After an investigatory trip had been undertaken, TS informants undertook a trial trip that lasted in duration from four weeks to several months. It was during this trip that they started to distinguish a greater understanding of the GNs lifestyle.

The TS informants’ behaviours now centred on staying in caravan parks for ‘lesser periods of time’, which they justified by explaining they were now seeking out a balance between caravan parks and the more informal type of camping areas often in the company of friends who lent moral and practical support. They reported undertaking conversations and outdoor activities such as walking and swimming with more experienced EGNs and started to determine a sense of ‘seeing things differently’ and learning to be independent:

So the next time we went away for twelve weeks I was just starting to get used to the scene and thought, “This is alright!” The first six weeks of the second trip it just changed. It just
changed to a completely different style of person. You had conversations and you now walked. It changed because we both started to see things differently (M; EGN).

Again at this stage the TS informants still did not consider the trial trip as a compulsory part of the process. It is only after other trips that have subsequently been undertaken that recognition occurred of having passed through a 'stage' where they observe the required behaviours of the EGNs needed to be identified as a GN.

What did change were the TS informants themselves. They commented on a new understanding of the shared value, behaviours and rules amongst GNs. They did not feel that they themselves belonged as yet, but determined this new understanding about GNs now included the 'love of freedom, 'desire to be removed from suburbia' and the desire to 'stop where ever and when ever' they desired, as observed by a TS male informant recalling his interactions with more experienced EGNs:

They love the freedom. They're sick of the hustle and bustle and stress. A lot of them are out here because of stress. They are just looking to just stop. We've seen a lot who do this as a Grey Nomad and who spend more than six months away. I've found that it extends their lives. They've told us it's improved their health and I think it's just a lack of stress (M; TS).

4.4.3 Admitting stage (AS)

Having passed through the training stage, AS informants, cemented their desire to be assimilated into the fully-fledged EGNs. By replicating the observed behaviours of other EGNs and purchasing equipment that the EGNs had in order to 'experience' being a GN.

AS informants undertook to purchase a whole plethora of camping equipment they determined the EGNs to have including power generating sources, freezing equipment, shade canopies, water containers and electrical equipment. At this stage, an AS informants' list of essential equipment was often more cumbersome that what is touted by an EGN. It is only by passing through the BSP stages and emerging that the informant actually can then recognise this difference, as was recounted in humorous appreciation by a male EGN informant:
The way I have it set up now is good. Not when I first brought it, because when I brought it, it wouldn't have supported me. I had to add a lot of things. It took me two months to get it right. Or so I thought. When you first start out you get lots of things that are unnecessary and cart them around with you. Later you realise what things are important. It's the things that support you in the bush that you're looking to have. (M; EGN).

The AS informants achieving this stage felt it was defined as having achieved social acceptance by the EGNs. This had the AS informants excitedly starting to call themselves GNs and stating they were now doing the same as the EGNs. They recounted being included socially and instructed in the appropriate behaviours of the group as highlighted within the following interview extracts:

They start to look out for you. It's so exciting! (M; AS).

They start to accept you once you know the ropes (M; AS).

We tried it and they said “Good one, you’re doing it the right way” (M; AS).

The EGNs themselves, however, were yet to see the AS informants as legitimate as they did not advocate the behaviours of the GN. EGNs commenced to ‘adopt’ AS informants in the admitting stage. The AS informants reported and understood this to mean they too were a GN, being unaware that EGNs require for the ‘becoming stage’ of the BSP to be completed Only when an informant enters the ‘becoming stage’ and adopts behaviours of the GN, have they met an invisible measure of legitimacy required by the EGNs.

4.4.4 Becoming stage (BS)

When BS informants enter this stage of the BSP, EGNs commence to instruct them in the values and norms that are focused around behaviours already being undertaken by the BS informants. The behaviours are seen to facilitate the values of an ethos of sharing; privacy and independence; and observation of nature's clock. They are undertaken to support the GNs’ group ideology of a freedom that is both physical and psychological.

At this stage BS informants began to advocate the behaviours of the GNs. Thus far behaviours had been observed (training stage), experienced (admitting stage), and undertaken (becoming stage). By
advocating behaviours BS informants ‘prove’ their progression through the BSP. The meanings of
behaviours are imparted to BS informants who were ‘adopted’ by EGNs who see the BS informant as
willing to now advocate the behaviours and values of the GN:

I thought I knew what it was all about. I'd done the same things as them and they always
talked to me and that. I was waltzing around the countryside calling myself a GN. Now I know
better! I had learnt the ways. I was even doing the ways. Now I needed to live the ways of
the Grey Nomad. See, you don't know that until you become one. You have to get through a
lot of hurdles for you to know all the different levels. Once you've done that then you are one.
When you live the ways, then you are one. (M: EGN).

Progression through this stage requires an EGN to undertake to transmit to the BS informants the
understanding of the groups' shared values and how they apply to the norms. Here the BS informants
reported undertaking the norms, but were still not yet fully aware of their link until they have finally
emerged as EGNs themselves.

When the becoming stage had been achieved the informants reported undertaking and now
understanding a number of ‘rituals’ that demonstrated outwardly to other GNs the informants' acceptance of the protection of the ideology that underlies the beliefs of the GNs. These rituals are discussed in a subsequent section.

4.4.5 Acceptance stage (AcS)

When informants enter the AcS stage of the BSP they had observed, experienced, undertaken, and
adopted the behaviours of the GN. It is in this stage that they finally advocate the behaviours of the
GNs. The modification in behaviour to becoming a GN is highlighted in a linear progression as shown in Figure 9:

Observe → Experienced → Undertaken → Adopted → Advocated

Figure 9: The behaviour cycle of acceptance for Australian Grey Nomads

Emergence from this stage sees the AcS informant finally accepted by the EGNs. Critical to the
understanding of freedom required in this stage by the AcS informant was the adoption by an EGN that had occurred in the becoming stage. Freedom is the all encompassing motivation and reason to
be a GN. The measure of freedom is considered in varying degrees but is eloquently illustrated by a male EGN informant who stated:

There are probably 25 million people in Australia today. They just exist! This is why I am dirty on governments stopping this sort of thing being a reality. There are people who need places like this. There are thousands of them and you see them coming through the camps. It changes people’s lives. When you see people putting up with this and the hardships they have to put up with, it changes your life and your attitudes; your mannerisms. It hardens you! So why should you be penalised? There are too many greedy bastards in this country opening up caravan parks on any corner and every corner, any river, everywhere you go! I’m very, very, very dirty on it. I just want my freedom. I want to get away from all that crook city stuff. Out here is where I want to be. I’m just out here in my own space, no one on top of anyone. I’m not bothering you or anyone else. Look, do you really think anyone wants to stay here besides the Grey Nomad? It’s just beach dunes and sea. We’ve got bloody thousands of miles of coast in this bloody country. Who am I harming? It’s all we’re about. Our freedom! No bastards get it. The bastards try to take it; but they don’t get it. They don’t know us! We just want to be away, by ourselves, doing our own thing. What harm is there in that? (M, EGN).

It is in this stage that AcS informants firmly state their having ‘arrived’ and being a fully legitimised GN. They now advocate and experience freedom by an understanding of the shared GN values of an ethos of sharing, privacy and independence and observation of nature’s clock.

Just to understand freedom alone as desired by GNs is not enough to enable appreciation of their consumption patterns. It is important to have an understanding of the members of the GNs. Review of the transcripts revealed a number of traits that the GNs used to describe themselves and how they believed others saw them.
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4.5 The traits of Australian GN membership

The informants reported a number of traits about their characteristics. These were how they saw themselves; how they felt others who were not GNs view them; and the ways in which they go about their behaviours.

The informants reported a number of traits that they consider to be the main characteristics of GNs; that is the peer group they desire to belong to. Informants in describing their actions reported these traits. They considered themselves to be autonomous, knowledgeable, courageous, sure and flexible. The characteristics assigned to these traits are reported below in Figure 10:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait recorded</th>
<th>Character assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autonomous:</td>
<td>Free, independent, self-determining, self-governing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledgeable:</td>
<td>Aware, conversant, experienced, familiar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courageous:</td>
<td>Bold, daring, fearless, gritty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sure:</td>
<td>Certain, reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible:</td>
<td>Adjustable, discretionary, open</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 10: The traits informant Australian GNs used to describe themselves

They felt their undertakings and behaviours are viewed by those looking to become a GN to be privileged, concerned, intense, supportive, consistent and understanding. The characteristics assigned to these traits are reported below in Figure 11:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait recorded</th>
<th>Character assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Privileged:</td>
<td>Advantaged, elite, entitled, favoured, honoured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerned:</td>
<td>Active, interested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intense:</td>
<td>Fanatical, fervent, fierce, impassioned, vehement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive:</td>
<td>Encouraging, sympathetic, understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent:</td>
<td>Constant, dependable, persistent, regular, true to type, undeviating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding:</td>
<td>Appreciation, awareness, comprehension, grasp, judgement, belief, idea, opinion, perception, view, considerate, kind, patient, tolerant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 11: The traits informant GN used to describe how feel they are considered by aspiring GNs

Informants reported on how and why they undertake their behaviours in the ways that they do. They describe that they go about things in ways that can be considered to be inventive, instrumental,
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retiring, adventurous and connected. The characteristics assigned to these traits are reported below in Figure 12:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trait recorded</th>
<th>Character assigned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inventive:</td>
<td>Imaginative, ingenious, innovative, inspired, original, resourceful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instrumental:</td>
<td>Contributing, helpful, influential, involved, helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retiring:</td>
<td>Quiet, reserved, unassuming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventurous:</td>
<td>Opportunistic, gambler, rogue, daredevil, traveller, voyager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected:</td>
<td>Allied, aligned, united, affiliated, joined, related</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 12: The traits informant GN used when describing how they are seen to go about their undertakings

Informants reporting traits of how they viewed themselves, how they believed their peers viewed them and their undertakings provides an insight of how they viewed themselves and wished to be viewed by others. It demonstrates an understanding of shared characteristics of the group called the GNs, although it does not reveal how they determine they are considered by anyone not belonging to the GN group.

The characteristics offered by the informants to describe themselves pertain to the reference group of fully emerged GNs. Hereafter, when referring to GNs, they were those informant GNs of the sample who had fully emerged through the BSP and were now seen by others to be a fully-fledged EGN.

The reported traits revealed how the GNs understand themselves and how they wish to be understood amongst their peers. Traits alone are of no value in understanding GNs unless they are linked to the values and norms of the GNs.

4.6 Esprit de corps: The values and norms of the Australian Grey Nomad

The ideology of freedom is negotiated and understood by informants in the ‘becoming stage’ of the BSP. Once this is understood it unites the group in a strong and enthusiastic dedication to the sense of belonging to the GNs.
4.6.1 Ethos of sharing

The GNs interviewed discussed that the sharing of information is a standard practice. They share knowledge of camping locations, resources and information they had procured to extend their travels. It allowed the GNs to demonstrate their peer group traits of being autonomous, courageous and sure. GNs share all the information and knowledge they have gathered during their travels and spread this by word of mouth. It encompasses all facets of their travels: distances involved in travel to new campsites; the facilities available within the surrounding district; rules that may be attached to staying at particular sites; and where available campsites are located that are low or free from cost. It covered services and providers, points of interest and fuel charges that were paid. Additionally, it may be about how to fix or adapt a piece of equipment that may have failed or for problems to be shared in order to provide a solution. By sharing knowledge they looked to unite as a group and support each other.

Informants exchanged their opinions, knowledge and experiences by standing around and talking in the case of males and sitting and chatting for hours by the females. Exchange is established to provide a comparison between the campsites that have been visited and allows the GNs to gather up-to-date 'data banks' of information and formulate opinions. Any information that will aid the GNs to extend their trip (e.g. locating service providers that are considered to charge reasonable rates for their wares and Shires that 'welcome' the GNs) is imparted. Opinions shared amongst GNs are considered to be 'legitimate and accurate' over those provided by people outside the group.

4.6.2 Privacy and independence

Privacy was facilitated by a code of conduct that gave guidance to the sharing of the information amongst the group and independence was undertaken by eco-camping. It allows the GNs to demonstrate their peer group trait of being autonomous. Privacy and independence are promoted amongst GNs as a social expectation.

Privacy was found in the way they had set up their camps by spreading out; the out-of-way places they stayed; and the code of social conduct that didn't allow them to impinge on their neighbour. Understanding developed as the GN moved through the BSP. When the 'becoming stage' of the BSP had been attained full understanding of the importance of this social norm is understood as recalled
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by a male informant, who recounted his dismay at others who were not yet aware of why this was so important to himself:

Now Grey Nomads understand, you know. Grey Nomads are not always in the mood for chatting. You know what I mean; it's their privacy. It's an inbuilt thing and you just sort of pick it. The tourist won't. They just stop and yak and yak! A Grey Nomad wouldn't interfere because he'd know. He wouldn't keep yakking and chatting unless he could offer some help or got under there with me to fix something, where the tourist won't. He'll keep going while my patience is at an end. The Grey Nomads will know that (M; EGN).

Independence of GNs is achieved by being self-sufficient when eco-camping in their preferred remote locations. It allows the GNs to demonstrate their peer groups trait of being autonomous. This independence was facilitated by a number of rituals that had been formalised by the group. These were the big clean up; the caravan park visit; and communication rituals. These are discussed in a subsequent section.

4.6.3 Observation of nature's clock

Observation of nature’s clock facilitated travel and activities at a leisurely pace that fitted with the stage of life that most GNs belonged to. This allows the GNs to demonstrate their peer group trait of flexibility.

GNs travel, socialise, interact, arrive and depart campsites and retire for the evening at a leisurely pace with little consideration to the clock; but are rather guided by nature's clock. They viewed the rising and setting sun as the yardstick by which to conduct their activities. It accounted for their annoyance at the regulation they experienced in caravan parks and supported their wishes to determine their own pace of travelling and daily schedules when at a campsite. It outwardly supported their ideology of psychological freedom and allowed for the distinction of the group from other types of tourists. The group explicitly stated that they were not tourists, but considered themselves to be lifestyle travellers. They reported that all GNs they know also consider themselves to be lifestyle travellers and not tourists. Observation of nature's clock explains the travel behaviours; campsite selection and use of rest stops; and equipment that the GNs undertake. These will be discussed in a later section.
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However, there were times where they imposed their own regimentation within the group and undertook a set of behaviours that were regulated around the regular time clock. These were the happy hour which traditionally occurs at 5pm and the tendency to travel between the hours of 11am and 2pm. The regulation of time supports the GNs in different areas of the system of ideas they hold. The timing of the Happy Hour is important to diffuse group tensions and is undertaken to relax at the end of a day. The travelling between 11am and 2pm ensured that if GNs were in transit they would be able to join in the ritual of the Happy Hour at the next camp they located themselves at.

Values and norms provide unity amongst GNs and their peers and centre around three themes, which as noted earlier were outwardly demonstrated by a set of rituals that further contributed to the cohesion of the group’s collective behaviour.

4.7 Rituals of the Australian Grey Nomad

4.7.1 Rituals that promoted ethos of sharing

The rituals of exchanging gifts, story telling and happy hours allow the GN to remain anonymous by not sharing too much of themselves with other GNs when initially meeting.

4.7.1.1 Exchanging gifts

The most important gift exchange is the sharing of information. A haircut was exchanged for an interview with an informant. Information was given about various campsites the GNs go to. This included the use of generators, the ability to light fires, and duration of stay permitted, water availability, and conditions of the entry road. Informal campsites preferred were those that were a reasonable distance from an urban centre to replenish supplies.

The gift of word of mouth support is bestowed to those service providers who understood informants’ needs and met the ideals that GNs sought: personable service, being offered alternatives to solve problems and advice being given freely. GNs wanted to select products that provide both economy and actualisation of being natural (such as the use of solar panels). Recommendations given by other GNs held the most value and reliability to informants. GNs reported either being advised to seek out, or steer clear of particular merchants up to six days travelling distance out from various towns. Poor service resulted in the grievance being passed amongst the informants; not to the service provider. The GNs interviewed supported those service providers perceived as ‘doing the right thing’.
Exchanging the gift of information meant that the GNs effectively were actively negotiating and unifying to support outcomes they desired. This behaviour emerged over time and movement through the BSP with the emphasis on achieving their desired level of service being attained.

Exchanging other gifts maintained the status quo through the sharing of food and baking, left over meals, fish and communal roasts. Food gifts were given for providing equipment, looking after campsites and possessions when away from the site, information, assistance and mechanical expertise etc. Exchange occurred when a favour has been provided to the GN who was able to ‘return’ the value of the favour. It was essential that no perceived debt remained owing. By the exchange of information and knowledge, the GNs were able to successfully maintain their travels.

4.7.1.2 Communication with home
Informants advised communication with home was set at weekly or fortnightly to contact friends and family or to catch up with a party to make arrangements to meet up at the next intended destination. A nominated contact collected information on the GNs location and passed it onto the informant’s family and social group. Communications to home were made by phone card, word of mouth exchange, public phones, emails, letters and postcards.

Regular communication maintained and facilitated the relationships that the GNs had at home. Informants highlighted that the mobile phone networks were found to be ineffective for them as they seek out isolated areas not accessible to a mobile phone network.

Continuing familiarity and connection to family and friends were important to the GNs, who while being dismissive of the importance of regular communication had made it a ritual. This provided a strategy to ensure a continued sense of security. Communication allowed for unity and attachment to their friends and family to be maintained while providing a safety net in case of an emergency arising.

4.7.1.3 Water gathering
The gathering of water was critical in areas that required remote camping. Stories told of concerns about water shortages and the means by which these were overcome:
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When we are travelling we can pull in and get water out of a windmill, a tank or something. Throw the hose over the top and siphon it out to use (M; EGN).

When it rained we caught all the water and filled the tank under the caravan. We went to use it as we were almost out of drinking water. We said it didn’t matter; we’ve got 80 litres under the caravan in the tank. We went to use it and we didn’t have any. We had to go to town. When we go we’ll get water for anyone else who wants it (M; EGN).

Discourse included conversations about consumption rates, charges that had been imposed and how GNs located and transported quality water. GNs compared their water usage while eco-camping to their domestic home consumption rates with platitudes about their successes in conserving water. Estimates of consumption provided by informants averaged 150 litres a week per couple. Informants reported decanting it into 10 and 20 litre containers for ease of moving. Decanting ensured the accuracy of gauging the remaining water available. Water is also decanted as it may come from a variety of sources. Water obtained specifically from town was used solely for drinking and stored by an elaborate process that demonstrates the importance of its quality to the GNs:

I could carry 150 litres of water and we use special containers, which we fill up when we go into town. I fill up the water from the containers and fill up the main tank. I fill everything and bring it back. We carry 200 litres and I can still carry another 150 litres, which we use for drinking. We have a filter here that we put in a special Jerry Can that we use only for our drinking. It goes to the filter and from the filter we drink it. I made it up. This is actually a spring water bottle from the shops and this is the best (to use) because the plastic does not smell. We have a jug with the filter in and put it in the fridge. We have another portable little bag for use when we travel around in the 4x4 in our little cooler bag (M; EGN).

Conservation of water is paramount to their success and GNs abhor those who waste water. They reported observing incidents such as the washing of cars with supplied water designated for drinking use only, the taking of volumes too large for daily consumption or those GNs filling up their water containers in a remote location even though scheme water would be readily available before their next destination:
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With water though, a lot of people abuse it. They had a tanker coming in (here) every second day and filled up some tanks that have a spring loaded tap so that it was not left running. They had showers and jammed it with a stick so that the water just kept running and running. Someone even told me that they saw an idiot washing their car at those water tanks they have on the Nullarbor for emergencies (M, EGN).

While the importance of conservation of water was vocalised by informants they admitted a reversion to hedonistic consumption when they had either endured a long duration of water hardship in a remote location or they were on their own and not being observed by others:

How much water do I use in a day? I splash out. I use a lot of water! I'm a water person. I don't think people could use water like I do. We're here at a campsite where water is scarce. But I must admit I will load up the washing machine and use it when no one can see me. I'm not going to boil and re-boil a kettle am I? I like my clothes to be clean (F, EGN).

We're supposed to use 200 litres maximum for a fortnight. Because we have one tank on, without all this stuff you get to know about water... well it lasts a week (M, EGN).

Conservation of water was driven by sheer necessity and was seen to reflect one of the challenges of the original pioneers of Australia. The obvious need to obtain, share and cart any available water or knowledge of its availability is obvious for survival in a remote location; and is reinforced by the value of an ethos of sharing. Any indiscretions with water usage while camped could be explained by the 140 kilometre return trip to the closest available scheme water source.

4.7.1.4 Story telling

Stories are told that have elements of hardships and how these are overcome. They include the behaviours of GNs and a justification of the actions. Stories are often told humorously with the GN as the hero and dunce who 'wasn't in the know'. These stories promote knowledge, education and experience about the group's social code. These stories are told around campfires at Happy Hour to facilitate inclusion, acceptance and harmony amongst the group members and often have an element that includes that GNs ideology that they have connected to the bigger picture.
Story telling by GNs is a male dominated communication for the sharing of experiences and hardships of the GNs. It demonstrates their ability to overcome adversities and exemplifies their self-actualisation. The stories reinforce the main themes that are the ideology of the GN’s freedom; ethos of sharing; privacy and independence and observation of nature’s clock.

4.7.2 Rituals that promoted privacy and independence

4.7.2.1 Big clean up

A big clean up is undertaken in town to ensure the GNs ability to remain out in the bush for a longer duration in comfort. The big clean up is comprised of a stay on a caravan park in order to undertake the cleaning of clothes and sorting of loads of washing to take into town. This was systematically done on a weekly or fortnightly basis as part of the travel agenda of the GNs. Also incorporated was water collection, refilling of fuel and food supplies.

Informants defended the need to stay on a caravan park to undertake the big clean up by complaining about the ‘cost of using a public washing machine’, the ‘inconvenience of shared machines’ with ‘clothes coming out dirtier than when they went in’. Mostly the women undertook the tasks of cleaning up and doing the laundry.

The tactic of going to town to stay in a caravan park was sometimes a disguise for the need to be ‘in touch’ with civilization. The GNs did not register this when verbalising or recounting the big clean up, but this is rather what the researcher gleaned the visit to represent. By ‘making an exception’ of staying on a caravan park the female informants revealed that this allowed for frequency of contact with family and friends to be managed and that the contact necessitates a regularised visit to town. Undertaking to go to town meant that they were able to undertake other things that come with being in civilization such as ‘dressing up to go shopping’, ‘having hair cuts’ and ‘visits to health care professionals’ etc.

4.7.2.2 Caravan park visit

Visits to a caravan park were seen to be both positive and negative in terms of service, facilities and the people experienced. Informants felt ‘forced’ to use them and expressed dissatisfaction at not being able to position for the sun to run their solar panels and that caravan parks were too regulated for their liking.
Informants provided an extensive list of grievances about caravan parks who advised they were not attractive unless they allowed them to replicate the same behaviours as they engage in when eco-camping. They stated caravan park were too small: they couldn’t spread out and were placed too close together. Facilities were considered unclean, not maintained or unhygienic: being self-sufficient they didn’t use the facilities anyway. Regulated hours of arrival and departure, impersonal service and noise of dogs and children resulted in them feeling overcharged. In short caravan parks do not suit them and other GNs they seek out are not traditionally located within them; except for when undertaking the big clean up.

Dissatisfaction with service, facilities and people experienced at caravan parks resulted in this being reported to other GNs by the bush telegraph up to six travelling days out from a townsite. The group avoided formalised parks as much as possible in resolution of their dissatisfaction. By avoiding those caravan parks that do not suit their criteria, the GNs legitimised their preference for remote campsites. Remote campsites enabled them to be self-sufficient and undertake eco-camping so that they remained independent. These camps provided the physical freedom to maintain psychological freedom that encompassed their ideology.

Although caravan parks are a necessary evil for informants, they revealed a holistic picture of how and when a caravan park is perceived to be attractive; or alternatively, not so. Caravan parks don’t aid the sense of belonging the GNs looked to achieve when eco-camping, unless the associated behaviours could be replicated. Comparison between themselves and caravan park patrons allows understanding of how GNs define themselves and their reference group. They advised they were not part of the caravan park culture; to be so entails acceptance of timely arrival and departure times, unsatisfactory ablution facilities, close proximity to your neighbours, adherence to regimented activities and behaviours as stated by caravan park management.

4.7.3 Rituals that promoted the observation of nature’s clock
4.7.3.1 Campfire
Informants reported that campfire preparation and enjoyment is undertaken before retiring to bed. Campfires were reported as a practical way to provide heat, cooking food, facilitating social interaction and being the authentic location of the Happy Hour, which is discussed below. Informants actually only had one fire at PO, using the facilities within their vans or cooked on portable gas barbeques. New societal concerns about looking after the environment meant that campfires are
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often restricted in many places. Informants reported that the campfire is a ritual that may become a thing of the past. Its function is used as a means to signal the closure of social interaction at the end of an evening and demonstrates the value of observing nature's clock.

4.7.3.2 Happy Hour

The Happy Hour was reported as a tradition amongst GNs that occurred at 5pm and involves a communal sharing of stories, food and drinks. The women typically organised the food and the men organised the drinks. Perceived as informal in nature it was open to all in the vicinity to share their experiences while sitting in a circle and drinking either alcoholic or hot drinks. It is seen to be the social realm of GNs on the road, and not undertaken in caravan parks.

The Happy Hour was used to diffuse tensions within the group and the circle formation facilitated discussion by sharing. In the session attended, and others reported by informants, no one assumed the position of leader. This reinforced the equality of members and was understood by participation and continued familiarity in the process.

4.8 Self-sufficiency: An exploration of the behaviours of the Australian Grey Nomad

The rituals of the GN guide the behaviours of the informants. Acceptable behaviours are moderated by the stages of the BSP as informants observed, experienced, undertook, adopted and then advocated their behaviours to emerge as a GN. Behaviours were grouped around their travel behaviours, energy source usage, campsite selection, eco-camping, facilities, use of rest stops and equipment to achieve self-sufficiency. The achievement of self-sufficiency promoted the central ideology of the GNs' ability to enact physical freedom to achieve psychological freedom.

Many of the behaviours adopted by GNs facilitate self-sufficiency and highlight the reinforcement of the values and norms divulged by informants. Self-sufficiency is organised into the areas of travel behaviour, campsite selection, use of facilities and rest stops; and investment in equipment. Variations amongst the informants' level of self-sufficiency can be attributed to the stage attained in the BSP. Self-sufficiency is achieved in the becoming stage of the BSP, but most valued by GNs when the acceptance stage of the BSP had been reached.
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The preference for self-sufficiency provided a process that allowed for continuity, unification and the protection of a traditional undertaking in the natural areas that the informants sought out. Self-sufficient eco-camping was the preference of most informants; but for some, it was imposed as a choice due to financial constraints and was most concisely reported by a female informant, who stated:

We use our self-sufficiency. Probably water is the most important thing and somewhere to sleep and I think you have to be the sort of person who can put up with a few discomforts. I guess that the idea of the two things about it that generally come to mind is that it's cheaper than sleeping in a caravan park, and secondly you are closer to nature. You may take water and facilities and so forth so that you are not damaging it, damaging the environment too much. Of course it is important not to, otherwise the next generation won't have the same opportunities and it may not be available to them to do the sort of things we are doing. There are a lot of things that can be renewed or restored but it wouldn't go back to its originality. (F; EGN)

4.8.1 Travel understanding and behaviours

Beliefs about travel developed over time as the informants moved through the BSP. Their observations and information exchange with other GNs led to an active negotiation as to the meaning of acceptable travel behaviour. Greater commitment to the accepted behaviours developed over time and immersion into the becoming stage of the BSP.

Travels undertaken by the informants were considered at two levels. Firstly, those that were the stated cognition understanding of travel by informants and, secondly the behaviours that were actually undertaken by informants. Interestingly these were at odds with each other and are discussed later.

4.8.1.1 Cognition of travel by Grey Nomads

Travel behaviours were determined by a two-layered concern for physical and psychological connectivity of the informants. The informants undertook their travel to physically locate other GNs in order to maintain the psychological connectivity that is seen as invaluable to the group. Once a GN has emerged from the BSP outwardly they understand that there is no such thing as time restrictions as they conform to the value of observing nature's clock.
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Physical distance is not considered by GNs. They stated they were not impeded by distances; unlike a traditional tourist they are on a continual and continuing journey. The informants reported that travel is a continual state in which they are engaged in a never ending journey. Their travels, even if they have been broken with a return to their homes, are continual:

Travel from here to there doesn't make any difference whether it's a hundred mile or a thousand mile. We don't travel thinking of distance. See we don't travel with a destination in mind. We don't have to! (M, EGN).

This consensus amongst informants of a continual journey was reinforced by informants who linked this to not having to account for or even adhere to time restrictions like a traditional tourist. Rather, it is considered belonging to the value of nature's clock which was stated in terms of:

With this there is no time. The sun comes up and the sun goes down, that's all the time there is. We had dinner yesterday at three o'clock; today we had it at one o'clock. That is the whole thing. The sun comes up and the sun goes down. That's the only thing (F; EGN).

They have done today and they've still got tomorrow. It doesn't have to be done today as far as they're concerned (M; EGN).

GNs did not acknowledge time limitations and timetabled plans; instead they saw them as being negotiated ad hoc with respect to prevailing weather conditions, how they felt and the atmosphere that was experienced amongst the campers when a campsite had been selected:

Now that the weather is changing, we're going to move on and get back into our summer clothes (F, EGN).

Those thirty seconds when you just have to make a decision, not us! Our friends went and we stayed. We just like it here and didn't want to move on just then; so we didn't (F, EGN).

We pulled up and didn't like the people camping there, so we moved on (M, EGN).
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GNs also reported the issue of endurance as being able to stick it out; being able to be in the bush and experiencing physical isolation; to keep travelling for as long as possible while stretching the finances; and camping in locations that were not physically attractive while on the way to the next planned destination. Most importantly it was running away from the trappings of civilization, and replacing a fixed home for a moving one. Not all GNs were able to do this though, and having tried, still required a sense of a fixed home base:

In Bruce Rock they’ve advertised for free land and I’ve applied. We have a good chance of getting a block there. We could build upon it and have a home base there (F, EGN).

4.8.1.2 Physical travel behaviours of Grey Nomads
The focus of travel behaviour included the time to reach a destination, distances travelled and the endurance in reaching a destination. Travel by informants in the information gathering and training stages of the BSP had often initially been instigated due to issues of health, aging and vitality. Once commenced and informants had reached the admitting stage of the BSP they reported that it allowed connectivity with family and friends. Attainment of the becoming stage of the BSP had informants reporting that enjoyment was mainly derived from seeking out other GN travellers.

Most informants advised that GNs had benchmarked travel at 300 kilometres a day between 11am and 2pm with expected stops for lunch and respite. Variations occurred due to such things as illness and death of family members, purchasing a block of land, covering the large distance coming to Western Australia, drastic changes in weather and campsites being full etc:

We only did 10 to 50 kilometres a day. We went the whole of Australia like that. We couldn’t have afforded it otherwise (F, GN).

I was doing 600 to 700 kilometres a day; I had to get to my sisters funeral (M; GN).

We always take off at 4am. I know no one else does; but I used to be a truck driver and so that’s what I’m used to (M, GN).
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We had to move. We were about 1000 clicks inland last week when it dropped to minus two. Nobody's going to stay around for that! Right? We came straight across to here instead (M, GN)

The GNs' travelling to PQ had travelled between 500 kilometres and 11,376 kilometres to get there and had originated from a number of states; including those West Australians who were journeying north for the winter and GNs on around Australia journeys.

Commitments that the GNs experienced that placed a time limitation or restriction on their travels included health checks; family events; organised holidays and pre-paid bookings; work commitments; and exiting tenants at rental properties, etc.

Although PQ is only 70 kilometres from an urban centre, informants advised that endurance was seen as one of the most important qualities when travelling. They often carried a large stock of provisions and equipment that may be needed during the course of their trips because they travelled to remote campsites, were away for many months and had to be prepared for a variety of circumstances that may place them in a position of being unable to access an urban area for a number of days. Circumstances experienced that demonstrated the value of needing to be prepared for endurance ranged from being caught in flash flooding; having medical emergencies and ill health; troubles with cars; broken axels on the caravan; and water in fuel supplies. Their trips involved large distances actually being travelled, rugged and remote areas being accessed and often the possibility of covering a couple of seasons during their travels:

I carry all the supplies with me. We stock up and eat fresh food and stuff. We have to carry everything with us. We were in Karriini last week. That's a couple of hundred kilometres out in the bush. I'm an ex bushie originally, it doesn't worry me to go off into the sticks. For instance on our last trip we went to Innaminca and cut across the Streslecki Track to Birdsville. We went in the panel van with the caravan on the back. The young ones said "you can't go there; you can't do that" (F; GN).
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We were away for 32 months in total and travelled right around. Actually that's not true. We didn't actually get home. We were within 600 kilometres and it was so cold we just decided to head back up north again (M, GN).

4.8.1.3 Paradoxes of travel by Grey Nomads

The travel behaviours and time limitations expressed by GNs as not existing were arranged around the formalisation of rituals to allow the informants to retain their sense of, and achievement of freedom, as expressed in the ideology of the group.

Travel behaviours and lack of time restrictions were understood once a GN had achieved the acceptance stage of the BSP. It facilitated interaction of a social nature as many stops are made on the way for respite in which GNs were sought out so that social chat can take place. This was when information exchange occurred about their concerns about travel and the issue of affordability.

Time limitations were not attributed as a consideration the informants’ negotiated unless they had commitments to meet. Commitments were anything that required the GN to adhere to a timetable of sorts and so they had formalised it, thus enabling them to override the value of observing nature's clock.

4.8.2 Campsite selection

Campsites were described in terms of the natural attractions of where the camps were located; regional comparisons between campsites; the perceived ‘authenticity’ of the site; and fees imposed for staying. Camping was undertaken in this way in order to protect its availability for GNs in the future, and is discussed below.

4.8.2.1 Unstructured campsites

4.8.2.1.1 Why unstructured campsites are attractive

Informants often reported an inability for those who were not GNs to see why the places they chose to camp were attractive. Campsites selected were described similarly to that of an urban block: views, location, position, accessibility, privacy and monetary value. Remote campsites were sought as they provided the isolation and physical space the GNs craved. Often they lacked facilities, which allowed the GNs to rough it, and necessitated their practice of self-sufficiency. An attractive campsite was one where they were able to position their camp where desired, spread out and position for the
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sun to run their solar panels. Issues of water, fuel and food availability were seen to be secondary considerations as it was expected that supplies would be replenished within a fortnight by going to town.

4.8.2.1.2 Unstructured campsite fees and their perceived value for money

Unstructured campsites were perceived to be effectively free from cost and regulation when compared to other alternatives. Most importantly the GNs were able to be where they wanted to be. The GNs advised it was their right and privilege to use these types of campsites because of the large upfront outlay to equip themselves. Seeking out these types of campsites and other GNs allowed for an achievement of physical space which facilitated the sense of psychological space; which was imperative to their ideology of freedom. Because they determined themselves not to be constrained by rigid rules and regulations, their ability to move from one camp to another when desired was understood upon emergence from the BSP. The value of the actual campsite itself at PQ was determined to be relatively high amongst informants.

They compared the fee of five dollars per night at PQ as being fair and reasonable. Price sensitivity of eight dollar per night was reported as the preferred price amongst GNs for this type of camp.

GNs valued the actual undertaking itself; that is the 'experience'. To maintain the freedom that eco-camping brings, exclusivity of campsites was retained by word of mouth exchange amongst the GNs of available places that were acceptable in which to undertake eco-camping in the ways they liked. Informants looked to protect the needs of the group membership over those who were not group members. If they felt that regulation obstructed their ability to access campsites some of the GNs providing protesting tactics as this male informant recalled:

Actually north of Derby, when we were travelling around Australia, the first thing I saw was a sign with a big caravan with a whacking big line through it. No caravans! I pulled along side it and I pulled out my spanner out of my tool kit and I took that sign off there and threw it away (M; GN).

Campsites were recalled in terms of how they differed from caravan parks. The spreading out of the informants’ effects at a campsite was seen to provide less impact upon the natural environment. The researcher observed approximately eight metres between caravans at PQ. This facilitates the
reduction of the numbers of people in close vicinity, which is more attractive to them and provides for the GN value of privacy and independence to be enacted:

I think too, the atmosphere is different. In a caravan park you are close to the next neighbour. You have other people close to you and you get ones now and again who don’t like certain things you would do basically. It makes the environment sort of uncomfortable. Whereas out here, you know, you have the open space. Out here you are not so close to each other. You wouldn’t be listening to their conversations, and them listening to you. It’s more relaxing compared to having people close to you. You still talk to people and they talk to you. It’s listening to the ocean and the birds and looking at the markings of the crabs when you get up in the mornings. I don’t know, it’s a different feeling, a different atmosphere (F; AcS).

4.8.2.1.3 Facilities provided at unstructured campsites and their perceived value

Facilities at the PQ campsite were considered in terms of the scale, provision, cost, servicing and improvements made by the Shire and the benefits obtained from their use by the GNs. While a few GNs used the facilities, mostly they had brought their own with being totally self-sufficient. The facilities noted by the researcher at the campsite included a sullage point, dustbins, tip, boat ramp, B.B.Q., pit toilets, bio toilets, caretaker, boat ramp and beach shelters. Those reported by informants were the sullage point, bins, pit toilets and caretaker. The lack of acknowledgement of some facilities demonstrated that if not used by the GNs, they are not considered a facility:

The only facilities here are to empty the rubbish in the rubbish tip and to empty your toilet up there. That’s all! (M; GN).

There are none, only the toilets (F; GN).

Paradoxically the GNs reported that the improvement and provision of additional facilities at campsites by authorities would actually increase the numbers of GNs frequenting them. They feared that if these became too attractive this would result in fees being raised to either recover costs for the improvements or curtail the numbers of GNs choosing to camp there. If these fears were revealed to authority they felt this would result in an erosion of their ability to camp as greater restrictions would commence to be applied:
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Basically the facilities are not important. The nature is important. People more or less self-cater. Some people even have their porta-loo and tent. People are more and more trying to be self-sufficient to be more natural and not have everything provided. It is one of the biggest fears on the road though, that sooner or later the government or councils will over regulate (F, GN).

By not reporting inadequate provision or damage to facilities, or their concerns about how improvements to campsites may affect themselves the GNs did not appear to associate power existing amongst the group. Rather than seeing the dense levels of regulation the BSP and culture afford them, they believe their culture to be very individualist and see themselves to be in a relationship of high power distance in dealings with authority.

4.8.2.1.4 Rest stops

Rest stops are located on main arterial roads and highways and have bins, water, toilets etc that enabled the GNs to break up the journey before reaching their main destination. They rest every few hours in between long bouts of continuous driving. Comparisons between rest stops were made by the GNs.

Rest stops were considered to be important to the ability to travel. They allowed for the sharing of information about places that were ‘further up the track’. The GNs can stay overnight at them after a day’s travel. Effort was made to either clean up the rest stops or leave as they had been found. By undertaking not to leave rubbish or effects in the rest stop, they acknowledged that they were not provided for the sole use of GNs. They were reported as a second choice of overnight stay to unstructured campsites and would be sought out in preference to a caravan park stay. A female informant provided a dissection of some of the rest stops she had stayed at:

They have mainly been the 24-hour roadside ones. We haven’t ventured too far off track. We’ve been happy with them. There are different experiences. A couple in Queensland had toilets and water. The Northern Territory tends to have the picnic tables and a water tank. Then you come across to W.A. and scratch the water tank and put in a long drop toilet. They have different things in them across the states. At the same time some are closer to the road than others. Some are off the road and near a decent sort of hill where the long haul semi-
trailers are going through the gearbox and so they are noisier. All these differences mean that you might be beside a bridge and they could bounce across the spans. A cattle grid and you wonder what that is. They all have their own characterises. We haven’t struck any two that are the same (F; GN).

Most informants stated that the use of rest stops allowed the GNs to spread their economic resources as opposed to the practical considerations of stopping and paying for respite breaks at such places as caravan parks. Saving funds by using rest stops, as opposed to campsites, the group reported their ability to spend their money where it was needed; that is in small towns. That other GNs would be located at these stops made them attractive by providing security in numbers. Concerns were raised that if they did not make use of rest stops and leave them in the condition found they would be closed down and this would inhibit the GNs ability to travel. Examples informants gave of where rest stops had been closed were numerous and spread Australia wide.

4.8.3 Investment in Equipment

Equipment discussions centred on what the informants actually had, what they chose to take, how they determined a viable piece of equipment, if it suited the concepts of self-sufficiency, if it allowed them independence and, finally, the economic considerations required to make the purchase. Equipment purchases replicated the many appliances that would be found in their homes and was determined to be valuable if it allowed the overcoming extremes of weather, conditions and terrains they had encountered during their travels. Equipment, both reported and observed, included heaters, generators, solar panels, windmills, batteries, gas cylinders, 240 volt direct electricity appliances, fishing rods, additional vehicles, boats, fridges, freezers, bread makers, televisions, video players, satellite dishes, compact disc players, roller annexes, porta potties and inside and outside shower units.

Informants showed pride in their possessions. Statistics were often reeled off about how well the selected piece of equipment performed and they strongly justified their position on which was their preferred piece of equipment with comparisons made between what they and other GNs used. The male informants provided the explanations of equipment. Commonly the male informant was very mindful of the outcome requirements of equipment as shown by this male informant who was very conversant with his choice of solar panels:
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I have enough solar panels, which are producing over 30 amps per hour in a good sunny position, and we have a huge Monoblock battery, which holds 255 amps. In our last camper we had 10 batteries. The best battery I think now that you can get is the dry cell battery because you can discharge it completely. The solar panels take the electricity directly into the battery and I have a metre to measure it. I have 6 solar panels on the roof and I could squeeze another one up there. The ones up there are big solar panels. Now they are much lighter solar panels. These produce less power but for a much longer time, as they're much newer than my old ones. They are a more constant and steady power supply (M; GN).

His wife though, showed how the females understood the equipment from the perspective of the functional use it offered:

We have solar panels and we have an extra battery on our Ute. The solar panels charge the batteries, which in turn run the lights for us. That's about all we’ve done. Well, we have a generator but we haven't done anything to the van. We run just about everything from it, except the stove, kettle and microwave and Dave starts it up for a shave in the mornings (F; GN).

References to the original equipment purchased revealed a transition occurring with time and repeated use of the preferred equipment. Progression through the BSP had the GN with copious amounts of equipment when undertaking their trial trip in the training stage. Attainment of the acceptance stage of the BSP had informants justifying that a quality piece of equipment that would meet their needs was considered to be a long-term investment due to the large upfront purchase cost required. This allowed for the avoidance of disaster from inadequate purchase choice and equipment being transferred from the old caravan to the new caravan if the purchase choice had proven itself to be reliable and durable. Restrictions included the weight and bulk of the equipment chosen. They would then reduce their equipment down to a few necessary items that would then have multifunctional applications. It can therefore be suggested that while it appears that buying equipment was functionality driven quality and cost were also always considered, but they are not mutually exclusive.

The informants' equipment can be construed as an important visual artefact that they secured to outwardly demonstrate their solution to their self-sufficiency requirements. Knowledge was developed
Towards an understanding of the Grey Nomad consumer over time with verbal explanation being an important part of the process of analysis amongst the male members to assist in their ability to display their legitimacy amongst peers. The equipment chosen defined legitimacy and acceptance amongst GNs. Attainment of the acceptance stage of the BSP had solar panels being held as the legitimate power source able to meet the requirements of overcoming the barriers of remote locations, while maintaining a sense of independence and self-sufficiency.

4.9 Chapter summary

Chapter 4 has provided the findings of the study which revolve around the journey and culture of the GN which guided the GNs behaviours. Chapter 5 provides a detailed discussion section that compares and contrasts the existing literature to the findings of this study. The discussion centres on the applicability of lifestyle and cohorts as a basis of segmentation, a condensed description of the GNs lifestyle, characteristics, travel motives, psychological needs and driving concerns. It then moves on to the informants’ preference for eco-camping, often finding caravan parks unattractive and their travels that are both interstate and intrastate. By undertaking free camping informants look to attain the desired ideology of freedom as a means to consolidate the GN identity.
CHAPTER 5
LIFESTYLE DISCUSSION

5.0 Chapter introduction

Chapter 4 provided a summary of culture of the GN. This chapter provides a detail discussion section that compares and contrasts the existing literature to the findings of this study. It discusses the applicability of lifestyle and cohorts as a basis of segmentation, provides a condensed description of the GNs lifestyle, characteristics, travel motives, psychological needs and driving concerns. It then moves on to the informants' preference for eco-camp and why they find caravan parks unattractive while travelling both interstate and intrastate looking to consolidate the GN identity.

5.1 Lifestyle discussion

The purpose of this study was to undertake an exploratory-grounded approach study of Australian GNs who subscribe to an eco-camping philosophy. The pre-literature review provided a number of gaps existing in the literature. With little or no knowledge available of the general core values of GNs, the factors they considered important in their travel-related consumption and limited understanding of GNs as consumers, this study's findings has commenced to provide some insight into these issues.

Before an understanding of the GN as a consumer in the market place can be segmented by motives and values as advised by Precision Marketing (2004), it was firstly important to determine who the GN consumer is. This required a determination of the characteristics and motives of the GN consumer.

The existing GN literature was mainly descriptive in nature and has little direct use in an application sense (Carter, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002, McClelland, 2000). The findings of this study directly add to the bodies of literature in the areas of:

i. Drive Tourism
ii. Mobility of seniors to warmer areas
iii. Free-camping or Boon docking
iv. Senior drivers
v. Senior travellers
vi. Grey Nomads
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vii. Eco-camping
viii. Seniors marketing
ix. Service satisfaction

The GNs of this study described themselves to be undertaking what they saw as, a 'drive tourism lifestyle'. Pridaux, Wei and Rusy (2001, p21) stated that “few studies recognise...lifestyle as a basis for segmentation”. However, the GN is portrayed as undertaking a lifestyle choice in popular literature (The Age, 2004; New Dimensions, 2003; GNs, 1997; The Bulletin, 2004, Lawson, 2003).

This study highlighted that informants undertook economic investment in their possessions and equipment in order to undertake their travels. These involved large outlays initially to purchase all their necessary equipment and thereafter GNs were essentially frugal in their outlays for products, campsites and caravan parks. They considered that a high need for both quality and durability of the products; and were prepared to pay larger amounts for products that met their ideals of self-sufficiency in the attainment of their ideology of freedom. This was the lifestyle of informants and was conveyed via their values, behaviours and culture identified by this study’s findings.

5.2 Comparable Grey Nomad discussion


The GNs of this study, like seniors in general, were found to have several characteristics. These include:

i. They liked to travel, entertain and socialise (Lahue, 2000; Conaway, 1991)

ii. They viewed themselves as being savvy about their undertakings, discriminating about how they were viewed by others, loyal to their cohorts, active in their undertakings and beliefs and
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productive in terms of their care of the environment (Eisman, 1993; Gruca & Schewe, 1992; Lanhue, 2000; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Moschis, 1996)

iii. They considered themselves in view of their 'life stage' when reporting that they were no longer tied to the constraints of family (Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Timmermann, 2000; Eiseman, 1993; Gruca & Schewe, 1992)

iv. They were concerned with issues relating to health, which often had provided the impetus to commence travelling; and had hopes of longevity, which were seen as a reason to continue travelling (Eisman, 1993; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Lahue, 2000; Timmermann, 1999).

v. GNs considered themselves a separate group identifiable by their cohorts (Eisman, 1993; Gruca & Schewe, 1992; Moschis, 1992; Kramer, 1991; Van Gorder, 1991; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Timmerman, 1999; Mitchel, 1996; Sherman & Cooper, 1988)

vi. They were frugal once they had outlaid large sums of money for their caravans and camping equipment (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002; AC Neilson, 1998)

vii. They saw their travels as a way of escaping from the routine of life (AC Neilson, 1998; Horneman, Carter, Wei & Hein, 2002)

viii. They enjoyed spending time with family and friends (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Romsa & Blenman, 1989); and

ix. They identified strong relationships with their cohorts as one of the most important attractions to travelling as they do (Eisman, 1993; Gruca & Schewe, 1992; Lanhue, 2000; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Moschis, 1996).

Similar to other seniors' studies, the GNs of this study were found to have several motives for travel. These included that:

i. They wanted see the countryside and while seeking out areas of natural wilderness in which to eco-camp (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Golik, 1999; Backman, Backman and Silverberg, 1999).

ii. They used their travels as a means of social interaction and stimulation via the culture and saw travelling as allowing them to continually be undertaking rest and relaxation (Golik, 1999; AC Neilson, 1998; Tourism Queensland, 1999 and 2002; Guinn, 1980; Romsa and Blenman, 1989; Thomas and Butts, 1999; Moisey and Bichis, 1999 and Crompton, 1979).
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iii. While travelling at a slow and measured pace that reflected their lifestage, they continually used their cars as the main mode of transport to pull their caravans (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Prideaux, Wei & Ruys, 2001).

McClelland's (2000) study determined that GNs psychological needs fitted into the framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1987) provides a framework whereby a person's biological needs (food and water) ascend to the more complex psychological needs (self-actualisation). Ascension through the model occurs as one set of needs is fulfilled and then the individual attempts to ascend to the higher level. Psychological needs of the individual become important after the basic needs have been met. Cooper and Miaoulis (1988) advised that identification of how the sense of self was perceived has implications for service satisfaction when the needs of the individual increase. The findings of this research demonstrate that the informants appeared similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1987) when they achieved:

i. Belongingness: which occurred by associating and being accepted by other GNS in the Information and Training Stages of the BSP when informants observed and experienced behaviours

ii. Esteem: which occurred when informants achieve the expected behaviours and were competent in continuing them. This was attained in the Admitting Stage of the BSP where informants undertake the required behaviours

iii. Cognitive level: which occurred when informants knew the values of the ideology, understood its meaning and explored behaviours in the Becoming Stage of the BSP and then adopted the behaviours; and

iv. Self-actualisation: which occurred when informants had achieved emergence through the Acceptance Stage of the BSP and advocated the behaviours

Similarly to Green (1978), McClelland (2000) and Counts and Counts (1997) the GNs of this study provide a captive land locked tourist market having travelled for an average of ten years and who undertook free camping or boon docking due to its perceived low cost. They had previously been the GNs reported by McClelland (2000), having once been solely based in caravan parks themselves. Senior drivers in Irwin's study (1999) reported their concerns with driving ability. The loss of driving ability would impact on GNs much-desired independence. They needed to be able to drive in order to undertake their travels. The male informants were observed as being the main drivers and
manoeuvring caravans into place and they expressed the same concerns as senior drivers in general.

Muller and O'Cass (2001) reported that seniors often see themselves as being younger than their chronological age. GNs valued themselves in this way by exploring Australia and travelling. If GNs are to be considered a separate market segment, then of the suggested ways to consider segmentation by 'lifestage' offered in the literature, lifestyle segmentation and cohort segmentation appear to be particularly appropriate for these GNs. This provides the need for refined marketing strategies to be developed for GNs who look to enjoy regular travel and maintain 'lifestyle' as a priority as reported in various publications (Colebatch, 2002; Tourism Queensland, 1999; Eismann, 1993; Bryck & Drinkwater, 2002; Mitchel, 1996; and, Sherman and Cooper, 1988).

5.3 Contrasting Grey Nomad discussion

Unlike the GNs of McClelland's study (2000), the GNs in this study reported caravan parks to be unattractive, finding them dirty, regulated and unfriendly with poor service and knowledge of their needs. They qualified that this did not extend to all caravan parks. They were supportive of those caravan parks that allowed them to duplicate their eco-camping behaviours. Caravan parks were considered unattractive due to operational regulation as opposed to legislative regulation. Unstructured campsites were considered attractive in terms of being subject to low operational regulation when compared to caravan parks.

This study's GNs did not experience the issues of fear and security when free camping in roadsides, in rest stops or undertaking bush camping. These undertakings were the informants' preference. Unlike McClelland's GNs (2000), informants reported initially commencing their travels in caravan parks, but had migrated from caravan parks in the Training Stage of the BSP and thereafter identified themselves as a separate and identifiable group.

Contrary to Prideaux, Wei and Ruy's (2001) and Irwin's (1999) studies the GNs travelled both interstate and intrastate. Current journeys they were undertaking averaged 31.5 months most trips averaging 10.5 months long in duration; it becomes obvious that these findings are new and exciting for the areas of research in driver tourism, senior drivers and senior travellers literature.
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The informants of this study advised that they saw their initial investment in a car and caravan in which to haul their equipment to undertake eco-camping facilitated the attainment of the GN ideology. Contrary to suggestions by Born (1976) and Counts and Counts (1997) this was not solely due to a lack of economic means, but ingrained in the attainment of the informants ideology of freedom. Additionally, contrary to Walker's study (2002) the informants' identity in this study was consolidated, rather than extended, by their travels.

5.4 Contemporary Grey Nomad discussion

This study highlighted a number of new areas and exciting contemporary contributions to the literature allowing further understanding of GNs. These findings have commenced the definition and understanding of the GN as a separate consumer group.

Market aware marketers are reported to be combining demographic, lifestyle and behavioural profiles in order to service their customers. ‘This requires knowing about the consumers’ attitudes, self-concepts and philosophy as it is expressed by their behaviour’ (Kyzer, 1995). This study has identified GN attitudes, self-concepts and philosophy that were expressed in the GNs behaviours and culture. These would not have emerged without the exploratory approach undertaken in the field as suggested by Leversedge (2004).

Leversedge (2004) reported that the need has never been greater in which products need to segment by motives and values. The findings of this study have identified the motives and values of the GN. The findings of this study have commenced an examination of the GN consumer in terms of Gerontographics as suggested by Moschis (1992) referring to a combination of psychographics, needs, attitudes, lifestyle and behaviours.

This study has identified a culture of values for this study's group of GNs and found them to be:

i. Ethos of sharing

ii. Privacy and independence; and

iii. Observation of nature's clock.

By exploring Australia and travelling the GNs valued themselves as being younger than their chronicle age (Muller & O'Cass, 2002) seeing themselves to be taking risks that their suburban
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counterparts did not engage in. It has yet to be determined how they considered their subjective age, which provides an area of research opportunity.

To understand the GNs a homogenous group would not reflect the diversities that existed amongst the group itself (Tourism Queensland, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei and Hein, 2002; McClelland, 2000) as revealed by the BSP. Successful market analysis requires that an understanding of the BSP is held by marketers. Marketers need to be able to successfully identify the various stages informants had attained to be able to determine the ‘who’ GNs thought they were.

The lack of information existing about GNs and their travel behaviours has meant that it is possible that products provided do not match the preferences of the group (Horneman, Carter, Wei & Ruys, 2002, p1). When travelling, this study has revealed the two-layered considerations that GNs used when talking about their travel behaviours: physical behaviours and psychological cognition relating to their travels. They wanted to locate destinations that were simple, appealing and distinctive (Day, Skidmore & Koller, 2001) GNs did not cognitively consider distance when travelling, but saw themselves to be on a continual and continuing journey. The element of ‘mystery’ that surrounded their outwardly appearing ad hoc organisation of travels added to the group’s mystique and aloofness which is used to maintain the ideology of freedom. Marketers need to understand this enactment of the group’s ideology to develop satisfactory personal relationships with GN to be able to correctly service GNs as consumers.

However, like all travellers, informants did have a set of patterned physical travel. In essence they looked to capture a sense of freedom or independence and saw themselves as travellers rather than tourists, because their satisfaction was derived from the intangibility of the experience itself (Miaoulis, & Cooper, 1987; Ogilvy, 1986; Wilton & Nicosia, 1986; Roberts & Hall, 2003; King, 2001). Their travels gave them a sense of personal pride and achievement and their expectations of this were quite high.

Mialous and Cooper (1987) reported that people in the later stages of life focused on the intangible benefits that contributed to their life goal; for GNs this was both the goal and benefits gained from extended travel. Lohmann and Danielsson (2001) advised that people explain travel in relation to their past travel experiences. The GNs of this study stated their travels were of a continual and ongoing form. Although they reported having physical breaks from their travels and returning to their
homes for intervening periods, this was not considered as cessation of their travels. This understanding of their psyche is vital to developing the full understanding of the GN identity. Marketers need to initially be conversant with and undertake to consider GNs in relation to their lifestyle.

GNs did not report general demographics about themselves as a basis for segmentation. They considered themselves as a united group in terms of their culture. The identification of a BSP demonstrated GNs to be at differing levels of knowledge and understanding of the culture and therefore skills and purchase requirements. Eastman, Goldsmith and Flynn (1999) stated that purchases can be used to identify the achievement of social status and prestige. Informants reported this occurred once they had emerged from the BSP. Hanna (1978) recommended that consumers are attracted to products they perceive as innovative. The GNs actively sought out these types of products and undertook their product searching and evaluation with vigour to obtain products they considered to be innovative in meeting their self-sufficiency needs. There is, therefore, a requirement for marketers to be made aware of this process so that relevant product strategies can be developed (Cooper & Miaoulis, 1988).

The undertaking to achieve physical freedom (the means) by eco-camping allowed the achievement of psychological freedom (the desired end or outcome). An approach that explains this in terms of consumer behaviour is the Means-end Chain Model. This model explains the consumer seeing products being valued for the end state they allow to be achieved (Solomon, 2002, p120). For GNs this was their use of a variety of equipment. The buying of equipment was functionality driven-with multiple functions being preferred. GNs reported that quality and cost were always considered and that they saw product purchases as a long-term investment. The high level of effort required to locate products that met the GNs multifunctional needs meant they often looked favourably on their purchases (Hanna & Wagle, 1989; Oliver, 1977) because they were hard to locate (Hanna, 1978) and usually more expensive (Hanna & Wagle, 1989).

Functionality, or instrumental value, and consumption of functionality, the terminal value, were important in GNs purchase decisions (Csikszentmihaly & Rochberg-Hilton, 1981; Furby, 1978; Hirshman & LaBarbers, Sherman & Newman, 1997-78) GN valued locating products that met their ideals of self-sufficiency that outwardly demonstrated their prestige to other GNs. These findings suggest that the psychological values used to select products were not limited to the values of the
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GN; but rather spanned the spectrum of the values-attitudes-behaviour system that they engaged in (Allen, Ng & Wilson, 2002). This finding confirms the importance of the value GNs assigned to products. They viewed them as serving both instrumental and expressive functions respectively (Allen, Ng & Wilson, 2002).

Bloch and Grady (1984) reported that consumers who were perceived to be tight with money while having low materialism values were often able to be predicted to avoid paying high prices for products. Once the GNs had made their initial large investment in equipment they were frugal with any additional expenses; excepting the replacement of equipment for which they were prepared to pay a premium price. Medina, Saegert and Greshom (1996, cited in Aliotatzel, 2002, p194) proposed 'that the two qualities of retention over time, by tracking money via budgeting, planning; and quality resulted in the consumer wanting to pay more for the best'. Informants saw their value of frugality as being a way to demonstrate self-control because they were able to enjoy the positive outcomes their purchases derived in their achievement of their ideology (Heslin, Johnson & Blake, 1989; Lunt & Livingstone, 1991; Todd, 2003). 'Value is a function of five dependents: features, quality, delivery, service and price...the buyers perception of each value depends on how the others are viewed (Sowell, 1992)'. GNs assigned value to their purchasing of products when they allowed them to eco-camp in isolated areas; achieving physical freedom and facilitating the desired psychological freedom.

The frugality of the GN can be considered either a personality trait or value; and is considered by Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) to be validated as a lifestyle. The GNs saw their lifestyle as requiring frugality. GNs advised their lifestyle was the overriding consideration of how they explained and determined their sense of self. Marketers looking to use this knowledge should look to provide products with concrete images that visually represent the undertakings of the GN (Babin & Burns, 1997). By laddering the consequences and links between the GN values and how they related to their behaviours, GNs identify the content and outcomes of their behaviours to the lifestyle they looked to achieve (Gutman, 1991).

Naylor and Kleiser (1988) and Oliver (1988) have reported that perception and responses, or behaviours to perceived service satisfaction is a function of expectations. Word of mouth was the behavioural response to service satisfaction by GNs. Major decisions regarding price, product knowledge and product investment were made via the progression through the BSP. When GNs had
emerged from the BSP knowledge was focused on price and quality going hand in hand (Rao & Munro, 1988).

The GNs reported behaviours grouped around perceived levels of service satisfaction, which served as a key component of repeat buying (Naylor & Kleiser, 2002). If they did not receive service satisfaction, the GNs would inform others of their dissatisfaction and the group would collectively undertake to avoid the retailer. The literature confirmed the GNs were actually telling us about themselves. (Parsuram, Ziemhml & Berry, 1998). The GNs are a highly cohesive culture with low individualism who praised if they received superior service and complained to each other if they didn't (Liu, Furer & Sudharshan, 2001). This can be construed as high uncertainty avoidance (Liu, Furer & Sudharshan, 2001).

While Bolton and Drew (1991) state it is perceived performance of products that is the measure of satisfaction. “Overall satisfaction compared to expectation and similar experiences” is what guided the GNs (Naylor & Kleiser, 2002, p344). They reported this satisfaction to other GNs by word of mouth exchange (Liu, Furrer & Sudharasham, 2001).

GNs are a group of people who like to collect experiences by undertaking their behaviours and travels (Smith & Lutz, 1996, p16). “In this variant of the ‘simpler liver’ the non-spend(ing). (GN can be seen as)... an environmentally friendly escapee from the competitive, materialistic, money driven stresses of modern life. The GNs saw many positives and even triumphs associated with their frugal lifestyle. The GNs are a collective society, rather than individualist, who undertook buying behaviours to equip them with visual artefacts that demonstrated their outward well-being (Richins, 1994; Douglas & Isher, 1979).

The GNs bought product and services that both protected and enhanced their self-image. The meanings of these products and services were understood in terms of their culture (Litivin, & Kar, 2003; Onkvist & Shaw, 1987). There is voluminous literature that supports that culture is one of the major influences of consumer buying (Litivin & Kar, 2003; Maslow, 1954; Assel, 1987; Mykeleton, Crots & Mykelvton, 2001; Pizan & Sussman, 1995; You, O'Leary, Morrison & Hong, 2000). The collective culture of the GN is based around in-group activities, in-group interests and therefore the formation of in-group opinions (Triandis, 1989; Triandis, 1990; Hofstede, 2001). The collective ‘self’ of the culture is organised to promote the collective good of its membership (Maslow, 1956; Hofstede,
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2001). By engaging in the culture the GNs carried and transmitted the beliefs amongst themselves to produce its meaning for the informants and the researcher (Snow & Benford, 1988, cited in Peters, 2003).

The informants offered a list of traits. These traits were used to justify and validate their normative behaviours (Peters, 2003). The collective identity and values of the GNs provided an expression of their social movement (Hunt & Benford, 1994), constructioned a framework (Snow, Rochford, Worden & Benford, 1986) that supported the collective identity of the group (Hunt, Benford & Snow, 1994) and gave meaning to the GNs actions (Goffman (1994), cited in Peters, 2003). These traits can be used by marketers to commence the development of a language that may be used to explain the culture of the GNs (Mills, 1940, cited in Peters, 2001, p210; Burke, 1935, cited in Peters, 2001, p210) in print medium.

Understanding of the language that the GNs provided about themselves demonstrates that the motives and framework of the GN culture was not mutually exclusive; rather they were used together to provide a holistic perception of what it meant to be a GN. GNs volunteered a vocabulary that could be used by marketers to more correctly target, recruit and retain customers (Peters, 2003). Astute marketers would be well served to motivate GN purchasers by understanding the composition of language reported by the GNs (Settle & Alreck, 1987). The language provided by the GNs reveals a level of understanding by the GNs of their sense of self and how they believed others perceived them.

The culture of the GN was based on the assumption of undertaking distributive justice, which advocated the patronising of those product providers who delivered satisfaction (Teo & Lim, 2001) when the outcomes were fair to the economic outcomes GNs desired (Adams, 1965). The GN culture promoted a system that measured fairness in terms of a quality basis and needs basis (Deutsch, 1975). Quality basis was construed where products were reliable, durable and multi-functional. Needs basis was construed where products enabled the GN to be self-sufficient. The basis of the distributive justice culture was considered in terms of the cost, level of service, correctness of fit and quality of service they received (Clemmer & Schneider, 1996). The culture of the GNs had two issues that defined distributive justice; inter-actinal and procedural justice (Bies & Moag, 1986; Sheppard & Lewicki, 1987).
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Inter-actinal justice was perceived when GNs received friendly, unbiased, honest, interested, sensitive and polite interactions with product providers (Clemmer & Schneider, 1996). The conditions that attracted the GN, as a consumer, were when the policies, practices and procedures set the tone of the business that provided a management (internal to the business) who was conversant with the GN (external to the business) (Schneider, 1990; Schneider & Bowen, 1985).

The GNs reported that they gave product providers procedural justice when they perceived satisfaction, gave loyalty (Brown & Reingen, 1987) and positive word of mouth (Brown & Reingen, 1987), when the provider was conversant with their perception of fairness (Seiders & Berry, 1998; Teo & Lim, 2001) and that they enjoyed shopping with their partners, because were both are equally involved in buying for their lifestyle (Mangold, Miller & Brockway, 1999).

The GNs of this study were looking to consolidate their identity. GN identity was undertaken by a search for some form of identity congruence. The informants advised they were conscious that they differed from others in how they thought (Schaetti, 2000). The GNs identified strong spiritual values and these extend outwardly to the expression of strong desires to seek other GNs in order to belong (Schaetti ,2000). As a group they resisted organisation and authority and they viewed themselves as being able to undertake paths that were not stipulated by conformity (Wood, 2003). The GN travels were based on a sociology system where mobility was the central concern that linked the GNs over geographical distances (Urry, n.d). Interestingly GN anti-authority stance hid their positive concerns for the environment they used to engage in their behaviours (Braidotti, 1996; Ghambou, 2000).

Anecdotal evidence exists of the ‘totality’ in understanding the relevance of linking the values, culture, behaviours and lifestyle for GNs. Evidence occured in the findings where informants reporting themselves to be self sufficient in their undertakings in order to preserve their ongoing and continual travels via a closed cultural system:

Nomads have a fluid identity allowing their strategy of adaptation to the environment...They do not see themselves as external to the environment; but rather they are part of it. Nomads are open to change...They know life is through experience and naturally resist authority that confines their freedom of movement...(Unknown, Nomadology.com)
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The informants stressed their travels were a continual process that was not seen to be broken as they wandered both interstate and intrastate during their travels:

They create their understanding in linear progressions by linking together the places they pass through because... (Unknown, Nomadology.com)

The ideology of freedom was the central motivation that informants desired and chose to engage in:

...they desire and choose freedom... (Unknown, Nomadology.com)

The achievement of the informants’ ideology was a continual, rather than a static process where they valued linking themselves with other GNs via their travels:

Freedom is a continual process that generates their identity and reflects creativity... They undertake a system of collective sharing, contribution and exchange so as to reflect their choice to live with people and not objects... (Unknown, Nomadology.com)

The informants reported successful attainment of their lifestyle required collective strategies of the group that had been achieved by the development of the culture in order to protect and facilitate their continued travels:

They do not try to control their environment but see that life and their travels are one and the same; and that their movements are united in the process... they undertake to resolve strategies of today to support their ideal of supporting the collective social organisation... that is on-going and continually evolving (Unknown, Nomadology.com).

Successful understanding of GNs as lifestyle consumers required a bottom up approach to investigate a few individuals to start to identify the needs of the group by focusing on the experiences they shared (Roberts & Hall, 2003). Their consumption cannot be understood in isolation as it was embedded in their social relationships (Roberts & Hall, 2003; Urry, 1995,) and was cemented in the experiences of their lifestyle (Roberts & Hall, 2003; Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Day, Skidmore & Koller, 2001). This necessitates marketers to understand that GNs were involved in an extended process where they purchased products, used and repeated use of products were not inert (Wilton, Nicosia &
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Franco, 1986). Their product purchases both defined and created the GN sense of identity (Belke, 1988; Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967; Richins, 1994), and gave the GNs value (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1978).

GN product purchases occur within a system that has been shown to have cultural meaning (Douglas & Isher, 1979; McCracken, 1986). Numerous studies have approached the value of products as being derived from its meaning. These include: Baudrillard, (1981); Bloch and Richins, (1983); Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981); and Douglas and Isher (1979). Meaning was derived by the GN in their daily consumption of their lifestyle (Dittmar, 1992). The utilitarian value the GNs looked to derive from products related to their abilities to provide the necessary functions they were to be used for (Csikszentmihaly and Rochber-Halton, 1981; Furby, 1987; Prentice, 1987; Hirshman & LaBarbera, 1987; Sherman & Newman, 1988). They looked to enjoy the products (Bloch & Bruce, 1984; Holbrook et al, 1984) that enabled them to show their interpersonal ties to their cohorts (Kamptner, 1991). This was important as it reinforced their sense of self (Belke, 1992; Hirsham & LaBarbera, 1987; Kamptner, 1991). Marketers will benefit from recognising that the products represented the GNs competencies in undertaking their self-sufficient behaviours, by demonstrating their achievement of emerging through the BSP which enable their personal self-actualisation of the GN ideology (Furbury, 1978a; Hirshman & LaBarbera, 1987). This successfully demonstrated to other GNs that they had achieved the required lifestyle.

Townsend (1986) and Hanna and Wagle (1989) advised that lifestyle studies must ensure they are realistic and undertake to continually monitor the environment. GNs undertook and viewed their travels as continuous; which meant that their perceptions, opinions and judgements changed with time and were dynamic, rather than stable. Kyze (1995, p666) stated that 'Lifestyle...was...defined as an intervening system of cognitive structures that link(ed) situation specific product perceptions to increasingly abstract cognitive values and finally personal values". Kyze's (1995) view of lifestyle takes into account that GNs use products that were situation specific in order to achieve their desired state of freedom.

Understanding GNs as lifestyle consumers it is appropriate to select a model that successfully represents diagrammatically the linkages of the GNs values, lifestyle and behaviours and how their psychological inputs fit into the Buyer Decision Process based on Cohen (1991).
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Smith & Lutz (1996) put forward the proposition of a total effects model that demonstrates the integration of values, lifestyle, behaviours and psychological inputs. The findings of this study have identified that values, lifestyle, behaviours and psychological inputs were used by the GNs to undertake their purchase decisions. It is proposed that a Total Effects Model of The Australian Grey Nomad Consumer is needed to demonstrate how the values, lifestyle, behaviours and psychological inputs identified in this study were used by GNs in undertaking their purchase decisions. This is of value and relevance to gaining understanding of the GN consumer. The Total Effects Model of the Australian Grey Nomad Consumer appears below at Figure 13:
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PROPOSED TOTAL EFFECT MODEL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREY NOMAD CONSUMER

Figure 13: Proposed TOTAL EFFECTS MODEL OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREY NOMAD CONSUMER adapted from the total effects model proposed by Smith & Lutz (1996, cited in Advances in Consumer Research) and incorporating the Buyer Decision Process based on Cohen (1991).

THE AUSTRALIAN GREY NOMAD CONSUMER

MARKET INPUTS:
1. Product
2. Place
3. Promotion
4. Price

VALUES:
1. Ethos of sharing
2. Privacy and independence
3. Observation of nature’s clock

LIFESTYLE:
Long-term travellers, who by travelling around Australia, look to realise independence their identity that is driven by an all-encompassing motivation of freedom which is defined in both a physical and psychological sense that occurs over time

BEHAVIOURS:
OBSERVED -> EXPERIENCED -> UNDERTAKEN -> ADOPTED -> ADVOCATED

PURCHASE DECISION:
1. Product choice
2. Location
3. Brand

PSYCHOLOGICAL INPUTS:

Ideology of the GN: The attainment of psychological freedom through enactment of physical freedom

Attitudes of the GN:
We are autonomous, knowledgeable, courageous, sure and flexible
Others consider us to be privileged, concerned, intense, supportive, consistent and understanding
We go about things in a way that is inventive, instrumental, retiring, adventurous and connected

Learning of the GN:
Information Gathering Stage -> Training Stage -> Admitting Stage -> Becoming Stage -> Accepted Stage

Perception of the GN:
Is guided by emergence through the Basic Social Process where emergence guides their perceptions of travel, eco-camping and investment in equipment
5.5 Chapter conclusion

This chapter provided a discussion of the findings of the study and compared and contrasted them to current related literature. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the comparable and contrasting discussion from this study's findings to that of the existing literature. It goes on to provide a summary of this study's contemporary findings that direct that the provision of a new definition that is more accurately reflective of the informants is required. It concludes with recommendations being made for several possible future academic investigation directions.
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CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND OUTCOMES

6.0 Chapter introduction

Chapter 5 provided a discussion of the findings of the study and compared and contrasted it to the existing literature and revealed contemporary findings that were of value pertaining to GNs. This chapter provides a summary of the comparable and contrasting discussion. It then goes on to provide a summary for this study's contemporary findings and additionally summarises the wants, needs and responses of the GN as a consumer. The chapter then moves to providing a new definition that more accurately reflects this study's GN informants and concludes with several recommended future academic investigation directions.

6.1 Summary of implications and outcomes

The literature supported the need for the collection of information relating to the general core values of GNs, and the factors they considered important when undertaking their lifestyle, so that understanding and identification of GNs as consumers could be achieved. The GNs of this study were intensive users of the products they purchased when undertaking their travels. Little had previously been reported in the literature and the findings of this study have addressed a number of gaps in the literature that existed.

6.1.1 Summary of comparable research findings

Comparable findings to existing researched were identified. These included that the GNs:

i. Characteristics were conversant with seniors generally
ii. Travel motives were similar to those reported in existing studies
iii. Psychological needs fitted those in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs; and
iv. Are a captive land locked travel market who perceived themselves as younger than their chronicle age; and therefore segmenting by lifestyle and cohorts is most appropriate for this group.
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6.1.2 Summary of contrasting research findings

Contrasting findings to existing research were identified. These included that:

i. Caravan parks were mainly considered unattractive and over regulated unless informants were able to duplicate their eco-camping behaviours. The informants’ preferences were for unstructured campsites.

ii. Issues of fear and security were not raised in relation to free camping in roadsides, rest stops or undertaking bush camping.

iii. Free camping was not undertaken solely due to a lack of economic means, but rather, was the preference of informants.

iv. Travel was undertaken both interstate and intrastate; and

v. Travel consolidated rather than extended the informants identity.

6.1.3 Summary of contemporary research findings

Contemporary findings to existing research were identified. These included that:

i. GNs can be considered a separate consumer group whose attitudes, self-concepts and philosophy are expressed in the eco-camping GNs behaviours and values.

ii. GNs use a two-layered consideration when talking about their travel behaviours. These are physical behaviours undertaken that are directed by psychological cognition as to the meaning of these behaviours. The satisfaction of travel is derived from the intangibility of the experience itself and is expressed in terms of both the goal of travel and benefits gained from travel. The expectations of travel are high, as travel is considered to be of a continual and on-going form which is considered as an expression of the GN lifestyle.

iii. GNs consider themselves to be united as a group in terms of culture which directs their purchases so that social status and prestige are achieved and recognised amongst their cohorts. Products are required to be considered innovative in allowing the achievement of self-sufficiency.

iv. The use of the Means-end Chain Model explains purchases of products which are valued for the end state they enable the GNs to achieve. Products are desirable when both functionality and the consumption of functionality are achieved.

v. Product selections span the values-attitudes-behaviours system that GNs engage in. GNs assign both instrumental and expressive values to these selections. After initial large
Towards an understanding of the Grey Nomad consumer

investment in equipment, the GNs thereafter are essential frugal consumers whose culture
directs that this behaviour demonstrates the expected self-control of their lifestyle

vi. Lifestyle explains and determines the GN sense of self. The GNs identified that their
behaviours and the outcomes of these behaviours allow them to achieve their desired
lifestyle

vii. The GN culture is one that is a highly cohesive collective society that promotes low
individualism where the participants collect experiences by undertaking their travels and
behaviours. These guide product purchases. Product purchases are used as a means to
both protect and enhance the informants' self-image. Self-image is based on in-group
activities, in-group opinions and in-group interests.

viii. Reported traits express normative behaviours and collective identity and values of the group.
The culture of the GN is based on the assumption of undertaking distributive justice that was
both inter-actinal and procedural in nature; and

ix. The GNs were looking to consolidate their identity by identity congruence. This congruence
defines the group in terms of a sociological system where mobility was the central concern
that linked GNs over geographical distances. Consolidation of identity is a continually
dynamic rather than static process which directs GN consumption and consumer behaviours.
GNs consumption and consumer behaviours are embedded in the social relationships they
engage in

6.1.4 Summary of GN consumer wants, needs and responses

Marketers and industry could benefit from understanding the GN consumers by using the
contemporary conclusions of this study. Additionally, it is important that findings of the GN
consumer's wants, needs and responses are addressed. These include:

i. GNs advised they wanted friendly, unbiased, honest, interested, sensitive and polite
interactions with product providers (Clemmer & Schiner, 1996)

ii. GNs advised they wanted service satisfaction where the provider was conversant with their
perception of fairness (Seiders & Barry, 1998; Teo & Lim, 2001) and that they enjoyed
shopping with their partners, because they were equally involved in the buying for their
lifestyle (Mangold, Millers & Brockway, 1999).

iii. GNs advised they needed equipment that both had multi-functions, was durable and of a
high quality
iv. GNs advised they responded to marketers who looked to correctly target, recruit and maintain their custom (Peters, 2003).

v. GNs advised they responded to service satisfaction by word of mouth. Being a highly cohesive culture with low individualism, they praised if they received superior service and complained to each other if they didn't (Liu, Furer & Sudharshan, 2001).

The major findings of this report and the understanding of the strong collective relationships of the GNs requires that a more concise definition that accurately reflects the GNs of this study is available. This has led to the development of a new definition by the researcher. Therefore it is proposed that the GNs of this study are more accurately defined as:

Long-term travellers, who by travelling around Australia, look to realise their identity that is driven by a focused desire to attain freedom that is defined in both a physical and psychological sense that occurs over time and is considered an ongoing and continual dynamic process that is hinged upon the integration of their values, behaviours and culture being embedded in the social processes they engage in.

6.2 Recommended marketers and industry responses

Marketers and industry would benefit from a number of recommendations that were highlighted in the discussion section of this report in order to more correctly identify and service this group of GNs. Recommendations include that marketers and industry would benefit from being conversant with:

i. The cognition of GN consumers

ii. GN product selection strategies

iii. The Means-end Chain Model that explains the GNs value of the end state product selections allow them to achieve

iv. The importance to GNs of both the functional and instrumental value of product selections

v. GNs frugality as consumers once the large initial outlays are made for equipment

vi. The assignment of value for products by GNs and the outcomes they enable them to achieve

vii. GNs behavioural response to service satisfaction is based on distributive justice

viii. That the GN culture is a highly cohesive culture with low individualism

ix. Product meanings being assigned by GNs in terms of the culture they engage in
x. List of traits offered by GNs that explain the GN social movement to recruit and retain GN customers and that the print medium is suggested as the most effective to use

xi. The GN sociological system where mobility links GNs over geographical distances and that the GN responses are not static

6.3 Generated future academic directions of inquiry

A number of recommendations for future studies have been generated by this research and are required to be undertaken in order to both broaden and consolidate the literature’s understanding of GNs. These include:

i. While the current literature currently aggregates GNs, this study has established that GNs of this study had originally migrated from those GN who solely remained in caravan parks. This requires investigation as to whether GNs belong to a larger as yet unidentified group

ii. The current GNs of this study did not reveal if any form of BSP existed during the time they were assimilated with caravan park GNs. This requires investigation to discover if the same BSP or another BSP existing amongst those GNs located exclusively in caravan parks.

iii. There is an opportunity to undertake quantitative research to explore the physical distances and the composition of distances between campsites that GNs undertake in order to accurately measure the pace and duration of their travels

iv. There exists an opportunity to undertake quantitative research to accurately measure the proportion of GNs identified in this study are represented in caravan registrations to determine the size of this particular GN market

v. It further calls for quantitative research to accurately determine the investment in caravans and equipment that GNs in general undertake

vi. If a difference exists in the outlay and expenditure patterns of the two groups of GNs and why this occurs

vii. To more accurately represent the mobility of GNs that were sighted by the researcher, future studies should look to investigate GNs travelling by caravan, camper trailer, mobile homes and the growing fifth-wheeler market

viii. The investigation that would be of greatest interest and difficulty in undertaking would be to locate those GNs who are permanently on the road and highly mobile having divested themselves of any permanent domicile residence
6.4 Chapter conclusion

Chapter 6 has provided a summary of the comparable and contrasting discussion and contemporary findings of this study. It provided a new definition of the informants of this study and concluded with a number of future academic investigation directions.
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Appendix 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Can you tell me about eco-camping?
(Check questions for researcher)
- Can you tell me a little about your group camping here?
- How often do you undertake this sort of activity?
- Can you tell me a little about the sort of people you meet who are also undertaking this sort of camping?
- What do these people tell you are the reasons they are undertaking this sort of camping?
- When camping, what sort of places do you stay?

What are the important things that attract you to Point Quobba?
(Check questions for researcher)
- How long have you been coming to Point Quobba Beach?
- How long do you stay?
- How did you hear about Point Quobba Beach?
- What would discourage you from coming to Point Quobba again?
- Can you tell me about the facilities at Point Quobba?
- How do you feel about these?
- Can you tell me a little about how you feel about the conditions of the campsite?

Can you tell me about the rig you have used to get here?
(Check questions for researcher)
- How does your choice of rig allow you to stay in a place such as this?
- Does coming to somewhere like Point Quobba mean that you have to select a special type of rig?
- Have you made any modifications to your rig?
- Could you tell me about what these modifications are?

How does the rig you have chosen support you to eco-camp?
(Check questions for researcher)
- What sort accessories do you need to stay in a place such as Point Quobba?
- Does how long you stay in such a place change the sorts of things you consider as being important accessories?
- Can you tell me more about this?
- Have you had any problems with the sorts of accessories you have brought with you on your trips?
- Can you explain about that a bit more?
Appendix 2: THE CULTURE OF THE AUSTRALIAN GREY NOMAD

IDEOLOGY
Attainment of psychological freedom through the enactment of physical freedom

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STAGE</th>
<th>BEHAVIOURS</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information Gathering</td>
<td>Observed</td>
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<td>Training</td>
<td>Experienced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admitting</td>
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<td>Becoming</td>
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<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Advocated</td>
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REPORTED TRAITS OF MEMBERSHIP:
We are: autonomous, knowledgeable, courageous, sure and flexible

Others consider us: privileged, concerned, intense, supportive, consistent, understanding

We go about things in a way that is: inventive, instrumental, retiring, adventurous, connected

VALUES and NORMS: (Ranking of the relative importance of values)
- Ethos of sharing
- Privacy and independence
- Observation of the natural time clock

RITUALS
Ethos of sharing
- Exchanging gifts
- Communication
- Water gathering
- Story telling

Privacy and independence
- Big clean up
- Caravan park visit

Observation of the natural time clock
- Campfire
- Happy hour

BEHAVIOURS
- Travel behaviour
- Campsite selection
- Investment in equipment
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