A New Face of Tourism: Understanding Travel Experiences of New Zealand Inbound Generation Z

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ABSTRACT

Any successful tourism industry player requires not only the ability to recognize change, but to also effectively respond to this change. Generational change is one such occurrence, offering both opportunities and challenges for tourism destinations. Significant studies on generation cohorts have been conducted over the years. However, each new generation is confronted by unique contemporary circumstances providing avenues for delineated and context-based perspectives. A new generation (Generation Z) is entering adulthood, necessitating specific research. Extant literature reveals a proliferation of market surveys but a paucity of academic research on this generation. Moreover, studies have tended to focus on Europe and the USA creating a gap in literature within New Zealand. Accordingly, this study aims to contribute towards plugging these identified gaps.

The aim of the study is to understand the travel experiences of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers whilst highlighting the emergence of this new generation. This is a qualitative study involving the Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology. The approach taken allowed for a deep interrogation of the data which was gathered through 12 semi-structured interviews and data mining from five travel blogs. From the analysis process, six core categories emerged. These core categories are travel patterns, destination profile, context, reasons for travel, identity, and realm of experience. While some of the findings and categories fit within the extant discourse on the notion of experience, two core categories are unique to this research – context and realm of experience. Findings further indicate that, New Zealand inbound Generation Z had similar travel patterns. Their image of New Zealand is predominantly centred on the beautiful landscape and the residents' culture.

The key outcome of this study was a new theoretical framework of Generation Z travel experiences in New Zealand. The framework proposes experience as being realized in either physiological realm, psychological realm or spiritual realm. The realms constitute the totality of a human being. These realms (experiences) are influenced by three different factors - immediate influences, destination influences and global influences; all through multiple interfaces. It is the gestalt of these aspects that constitutes an understanding of Generation Z travel experiences. Observably, the theoretical framework shifts the focus from destination to the tourist/traveller. This is in keeping with a similar trend by Tourism New Zealand of laying more emphasis on the people rather than the landscape.

Keywords: Generation Z, realm of experience, context, global, social media, influence, interfaces

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AoIR: Association of Internet Researchers

AUTEC: Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

BRIC: Brazil, Russia, India and China

CBD: Central Business District

DMOs: Destination Marketing Organizations

EU: European Union

EWOM: Electronic Word of Mouth

FIYTO: Federation of International Youth Travel Organization

GT: Grounded Theory

ICT: Information, Communication and Technology

IRD: Inland Revenue Department

ISIS: Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

ISTC: International Student Travel Confederation

MBIE: Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment

MTEs: Memorable Tourism Experiences

NZD: New Zealand Dollar

SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises

TA: Thematic Analysis

TBP: Theory of Planned Behaviour

TCL: Travel Career Ladder

TCP: Travel Career Pattern

TNZ: Tourism New Zealand

TV: Television

UK: United Kingdom

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization

USA: United States of America

WTO: World Tourism Organization

WWOOF: World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms or Willing Workers on Organic Farms

WYSE: World Youth, Student and Educational Travel Confederation

YHA: Youth Hostels Association

YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

YWCA: Young Women's Christian Organization

LIST OF APPENDICES

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Sign: **Date:**   10th January 2019

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1 CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

Each new generation is a new people (Tocqueville, 1898).

This research highlights emergence of Generation Z and explores the travel experiences of its members visiting New Zealand. Chapter one is an introduction to the research. Background information is provided highlighting the significance of youth tourism and the emerging of Generation Z, thus providing the overall context of the research. A brief historical account of youth tourism is presented. This is followed by the theoretical framework which discusses the Generational Theory and the Socio-cognitive theory. This is followed by a definition and characteristics of Generation Z. An overview of the tourism industry in New Zealand is then presented followed by a summary of the research aims and objectives, and the methodology. The chapter concludes with an overview of the overall organization of the thesis.

1.1 BACKGROUND CONTEXT

The significance of youth tourism is growing throughout the world (Horak & Weber, 2000). Individuals are now travelling internationally at a younger age (eDreams, 2017). In 2015, youth travel accounted for an estimated 23% of all international travel. It is estimated that by 2020 almost 370 million youth travellers will account for a total spend of over USD 400 billion up from USD 190 billion in 2009 (UNWTO, 2016). In exploring the economic impact of youth travel, the UNWTO in its report noted that, on average youth spend up to two thirds more than most other tourists. This was attributed to several factors, among them the fact that they take much longer trips. Their high value is also pegged on the 'lifetime value' over the course of their travel career. The value rests on the rationale that generally, youth being a younger emerging market, have longer years of life ahead compared to the ageing demographic. Potentially, this offers more long-term opportunities into the future as the youth add to their travel portfolio. Further, the UNWTO report observes that 60% of the youth travel budget is spent at the destination.

United Nations defines youth as those persons between 15 and 24 years of age, an age at which people's mobility is the greatest (Horak & Weber, 2000; United Nations, 2001). This can be attributed to the freedom which comes with their progressive separation from parents. The new-found status engenders an urge to explore and discover new things resulting in more independent travels. Indeed, Horak and Weber (2000) observed a greater propensity for travel in younger people. In New Zealand, visitor statistics for the year ending April 2016 show that of the 3,274,182 inbound visitors, 391,040 were aged between 15-24 years (Statistics New Zealand, 2016). This translates to 12% of the total number of visitors, a significant percentage of the market, thus meriting attention.

A key element of a successful tourism industry is the ability to recognize and deal with change across a wide range of key factors and the way they interact (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman, & Scott, 2009). The key external drivers of global change are economic, political, environmental, technological, social and demographic. Demographic changes can affect tourism directly or indirectly (Grimm et al., 2009). Direct impacts relate to demand (volume and structure) and the labour market (number of workers and their qualifications) while the indirect impacts relate to jobs within the tourism industry and tourism services. Demography is, therefore, a key driver for future tourism demand (Yeoman, Schänzel, & Smith, 2013). Exploring demographic trends allows important change agents, on both the supply side and the demand side of tourism to be highlighted and discussed (Dwyer et al., 2009). The future growth of tourism will depend to some extent on how well the industry understands the social and demographic trends influencing traveller behaviour (Moscardo, Murphy, & Benckendorff, 2010). Destinations and individual operators that make decisions on the supply side without matching them to changing customer and customer needs suffer '*strategic drift'*, a phenomenon which occurs when an organization's strategy gradually moves away from addressing the forces in the external environment with a clear direction (Dwyer et al., 2009).

A new generation is entering adulthood while an older reaches retirement. Christened Generation Z, this young generation comprises individuals born in the year 1995 and after, making the oldest members 23 years old (Chhetri, Hossain, & Broom, 2014; Eisner, 2005). In the USA they make up a quarter of the population and already contribute US$44 billion to the American economy (Globe Trender, 2017; Sparks & Honey, n.d.). Globe Trender (2017) further projected that by 2020 the generation will account for one-third of the US population and will become the most powerful spenders. Born into a digital age and with increasing international travel, this younger generation is likely to transform tourism and destinations (Yeoman et al., 2013). Indeed it has been argued that "*Fordian*" (mass) tourism may no longer provide destinations with requisite competitiveness in the face of new tourism (Stănciulescu, Molnar, & Bunghez, 2011). The implication is that destinations relying on mass tourism characterized by an ageing demography will find it increasingly difficult to operate profitably in an environment characterized by an emerging and more contemporary form of tourism comprising youth and youthful travellers. The envisaged demographic change represents an important phenomenon which may pose both opportunities and challenges for the development of tourism and destinations (Bernini & Cracolici, 2015). This has significant implications to New Zealand because Small and Medium Enterprises – SMEs in the tourism industry depend on major tourism developments and changes (Stănciulescu et al., 2011).

In addition, it is observed that global consumption patterns indicate that we are entering an era characterized by consumers who are more diverse and eclectic in their lifestyles than previous generations (Schewe & Meredith, 2004). Generation based research that identifies different groups of consumers and their specific needs and desires is therefore important (Chhetri et al., 2014). Recent finding, for instance, indicate that the less technologically enabled tourism destinations can benefit by employing contemporary principles and practices to meet the needs of the new generation of tourists who seek rich digital and gamified tourism experiences (Skinner, Sarpong, & White, 2018).

This research explores the New Zealand travel experiences and behaviour of inbound Generation Z tourists/travellers. Research interest on the Generation Z stems from observations made by the researcher upon migrating to New Zealand. Having worked in the hospitality industry overseas and now in New Zealand, it seemed that New Zealand had a higher staff turnover characterised by more youthful employees from different nationalities. It was later realized that most of the youthful colleagues at work were in the country for travel. Employment was therefore temporary or casual and a means to finance their travelling budget. Instructively, some of their visas required a change of employer/job after three to six months. This was a new phenomenon to the researcher which generated interest in further exploring Generation Z travels.

While numerous market surveys have been conducted on this generation, a dearth of academic literature has been noted. It is only recently that Generation Z literature is beginning to appear in tourism academic journals. The recent special issue on Millennials and Generation Z in Journal of Tourism Futures is one such contribution (Corbisiero & Ruspini, 2018). This may be explained by the fact that, only recently have the oldest members of this generation reached legal age by which parental approval for research is not required. This underpins the explorative approach taken for this research. Expectation for the immediate future is a proliferation of literature on this generation. Implicit is the necessity for international and cross-cultural validity. These factors informed the choice of methods for this research allowing for a cross-section of nationalities to participate. In so doing, the research provides important data which may be utilized for future studies and to derive possible implications for the future of tourism and tourism development in New Zealand.

1.2 THE HISTORY OF YOUTH TOURISM

Whereas there is no universally accepted definition of youth and youth tourism, broad definitions exist in the literature. "Youth" is understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence and awareness of our interdependence

as members of a community; it is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group (UNESCO, n.d.). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO) report of 2008, youth travel is independent trips for periods of less than one year by people aged 16-29 years which are motivated, in part or in full, by a desire to experience other cultures, build life experiences and/or benefit from formal and informal learning opportunities outside one's usual environment (Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013). Accordingly, Generation Z members may also be regarded as youth and youth travellers.

1.2.1   The early years

As early as 15th century, students (sometimes referred to as wandering scholars) travelled around Europe from one university to another finding accommodation on the way in dormitories attached to monasteries (McCulloch, 1992). It is around the same time that craft guilds in Europe required their apprentices to take several years of compulsory travel in other towns and countries while learning their trade and being accommodated in lodgings/inns provided by their guilds (McCulloch, 1992). Travel by youth gained further impetus in the "Grand Tours" of young aristocrats in their educational quest during the 17th and 18th century (Demeter & Brătucu, 2014; Horak & Weber, 2000). Their travels were to classical works of art and cultural landmarks with main destinations being France, Switzerland and Germany (Demeter & Brătucu, 2014).

The years 1844 and 1845 in London saw the founding of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) respectively. Additional centres were established across Britain and other Anglo-Saxon countries offering cultural activities as well as inexpensive accommodation for young people arriving from other parts of the country or from overseas (McCulloch, 1992). These two associations are still visible today, offering accommodation services which usually cater for the youth.

1.2.2   The 20th century

The 20th century saw the birthing of regular trips by young people in Germany sparking groups like *Wandervogel* (Birds of Passage) and the German Youth Movement while England saw the founding of the Boy Scouts Association and Girl Guides Association in 1908 and 1910 respectively (McCulloch, 1992). However, it is in organized elementary school children trips that youth tourism developed, the inaugural one being organized by a German teacher, Richard Schirrmann (Horak & Weber, 2000). This was in 1909 when on an excursion with his pupils he was caught in a storm forcing them to spend the night in a school building (Nagy, 2016). It was from this that he decided to make this into a practice, turning schools which were a day's walk from each other (30-35 km) into accommodation during the holidays. Schirrmann created the

idea of "wandering school" on weekends by taking students on field trips into the countryside for fresh air and exposure to nature with nights spent in school buildings (Hostelling International- USA, n.d.; Nagy, 2016). The increased popularity of these trips, especially in central Europe, heralded the birth of youth holiday organizations and youth hostelling (Horak & Weber, 2000). The world's first permanent youth hostel was established in 1910 in the old fortified castle of Altena by the local authorities who were persuaded by Schirrmann. By 1932 Germany had more than 2000 youth hostels recording more than 4.5 million overnights annually (Horak & Weber, 2000; Hostelling International- USA, n.d.; McCulloch, 1992). In the same year, the first Southern Hemisphere hostel was founded in Canterbury New Zealand New Zealand, n.d.).

After the Second World War, youth tourism transformed from an erstwhile educational paradigm into a more social category characterized by cultural exchanges due to the era's international peace initiatives (Demeter & Brătucu, 2014; Olimpia, 2010). These initiatives precipitated the founding of the Federation of International Youth Travel Organization (FIYTO) and the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) in 1949 (WYSE, n.d.). The social-cultural thrust evolved later to an emphasis on the individuality of travel at the behest of globalization (Horak & Weber, 2000). The globalized world under the aegis of technological advancement is witnessing a more informed youth traveller. As the figures listed earlier indicate, an increasing population of young people is now engaging in international travel. With this in mind, this research promises to be a timely contribution to New Zealand's awareness of an important segment of the tourism market. From this, relevant policy and product development strategies may be developed to improve market responsiveness.

1.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework consists of selected theories that undergird a researcher's thinking with regards to how he/she understands and plans to research a topic, as well as the concepts and definitions from that theory that are relevant to the topic (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). This research is predicated on the generational theory from a socio-cognitive perspective. The research seeks to understand human thought and behaviour by describing the human experience (Upton, Schänzel, & Lück, 2017). It critically examines and analyses the experiences of Generation Z, a contemporary new generation entering the tourism market. This makes this thesis a relevant and timely investigation. Further credence of the study is in the paucity of academic literature on a generation which is contemporaneously in its 'highly influenceable' period of life and entering adulthood in an increasingly changing world.

1.3.1 Generational theory

Also known as sociology of generations, the generational theory was conceptualised by Karl Mannheim (1952) in which he highlighted three core 'tenets' (Leask, Fyall, & Barron, 2013; Ward, 1974). The first, 'location', refers to the chronological span of time for the birth years of a cohort of individuals. The second, 'actuality', relates to the manner in which a generation responds to social changes and how these responses form the persona of the generation. The third tenet, 'units', relates to subcohorts within the broader generation segment (Leask et al., 2013). The theory argues that political, economic and social-cultural context coupled with historical events influence individuals in each generation (Ward, 1974). Importantly it presents that major historical events change society (DeChane, 2014). Chen and Shoemaker (2014) observe that the historical environment in which notable events predominate the youth at the same chronological age significantly influences the formation of these individuals' value systems and personality. Schewe and Meredith (2004), share this position and argue that shared experiences and similar external events during the highly influence-able 'coming of age' years (approximately 17-23 years of age) of a group of individuals born during the same time period influences their values, preferences, attitudes and behaviours. Generations are therefore unique and distinct from each other in behaviour and tastes. The behaviours eschewed by and preferences of a youthful generation, therefore, will be different from the ageing generation. This is echoed by Strauss and Howe (1991) who opine that a generation is shaped by its "age location" or by participating in epochal events that occur during their life (Pennington-Gray, Fridgen, & Stynes, 2003). Instructively, choosing Generation Z as the research group theoretically positions the study within generation discourse.

A hurdle to this reasoning has been observed in that there is a lack of agreement among authors as to the actual age parameters of generations, thus impacting on the identification of the formative experiences that help define a generation (Donnison, 2007; Leask et al., 2013). Terminological confusions on generational analysis have also been noted and so have different theoretical frameworks. Some authors have used the term generation synonymously with birth cohort (Pennington-Gray et al., 2003). Elsewhere, Glenn (1977) noted that generation is a kinship terminology denoting relationship and advises against synonymous use of the term generation where cohort is implied (Pilcher, 1994). Originally referring to a Roman group of warriors or soldiers, cohort is today defined as people within a delineated population who experience the same significant event/s within a given period of time (Glenn, 1977; Pilcher, 1994). However, it is important to add that the characteristics of any generation evolve from both historical events and the family heritage (DeChane, 2014). A different perspective is offered by Strauss and Howe (1997) who advocate an archetypal cyclical change of generations

which they call 'turnings'. The turnings occur in recognizable patterns categorized as hero, artists, prophets and nomads. Heroes come of age at a time of emergency or crisis while their children, the artists, come of age during the post-crisis (Galland, 2009). The prophets, on the other hand, come of age during a period of cultural upheaval while the nomads grow up during awakenings or great cultural upheavals (Galland, 2009). Human life cycle theory as argued by Erikson (1993) presents yet another approach advocating different stages in human life development wherein as people age, their attitudes, values, belief systems and physical conditions change and influence their behaviours and consumption patterns. However, continuity theory as argued by Atchley (1989), observes that during ageing process older people show consistency in psychological characteristics and behavioural features despite other changes (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014).

From the foregoing, it can be argued that the confusion surrounding generation as a term arises out of several factors. One is a merging of generation with cohort. Second is the insensitivity to the multiple nature of time. Thirdly is the complexity of biographical and historical connections (Pilcher, 1994). Summarily, generation as a concept has four dimensions; demographical, genealogical and familial, historical, and sociological (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). Generational cohort is a sociological perspective wherein the individuals in each generation are influenced by the political, economic or cultural context in which they live and by the historical events. While acknowledging the inescapable problem of separating age effects from period and cohort effects in research, Palmore (1978) distinguishes between three necessary levels of analysis: observable differences (longitudinal, cross-sectional, and time-lag); inferred effects (age, period, and cohort); and the several causes of these effects. Cross-sectional differences refer to differences between age groups. Longitudinal refers to differences over time for the same group. Time-lag differences refer to those between the older cohort at the earlier measurement and the younger cohort at the later measurement when they are the same age as the older cohort was at the time of earlier measurement (Figure 1).

MEASUREMENT TIME

Early · Later

Younger — A → 1 → B

COHORT — 2 — 3

Older — C

1 = Longitudinal difference
(B – A)
2 = Cross-sectional difference
(C – A)
3 = Time-lag difference
(B-C)
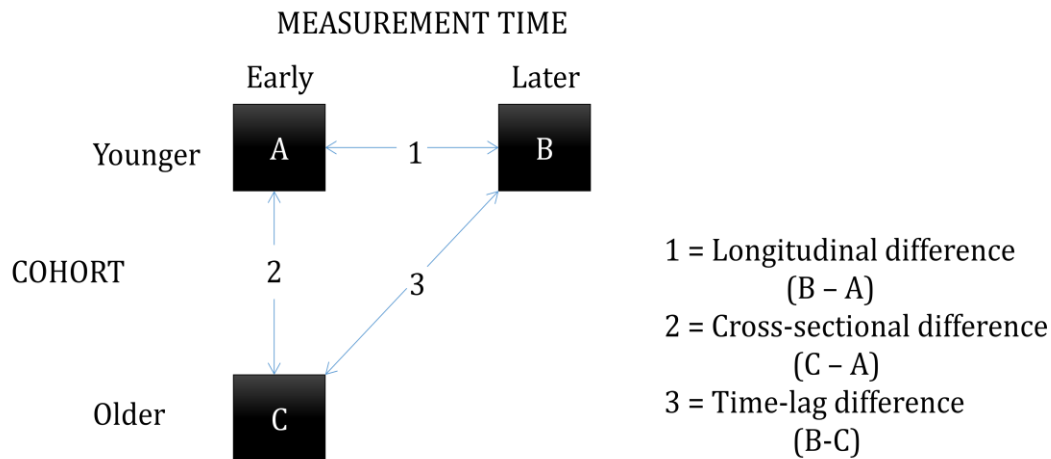
Figure 1- Observable differences of generations (Palmore, 1978)

In this model, age effects are reflected in longitudinal and cross-sectional differences. Longitudinal and time-lag differences reflect period effects while cross-sectional and time-lag differences allude to cohort effects. In determining the causes of these effects, Palmore advises that age effects may result from biological ageing among other causes. On period effects he opines that they are caused by changing physical or social environments among others. Finally, cohort effects could be caused by social or physical environments during critical earlier years, cohort size and composition among other factors. This model promises a comprehensive analysis by underscoring the necessity of conceptual and methodological accuracy in studies. The scope of this Generation Z research is limited to arguments from a cohort effect as a core influencing factor of travel experience. However, time-lag differences are outside the scope of this study as they would require data on the older cohorts when they were the same age as Generation Z is now. This form of analysis may form the basis of further cross-generational investigations and studies.

Despite the same generation members sharing similar generational characteristics, it should be noted that differences do exist amongst the individual members as has been alluded to in Palmore's model. These differences may be cultural, ideological, religious, political, economic and/or educational depending on the background of the individual generation members (Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2010). It is therefore important that the epochal events defining a generation are cross-cultural, are international and are recognizable now and after (Leask et al., 2013). From the foregoing, it can be surmised that the concept of generations is multidimensional. Consequently, this research aims to explore not only the experiences but also the possible influencing factors.

1.3.2   Socio-cognitive paradigm

Socio-cognitive thinking is credited to the writings of Albert Bandura who brought awareness on the role of social modelling in human motivation, thought and action (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). People are regarded as actors as well as products of their environment. This view seems to augment Manheim's theorizing that major historical events have a direct and linear change impact on society (DeChane, 2014). Several publications on socio-cognitive thinking advocate for self-efficacy which is thought to make a difference in how people feel, think and act (Bandura, 1977). Surmised, social cognitive theory argues that human thought and action are regulated by forethought (Luszczynska & Schwarzer, 2005). To a traveller, forethought is important in planning a trip or making choices as to what activities to engage in or not. Commenting elsewhere Chhetri et al., (2004) notes that 'experiencing' is a cognitive construct involving the processes of knowing, believing and recognising. These, they argue, are based on background knowledge, learning and reasoning capabilities of individuals. Further, the authors note that experiences are influenced by cultural, socio-demographic, and behavioural factors.

The seminal work by Poon (1993) can be regarded as a demonstration of the above reasoning. Her work presents the fundamental differences between the old and new tourist/tourism. She observes that the old tourist found security in numbers while the new tourist wants to be different from the crowd. Whereas the work was not directly referencing generations, it highlights some dynamics of changing tourism, thus offering relevant insights applicable to the current generational shift. Her work inadvertently captures key arguments of the theory of generations in as far as the tourists/tourism being a product of the times is concerned. Mass production was a key feature of the industrial revolution. In tandem, international tourism at the time displayed characteristics of the time – it was mass, standardized and rigidly packaged. Travellers were forced by the dominant economics of the day (mass production) to consume standardized packaged travel and leisure services (Poon, 1993). Poon's observations provide a useful template applicable when there are macro shifts in form or nature of tourism/tourist configuration. Such shifts are occasioned by major global changes within the social, economic, political and technological sphere.

By basing this research on a Socio-cognitive Generation Theory, the study recognizes the integral role of historical and socio-cultural happenings in shaping a generation's experiences while engaged in tourism and travel. An understanding of the paradigms which characterize Generation Z is therefore important for successful tourism development in the future.

1.4 GENERATION Z

Generations are defined by demographers, the media, popular culture, market researchers and by members of the generation themselves (Benckendorff et al., 2010). Canadian author Douglas Coupland is credited to have created the label Generation X in one of his fictional work thus spawning the labels for Generation Y and Z (McCrindle, 2014). Generation Z is mostly the offspring of Generation X and has been raised during changes occasioned by the internet, smartphones, laptops, freely available network and digital media (Tulgan, 2013). Elsewhere they have been called 'postmillennial' or 'centennials' or 'pivotals' or 'digital natives' among other tags and is the first generation to have grown up with smartphones (Grail Research, 2011; Southgate, 2017). Noting that the most common name used for this group is Generation Z, Hertz (2016) tags them Generation K after the fictional character 'Katniss Everdeen', the determined heroine of the Hunger Games. Like Katniss, they feel the world is one of perpetual struggle – dystopian, unequal and harsh. In her 18 months interviews of 2000 teenagers in UK and USA, Hertz (2016) notes that this generation feels profoundly anxious and distrustful. This can be attributed to the fact that this generation developed their personalities and life skills in a socio-economic environment marked by chaos, uncertainty, volatility and complexity (Sparks & Honey, n.d.). As argued by Read and Truelove (2018), Generation Z has never known a world without war and terrorism which makes them crave safety and financial security. Although some other generations, such as, World War 1 and World War 2 generation cohorts have lived through war, no generation before has been exposed to war and terrorism 24/7 through the internet and social media.

Generation Z has come of age in an era of economic decline, increased inequality, job insecurity and social media presence. Similarly, Seemiller and Grace (2016) have identified some of the common events forming the context for Generation Z as connectivity, information at their fingertips, creative entrepreneurship, diversity and social justice, fear of disasters and tragedies, and economic hardships. Further, Read and Truelove (2018) have listed recession, ISIS, Sandy Hook shooting, marriage equality, the first black president, and the rise of populism as some of the formative events for this generation. The combination of the above factors has made them develop coping mechanisms and certain resourcefulness as a necessity. Furthermore, they are considered highly educated, creative and innovative, and able to multi-task (Corbisiero & Ruspini, 2018).

Generation Z in the U.S. is said to influences US$600 billion in family spending (Ketchum, 2015). The report projects that by 2020, generation Z will represent 40% of consumers in the United States, Europe and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China), further underscoring the pivotal role they will play in shaping future economic development of nations. In tourism and travel,

Generation Z is considered an incredibly important cohort (Barnes, 2018). This, Dr Paul Redmond, a generational cohort expert observes is due to several factors; first is their powerful influence on family holidays as their parents opt to consult them prior to booking trips. Secondly, is their preference for experiences rather than possessions (Barnes, 2018), thus increasing their propensity to travel in search of fun experiences. In addition, they are open-minded, bucket-list oriented and look for off the beaten path locations (Expedia Inc., 2017). Consequently, they can be expected to seek out remote places and engage in numerous travels/activities. Southan (2017) further notes that Generation Z members are considered budget conscious travellers and start off their travel plans without a set destination in mind. These impact on expenditure choices and preferences at the destination, for example, the choice of accommodation based on available alternatives or affordability.

1.5 NEW ZEALAND TOURISM ECONOMY

Early tourism in New Zealand was encouraged by the development of ocean-going steamships in the mid-19th century, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, and the Duke of Edinburgh Prince Alfred's visit to New Zealand in 1870 (McClure, 2010). The first tourists were wealthy travellers from Britain and the United States. The earliest record of annual international tourist numbers to New Zealand was 5,233 in 1903, 80% of whom were from Australia and Britain. The main attraction over the years has been the landscape (mountains, forests, lakes and geysers) (McClure, 2010). Today tourism is New Zealand's largest export industry in terms of foreign exchange earnings. For the year ended March 2017, the sector's direct contribution to GDP was $14.7 billion or 5.9 per cent of GDP while tourists generated 3.3 billion in goods and services tax (GST) revenue. The industry employed a total of 230,793 equal of 8.4 per cent of the total number of people employed in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2017b).

Visitor arrivals between 2007 and 2017 show a steady rise from 2,445,130 arrivals in year ending March 2007 to 3,543,631 arrivals in year ending in March 2017. Only 2 years, 2009 and 2013 recorded a decline in numbers (Statistics New Zealand, 2017a). The annual arrivals in 2009 were 2,400,719 down from 2,496,994 in 2008 representing a negative 3.9% decline. In 2013, there were 6,553 fewer arrivals than 2012. The decline can be attributed to the global financial crisis. The numbers from 2013 to 2017 show that majority of visitors came to New Zealand for holiday or to visit friends and relatives (Table 2). Travellers within the 15-24 years age group have consistently outnumbered the retirees of 65+ years. In 2013 the arrivals of this young group were 316,832 rising to 421,584 in 2017. This compared to 250,864 from the older generation in year 2013 and 400,928 in 2017. The leading source markets over the years remain to be Australia, China, USA, UK, Germany and Japan. This trend is projected to continue into the year 2023 (MBIE, 2017a). MBIE forecast further indicate an annual growth of 4.8% in

total visitor arrivals with 4.9 million visitor arrivals in year 2023. The projected total visitor expenditure is NZD 15.3 billion for the same year representing an annual growth rate of 6.2%.

Key characteristics of visitors
Year ended March 2013–17

Key characteristic	Year ended March				
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total visitor arrivals[(1)]	2,611,377	2,752,257	2,947,901	3,255,463	3,543,631
Travel purpose					
Holiday	1,204,080	1,303,776	1,432,736	1,652,560	1,841,728
Visiting friends & relatives	859,744	876,768	920,256	980,832	1,023,088
Business	250,752	262,672	266,000	276,752	295,184
Education	50,640	53,248	58,416	62,496	65,904
Conferences & conventions	54,160	57,888	57,440	61,536	68,976
Age group (years)					
Under 15	226,592	230,880	253,152	273,984	292,272
15–24	316,832	340,928	362,400	392,864	421,584
25–34	518,544	542,896	585,152	652,624	713,168
35–44	424,496	438,224	463,808	501,184	537,616
45–54	450,528	463,968	495,120	543,968	584,864
55–64	411,952	442,608	468,224	530,144	583,296
65+	250,864	287,824	316,544	358,832	400,928
Length of stay (days)					
1–3	461,680	478,096	487,696	552,288	630,800
4–7	693,616	729,664	777,968	854,560	898,736
8–14	690,064	721,936	795,824	882,528	971,744
15–21	297,680	318,912	352,448	385,648	421,696
22 and over	456,768	498,720	530,464	578,576	610,752
Median	8.6	8.8	9.0	9.0	8.9

Table 1 - Key characteristics of visitors to New Zealand - Source Statistics New Zealand (2017)

As noted earlier, the youth market accounted for 12% of the arrivals in New Zealand for year ending March 2017. The economic value of this market to the country is therefore significant. International reports have attested to the significance of this market with UNWTO, (2001) making six key observations, that;

- Youth travel is high in value with their total trip spending being on average up to two thirds more than most other tourists.
- Youth markets are resilient with indications of less volatility in the segment than in the rest of the tourism market.

- Young travellers spend their money directly with local communities with 60% of their budget being spent at the destination. Their drive to experience the 'local' brings them closer to the local communities.

- Purposeful travel which goes beyond leisure towards a more personal development approach including work and study, volunteer travel and language learning travel

- Contribution to other industries in form of mobile and flexible workforce and overseas student industry.

- Young people attract others to the destinations

The foregoing underscores not only the importance of generational thinking in tourism but also the pivotal role that Generation Z, in particular, will play. It can be expected that the value and contribution of Generation Z in the tourism industry as we move into the future, will be more evident and pronounced. Therefore, studies and research on this generation are not just an addition to the plethora of academic literature, but a valuable contribution to the strategic tourism planning for long-term sustainability of tourism in New Zealand.

Available literature shows an abundance of research on cohort travel experiences. However, there is paucity of Generation Z travel experiences in literature. Although the generation may be classified within the wider youth travel, members of the cohort represent a delineated group which warrants specific research. Furthermore, extant literature tends to focus on the destination to understand experience. This research focuses more on the traveller. In addition, a noted feature of generation experience studies is the predominance of the U.S. and Western Europe creating a gap in other regions. This research offers a perspective from New Zealand. Finally, the research deviates from a market-research orientation popular in studies on generation cohort to an academic orientation.

1.6   RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to understand the New Zealand travel experiences of inbound Generation Z. To this end the research seeks to address the following objectives:

1. To analyse the travel experiences of inbound Generation Z by;
   - Examining the travel patterns of inbound Generation Z
   - Examining the attitude and motives for travel
   - Examining the expectations and satisfaction from their visit to New Zealand
2. To identify possible factors shaping these experiences
3. To identify aspects of New Zealand which act as a pull for generation Z

1.7 METHODOLOGY

An inductive qualitative approach was deemed most appropriate for this study. In qualitative research, knowledge comes from interacting with the participants. Qualitative research does not privilege a single methodology over another (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). There being no prior research on New Zealand inbounds Generation Z travellers, an exploratory approach was considered most appropriate. Exploration research is conducted when there is little or no knowledge of the phenomena or situation being studied (Stebbins, 2001). A constructivist Grounded Theory methodology was used. This allows interaction with participants to gain their perspectives. In this methodology, theory is grounded in the data.

Two qualitative methods are used in this research; interviews and netnography (Kozinets, 2002). Twelve participants undertook a semi-structured interview lasting about 30 minutes each (Creswell, 2007). The interviews were conducted in the Auckland CBD area. The semi-structured interviews asked Generation Z participants to narrate their experiences in New Zealand, the factors which led to the choice of the destination and their overall views of their travels. Netnography method is used here to complement interviews. Five travel blogs that narrate New Zealand travellers' experiences are selected and examined.

Further, it was deemed necessary to ascertain some level of validity of the research across borders. Consequently, the audience comprised participants from different nationalities. To facilitate this within the period allocated to complete the research, netnography was used and eventually proved effective. The method entailed data mining from five online blogs by New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers. These were analysed, and core categories and themes generated. In utilizing the method, time and space barriers were ameliorated. There rigors of planning and conducting face-to-face interviews were avoided as data was readily available online.

1.8 ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

The first chapter is an introduction to the thesis. It sets the background context of the research. The history and current state of youth travel is discussed. The definitions and underpinning theories are introduced as is a discussion on the New Zealand tourism industry. This is followed by the presentation of the research aim and objectives, and finally, the methodology.

Chapter two provides review of relevant literature including generational theory studies and tourism experience studies. Generation cohort studies are discussed followed by a listing of the common cohorts found in literature. This is followed by a review section on youth travel and tourism. Experience and travel motivation are discussed. The chapter concludes with the presentation of a conceptual framework emanating from some of the existing literature.

Chapter three presents the methodologies and methods of the study. An overview is provided on qualitative interviews, netnography and exploratory research. The research paradigm including ontological and epistemological paradigms is discussed. Further, details are provided concerning the data analysis process and the ethical underpinnings. The chapter also discusses the limitations and weaknesses of the chosen methodology and methods.

Chapter four presents the findings with in-depth discussions of the findings being presented in chapter five. The conclusions are presented in chapter six. Here recommendations are also delved into, thus providing the envisaged future trajectory from the research findings.

2   CHAPTER 2 – Literature Review

An investigator who ignores prior research and theory risks pursuing a trivial problem, duplicating a study already done, or repeating others' mistakes. Then the goal of research – contributing to the knowledge base of the field – may never be realized (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This review explores the literature in three segments of study; generation cohort studies, destination as experience spaces and definition of tourist experience. In dealing with the first segment, general cohort studies including tourism specific literature have been reviewed. Different generation typologies have been elucidated followed by a review of youth tourism. In the second segment of this review, literature on destinations as spaces for experience has been commented on.

Finally, the section presents a conceptual framework emanating from perspectives in the literature. The structure here is mainly premised on two broad perspectives; experience as from the tourist's point and experience from the destination/sector's point of view. Whereas this can be conveniently labelled a demand (tourist) and supply (tourism industry/destination) model, such a dichotomy would undermine the multi-layered factors underlying 'experience' as revealed in this literature review.

2.1   Generation cohort studies

Generation cohorts have been widely explored. Despite the extensive research, there are differing opinions as to the historical location of any particular generation and what they are to be referred to as. There, however, exists some consensus on what generations are like as explained in Manheim's concepts of generation actuality and generation unit (Donnison, 2007). Location refers to the chronological placing of a group of individuals at a given historical time period. Actuality is a reference to the persona of a generation which springs from their response to social changes while units are subgroups within the generation. In an effort to capture the relationship between the three concepts (location, actuality and unit), Edmunds and Turner (2002: p.10) advance that;

> A generation location is a cluster of opportunities or life chances that constitute the 'fate' of a generation. There emerges a generation as actuality that shares a set of historical responses to its location and then within a generation there are generation units which articulate structures of knowledge or a consciousness that express their particular location.

Extant generation cohort studies have focused on mapping consumption patterns so as to develop effective marketing strategies (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Rentz, Reynolds, & Stout, 1983; Schewe & Meredith, 2004; Schewe & Noble, 2000; Schuman & Scott, 1989). This, it would seem, deviates from the theory's 'ancestral roots' in sociology and psychology. In defending the validity of cohort as a marketing technique, Schewe and Noble (2000) observed that studies on the topic range from showing that cohorts share collective memories to illustrating the value of forecasting using cohort analysis. The authors summed up Schuman and Scott's (1989) study as clearly demonstrating that cohorts have collective memories. These memories are recalled predominantly from adolescence and young adulthood when events have primacy in shaping perspectives and values (Schewe & Noble, 2000). With this understanding and view of generations, companies and their marketers can tailor products and advertisements to target specific audiences. It can be argued that memory is personal and is subject to an individual's interpretation of things. Events and phenomena would, therefore, be recalled differently by people of the same cohort group and who experienced the same event.

In Rentz, Reynolds, and Stout (1983) cohort consumption analysis the results showed that basing consumption on an aging interpretation produced opposite results to a cohort interpretation leading to suggestions that consumption is influenced more strongly by cohort membership than by age (Pennington-Gray et al., 2003). Elsewhere though, the theory of generations has been considered limited in explicating cohort markets (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014). The authors argue that advanced age effects may be more effective than cohort effects in explaining group differences. The implication is that differences observed in a group of people are because of ageing or age factors, thus biologically instigated. While not defending this position, Seemiller and Grace (2016) note that ageing may occasion changes in a group's trends and behaviours. This position fails to acknowledge the impact of other influencing factors like culture, politics, and economy among others.

2.1.1 Generational thinking and other theories

Cohort thinking has been applied elsewhere in other theories. In their study of Chinese Generation Y consumers Padgett, et al., (2013) concluded that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TBP) is a reliable predictive model of intention to purchase a fast food meal. The authors note that the Chinese Generation Y (born 1980s to mid-1990s) were born in the 1979 one-child policy and grew up when the country was transforming to a market economy from the erstwhile controlled economy. These significant epochal events made them aware of and open to western ideas and products. Consequently, a preference for foreign brands has been observed among the young generation. In addition, the authors note, that fewer young Chinese adhere to the

collectivist attitude of yesteryears. This is further in keeping with the arguments postulated by generational theory where significant events shape a generation.

2.1.2 Generation theory in tourism

Recent years have seen an increased interest in generational analysis in tourism literature (Beldona, Nusair, & Demicco, 2009; Huh & Park, 2010; Li, Li, & Hudson, 2013; Pennington-Gray, Kerstetter, & Warnick, 2003). Warnick conducted one of the first tourism cohort studies in 1993 in which he analysed whether generational characteristics and personalities impact the U.S. domestic travel. He suggested that understanding generational personalities will be helpful in predicting future travel trends (Pennington-Gray et al., 2003). The value of this can be found in recent research suggesting that differences in generation-induced lifestyles and values permeate into vacation activities and experiences (Benckendorff et al., 2010). A tourist's membership in a particular generation could affect their thoughts, decisions and behaviours related to travel (Li et al., 2013). This would be of importance to businesses and destinations that are keen on understanding the market in order to map out strategies for future growth and development.

Furthermore, studies on lifelong travel patterns have concluded that a greater use of cohort analysis is needed to examine changes in travel behaviour (Oppermann, 1995). Gardiner, Grace, and King, (2014) indicate that future travel behaviour will differ between the generations – Baby Boomer, Generation X and Generation Y tourists. The implication of this is the necessity to conduct thorough studies and research on each generation in order to effectively respond to the demands of each of them. Similarly, in their study on cohorts effects on travel behaviour and travel philosophy, You and O'Leary (2000) found out that younger cohorts maintained their level of activity as they aged and that they had different philosophies about pleasure travel. This led to the conclusion that behaviour and philosophy change over time (Pennington-Gray et al., 2003).

Reviewed literature shows that age group studies tend to be cross-sectional in design focusing on comparing two or more groups (Pilcher, 1994). A limitation in this design is that it ignores changes over time. There is, therefore, a need for longitudinal research. Such research would help in tracking and determining the effects of generations and age over time (Chen & Shoemaker, 2014). The information derived from these studies would facilitate more accurate forecasts of consumer patterns and intentions. Instructively, culture can affect the cross-cultural validity of theories and models (Padgett et al., 2013). Nonetheless, not all theories make claim for cross-cultural validity or trans-historical continuity (Colquhoun & Kellehear, 1993). Generation studies have focused on intra-national as opposed to international samples (see *Table 2*). To ascertain the international and cross-cultural validity of this explorative study on

Generation Z experiences, it was deemed necessary to study an audience comprising participants from different nationalities. One of the implications of this was a requirement to consider not only events of significance within the participants' country of origin/residence which might have shaped their views as members of Generation Z but also the macro shifts in society. Gardiner et al. (2014) concluded that long-term tourism planning would benefit from an examination of recent macro societal influences (formative referents) to forecast implication for travel decision making when Generation Z reaches adulthood and becomes fully independent travel consumers.

This research deviates from the extant cross-sectional studies in that the focus is on a specific generation rather than an effort in comparing across generations. The table below shows a proliferation of tourism-related generation studies in the last two decades indicating a growing interest in this reasoning within tourism. Generation Z studies and surveys seem to appear after year 2010, possibly explained, first by legal age-related factors, secondly by the possible increased economic relevance due to the freedom to make consumptive decisions. These studies are predominated by marketing surveys and business reports. The table further indicates that generation studies have been conducted in different nation indicating a possible interest among researchers from different nationalities of this reasoning.

Author & Year	Year	Generation studied	Sample	Research topic/area
(Oppermann, 1995)	1995	Cross-sectional	Germans	Lifelong travel patterns
(You & O 'Leary, 2000)	2000	Elderly & young	Japanese	Age and cohort effects. Travel behaviour & philosophies
(Pennington-Gray et al., 2003)	2003	Cross-sectional	Canadians	Cohort segmentation and travel
(Lyon, Legg, & Toulson, 2006)	2006	Cross-sectional	General	Generational cohorts and the implications for management
(Glover, 2010)	2010	Generation Y	General	Tourism demand – opportunities and challenges
(Huh & Park, 2010)	2010	Cross-sectional	USA	The relationship between trip planning and effects of age, time & cohort
(Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013)	2013	Youth tourists	Greek	Travel choices as influenced by social media networks
(Li et al., 2013)	2013	Cross-sectional	American	Generational theory in consumer behaviour
(Yeoman et al., 2013)	2013	Elderly	New Zealand	Demography
(Chen & Shoemaker, 2014)	2014	Elderly	America	Age and cohort effects
(Chhetri et al., 2014)	2014	Cross-sectional	Australia	Differences in consumption patterns
(Demeter & Brătucu, 2014; Timea Demeter, Brătucu, & Palade, 2015)	2014	Youth	Romania/Global	Typologies and Dynamics of youth tourism and travel
(Gardiner, Grace, & King, 2014)	2014	Cross-generational	Australia	Generational cohorts' travel decision-making process and the influence on future travel behaviour
(Bernini & Cracolici, 2015)	2015	Cross-sectional	Italian	Demographic change, tourism expenditure and life cycle behaviour
(Buffa, 2015)	2015	Young tourists	Italian	Sustainability
(Birenboim, 2016)	2016	Youth	Israel	Tourist experiences
(Hung & Lu, 2016)	2016	Elderly	General	Ageing studies in hospitality & tourism journals
(Puiu, 2016)	2016	Generation Z	Romania	Consumer behaviour
(Southgate, 2017)	2017	Generation Z	General	Advertising
(Brown, 2017)	2017	Generation X, Y and Z	Global	Advertising, and media attitudes and behaviour

Table 2 - Summary of generation cohort literature in tourism

2.1.3 Generational typologies

From a socio-cognitive (generation cohort) perspective the following generation groups have been identified by Eisner, (2005) and Chhetri et al., (2014);

	DEPGEN	WW2GEN	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Gen Y
Year Born	1901-1932	1933-1945	1946-1964	1965-1976 0r 1980	1977 or 1981-1994
Also Known as	GI	Swing, Silent, Post-depression, Wartime generation		Baby busters	Millennials, Echo Boomers, Next generation
Economy	Great Depression	Economic growth	Economic prosperity	Downsizing economy	Capitalism rules
Cohort experience	World war II	New Technology	Vietnam war & Cold war	Death of socialism	The rise of China and high technology
Core values	Conservative in spending, powerful, leadership	Less conservative in spending, adaptive personality	Idealistic, Individuality	Pessimistic, diversity in setting priorities and values	Independence, autonomy, self-reliance, innovative, positive, globalisation, anti-corporate mentality
Buying Habits	Functional and less expensive purchase, save a lot, spend little, price conscious	Quality for the price is important, demand for high-quality long-lasting products, watching movies, reading, enjoying music	Spend a lot, brand loyalty, transforming consumer markets across every life stage it progressed	Affluent, akin to travelling, influenced by MTV, Want customized messages and products, very sceptical consumers	Resistance to advertising efforts, perceive consumption as a leisure-time activity, products with cool images are important

Table 3 - The different generational typologies (Eisner, 2005; Chhetri et al., 2014)

A lot has been commented on other generational groups, especially the Baby-boomer and the Generation Y groups. However, there seems to be a paucity of literature on the emerging Generation Z (Southgate, 2017). By exploring the post-1994 generation, this research goes a generation further than the above authors. In so doing, contribution is made to the understanding of a contemporary 'coming of age' generation of young people. While not negating the possible impact of kinship and/or biological (age-related) factors on how Generation Z views and responds to the world, this research specifically explores generation/cohort's effects.

2.2 YOUTH TRAVEL AND TOURISM

It has been earlier noted that Generation Z members fall within the definition of the current youth group. Historically, a publication by Cohen (1973) precipitated early research on youth travel studies in different countries. These included research in Yugoslavia (Horak, Crnkovi, & Mikaci, 1989), in France (Méréo, 1999), in Mexico (Garibaldi & Rebora, 1995), Australia and USA (Reisinger & Mavondo, 2002; Reisinger, Mavondo, & Weber, 2001) and in Britain (Mintel, 1991, 2000, 2001). Research into the youth tourism domain was accentuated in 1991 when the first conference of the World Tourism Organization took place in New Delhi with the main focus on young people in travel (Moisă, 2007). Horak and Weber (2000) conducted the first thorough research of the entire European youth travel market, thus transcending geographical boundaries. Post year 2000, international organizations awoke to the importance of youth tourism. Following this epiphany, international organizations undertook global studies on youth travel. Studies were conducted for World Youth and Student Travel Confederation (WYSE) by Richards and King (2003), and Richards and Wilson (2003, 2004). This was followed by the publication of the New Horizons III report in 2013, a survey of over 34,000 young travellers from 137 countries (WYSE, 2013).

Research on youth tourism has tended towards travel motivations and purpose of travel (Dann, 1981; Frändberg, 2010; Kim & Jogaratnam, 2003; Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009), backpacker studies (Cohen, 2003; Maoz, 2007; Richards, 2015; Richards & King, 2003; Toxward, 1999) and host tourist interactions (Eusébio, João, & Carneiro, 2012). Recently research has grown to include typifying the youth tourism market (Demeter & Brătucu, 2014), exploring youth travellers and environmental issues (Buffa, 2015) and the impact of tourism on the youths quality of life (Eusébio & Carneiro, 2014). Whereas there is a growing body of knowledge in youth tourism, there seems to be little Generation Z-specific research. The dearth of academic research on this generation cohort can be attributed to the fact that it is only recently that this generation has started to 'come of age', thus outgrowing the 'minors' tag. Just like is the case with the wider youth segment, the majority of studies conducted on Generation Z is

predominantly market surveys biased towards effective marketing and advertising (Grail Research, 2011; Hertz, 2016; Sparks & Honey, n.d.; Center for Generational Kinetics, 2017; Ketchum, 2015). This research will help fill this gap by providing academic research data from which future studies can borrow. The research aims to address the void in academic literature by providing academic perspectives and insights into Generation Z using New Zealand as a case study. The importance of this segment and the wider youth market lies in the fact that not only is the segment becoming larger but also that it represents the market of the future (Vukic, Kuzmanovic, & Stankovic, 2015). Credible studies can facilitate accurate preparedness to service future needs. It is to be expected that as the generation matures more articles will be published.

Secondly, it is observed that the current global travel and tourism market is characterized by multi-generations (Glover, 2010). It may be argued that this is as a result of the tendency by marketing agencies to target a specific demography for differentiated tourism products, be they tourism services, goods or otherwise. In a similar observation, Schewe and Meredith (2004) note that present consumers are more generationally diverse and eclectic in their lifestyles than previous generations. Elsewhere, Eisner (2005) observed that for the first time, the workforce now contained four generations, making it a multi-generational environment. Consequently, destinations would stand to benefit by understanding the different generations constituting their market. In this regard, this research argues for generation cohort as a valid approach to understanding demographic factors in tourism studies. Indeed, Pennington-Gray et al. (2003) have argued that case studies have been used to demonstrate the validity of cohorts in tourism.

2.3 DEFINITION OF EXPERIENCE

Experience has been commented on across disciplines. In tourism, the concept of experience is considered important for a destination's competitiveness (Jensen, Østergaard, & Lindberg, 2015). In English, the word experience refers both to lived experiences as well as to the knowledge and expertise gained over time as a result of lived experiences (Duerden, Ward, & Freeman, 2015). The American Heritage Dictionary definitions of experience are given below in Table 4:

1	The apprehension of an object, thought, or emotion through the senses or mind	Noun
2	a. Active participation in events or activities, leading to the accumulation of knowledge or skills b. The knowledge or skills so derived	Noun
3	a. An event or a series of events participated in or lived through b. The totality of such events in the past of an individual or group	Noun
4	To participate in personally; undergo	Verb

Table 4 - Definition of experience from the American Heritage Dictionary

In the definition above a distinction is made between experience as a noun and as a verb. A further distinction is made between two German words for experience; '*Erlebnis'* and '*Erfahrung'* (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Larsen, 2007)*.* The first signifies immediate participation or consciousness related to situations while the second connotes the accumulated experiences in the course of time (Larsen, 2007). Larsen notes that both these words are applicable to tourism in that tourists participate in events while travelling and also accumulate memories from the trips. In this study on Generation Z experience is defined as "an individual's subjective evaluation and undergoing (i.e., affective, cognitive, and behavioural) of events related to his/her travel activities which begin before (i.e., planning and preparation), during (i.e., at the destination), and after the trip (i.e., recollection)" (Tung & Ritchie, 2011: 1369).

Schmitt (1999) defines experience as the triggered stimulations to the senses, the heart, and the mind occurring because of encountering, undergoing or living through situations. The implication is that experiences may be realized on either or on all the realms of a human being – body, soul and spirit. This seems to be supported by Aho (2001) who distinguishes between essential core contents of touristic experiences as getting emotionally affected, getting informed, getting practised and getting transformed. The research on Generation Z regards the individual as the realm of experience, seemingly agreeing with these two authors. However, a distinction is made to Schmitt's marketing proposition of five different types of experiences - sense, feel, think, act, and relate - referred to as strategic experiential modules (SEMs). As earlier noted, a person is a body, soul and spirit (see Figure 2) thus making Schmitt's modules a function of either of these three. In exploring Generation Z experiences, this research recognizes these three dimensions of a human being as the realms where experience is realized making it an inward-focused model. This is a departure from the realms presented by Pine and Gilmore (see Figure 3) which can be termed as being more outward-focused.

SPIRIT - **Spiritual**
Conscience, Intuition,
Meaning, Purpose

SOUL - **Psychological**
Mind, Emotions, Will

BODY - **Physiological**
Sensory - See, Smell, Touch,
Smell, Feel
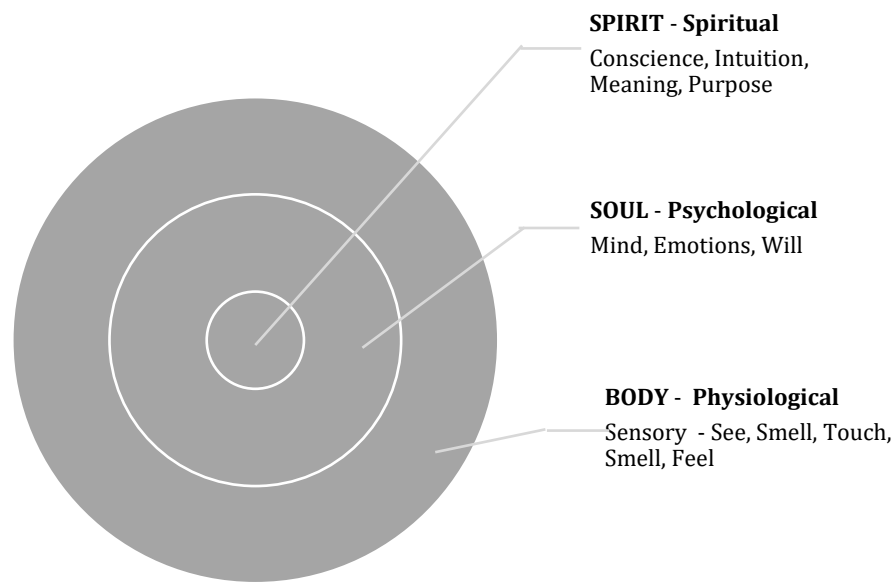
Figure 2 - The realms of tourist experience (researcher's model)

Pine and Gilmore (1998) present experiences as the fourth economic offering after services, goods or commodities in what they call the "*progression of economic value*". They opine that experiences are created when a company intentionally uses services as the stage and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Arguing from a management paradigm, their discussion on characteristics of experiences presents four realms of experience - entertainment, educational, aesthetic and escapist - categorised according to where they fell along two dimensions; customer participation and connection (see Figure 3). However, it is contended that literature about and studies of "the experience economy" privilege the supply-side over the demand-side and performances of the industry over consumers and tourists (Ek et al., 2008). Furthermore, the argument presupposes commoditization of experience. This, some would argue, invalidates the argument of experience as a distinct and separate phenomenon rather classifying it within the three pre-mentioned economic offerings (Morgan, 2010). Instructively, marketing and management editors have observed a trend towards a focus on strategies geared towards satisfying tourist experience needs from a reliance on features of tourist destinations (Haven-Tang & Jones, 2010; Morgan, 2010).
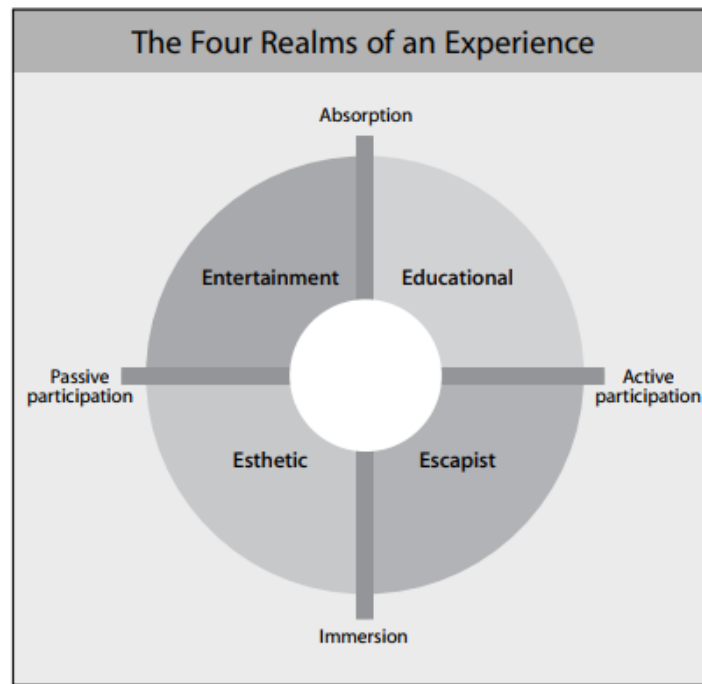
Figure 3 - The Four realms of an experience - Sourced from Pine & Gilmore, (1998, pp102)

Worth mentioning is that despite the plethora of contributors, no single theory has defined the meaning and extent of tourist experiences (Chhetri et al., 2004). This underpins the multidimensional nature of experience.

2.3.1 Experience – the 'tourist-centric' perspective

Beyond the definitional lacuna, however, experience is a widely studied phenomenon across disciplines. Tourist experience studies vary in approach and perspectives. However studies have concentrated on two broad academic perspectives; a social science approach (e.g. Lee & Crompton, 1992; MacCannell, 1973) and a marketing/management approach (Volos, 2009). From the social science approach these vary from phenomenological approach (as a subjective experience), to Durkheimian approach (as an opportunity for escape or sacred journey), to subjective psychological process approach, to critical approach (institutional pleasure-seeking activity) and as a type of gaze (romanticism, cultures and power) among others (Quan & Wang, 2004). Volos (2009) presents these as investigations of motivations, activities, interests, meanings and attitudes, the search for authenticity and focus on subjective experiences.

The social science approaches, Quan and Wang (2004) argue, contrast between tourist experience and daily life experience. The authors use the term *peak experience* to connote tourists' travelling to experience something different from the routine. This position that tourism experience and everyday life routine are disparate has been challenged by scholars

since the 1990s (Uriely, 2005). Uriely argues that the distinctions between the two have been blurred or obliterated by the emergence of mass media and the increase of simulated environments which have made touristic experiences possible without the need to travel to separate destinations. Conversely, these developments may be used to prop up rather than impede travel. An example of this can be seen where Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) using media and new technology as tools to promote destinations resulting in increased visits. Furthermore, the social science approach is distinct from the management/marketing approach which regards tourist experience a *consumer experience.* This can be regarded as commoditization of experience. Indeed O'Dell (2007) observes that though experiences are personal, subjectively perceived, intangible and continuously ongoing, in tourism they are also a commodified phenomenon. Inferred is not only tourist experience as a social/psychological phenomenon but also as a commercial/economic phenomenon. Indeed, Tribe (2004) mentions that in the field of tourism the business part holds a strong sway on knowledge production with much of the knowledge being generated for profitability.

Psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi studying 'the experience' in the context of leisure/play is considered the most important person in giving birth to the concept of consumer experience (Csikszentniihalyi, 1975; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009). He described what he called 'optimal experience' in a later publication as the sense of exhilaration, the deep sense of enjoyment that is long cherished and that becomes a landmark in memory for what life should be like (Ritchie & Hudson, 2009). Otto and Ritchie (1996) in one of the earliest scholarly journal research articles on tourism experience provided some insights on dimensions of experience in tourism. Their arguments from a management position present tourism as a business comprised of many service sectors. The tourist experience is therefore akin to the consumption of services. In their empirical study of 339 tourists, they identified six dimensions of service experience: Hedonic, Interactive or Social, Novelty seeking or Escape, Comfort, Safety, and a Stimulating or Challenge Seeking Dimensions (Otto & Ritchie, 1996; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009). The study was significant in introducing the emotional and hedonic aspects of experience to tourism.

2.3.1.1   A tourist experience cycle

A different model by Cutler and Carmichael (2010) proposes that tourist experience is preceded by motivations and expectations resulting in satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Larsen (2007) arguing from a cognitive approach distinguishes between the tourist event, its precursors and effects. He offers that experiences are influenced by expectancies and events. He further states that the experiences remain etched in the individuals' memory, thus forming the basis for new preferences and expectancies. A description of experience will, therefore, encompass the planning process (expectancies), the actual trip (events during the trip) and the memories

thereafter (Larsen, 2007). Similarly, Aho (2001) distinguished the stages of experience process to include three stages; before the trip, the trip and after the trip (Figure 4). The figure shows a cyclical progression to demonstrate the continuous flow of these stages. The memories and knowledge after the trip influence the anticipations before the future travel. The "after trip" becomes the "before trip" for future travel.
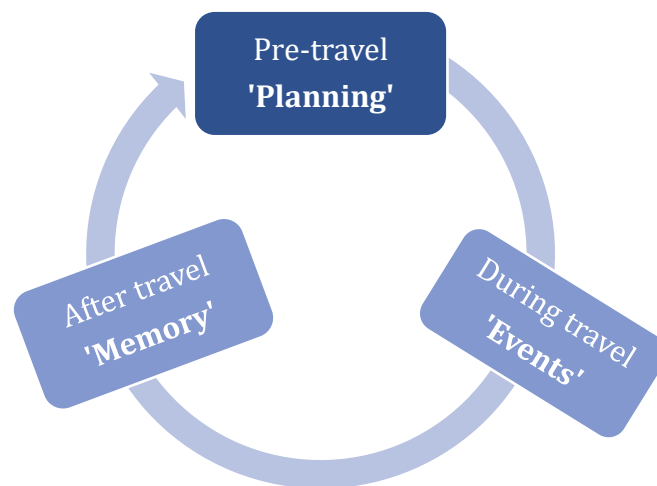
Figure 4 - The tourist experience cycle – sourced from Aho (2001)

Here the focus is shifted from the destination and tourism sector (supply) to the tourist (demand) leading to Larsen's (2007) suggestion that a focus of tourism experience should be on the construction of memories. This, it would seem, was heeded to as attention of tourism experience research has tended towards understanding how tourist experiences can be converted into more memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) (Chandralal, Rindfleish, & Valenzuela, 2015). Emerging from this paradigm is a view of destinations as staged realities. This raises issues of sustainability and/or perpetuity of destinations as portrayed in these images, and the permanence or longevity of the would-be memorable experience in the life of the individual engaged in travel.

Memory is recognized by tourism scholars as an important source of information for a traveller (Chandralal et al., 2015). This makes the creation of dominant positive impressions and memories an important concern for tourism purveyors. Howbeit, negative experiences are unavoidable (Liu, 2016) but may result in positive outcome over time, even though people tend to forget and avoid them (Hosany, 2012; Liu, 2016). A distinction is made between implicit and explicit memories. Explicit memories are either *semantic* which connotes general facts and knowledge, or *episodic* which refers to personally experienced events (Larsen, 2007). The

author argues that the later better serves the tourist experience discourse. However, the importance of the former in this subject should not be ignored. Recall of general facts like geographical location and distances may be instrumental in planning future repeat visits.

Elsewhere, Robinson (1986) describes autobiographical memory referring to a person's memories of his or her own life experiences. The very vivid, long-lasting memories of significant events in life are referred to as 'flashbulb' memories (Brown & Kulik, 1977; Chandralal et al., 2015; Larsen, 2007). These are borne of two principal determinants; a high level of surprise and a high level of consequentiality or emotional arousing (Brown & Kulik, 1977). Pine and Gilmore (1998) have argued that while commodities are exchangeable, goods tangible and services intangible, experiences are *memorable*. Observably and as earlier mentioned, there are instances where negative experiences become positively memorable. Such could include getting wet on a rafting trip or being scared while skydiving or sore muscles after a long hike. It follows that any would-be successful destinations will incline their strategies towards developing tourism product that would engender memorable experiences to the tourist/traveller.

2.3.2 Travel motivation

Tourist experience is likened to other consumer experiences – preceded by motivation and expectation with the results being either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; Morgan, 2010). In considering the motivation for travel, Iso-Ahola (1982) proposes two forces at play. One is the desire to leave the accustomed everyday environment and second the desire to obtain psychological (intrinsic) rewards. These forces determine a tourist's plans and behaviours and can affect his/her resultant experiences in a destination (Chhetri et al., 2004; Iso-ahola, 1982). Aho (2001) identifies core motivational elements in experience as being the physical elements, mental elements and social elements and their derived combinations. However, motivation is only one of many variables which may contribute to explaining tourist behaviour (Crompton, 1979).

Whereas there is a lack of universally agreed-upon conceptualization of tourist motivation construct (Fodness, 1994), several models do exist including Dann's (1977) push and pull factors, Pearce's (1988) travel career ladder (TCL) and Plog's (1974) allocentric/psycho-centric travel personalities, and Mannell and Iso-Ahola's (1987) escaping and seeking dimensions of leisure motivation. The push/pull model is generally accepted by many researchers (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Hanqin & Lam, 1999; Jang & Cai, 2002; Kassean & Gassita, 2013). Fodness (1994) developed an easy to administer self-report scale of tourist motivation that relates travel to functional models. The six motivators he identified are the ego-defensive function (self-esteem and self-discovery), knowledge function (educational, cultural and novelty), utilitarian function/reward maximization (health, sports, pleasure, adventure, relaxation), utilitarian

function/punishment avoidance (escape, anomie), value expression function (ego-enhancement, prestige), and social adjustive function (kinship relationships and social interaction). Dismissing some models as secondary and superficial, Fodness (1994) further offers that this scale is easier and more precise in measuring tourist motivation.

Lee et al., (2011) observed that, tourism research without consideration of the motivation of a tourist is considered meaningless. Consequently, this research considers the motivations behind Generation Z travels in New Zealand. To do this, the research adopts a push/pull model. Push factors are internal motives/forces that cause tourists to seek activities to meet their needs while pull factors are destination generated forces (Crompton, 1979; Essays, 2013; Gnoth, 1997). While the push factors are thought of as birthing travel desire, the pull factors are more instrumental in the choice of destination (Crompton, 1979).

2.4 DESTINATIONS AS EXPERIENCE SPACES

Arguably, individuals seek experience of place or self in place (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010). Experience has been viewed as an interaction between destinations as the "theatres" and tourists as the "actors" (Stamboulis & Skayannis, 2003). The destinations are therefore seen as an arena for experiences. The tourism industry is considered a player in generating, staging and consuming of experiences through manipulation of place and presentation of culture (Cutler & Carmichael, 2010; O'Dell, 2007). According to O'Dell (2007), experiences are staged, produced and consumed in places such as stores, museums, cities, and tourist attractions among other spaces. Mossberg (2007) has labelled these places/spaces '*experiencescape*'. These, according to Volos (2009), can exist anywhere outside one's usual environment and committed time. For this reason, individuals will travel away from their usual environment to experience something new or different, and meet new people. It was found that tourists may potentially incur meaningful and transformative experiences during their interaction with locals in their daily living environment (Aquino, Schänzel, & Hyde, 2018).

The interaction of the tourist with the tourism system in these visited places is fundamental to the construction of tourists' experiences (Larsen, 2007). This argument considers the tourist a co-creator of tourist spaces (Mossberg, 2007). It is a view supported by Ek et al., (2008) who have argued that tourists are not passive consumers but are also co-designers of their own experiences and of the places they visit. They do these through their tales shared on different media. Tourists come to shop for an experience with certain attributes while the destinations and purveyors of tourism services offer opportunities to access such experiences (Volos, 2009). New Zealand is known for its stunning landscape and coastline. These features, it could be argued, provide the traveller/tourist with numerous spaces for creating experiences. The

images portrayed by destination marketers and the tourism industry players reinforce perceptions in a traveller's mind about the destination. This will act as a 'pull' factor or a motivating factor.

2.4.1   The 'push' and 'pull' factors

These two concepts pervade most discussions of tourist motivation (Crompton, 1979). Push factors are considered an intrinsic and intangible drive, for example, the desire to escape, rest among many more (Seebaluck et al., 2015). Pull factors, on the other hand, are extrinsic and relate to the destination. In Gnoth (1997), these are referred to as "need" and "press" further distinguishing them as motives and motivation. People engage in travel because they are pushed by socio-psychological factors and pulled by external forces of a destination's attributes (Crompton, 1979; Seebaluck, et al., 2015). In this regard, Chhetri et al., (2004) have argued that tourists visit a destination to satisfy and fulfil certain goals and needs. Destinations are therefore required to possess the 'pull factor' and the ability to satisfy these needs.

Destination marketing, branding and promotion initiatives reinforce the pull factor (Seebaluck et al., 2015) by creating images in the traveller's mind. Destination image has been related to destination positioning and destination selection (Gallarza, 2002; Y. Wang & Davidson, 2008). Perceived images of a destination's attractiveness pulls/motivates the tourist to travel to the destination (Kassean & Gassita, 2013). The core challenge of tourism planners, therefore, is to design effective touristic destinations and experiences (Ritchie & Hudson, 2009). Historically, New Zealand marketing and promotion has been pegged on its pristine beauty and productivity (Bell, 2008). From the early 'Scenic Wonderland' of the nineteenth century, the 'clean and green' tag of the 1970s, the 'nuclear-free' label of the 1980s to the '100% pure New Zealand' brand since 1999, the image conjures a perfect '*experiencescape*'. This attractiveness is a 'pull' factor and consequently motivates travellers and tourists to visit. This can be evidenced by reports indicating that in 2017, New Zealand ranked 16th in the global tourism competitiveness index (Smiler, 2018). In the report, the country ranked 1st in attractiveness of natural assets and 2nd in effectiveness of marketing and branding to attract visitors.

However, it has also been suggested that places do not attract people, nor do they push people away (Larsen, 2007). Consequently, the author opines, that studies should concentrate on individuals engaged in or about to engage in tourism. The argument shifts the locus of experience and experiencing to the tourist/traveller. Indeed, in his observation, Uriely (2005) notes a shift from tourism's displayed objects being the determinants of experience to the tourist's subjective negotiation of meaning being the determinant. This research acknowledges both views in a conceptual model but regards Larsen's and Uriely's suggestions that the individual is the arena of experience. Experience is realized by the individual and can, therefore,

be viewed as subjective. In this regard, experience is a reality-bound within the person and not an externality. The traditional 'pull factor' of the destination therefore can be considered an indirect element contributing towards the experience. It is a *raison d'être* filtered through subjective interpretation.

Seemingly, this position corresponds to Morgan's (2010) assertions that satisfaction (resulting from expectation) emerges over the course of experience rather than as a response to features of a service. Similarly, this research holds that travel is more about experiences rather than about places and things (King, 2002; Morgan, 2010). Consequently, King (2002) believes that the focus of DMOs should increasingly shift from promoting physical features of the destination to being more traveller centric. Presumably, New Zealand obliged to this assertion and from 2005 campaigns attempted to shift focus from pristine landscapes to people interacting with the landscape and enjoying being outdoors (Campelo, Aitken, & Gnoth, 2011). In 2007 a campaign by Tourism New Zealand (TNZ) targeting international market underscored the focus on experience rather than on the destination (Campelo et al., 2011).

2.4.2 Conclusion

In summary and as pointed out by Mannell and Iso-Ahola, (1987) and Morgan, Lugosi, and Ritchie, (2010), the dominant perspectives used to examine tourism experience can be grouped in four categories - definitional approach, the post-hoc satisfaction approach, the immediate conscious approach and the business and management approach (see Table 5).

However, a mixed approach may be important. This research utilizes a mixed approach. A definitional approach which identifies the realms of experience has been used. Discussions on motivation, satisfaction and appraisal of experience which correspond to post-hoc approach have also been identified and discussed. In addition, the actual New Zealand on-site experiences of Generation Z in this research relate to the immediate consciousness approach.

Research perspective	Key arguments and features	Representative authors
Definitional approach	Elements and dimensions of tourist experience	(Botterill & Crompton, 1996; Desforges, 2000; Larsen, 2007; O 'Dell, 2007; Pearce & Foster, 2007; Quan & Wang, 2004; Uriely, 2005)
Post-hoc approach	Psychological benefits – motivation, satisfaction, assessment of experience	(de Rojas & Camarero, 2008; Gram, 2005; Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007; Prentice, Richard, Witt, S., 1998)
Immediate consciousness approach	Actual real time on-site experience	(Arnould & Price, 1993; Borrie & Roggenbuck, 2001)
Business management approach	Consumer theory, products offered, evaluating sites, activities, enhancing tourist experience and management techniques	(Mossberg, 2007; Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

Table 5 - A Summary of experience literature perspectives

Furthermore, a juxtaposition of social, cognitive and personality processes are required to describe tourist experience (Larsen, 2007). This calls for a multidimensional and multidisciplinary analysis, a position supported by Chhetri et al., (2004) who note that experience is more than seeing a landscape but extends to include processes of knowing, believing and recognising. These processes are embedded in cognition and are based on background knowledge, learning and reasoning capabilities of individuals. While this view contrasts the business and management propositions, it further invites a multidisciplinary consideration of the notion 'experience'. In full recognition of the above, this research explores multiple aspects of Generation Z travel experiences. Important features in this research are the push and pull factors. These factors contribute to the overall understanding of some aspects of New Zealand which may be regarded as posing a pull effect on Generation Z and provide arguments to the research question.

2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

As it has been established in the literature review, experience is not a one-dimensional phenomenon. Numerous factors are to be considered when conducting a study on experience. These factors, it can be said, impact upon different aspects (hereto referred to as realms) of a human's construct (the spiritual level, the psychological level or the sensory level), thus resulting in 'experience'. This research reconceptualises experience by adopting an integrative model. The model considers experience beyond the sensory realm to include soul and spirit while at the same time appreciating other external factors which impact on the said experience (see Figure 5).
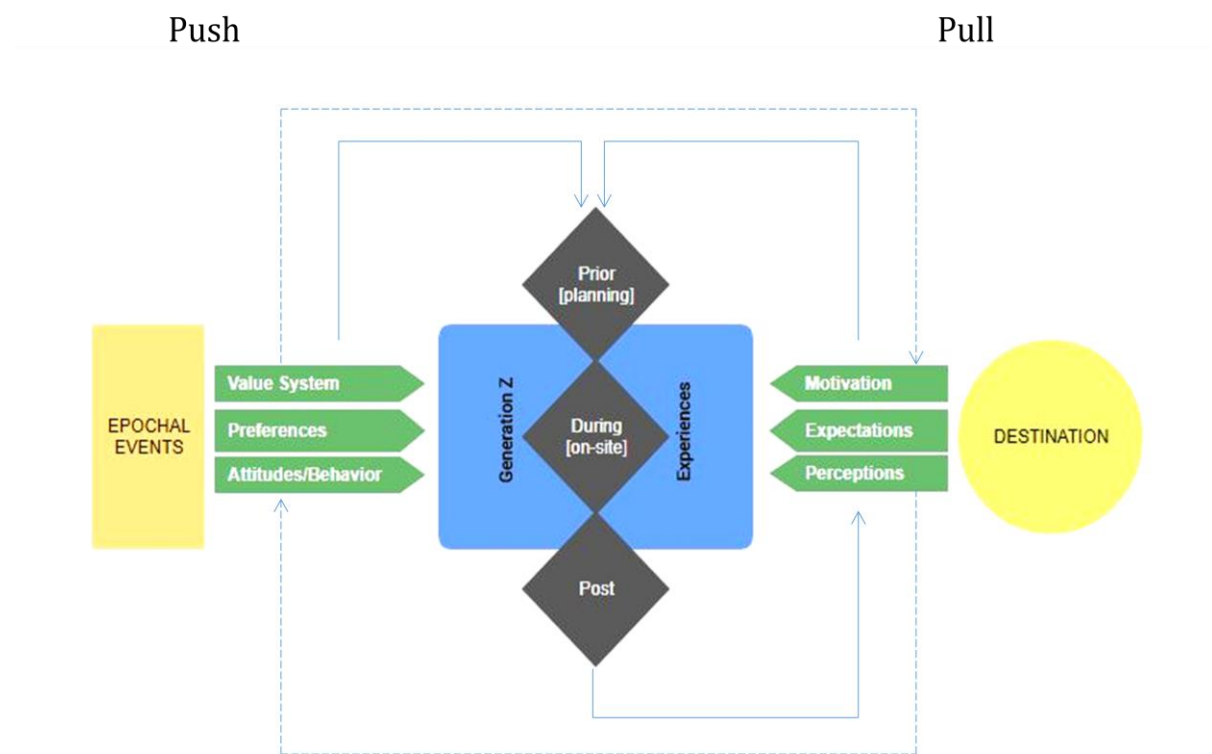
Figure 5 - Conceptual Framework of components of tourist experience (Researcher's model)

These external factors will include the epochal events as well as destination features for example; landscape, people among others (see detailed discussion in chapter 3 on methodology). The events constitute a 'push' factor in that they embed values, attitudes, preferences and behaviours which internally drive Generation Z to pursue 'experiences'. The destination, on the other hand, constitutes the 'pull' factor by producing perceptions, expectations and a motivating effect in Generation Z travellers. As noted earlier, an individual's

image of a destination will affect their subjective perception and consequent behaviour, and destination choice (Gallarza, 2002). While some literature focuses on experience as occurring at the destination, this model recognizes experience as the sum-total of pre-trip, on-site and post trip.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter has reviewed literature on generation theory and experience. Reviewed literature indicates that generational theory pervades several disciplines including sociology, anthropology, marketing and management among others. Additionally, the theory has been applied in tourism studies. However, there is a paucity of studies on the emerging Generation Z in the tourism literature. Studies on Generation Z are primarily market research surveys with little academic research having been observed. This research is intended to contribute towards filling this gap.

Concomitantly, studies on experience are wide and varied. This underscores the multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature of experience as an area of study. Despite the plethora of literature on the subject, and to the best of my knowledge, no studies on Generation Z travel experiences in New Zealand were found. The dearth of literature on a significant generation that is entering adulthood is further rationale for this study.

In addition, the review indicates that there are definitional contestations, approaches and conceptualization of experience among different writers. Consequently, a reconceptualised model has been adopted for this study. The new model considers different strands emergent from the literature. However, this is no claim to an exhaustive grand theory status. the chapter on methodology highlights the assignment of the research questions to the new conceptual model. This provides an overview of the research in a diagrammatic form.

3   CHAPTER 3 –METHODOLOGY

You need to treat the literature not as an authority *to be deferred to, but as a useful but fallible source of* ideas *about what's going on, and to attempt to see alternative ways of framing the issues (Maxwell, 2013).*

This chapter outlines the design and procedures adopted to address the research aim and objectives. It starts with a brief statement on the research gap and proceeds to detail and justify how the research was conducted. A conceptualization of the research questions is presented. This is followed by a discussion of the research paradigm including ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods used in this research. The data analysis process is discussed leading to presentation of the thematic framework emerging from the data. Finally, the chapter discusses the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1   THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Chapter 2 of this study provided a review of literature which indicated a paucity of research and literature on Generation Z travellers/tourists. The review included literature on the generation theory in tourism, youth in tourism and debate on tourist experience. Literature revealed a dearth of literature specific to travel experiences of inbound Generation Z in New Zealand. It was observed that the tendency has been to use youth as the descriptor for all young travellers. There appears to be limited recognition of generation cohorts in New Zealand literature instead using broader age-grouping. As such, Generation Z in tourism and travel would be studied under 'youth tourism' or under other travellers' taxonomies such as 'backpacker tourist' among others. While such studies offer insightful knowledge, they tend to generalize issues. Studies on backpackers, for instance, conclude that backpackers are not just youth but include older people (Cohen, 2017; Maoz, 2007; Markward, 2008). Typology studies have been deemed insufficient on insights into the complexities of tourism interactions at experiential and emotional levels (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). This research is specific to a delineated group – the New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers. The research prods into multiple facets and levels of experience to include psychological, sensory as well as spiritual.

While the examined corpus reveals extensive research in experience, this research proposes a reconceptualised model. The model shifts from a 'destination-centric' model to a 'traveller-centric' model, thus focusing on the '*experiencer'* - Generation Z (O'Dell, 2007). This further shifts Generational Z study from the extant market research orientation to a more academic orientation. In addition, it provides insights to leverage the current thrust of Tourism New Zealand towards a more people focus as opposed to a former focus on landscapes.

Generational theory has its genesis in Western Europe. This is evidenced by the seeming predominance of Europe and USA in studies on the topic. The dearth of generational cohort research and knowledge in New Zealand is further rationale for this study. In addition, Generation Z represents demography of soon to be adults. Invariably, they will soon play a pivotal role in both tourism clientele as well as tourism sector's workforce/investors. Insightful research into the generation will provide relevant and helpful knowledge to would be hosts, employers and/or destinations. Finally, and in recognition of the multidimensional, multiphase and dynamic nature of tourist experiences, the advice of Jennings (2010a) to use a qualitative approach has been followed. This will allow for a more holistic and insider (emic) perspective.

3.2   CONCEPTUALIZATION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A conceptual framework explains the key factors, concepts, or variables of a study and the presumed relationships among them (Maxwell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). These can either be graphically or in narrative form. A graphical representation has been used. The choice of this form of representation was to capture in a diagrammatic format, the complex relationship among various factors which contribute to the discourse of experience. Theories and previous research from different fields have been utilized in conceptualizing this study as shown below (see Figure 6). The inclusion of these theories and concepts underpins the multifaceted dimensions and breadth of investigations of tourist experience. Tourism does not exist in a vacuum far removed from the wider trend in social sciences and academic discourse (Hall, 2004). The integration of different ideas, approaches, lines of investigation, or theories in a conceptual framework makes it more productive (Maxwell, 2013).

This qualitative exploratory research seeks to understand how New Zealand inbound Generation Z interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). To this end the research will focus on the following main questions:

- What are the New Zealand inbound Generation Z travel experiences?
- What possible factors have shaped these experiences?
- What are some of the aspects of New Zealand as a destination which pull these travellers?
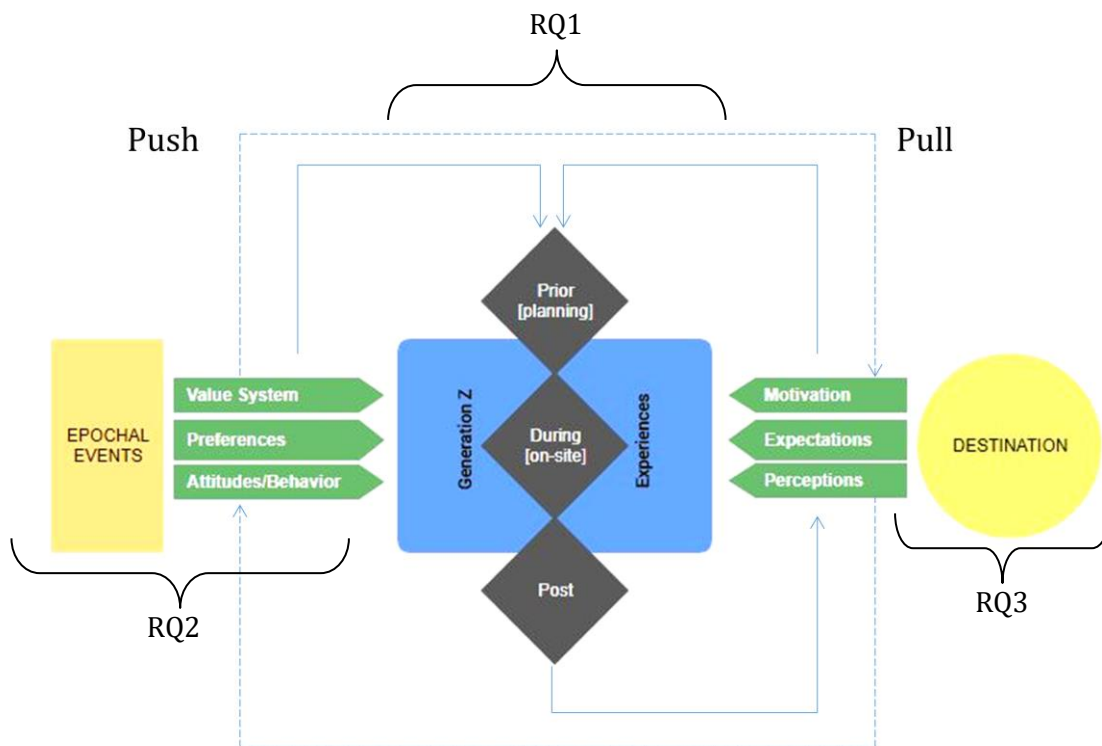
Figure 6 Generation Z travel experiences conceptual design (Researcher's model)

In the conceptual model shown above (Figure 6), the 'epochal events' shape the 'collective persona' of a generation. These generational attributes are instrumental in determining how the individual interacts with the destination. Identifying the events and the resultant defining characteristics of Generation Z are key to understanding their value system, preferences, attitudes and behaviour. Consequently, these factors impact and shape the tourist experience. Further, these factors impact on the planning process, the on-site interaction and post-travel experience. This is shown by the inner continuous arrow pointing to the planning box. These constitute the research question 2 and are marked as RQ2 in the figure. The destination as a bounded environment provides not only the space for 'experience' to be realized but also has an impact on the planning process of the trip. Examples of this include the costs associated with touring the place determining the length of stay or quality of accommodation which the traveller chooses. These will further contribute to the overall experience. In addition, the destination features and attributes shape expectations and perceptions. These can be said to constitute the 'pull factor', thus producing motivation for travel to the destination. As indicated

in the literature review, the destination has been the focus of most tourism industry purveyors. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) generate representations on the significance of a destination (Moscardo, 2010). These are reinforced by other media such as movies, eventually forming a basis of destination selection by a traveller. These effects are represented by the continuous inner arrow pointing from the destination end towards the pre-trip planning box. In the conceptual model above, they are marked RQ3 and form the basis for research question 3.

The mid-section of the model is the place (arena) of experience. It is the place where 'experience' is realized and is the realm of the Generation Z traveller. The model considers experience as being realized on three realms which form a person – the body (encompassing the physiological or sensory realm/dimension), the soul (psychological realm/dimension) and the spirit (spiritual realm/dimension). This experience does not start at the destination but starts prior to travel during the planning process and continues during the trip and post trip. In the diagram, this represented by the fact that a part of pre-trip and post-trip are contained within the rectangle marked as Generation Z experiences.

Post the travelling, new perceptions and expectations are formed to become reference points for future travel. Secondly, the travel experiences become important in shaping future development of the destination, hence the backwards-flow arrow post the travel. Smed (2012:136) qualifies this by stating that "the *after* is turned into a new *before* over time and, thereby, new – or revised – evaluations are made, providing a new basis for choices being made". This cyclical flow is represented by the outermost arrows flowing from the epochal events or push end of the diagram to the destination or pull end and then from the pull end back to the push end of the diagram.

3.3 THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

A paradigm is the basic set of beliefs that define a person's worldview – a lens through which we view the world (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Philosophical paradigms significantly influence how we conduct research and how we seek to acquire knowledge. As pointed out by Guba and Lincoln (1994), the basic belief system and worldview is integral in guiding the investigator in choice of methods, ontologically and epistemologically. Pernecky (2016) has noted consensus among scholars on the necessity of engaging with ontological and epistemological views in the research process. Essential to a researcher, therefore, is an understanding of the values and beliefs he ascribes to. I deemed it necessary to understand the philosophical position of my study. The position would entail my belief about the nature of reality (ontological position) and the nature of knowledge or epistemological position (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

This is a qualitative exploratory research founded on an interpretive (constructivist) paradigm. To an interpretivist, humans are meaning makers, thus understanding phenomena requires understanding the meaning from the subjects (Elliot, Fairweather, Olsen, & Pampaka, 2016). This research sought to understand tourist experiences from the participants – Generation Z. Further, the paradigm holds that knowledge is not only intrinsically valuable but is also of significant value in regard to social change (Jennings, 2010b). Insight into the travel experiences of Generation Z will be of significance in as far as embracing the envisioned generational shifts and the anticipated change is concerned. Furthermore, the findings may be useful to different tourism practitioners in understanding contemporary socio-demographic trends in New Zealand.

In qualitative research, theory is generated from the data while placing emphasis on participants' perspectives to gain understanding (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). This, the authors observe, entails interaction with the participants and interpretation of meanings. As a qualitative researcher it was important to understand how Generation Z interpreted their experiences and the meaning they ascribed to their experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). This understanding was transmitted through interacting with the participants. Interaction with participants was by way of interviews and through in-depth analysis of bloggers' posts. Exploratory research is conducted when very little or no information/data exists on the tourism phenomenon being investigated (Jennings, 2010). In the review of literature and to my knowledge, no inbound Generation Z tourists' studies have been conducted in New Zealand this far. Secondly, the generation in only now reaching adulthood, arguably making prior research restrictive due to legal adult age requirements. Therefore, they represent the new emerging adults thus making the choice of exploratory research most suited.

3.3.1 Ontological perspective

Ontologically, interpretive (also called relativism) research is based on philosophical doctrines of idealism and assumes multiple realities which are socially constructed (Walliman, 2011). "Multiple" means that reality is complex, changing, and multi-perspectival depending on who views it, from where, and at which point in time (Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). To a relativist, reality is based on meanings and understandings on social and experiential levels (Dudovskiy, 2011). An interpretive reality consists of multiple constructions emanating from the different perspectives or perceptions of a given phenomenon. Reality is therefore subjective and is influenced by the context of the situation – the individual's experience and perceptions, the social environment, and the interaction between the individual and the researcher (Ponterotto, 2005). The researchers do not "find" knowledge; they construct it (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Thanh, Thi, & Thanh, 2015). Therefore, an interpretive constructivist is seen as seeking to

understand the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it (Schwandt, 1994).

This research is on Generation Z from whom understanding was sought. There was recognition that meanings in this enquiry were jointly constructed between the researcher and the participants. This, Walliman (2011) describes as the researcher being inextricably bound in the human situation that he/she is studying. Furthermore, in settling on Generation Z (a generational theory construct) as the subject assumes *prima facie* a socially constructed reality. Experiences and cultural context influence how an interpretivist views phenomenon. Having grown up in Kenya, a former British colony with some residual British systems in the society has engendered several western perspectives. For this reason, the erstwhile African cultural moorings have been tempered with westernized views. These have been accentuated by my nine years in New Zealand and hospitality industry training cum work experience. In these, I have come to appreciate the multifaceted expressions that constitute life, testament of which is the ontological position taken in this research.

Goodson and Phillimore (2004) opine that tourism spaces are not physically but socially constructed. The authors advise consideration of how the meanings associated with spaces are constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed over time. Consequently, as a tourism practitioner and student living in New Zealand, I felt indebted to contribute towards a contemporary construction of the destination for posterity.

3.3.2 Epistemological belief

Epistemology is concerned with how we know the world and defines the relationship between the inquirer and the known (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). It is described as a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know (Crotty, 1998). An interpretive epistemology is transactional or subjectivist and views people as inseparable from their knowledge (Dudovskiy, 2011; Pizam & Mansfeld, 2009; Ponterotto, 2005). This requires cooperation between the researcher and research participants. Appropriate means of connecting to the participants was therefore paramount for this research. Interaction with the participant and/or their world was the platform for knowledge transfer. It was important to capture meaning from the participants themselves and ascribe accurate interpretation to the same.

Goodson and Phillimore (2004) have advised of the importance of acknowledging the indexicality (the contextual position) of knowledge through exploring how claims for knowledge relate to a temporal, geographical or social moment. Ways of knowing are culture-bound and perspectival (Colquhoun & Kellehear, 1993). Therefore, it was important to recognize that the inquirer and the participants possess bias of their own, hence subjectivity.

Subjectivity should be viewed as being self-aware and as an expression of individuality. Recognition of these biases or subjectivities is strength to be productively utilized. Glesne and Peshkin (1992, p.104) emphasized the importance of subjectivity in the conduct of research as something to "capitalize on rather than to exorcise". Rather than masking these subjectivities, an awareness and vigilance on how they shape the conduct of the research process contributes to a more robust socially constructed reality.

It is observed that tourism researchers tend to approach tourism studies from within the specific boundaries of the main discipline in which they have been trained (Echtner & Jamal, 1997). My training is in hotel operations and management. Managerialist institutions have been accused of having little genuine cross-disciplinary coverage of the tacit, the subjective, the discursive or the interpretive (Hollinshead, 2004). In view of the above, it is acknowledged that my hospitality industry training in the Kenya Utalii College (a managerialist institution) coupled with about two decades of work experience in hotels has engendered perspectives about tourists/travellers. However, these perspectives enhanced the process of this research.

Hospitality industry is founded on customer service, thus making it relational and interactive. Interpretivists hold that reality needs to be interpreted and meaning unearthed through interaction with the participants (Crotty, 1998). This fitted well with my training and work experience. Establishing rapport with the participants proved quite easy despite the age difference and despite the 'cultural distance' between the participants and me. It is acknowledged that people may respond differently depending on their perception of the person asking question (Denscombe, 2014). Factors like sex, age, ethnic origin, and accent may impact on the amount of information participants are willing to share and their honesty of revelation. In this regard, the interaction process was leveraged by my customer service training, thus making the erstwhile subjective elements an asset.

3.3.3   Grounded theory methodology

All qualitative research relies on the use of empirical data (Pernecky, 2016). Interpretive methodologies provide a context that allows the researcher to examine what participants have to say about their experiences (Thanh et al., 2015). Initially presented by Glaser and Strauss in 1967, Grounded theory (GT) is an interpretivist inductive methodology which utilizes collected data to develop theory (Goulding, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1994; Walliman, 2011). Theory is grounded in data. The approach emphasizes the importance of empirical data and the close linkage of any explanations to what happens in the real world (Denscombe, 2014). Not only has GT gained momentum as a methodological approach in tourism research but has also seen emergence of different versions (Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). Apart from the original version by Glaser and Strauss (1967), other versions are the objective grounded theory (Glaser, 1978),

post-positivist grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), and constructive grounded theory (Charmaz, 2000, 2006). In tourism, most researchers have used at least two versions of grounded theory.

In selecting the grounded theory approach, special attention was paid to my philosophical stance to ensure compatibility (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007b). As such, this research utilizes the constructivist version of grounded theory. In this version, interaction of the researcher and participants in the research process is necessary because meanings are regarded as being socially constructed (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, the approach is not only suited for qualitative research but also for exploratory research, and studies of human interaction. This being an exploratory research and tourism being an industry of human interaction makes GT the best suited approach (Denscombe, 2014). Furthermore, GT is compatible to an interpretivist stance in that this research does not aim for universal laws but to develop insights and to present propositions in an area where little is known (Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). Observing that grounded theory has its roots in pragmatism, Denscombe (2014) offers that theories produced should have practical relevance and be meaningful to those on the ground. This research is of practical relevance to a contemporary demographic reality. Insights generated are applicable to unfolding tourism patterns and trends being observed.

Data collection and analysis happened simultaneously, a process referred to as constant comparison (Cutcliffe, 2000). GT is used to generate theory where little or nothing is known about a phenomenon, or to provide a fresh perspective on existing knowledge (Goulding, 1998; Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). Whereas a lot has been studied about generation cohorts in general and about experience, little research exists on travel experiences of Generation Z. This makes GT an apt methodology for this study. This research introduces a new slant to existing experience discourse whilst providing contemporary study on Generation Z, in particular. Data was collected between 7th October 2017 and 12th February 2018 by way of semi-structured interviews and netnography until saturation was reached. This is a point where new data no longer provides new evidence (Cutcliffe, 2000). Implicit is that there are no limits as to the number of participants or interviewees.

3.4   QUALITATIVE EXPLORATORY RESEARCH METHODS

An important objective of qualitative study is to allow description of social realities from the perspective of those being studied rather than from the researcher's perspective (Chadwick, Bahr, & Albrecht, 1984). In selecting methods employed in this research, consideration was given to how best to achieve unobtrusive perspectives. Semi-structured interviews and netnography were selected as most appropriate. The two methods leveraged the narration of

experiences by the participants. The choice of netnography to complement interviews proved valuable in gaining detailed and in-depth narrations from the bloggers.

Since little research exists on this topic, the methods used in this qualitative study are oriented towards exploration and discovery (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Patton, 1990). As there is no one way to conduct a qualitative study (Patton, 1990), it was thought most appropriate to both incorporate interviews and netnography in this research in order to understand the multifaceted dimensions of travel experiences. Equally, these methods and approaches were considered reality-aware and context-appropriate (Hollinshead, 2004) in that Generation Z has grown up in a digital environment, thus making use of online platforms to communicate a norm.

Twelve interviews were conducted, and additional data mined from five bloggers' entries. These numbers were considered sufficient to gain in-depth data since qualitative methodologies facilitate the gathering of detailed data generally from small numbers of people (Veal, 1997). This, according to the author, is achieved through the interaction of the researcher with respondents. Furthermore, the process was maintained until saturation point. This point is achieved, in most studies, with eight to 24 interviews depending on the topic (Goulding, 1998; Riley, 1996).

3.4.1   Netnography

Netnography is an unobtrusive internet research approach which involves looking at the world of online travel blogging to provide insights from consumers' view (Kozinets, 2002; Bosangit, Hibbert, & McCabe, 2015). Societal change in the form of technological advances and the willingness to share information has given birth to the electronic word of mouth (EWOM) (Volo, 2010). This change, Volo notes, has seen a mutation of 'word of mouth' to more virtual forms such as blogs. Blogs are a digital form of journaling (Volo, 2010). They have been acknowledged as a useful tool for research (Chandralal et al., 2015). Recent years have seen an increase in travel blog research (Banyai & Havitz, 2012). Contrasting with the more researcher-led approaches such as interviews, Bosangit et al. (2015) note that blogs represent unleashed consumers' narrative and provide insights that may otherwise be missed. In blogs, details of contributors' experiences and opinions are published.

Blogs take the form of online diaries where private and intimate content is posted (Hookway, 2008). According to Carson (2007), blogs are seen as more representative of the 'real' thoughts and feelings of the participants. The inclusion of netnography in this study is informed by the fact that the current cohort of young travellers relies heavily on communication technology and media usage (Ramasubramanian & Martin, 2009). It was further considered as a way of widening the participant reach and of overcoming limitations of time and space.

Netnography can take one of four formats. First is the *'lurker'* where the researcher's presence is not revealed, and he/she does not participate in the communication. Second is the spy format where the researcher participates incognito. The third format is the observer wherein the bloggers are made aware of the research. The researcher does not participate or contribute. The fourth format is the researcher as a participant. This format incorporates the researcher's communication and the participants are made aware of the research (Mkono, 2013). This research takes the *'lurker'* format where the bloggers provided accounts of their experience unobtrusively. In this format, how the researcher presents him/herself, the research project, its aims, and expected outcome is not an issue (Björk & Kauppinen-Räisänen, 2012).

The process involved the use of search engines such as Google and Explorer to identify and select suitable blogs. By using key search words, such as tourism blogs/bloggers, travel blogs, youth travel blogs, and generation Z bloggers/blogs, several blogs were identified from numerous options. In selecting the blogs, two criteria proposed by Hookway (2008) were considered useful, thus; (1) the hosting personal diary style blogs and (2) the availability of search function according to location. Once potentially useful blogs were selected, the next step included browsing through the blogs to ascertain accessibility of posts and blog entries. From this step, two sites were selected: *www.travelblog.org* and *www.travelforteens.com*. Elimination ensured from here to ensure that selected blog entries met the important criteria of visit to New Zealand and age bracket.

Age location of contributors was a key factor in ascertaining usability of the data. In selecting individuals on this basis, key 'let-in' words or details were sought within the posts and profiles. These included photos and/or references to completing education studies, first trip on my own, and overseas experience among others. An example is a participant who had posted that she bought a car manufactured in 1997 and added the quote '...*the car was older than me*...'. From this, it was easy to ascertain that the blogger was born around 1998. A second criterion of elimination was the year blog posts were entered. Blogs entries that were over 4 years old were disregarded. This is because such a post would the place the blogger's age outside of the minimum 18 years bracket. The computation was arrived at as shown below (see Figure 7):
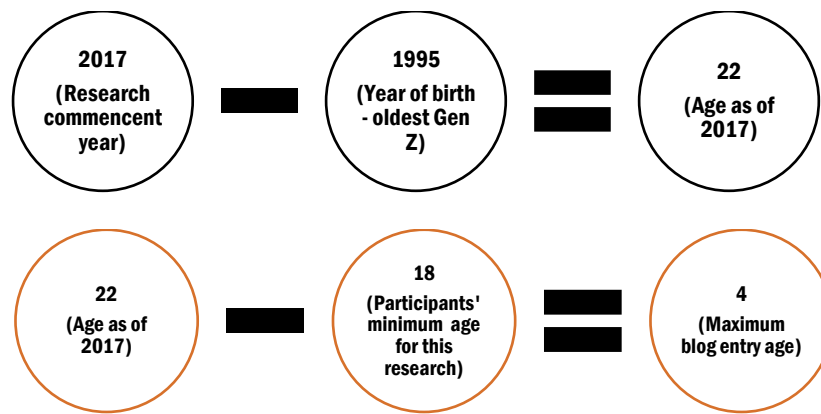
Figure 7 - Computation for oldest blog entry

This process was tedious, repetitive and time consuming. Once potential participants were identified, a more thorough scan of the posts ensued with a view to ascertain depth and relevance of posts to the research. From these, publicly available data was directly copied, compiled and analysed for proper interpretation. Density of notation was not a concern as netnography offers a revelatory depth of communication (Kozinets, 2002). Useful conclusions can, therefore, be drawn from a small number of messages which contain sufficient descriptive richness (Kozinets, 2002).

3.4.2   Qualitative semi-structured interviews

Whereas the internet is a viable fieldwork site for qualitative tourism research (Mkono, 2013), this research further incorporated 12 semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes each in the Auckland CBD. This structure of interview allows some freedom and adaptability in getting information from the participants especially by way of prompts (Turner, 2010). In qualitative research through semi-structured interviews, the researcher is able to build a relationship with the respondent which engenders trust and openness (McDonald, 2006). Since interviews provide in-depth information on experiences and viewpoints of participants, there was an expectation that these will complement the research and plug any gaps that might be endemic to blogs (Turner, 2010).

The initial process was raising awareness of the study and recruitment of participants. Recruitment posters bearing a brief of the study and the researcher's contact details were distributed in budget accommodation facilities in Auckland CBD where youth and backpacker travellers are known to frequent (see Appendix IV). Potential candidates were requested to contact the researcher by email or phone. Further recruitment was conducted by the researcher on the streets by way of public display of the recruitment poster and conversation with those who showed interest. After initial contact was established an agreed upon schedule was

planned. Where participants were ready to take the interview immediately, a quiet and convenient space was sought, and interviews conducted. To expand the base for capture of participants, the referral system - snowball effect method, was also used (Wahyuni, 2012). In this approach, the identified small number of participants was used to identify others (Gray, 2004). Three participants were identified through this method. A printed copy of the poster was provided to interested participants to pass on to friends and colleagues.

The choice of Auckland is informed by the fact that international travellers will normally land here before embarking on travels to other parts of New Zealand. It is also from here that they depart after their travels; it is the main port of arrival and departure. Age is a critical element of this research because the specific target group is Generation Z. Only participants within this age bracket were interviewed. To ensure this was adhered to, the recruitment poster, as well as participant information sheet, highlighted the age bracket (see Appendix IV). In addition, the researcher ascertained the year of birth for each participant prior to commencing the interview. To ensure gender representation, both male and female participants were interviewed. On realizing that most of the initial participants were females, the researcher resorted to specifically targeting male participants.

It was necessary to choose a suitable location for conducting the interviews. Quiet/reserved sections of cafes were used. The choice of these locations was based on proximity to participants' locality, quietness, comfort and participant's preferences. All these were to engender a relaxed atmosphere and quiet environment for the process. Once the suitable location was identified, care was taken to explain the study and the procedure to the participant. A consent form was then duly filled with the interviewing ensuing. Of primary importance was establishing rapport with the participants. Charmaz (2006) observes that this is a way of respecting our participants. To achieve this, participants were engaged in a casual conversation before the start of interview questions.

Ensuring the right kind of equipment is an important preparatory step (Roulston, 2013). A test run was done by the researcher before each interview to ensure functionality of the digital recorder. In addition, a spare set of batteries was carried as was a backup recorder. Each interviewee was then asked to talk about their New Zealand travel experiences. From this, prompts and follow-up questions around different themes were asked. Prompts allow unexpected data to emerge, hence providing much-needed insight and depth into the inquiry (Jacob & Furgerson, 2012). An interview guide (see Appendix V) was used while still maintaining flexibility to allow a conversational interchange without the stricture of structured interviews. The interviews were digitally recorded for accurate capture. This was done with the consent of the participants. They were later transcribed and analysed.

3.4.3 Data analysis

Inductive thematic analysis (TA) was deemed the most appropriate method of analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns/themes in a set of data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This technique of analysing data has been used in GT with identified themes being linked to the data (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 1990; Ryan & Bernard, 2000). TA is useful for interpretation of both written and visual texts as well as for concepts with linguistic ambiguity or which are subject to social, cultural, and temporal variations (Walters, 2016). The author further notes that, in tourism research thematic analysis is frequently applied to the interpretation of written documents such as interview transcripts.

Data mined from blogs is in the form of written and visual text while the digitally recorded interviews were transcribed into a textual format. After transcribing the narrated experiences from interviews and copying text from online bloggers, codes were identified and themed (Upton et al., 2017). The themes were then explored and analysed to unearth concepts and provide greater meaning for the research.

3.4.3.1 *The coding process*

Coding is the initial step of analysing data. It is in the coding process that particular statements in the collected data become more abstract interpretations (Charmaz, 2006; Gorra, 2007). GT uses several coding steps (Figure 8). The first step involves breaking down of data into distinct units of meaning a process referred to as open/initial coding (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Open or *in vivo* codes are derived directly from the data (Goulding, 1998). The most useful analytical codes are selected from the array of initial codes, a step referred to as focused coding. This is followed by axial coding which adds structure by relating categories to subcategories (Gorra, 2007). The final level is theoretical coding which involves making connections between codes to form categories from which concepts or theoretical propositions are made (Charmaz, 2006; Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017).

The arrows at the top and bottom indicate that the process was recursive with back and forth movement as required (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Each stage refines the theory. Goulding (1998) advises checking against premature closure, where research stops at just describing that which is in the volume of data. In such cases, he opines, the GT is based on participants' descriptions and not on developed concepts. Similarly, the coding process did not try to fit data into a pre-existing coding frame or my analytic preconceptions rather it was data-driven (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Furthermore, close attention to coding and immersion into the data helped interpret participants' tacit meanings (Charmaz, 2006).
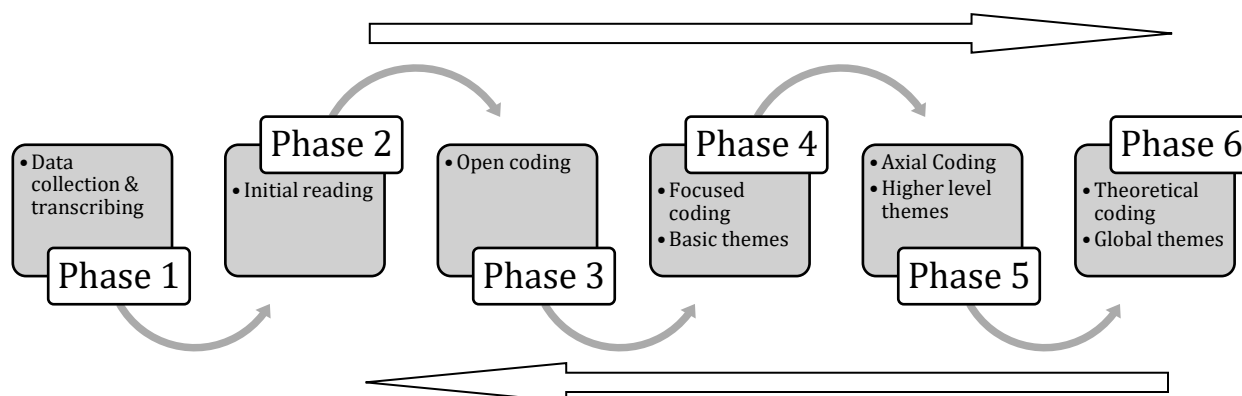
Figure 8 - Coding process adopted for this study from Charmaz (2006); Walters (2016)

Phase 1 – Data collection and transcribing

Data collection was by way of semi-structured interviews and blogs. The interviews were digitally recorded and then personally transcribed. *Verbatim* transcription was used. This is the word-to-word reproduction of the verbal data, with the written words being an exact replica of the digitally recorded words (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006; Poland, 1995). The verbal data was, thus, transformed to written/textual data. Although the process proved time consuming, it allowed an in-depth interaction with the data. This would have been significantly compromised were it to be assigned a professional transcribe. The transcripts were saved in Microsoft word format and later uploaded to NVivo 11 program for coding and analysis. In the case of blogs, data was directly copied from the online entries and pasted on a word document. The documents were formatted to an acceptable standard. Although the blogs selected are publicly available, it was deemed necessary to replace individuals' names with randomly selected letters to protect the identity of these individuals and for privacy.

The process of data collection was also staggered over a period (between October 2017 and February 2018). This helped in the continuous and constant comparison of the different data from interviews and blogs in keeping with GT's tenet of a cyclical research process which leads to theoretical coding (Matteucci & Gnoth, 2017). Furthermore, this approach ensured the capture of a wider audience in that participants did not fall into the same pool of inbound arrivals landing into New Zealand at the same time frame.

Phase 2 – Initial reading

This step involved a back and forth reading of each of the 12 transcribed interviews and data copied from the five blogs with a view to further familiarize with the data (Braun & Clarke,

2006). The reading was done simultaneously with further playback of the digital recording of the interviews to firmly familiarize with the data. Few instances of omissions were corrected allowing for a better overview of the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) have advised a full immersion with the data. This process marked the genesis of earnest analysis with consideration of the meaning and patterns in the data.

Phase 3 – Open coding

This process entailed a line-to-line reading of the transcripts, and blogs followed free generation of codes and descriptive labels. Initial codes were assigned to the transcripts and blogs using the NVivo 11 program. In this software, codes are referred to as nodes. A total of 306 initial codes were generated. This enabled a good capture of what was being said and minimized chances of missing important categories while ensuring relevance of developing categories to area under study (Holton, 2010). This, Charmaz (2006) describes as sticking close to the data. The author advises researchers to do their own coding in order to stimulate conceptual ideas. While Nvivo 11 program was used in this process, each code was personally generated. The software facilitated the organization of the data and codes into meaningful clusters.

Phase 4 – Focused coding

In this stage of coding, the 306 codes generated from open coding were sorted into more meaningful codes. The most telling codes from the open codes were chosen to generate basic themes. Consideration was given to the relationship between codes and the possible combination/merging of different codes into themes was considered and applied where possible. This yielded a group of themes within which codes were now clustered. In NVivo 11, these are referred to as the parent and child nodes respectively. In the example below (see Figure 9), the three child nodes were merged into one parent theme – mode of transport. Consequently, the data and numerous codes were condensed into fewer codes. Critical to this process was an appreciation that codes and concepts can legitimately belong to, and cut across numerous cases (Goulding, 1998). The process was time consuming and iterative, requiring constant movement of text to different codes as well as multiple coding of some of the text. It was critical at this stage to realize that any preconceived theoretical concepts may provide starting points for looking at data but they do not offer automatic codes for analysing these data (Charmaz, 2006).
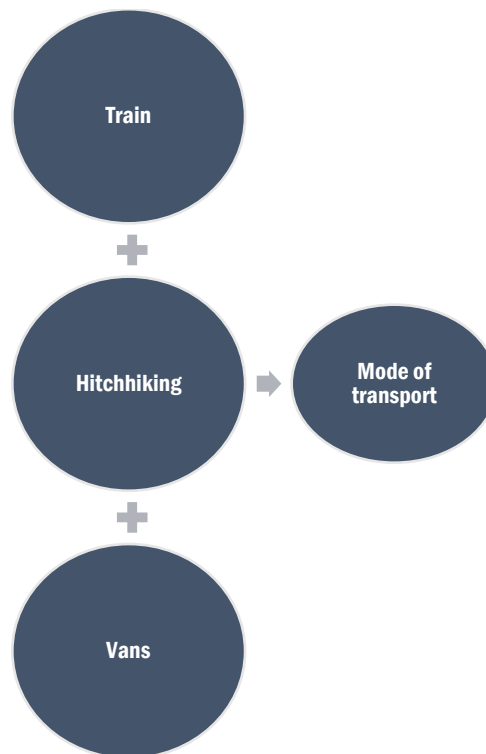
Figure 9 - Merging of codes into basic themes

Phase 5 – Axial coding – categories

This stage entailed relating codes to each other. Themes were developed into higher level/broader themes (categories) through a process of constant comparison (Holton, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1994). The subsequent categories, themes, and their linkages are a reflection of how I made sense of the data (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a; Charmaz, 2006). The key category named transport, for example, was linked to themes (sub-categories) of mode of transport, factors influencing choice and assessment factor (appraisal) of the said means of transport (see Figure 10).
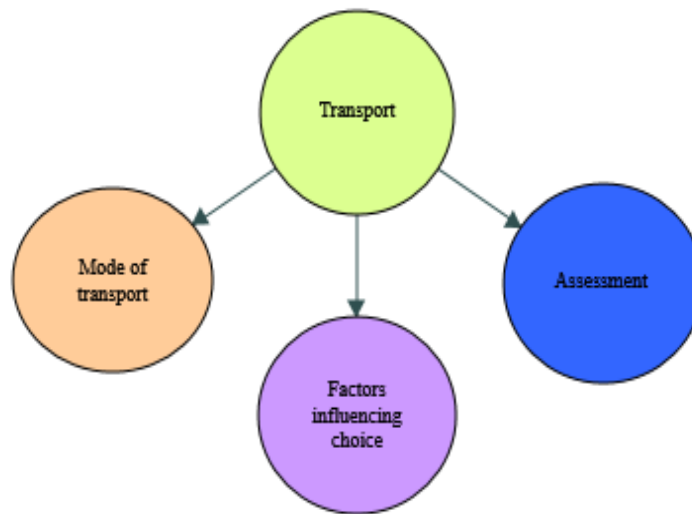
Figure 10 - Linking categories to sub-categories (themes)

Phase 6 – Theoretical coding

In this phase, the relationship between the core categories is explored and theoretical possibilities advanced (Charmaz, 2006). The codes generated at this level specify possible relationships between categories and form the building blocks of theory (Goulding, 1998). Accordingly, these theoretical codes had to earn their way into this grounded theory by way of critical analysis of their usability in the current study on Generation Z travellers in New Zealand (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). The process yielded nine categories which were further re-assigned to form six core categories (see Figure 11). A seventh category (Influencing factors) was common to all the other categories and was therefore, not considered an independent core category. While four of the categories are common in available literature, two categories are unique to this research. These two are context and realm of experience. A thematic framework was developed showing the core categories, themes, and codes as grounded in the data analysis (see *Figure 12* and *Figure 13*).

Figure 11 - Emerging Core categories from NVivo 11

3.4.4   Thematic framework

The utilization of Constructivist Grounded Theory allowed for creation of new categories (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007a) and the overall outcome of a thematic framework (see *Figure 12* and *Figure 13*). The framework is shown in two separate diagrams due to space limitations. The first core category is travel patterns. Its related themes are accommodation, activities, places visited, transport, and travel career. The second core category is destination profile with destination image, attractions and facilities, and expectations and appraisal as the related themes. Context is the third core category with global factors, socio-political factors and ICT as the related themes. Reason for travel formed the fourth category. The themes related to this category are attractions, escapism and break, adventure and novelty, norm, and internship. Clustered under the fifth core category on identity are issues of definition, generational differences and future planning. The final core category is realm of experience. The associated themes are sensory, mind and spiritual. These are discussed in detail in chapter four on findings.

As earlier indicated, a key feature of Constructivist Grounded Theory is that theory is grounded in data. It is from the data that themes and categories are developed. In the thematic framework from this research, this aspect is represented by the directional flow of the arrows. They show a bottom-up direction with codes combining to form themes which are in turn related into core categories.
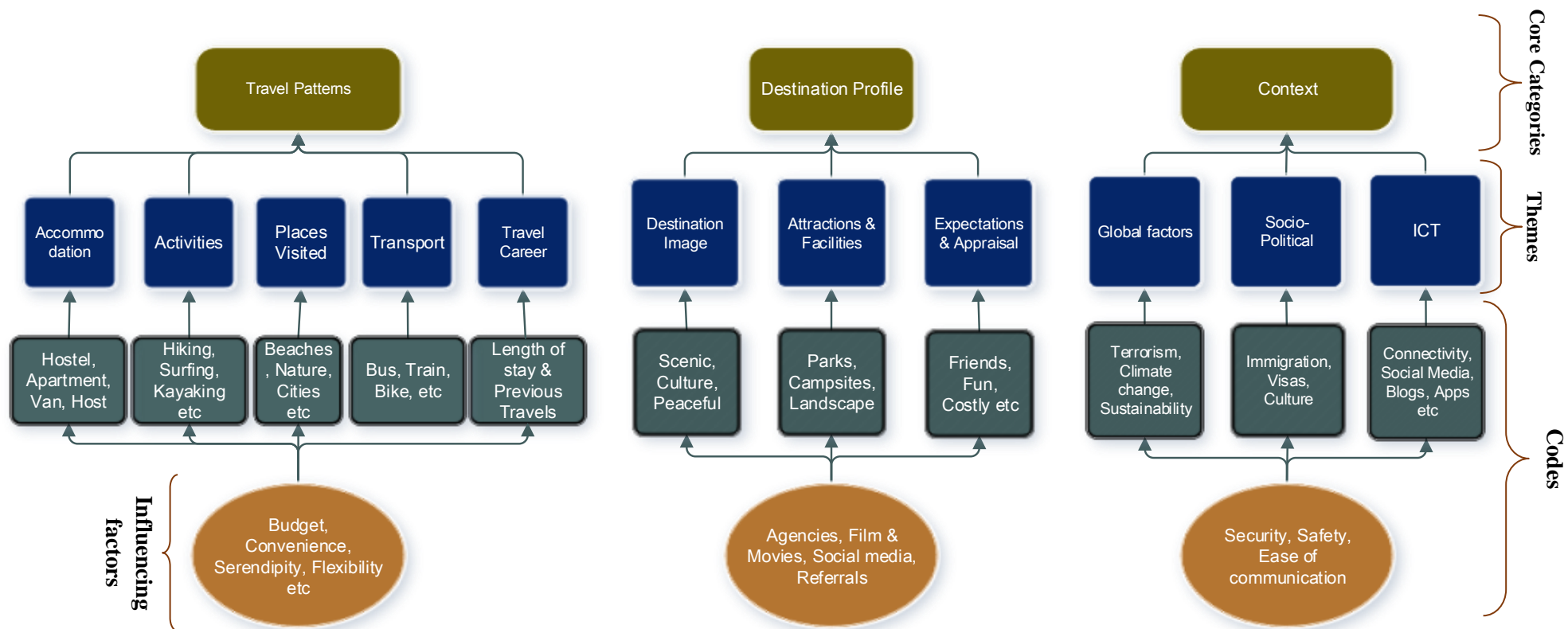
Figure 12 - Thematic framework of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travel experiences
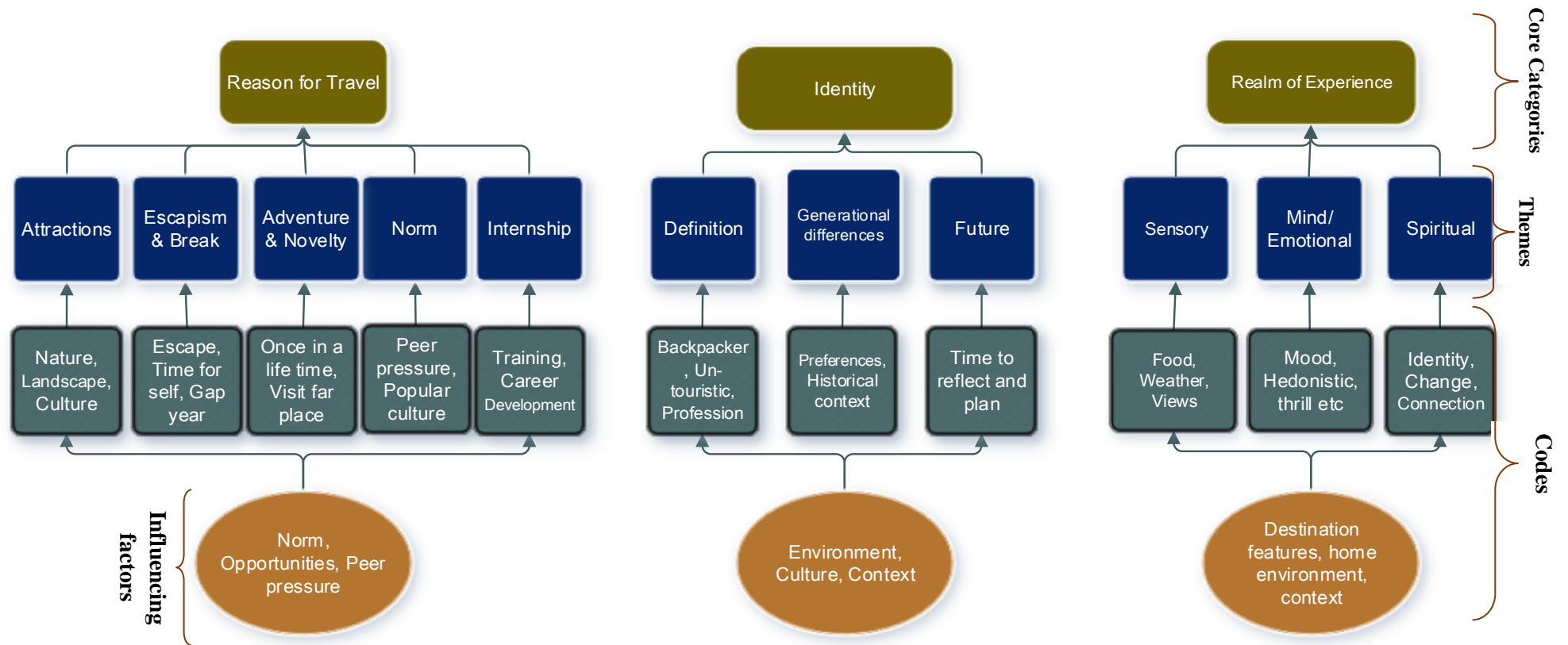
Figure 132 (continued) - Thematic framework of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travel experiences

3.4.5   Ethical considerations for interviews

It is incumbent on researchers to behave ethically. In considering ethics, deontological issues which emphasize moral obligations and commitments that should undergird proper conduct of research are adhered to as discussed below (Skinner, Dubinsky, & Eerrell, 1988). Ethical considerations are embedded on principles. These principles may vary depending on institutions. In AUT University, the following principles are considered for this research:

3.4.5.1   *Informed and voluntary participation*

In conducting the interviews, participants were made aware of the details of the study by way of a participant's information sheet (see Appendix II). The sheet contained information on the purpose of the research, confidentiality of the information collected and risk factors associated with undertaking the interviews. Fletcher (1992) observes that it is important to outline to the candidate the reasons why information is being sought and how it will be used. This provides the requisite information to allow for informed decision. Each participant was required to fill out a consent form showing their acceptance to be interviewed and to participate in the research. Further, a recruitment poster with a brief on the research was circulated. This ensured that only those willing to participate proceeded with the research by contacting the researcher. Participants were also afforded the opportunity to review recording transcripts should they wish. In addition to the option to withdraw participation for whatever reason, participants were not obliged to answer any questions and could opt to pass.

3.4.5.2   *Privacy and confidentiality of participants*

In adherence to the requirement for privacy and confidentiality, information which identifies the participants has been kept confidential. To not disclose participant identity, pseudonyms have been used for each participant. Furthermore, years of service in the hospitality and tourism industry, both in New Zealand and overseas, have engendered in me appropriate professional conduct. As an employee, interacting with guests and their information requires confidentiality of guest information. This learning was utilized in the research whereby, participants information was regarded as no different to guests' information hence necessitating care in how it was handled.

3.4.5.3   *Respect of participants*

The nature of this research called for a friendly and but equally respectful conduct. Participants were going out of their way to incorporate interviews at a time when they were travelling. In recognition of their sacrifice a small donation of $20 shopping voucher was given each participant. Additionally, participants were offered a cup of coffee/tea in a nearby café. The

interviews were scheduled to suit the convenience of the participants and their choice of location.

3.4.5.4   Avoidance of conflict of interest

Due to being engaged within the hospitality industry at the time of this research posed potential conflict of interest. It was therefore important to not interview participants who were guests at my work place. Further, fellow workmates who were on casual employment and fitted the interview criteria for this research were excluded.

3.4.5.5   Research approval

This research could not commence without the requisite approval. Consequently, an application (17/285) for research approval was submitted to AUTEC with subsequent approval being obtained on 28th August 2017. The application contained a detailed account on measures taken to ensure the ethical conduct of this research. In particular, details on AUT University's key principles of *partnership, participation, and protection* were observed. In partnership, informed consent was sought from the participants. The research provides the opportunity for the participants to share their insights on New Zealand. Furthermore, a mutually agreed upon time and place between the participants and the researcher was adhered to. The principle of participation requires a clear outline of the participants' role, a factor that was considered in the participant's information sheet. In addition, the participants are free to request the findings of the research. The final principle of protection requires confidentiality. This research ensured that interviews and participants' personal details are not linked.

3.4.6   Ethics for netnography (blogs)

Netnographic research is not exempt from relevant ethical and procedural criteria (Mkono, 2013). Ethical considerations in netnography are similar to those of interviews including privacy, the consent to use personal stories and confidentiality (Sharf, 1999). A central issue concerning privacy in internet-based research is the blurring of public and private spaces (Beddows, 2008). Opinion among researchers on what is private and what is public online is divided (Hookway, 2008). There are those who argue that material on the internet is publicly available, thus does not warrant participant consent. Others opine that online postings are written with an expectation of privacy and should be treated as such. Still others argue that online interaction lacks clear cut definition as to whether public or private.

Ethical issues in online research have received attention from both academic and professional institutions. Among them is the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) which proposed specific ethical guidelines and principles for online content and research (Markham & Buchanan, 2012). In conducting research in a context with no consensus or assumption of

consensus such as privacy in this case, AoIR advises to apply Nissenbaum's (2010) concept of contextual integrity. The concept stipulates *appropriate* flow of information rather than *restriction* of the flow. This research utilized this concept. The same ethical considerations adopted for the face-to-face interviews were applied to the blogs. While only publicly available blogs have been used, the names of bloggers and their associates were replaced with pseudo names. The pseudo names used for both interview and blog participants are of African ethnic descent while participants bare Western names. Images and personal information from the blogs have not been used. In addition, it is concluded that since the research entails publicly available data, consent from bloggers is not required. As observed by Hookway (2008) accessible blogs may be personal but they are not private. Furthermore, the 'lurker' approach does not require the researcher to identify themselves.

An additional set of ethical consideration involves copyright law. This may be regarded as a legal issue requiring mandatory observation rather than an ethical issue of a moral nature. However, in academic literature, legal issues are considered a subset of ethical issues (Charlesworth, 2008). Furthermore, the concept of 'fair dealing' exception is applied in this research. The concept stipulates that there is no infringement of copyright if the material is for scholarship, research or education purpose among other reason (Government of Canada, 2012). It was considered that, while copyright laws may protect a blogger's post in as far as ownership is concerned, they do not guarantee prevention of personal harm (Charlesworth, 2008). Consequently, AUTEC principles were applied in this research to further buttress the bloggers against personal harm.

3.4.7   Trustworthiness

In quantitative research rigour concerns validity and reliability, and generalisability. In qualitative research however, the concepts of trustworthiness and authenticity replace validity and reliability (Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Veal, 2018). It has been argued that thorough reporting of the process and results of qualitative research is the key to justifying and assuring that trustworthiness exists in the study (Veal, 2018). The research paradigm and process followed in this research has been reported in detail.

3.5   SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the methodology applied for this research. In establishing the rationale for the study, the dearth of literature on Generation Z in New Zealand has been highlighted. The research adopts a traveller-centric concept as opposed to destination-centric concept. It is explorative in nature and adopts a constructivist interpretive paradigm. The Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology is used, by which themes emerged from the data. The analysis

process yielded a thematic framework constituting six core (key) categories, and related themes and codes. These have been presented and discussed in the proceeding chapters. In addition, the chapter explored ethical considerations. These include informed and voluntary participation, privacy and confidentiality, respect of participants, avoidance of conflict of interest and copyright issues.

4   CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the 12 semi-structured interviews and five blogs. The layout of the chapter starts with a demographic profiling and a tabular presentation of the information (see Table 6). This is followed by presentation of findings along the thematic framework developed from the thematic analysis process. The constructivist grounded theory methodological approach employed in this research resulted in generation of codes, themes and categories. Six core categories emerged from the data set. In presenting the findings, direct quotes as well as tables and figures have been used. Pseudo names have been used for all respondents and bloggers to protect their identity.

4.1   DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

A key feature of research involving human participants is demographic data. This enables readers to contextualize information contained in the research. Following is information relating to participants in both face-to-face interviews and travel blogs.

4.1.1   Biographic data

This research is on Generation Z, thus making age (date of birth) significant criteria for qualifying a participant. The recruitment poster as well as the participant's information sheet indicated target group as those born after 1995. During the interview process, participants were asked the year of birth. This ensured that the right age group was being interviewed. In the case of blogs, reliance was on cues from the bloggers' posts that would suggest their age location. An example is;

> On Sunday we went to see some other cars for both of us. I found a car and let it be checked out by a mechanic. His name was Z and he was a friend of the XXX's owners, so he did it for free. He said that is was a really good car, so I took it. It is a Nissan Primera Camino from 1997. It is older than me but runs very good.

The blogger is therefore born after 1997. However, some of the bloggers were forthright with posting their age as is the case below:

> Hello, my name is WXY, I am 19 years old and I will report about my stay in New Zealand in the next 8 weeks. I was sure for a long time that I would go abroad after completing my high school diploma, but where exactly was still unclear

The blog was posted in 2017 which translates to 1998 as the year of birth. Pointedly, this proved to be a time consuming and sometime frustrating experience. Not all blogs had clues as to the age or date of birth. Those that did not were discarded and others sort. Overall, six participants were born in 1999, four were born in 1998, two in 1997, three were born in 1996,

and two were born in 1995. Whereas gender parity was not a concern for this research, it was important to have representation. Of all the participants 13 were female and four were male. All four male participants were semi-structured interviewees while all bloggers were female.

Seven respondents are from Germany all of whom were face-to-face interviewees. Two respondents are from the USA, a blogger and an interviewee. From Netherlands, there was one interviewee and one blogger, while two interviewees came from France. Two bloggers are from Luxembourg. Iceland is represented by one blogger while England had one interviewee. In total, seven nationalities are represented. Apart from the two respondents from the USA, the other 15 respondents are from Western Europe.

4.1.2 Travel information

Majority of the participants (five) are in New Zealand for six months. The shortest period of stay is 13 days while the longest length of stay is 12 months. The participant staying the shortest was here on an organized group program. Four participants are in New Zealand for a period of three months. The choice of accommodation was varied but mostly revolving between hostels, campsites, personal cars/van and farm houses. Some of the participants chose to flat while still others were hosted by extended family members. There are those who momentarily stayed in farm houses or chose to work for free accommodation (an arrangement referred to as WWOOF).

> *I worked there 2-3 hours a day for accommodation. The contract said 1 1/2 hour a day, but things are never like promised... I stayed there for nearly 3 weeks, making beds every morning, vacuuming, cleaning the bathrooms and the kitchen. No day off. I shared my room with 7 other people... Well, I would call it a pretty bad job. But it was bearable. I didn't have to pay for accommodation and the hostel was in the city centre of Dunedin and a 10 minutes' walk from the university.*

On few occasions, some participants stayed in hotels but only for a short while or on the first/last days of their visit to New Zealand.

> *My last few nights in Auckland, I spent in a private hotel room. I had my own bathroom, mini kitchen and - wait for it - DOUBLE BED. Needless to say, I enjoyed this luxury. Now it's time to leave New Zealand. I'm very excited for my next adventure.*

Arrivals into New Zealand were by air. Just like in choice of accommodation, modes of transport while in New Zealand are varied. While owning a car or van seemed the common and preferred trend some resulted to hitchhiking and walking. Public transport (bus, and train) was also common especially within the cities. One participant preferred skateboarding.

I've taken a taxi from the airport and other than that I have just been skateboarding everywhere and walked. I haven't gotten in a car since I've left the airport.

While some participants were forthright on divulging their budgets allocation, few paused momentarily before responding to this question. Each participant's budget was different from the other. The source of the initial travel budget was from long-term saving coupled with family support. It was observed that in all the cases, participants engaged in employment to supplement their budgets.

For me I've worked for it a little bit after school and from my parents and from family; for birthdays they gave me some money especially for the flight to New Zealand.

The highest disclosed figure is Euros 8000 (approximately NZD 13500)[1] by the longest staying participant.

The reasons for travelling into New Zealand varied among the participants. However, there was a common overarching theme of touring and exploring. In addition, two of the participants included visiting friends and family in their tour. Two others used internship as a means of facilitating their visit to New Zealand. Only one blogger was in New Zealand as part of an organized tour in a group.

Table 6 below presents a summary of the demographic information obtained from the participants in face-to-face interviews and blogs.

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[1] One New Zealand dollar was equivalent to 1.6875 Euro

PARTICIPANT	DOB	GENDER	COUNTRY	LENGTH OF STAY	ACCOMMODATION	MODE OF TRANSPORT	BUDGET in NZD	REASON
Akinyi	1999	F	Germany	3 months	Hostel & Flatting	Bus & walking	8500*	Internship, Exploration, to see the landscape & to discover self
Apondi	1999	F	Germany	3 months	Host family	Train & walking	12000*	Internship & Exploration
Chelangat	1996	F	Netherlands	3 months	Hostel & camping	Hitchhiking & hired car	3500	Break, new discoveries, scenery & culture
Chepkoech	1996	F	France	6 weeks	Camping	Hired car	3500	Break, get away & exploration
Kanini	1999	F	Germany	6 months	Car & camping	Own car	6900*	Nature, norm
Kamau	1998	M	Germany	6 months	Car & camping	Own car	6900*	Nature and break
Makau	1999	M	Germany	6 months	Dorm & in their car	Own car		Visit far-flung destination, get away from winter & nature
Mutuku	1997	M	Germany	12 months	Hostel, van & friend's family	Own van	13700*	Touring around
Wambui	1996	F	England	8 months	Family & hostel	Bus, train, boat & Own car	3700*	Visit family, freedom, experience NZ
Wambugu	1998	M	USA	6 months	Hostel & flatting	Taxi & skateboarding	3300	Independence, visit far place, personal development, watched hobbit and wanted to see this landscape
Syokau	1999	F	Germany	2 months	Farm housing (WWOOF)	Hitchhiking	9500*	Break, Independence, visit far land
Syovinya	1995	F	France	1 month	WWOOF, shared car	Hitchhiking and uber	6900*	Visit a far land, see landscape
Katunge B	1998	F	Luxembourg	9 months	Hostel, Camping & host families	Own car	Unspecified	Tour & explore
Mumbua B	1998	F	Luxembourg	6 months	Hostel, Camping & host families	Own car	Unspecified	Tour & explore
Mukoli B	1997	F	Iceland	8 weeks	Host family	Unspecified	Unspecified	Tour & explore
Mwikali B	1995	F	Netherlands	3 months	Hostel, Hotel, Camps	Own car- shared	Unspecified	Tour & explore
Wayua B	1999	F	USA	13 days	Hotels	Flight, Walking	6500*	Tour, Excursions, Group travel

Table 6 - A summary of demographic data from the interviews and blogs

4.2 KEY CATEGORIES

The process of thematic analysis yielded codes, themes and core/key categories. This may be attributed to the flexibility of Grounded Theory which allowed for follow up of leads that emerged in the process of data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). The core categories provide a lens through which the travel experiences of New Zealand inbound Generation Z can be understood. The key categories are presented in Figure 14 below.
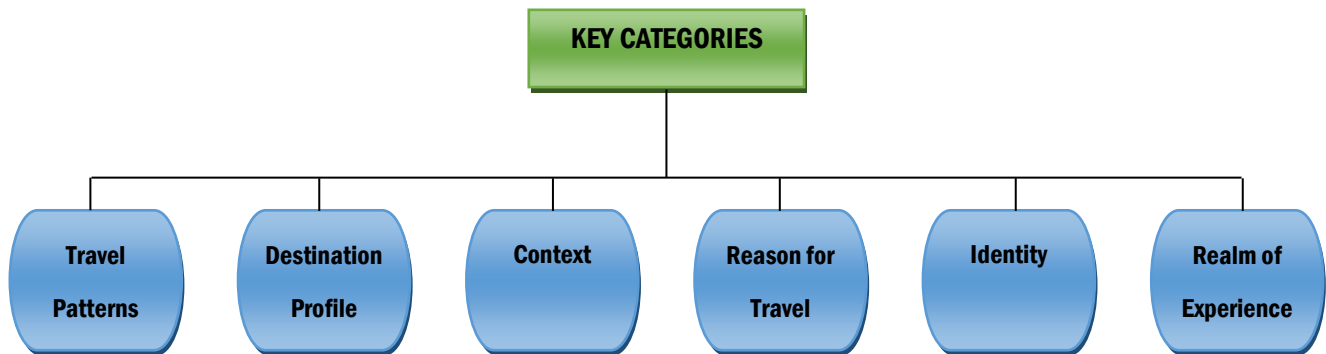
Figure 14 - Key Categories of NZ inbound Generation Z experiences

The findings for each category are sequentially presented below.

4.2.1 Travel patterns

Themes within the travel patterns included type of accommodation, the activities that the participants chose to engage in, places visited during their stay in New Zealand, transport choices and travel career (see Figure 15). The later included previous travels and/or future planned travels. Accommodation choice was varied and included farm stays, hostelling, camping/vans *inter alia*. The choice of the type of activities, accommodation, transport and places visited was influenced by among other factors affordability, peer pressure and proximity to attractions as demonstrated by the excepts below. These factors constituted the numerous nodes/codes which were clustered to form the themes (in blue squares). It is these themes that formed the emerging core categories.

> *I am planning to go to my road trip in March because I've met some people now in my hostel, friends, now we are going in March for a road trip.*

Mumbua narrated her plans thus; *"In the morning I left for the Mt. Fyffe. On the car park I met a guy that had spent the night at the same camping than I had. We decided to walk the track together. Our first goal was to reach the Mt. Fyffe hut. It is at an altitude of 1100m".*
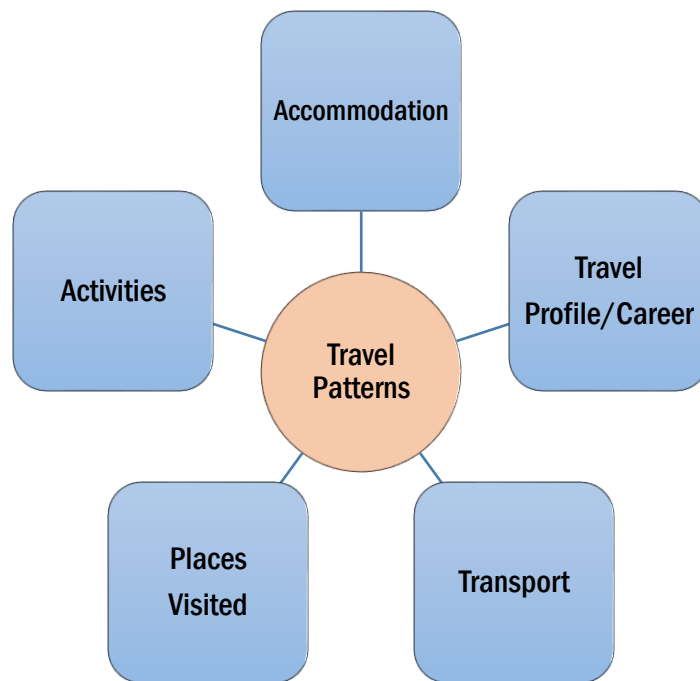
Figure 15 - Travel patterns core category

On investigating travel career, it was found that majority of the participants had toured or had plans to tour other parts of the globe. For some, New Zealand was the first overseas trip they had undertaken on their own.

4.2.2 Destination profile

Participants expressed their views about New Zealand. These were clustered under destination profile (see Figure 16).
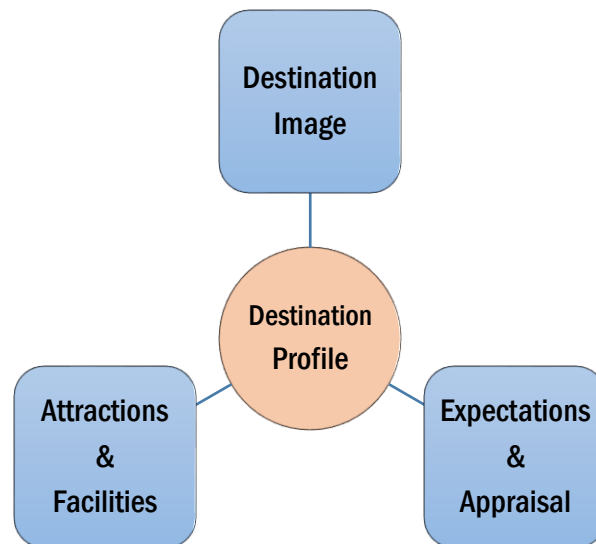
Figure 16 - Destination profile core category

In considering the profile of New Zealand as a destination, it emerged that some participants knew little about or were oblivious of the country with comments such as, "*New Zealand is a little like a mystery like you don't know much about it and uh umh you hear a lot about Australia yeah, but I actually didn't know anything about New Zealand*".

Some participants alluded to the geographical solitude and distance from other countries. This, in some cases, resulted to teasing and deride by colleagues back in the country of origin.

> *In Germany lots of people go to New Zealand, it's a bit it's like they, some people really start making fun of it uh you've been to New Zealand oh! you've travelled so far!*

Supposedly, because of the distance and removal from other land-masses, the destination was perceived as a spiritual recluse rather than a place for 'touristic' ventures.

> *I think people coming in New Zealand want to like something more spiritual than like touristic things.*

In addition, New Zealand is perceived as an environmentally conscious nation. This perception was in some cases challenged by what respondents saw and experienced an example being the

use of plastic bags which a participant considered to be inconsiderate of the environment.

> *But also, one thing that I want to mention for example I always thought that NZ is so natural, and they take care of their environment, but the biggest problem is the plastic bags at the super market, it's so crazy.*

On appraising the destination, it was felt by some that New Zealand was restrictive because of the strict rules when compared to other places.

> *I think the rules here are too strict because I am not used to strict alcohol rules and also prices for alcohol.*

The stunning geographical features, such as landscape and scenery were a major attraction to many of the participants. Facilities like free camping sites, free national parks, and opportunities such as farm jobs distinguished the destination from others in the mind of the interviewees and bloggers. In addition to these, the perceived safety of the country amid rising insecurities in other places was also mentioned. The friendly, laid-back culture was perceived as pervading the entire country. However, some participants felt that employers in the farms were exploitative and took advantage of the travellers. Dishonesty was also observed among some traders. It was further appraised as an expensive destination with food, transport, accommodation, medical care, and insurance being regarded as costly.

4.2.3 Context

Within the core category of context are themes relating to socio-political issues, global factors and ICT (see Figure 17).
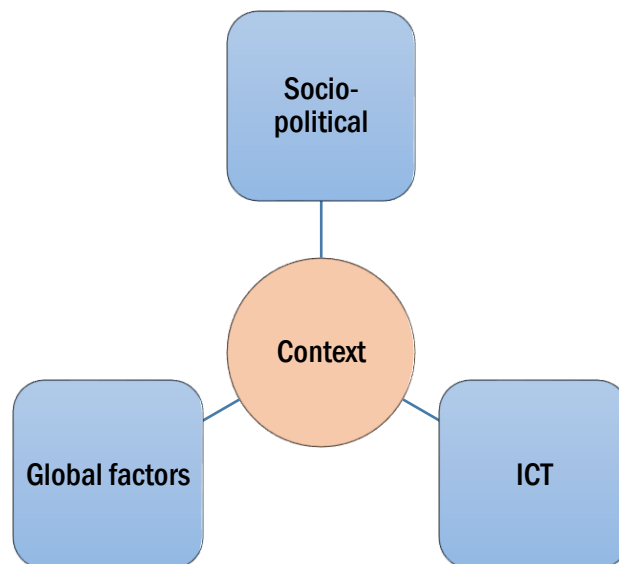
Figure 17 - Context category

To some participants, New Zealand is considered a recent civilization in comparison to other countries.

> *But I think it's also because NZ is a new country, in Europe we are like more old country so like we had time to develop.*

Environmental concerns as well as social failures were raised by Syovinya who noted thus; "*But you have the issue with the sun because it is very strong, so you have lots of skin cancer but the sun cream it's really really expecting like it's not that good. Yeah!*"

This was further raised by another participant who voiced discrimination against Maori people and made observations on social stratification. The participant commented that "*We spoke to a lot of Maori people and uh more local people, and we did think, I don't know whether it's right to say but, there was quite a lot of discrimination which we found kind of shocking*".

The importance of connectivity and use of gadgets was noted among some participants as commented by Mukoli;

> *My host family is great, super nice and very helpful. Just arrived, my host mother also takes my phone and my iPad and sets up useful things like NZ sim card, Wi-Fi, useful apps and so on.*

Speaking on social media, Mutuku notes the pivotal role it played in motivating him to visit New Zealand. He quipped;

> *Instagram is a big feature because I have seen so many beautiful pictures of New Zealand holy crap and I want to visit these places and take these exact same photos and try to make it look like but with my face of course, my dad knows I am here yeah' so probably this would be the only yeah internet photos and the reason I actually came here is because I was watching the Hobbit. It has such amazing landscape that I kind felt that this should be the place I should come first –* Mutuku.

This participant further alludes to the movie Hobbit as a key factor of motivation to visit New Zealand. Similarly, another participant notes the influence of a TV program in destination choice.

4.2.4   Reasons for travel

The reasons for travelling were varied (see Figure 18).
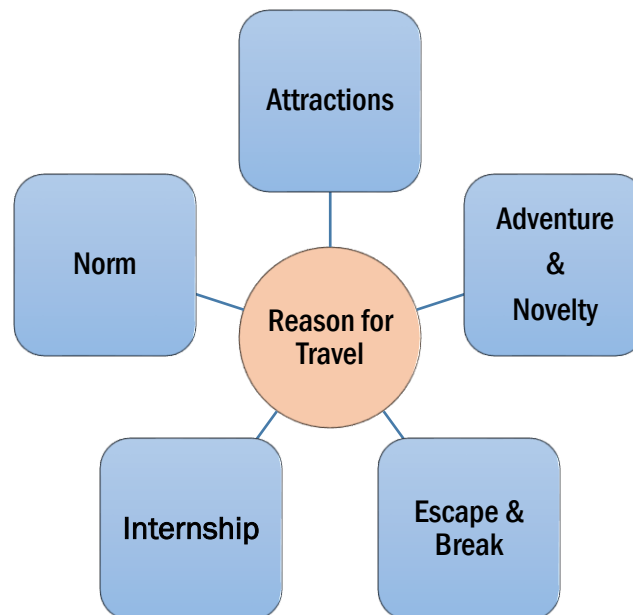
Figure 18 - Reason for travel category

For some like Wambugu, they were running away from adverse happenings in their home country. Wambugu explained: "*I was kind of running away from the negative changes that are happening and I didn't really want to be associated with that I guess that 's the only thing*. There was the expressed desire of wanting to disassociate with the negative events. The perceived safe environment of New Zealand further drove some like Syokau to want to travel. Her response also highlighted her travels as being equally opportunistic as it was a keeping up with the popular say. She said;

> I think they were two opportunities to go to New Zealand and Australia because it's like I
> think Europe and Germany especially it's like a hype to go to those two countries because
> they are safe – Syokau.

The opportunities to work and travel documents played a part in drawing some like Syovinya to New Zealand as attested by her response below. She further observed ease of communication and language as another factor for choice of destination.

> Also, yea I think it is easy for us to come here like the visa also because there are plenty of
> jobs available, so we knew that if we are coming here we can find something and also

because it is an English country and a lot of people travelling speak English so it's a good place to come - Syokau*.*

Linked to the above reasons was the various attractions that New Zealand has to offer. Participants, both interviewees and bloggers highlighted landscape and the beautiful scenery as a motivating factor. These features were conveyed to the tourist through movies, TV programs, social media, and marketing agencies. Travel was also linked to the availability of time and opportunity for engaging in travel amid other life commitment like study and work. This was aptly noted by Kamau who observes that; *Only have now the opportunity to go to New Zealand because after that I'm working and do not have one year to go to another country.*

An added feature to the reason to travel was the notion of novelty and desire to experience something outside the norm as narrated by Akinyi;

> *I don't know I think I am just looking for some experience that I wouldn't have been able to have in Germany or in Europe I don't know like uhm as I already mentioned the scenery is so very different like from like everywhere. You don't get this at any other place in the world and umh yeah, I really wanted to have like a kind of summer feeling.*

Peer influence was also noted as a reason for engaging in travel by some participants as expressed by Syovinya's sentiments;

> *I am planning to go to my road trip on March because I've met some people now in my hostel, friends, now we are going in March for a road trip.*

The findings indicate a range of reasons for Generation Z travels. Although there were various reasons for choosing to travel to New Zealand, they appeared to be common among the participants. While some of the reasons differ from the general travel reasons, some others do not.

4.2.5 Identity

Emerging from the research was the issue of identity (see Figure 19). Themes related to this core category included how Generation Z defined their travels and who they perceived themselves to be as they engaged in travel. A second theme related to their future while still another highlighted perceived generational difference.
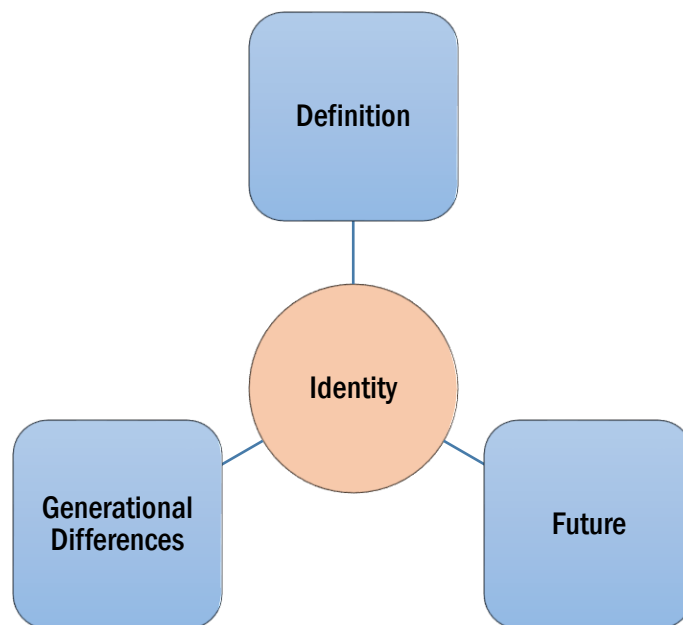
Figure 19 - Identity category

On the issue of definition, some of the participants did not regard themselves as engaging in tourist activities but instead thought of themselves as being backpackers.

> *Yea, I wanted to go to New Zealand because for me it's less touristic than Australia and I wanted to like more like to see like the country, the back backers but actually, it's as much touristic as Australia* - Syokau*.*

To some like Chepkoech, their travel was linked to the opportunity to plan about their future. Her explanation was *"I have Bachelor's in law and I think I want to change my path like completely like maybe link law with the cultural like eeh area; like really change completely so I'm taking this year off like to think about what I want to do".*

In addition, travel was associated with the quest for freedom, self-discovery, and time to visit friends and family. Wambugu was candid on these issues and commented;

> *I think for me being 21 is a good time for me to sort of fly the nest and stand on my own two feet a bit as well as seeing the family and experience this amazing country, yea it was more about spreading my wings*

Wayua blogged that getting out of the comfort zone allowed her true personality to shine. On her part, Wambui pointed out that travelling was not just a way of escaping from accustomed lifestyle but also as a means of forcing her to mature. In comparing his travel to the parents' Mutuku noted that it is much easier to travel now than it was then. However, parents offered some travel tips on activities.

> *Yeah, I can say that they travelled in other ways because my dad was studying in Boston for 3 or 4 years and travelled in through America, so he told me very much about how he travelled and `gave me tips how I should do these other things, but I think now it's more easier to travel*

Furthermore, accommodation type was noted as another point of difference. Parents were regarded as being very particular in choice of accommodation with preference for hotels and more conventional options. In highlighting this aspect, Akinyi joked;

> *For my parents it's the accommodation and something like that very important and when I think about my first accommodation my mother couldn't have slept there for a night or something like that.*

Geo-political events were identified by some participants as a contributing factor to differences between generations and how they engage in travel. Apondi observed that; *I'm from Germany…..the east, so my parents did not get a chance to travel at all because of, you know, the separation and people on the east, I think, they could only go to Ukraine and maybe Russia; I don't know. But they didn't have the chance to go like anywhere else… I've travelled with them a few times around Europe but, they haven't been outside Europe so yeah; they didn't have the chance to do something like we are doing now.*

4.2.6 Realms of experience

The final core category on realms of experience included themes on sensory type of experiences, mind and emotional experiences, and spiritual experiences (see Figure 20).
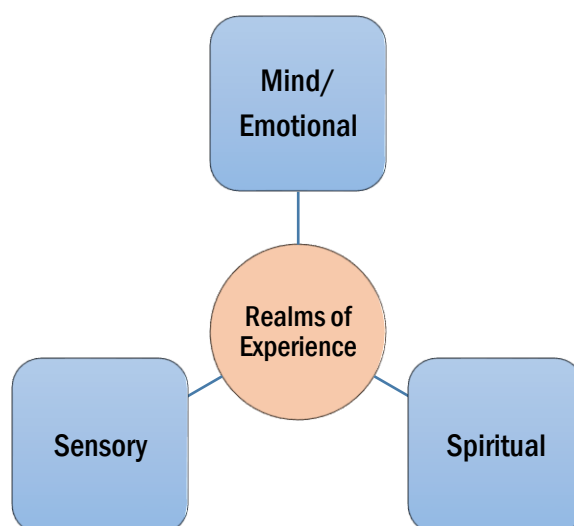
Figure 20 - Realm of experience

In narrating their experiences, participants alluded to that which was realised on either a physiological/sensory level (involving the five senses - hear, smell, see, taste, and touch), the mind/emotional level which relates to psychological processes, and the spiritual level relating to transformational aspects and meaning association. Descriptions were given of how participants felt after engaging in travel, what they thought or perceived, and the transformation or meaningful associations of events.

In describing their experience, some participants stated that the experiences were memorable and would remain etched in their minds for life.

> *I also done a glow warms which is definitely an experience that I will remember probably for the rest of my life and the thing just I've had some of the best nights I 've had in my life in Auckland it's just ticking all the right boxes for me so far.* - Wambui

Further, association was made to self-efficacy while undertaking activities as portrayed by Apondi's observation; "*and also, you are very happy you really have to overcome yourself like ok I got it I got to go there and I gotta do this and I cannot wait for anyone because I just have to do this on my own".* Activities were also associated with expectancies and satisfaction. On this, Mwikali pointed out thus, *"One of the activities made one of my dreams come true: it was*

snorkelling with dolphins! It was one of the best experiences I've had on this trip, or in my life in general".

Travel is seen by some as contributing to self-actualization. Makau described the amazement of finding bars equipped with a pool table, a rarity in his home town. He invested in perfecting his pool playing prowess so that he can finally beat his friends on returning to Germany. Elsewhere, Mumbua blogged about her emotions while camping; *For the first night I stopped in a free camping near Timaru. It was really creepy. If there would have been no one else, I would have paid to go somewhere else… But luckily there was a really nice couple with their van.*

Travelling resulted to gaining more knowledge and understanding as witnessed by one blogger noting; *While shopping I discovered a fruit I had never heard of: Yak. It looks like big red larvae.* Similarly, engaging in travel resulted to opportunities for learning new things and self-development as was the case with Mumbua who blogs about it; *During that hike a saw a Pukeko! It is a really rare bird that was thought extinct until 20 years ago.*
While Pukeko are a common bird, the blogger was beholding a creature they never saw before.
In some cases, participants demonstrated passionate desire for knowledge about the local culture and the country. This proved a key determinant of decisions taken as stated by one participant; *I actually didn't know anything about New Zealand, like I knew about Maori culture and stuff like that; like just basic stuff, just really nothing. Which is probably why I wanted to go to a host so bad because I really wanted to get to know the people living here and like knowing the country. Yeah!*

To some like Akinyi, being in New Zealand felt like home. This resulted to a 'liking' of what she was experiencing. *It doesn't feel as though it's so far away from home, yeah! I really like it!* This was reinforced by Apondi's observation that; *I found it very easy to feel like home here it didn't take long at all and I also think it's not too different from Germany.* What the participants were experiencing was likened to their home environment.

On a sensory level of experience, weather patterns were a notable element in determining experience. Participants reported and blogged about this as quipped by Mukoli; *On Saturday I'm going to the city, because I need some thicker clothes, because even if the Kiwis dress as if it were midsummer, it is very cold.* Listening to stories from other travellers and from the local residents enriched Mumbua's experience as noted in her post; *We ate together and shared our food. I really enjoyed listening to all their stories about their travels.* Similarly, Katunge was fully immersed in what she was seeing on a beach engendering what she describes as enjoying the

landscape. *I actually thought that it's just a normal beach but then I found out that there is a small hike to a lookout point and the view from there was amazing... I stayed there for like 40minutes just enjoying the landscape.* However, there were also adverse effects and negative experiences by some participants who contracted a viral infection as they travelled together in a bus.

The spiritual level of experience was noted among some participants. In her blog entry, Mumbua mentions her transformation; *Bye farm life! The last days at the farm were really cool. I had to feed the calves and they were just so adorable. And... I started eating meat again... I was vegetarian for 2 years, but I couldn't stand cooking meat all the time without eating it. So yep...* Apondi, one of the other interviewees, discovers the value of travelling alone and says, "*I think in those moments you really get to know yourself which you need and why you should be happy for all these you are missing*". In addition, seclusion was cherished by Mumbua who posted in her blog, *I really enjoy being here, far away from everything and still so close to the sea. When I sit outside in the sun, all I hear are birds and cows. No cars, no planes, no humans.* Such moments engendered deep thinking and meditation. Coupled with the above, travel was also imbued with moments of nostalgia and reminiscing of pleasurable moments in life as noted by Mumbua's blog entry; *On Friday evening X and I took a bath in the outdoor bathtubs of the villa. It was like a childhood memory. As children we always used to take a bath together.*

However, there were moments when some participants' values and resolve were put to test as narrated by one; *Nobody understands that I have a boyfriend and sorry I don't want to cheat on him. They are just like, oh then why are you here? You want to do new experiences. And I'm like, sorry that's not the kind of experience I need!* The perpetrators equated hedonistic behaviour to the purpose of travel and new experiences. In other cases, openness to strangers yielded some positive experiences. Chelangat observed that blending in with the locals was a highlight for her. She said; *I think just blending in that was my highlight - blending in with the locals. it happened a lot of times. Hamilton, we stayed at this woman's place and it was just really fan.*

Value and meaning were also derived from interacting with people. On this Chepkoech narrated; *You see people and they just went fishing and you know that's just their life you know. We grew up buying fish in a super market in a plastic you know, and here someone comes and with fresh fish, that's been caught like an hour ago. Nice!* While in some cases engaging in travel elicited negative feeling, the overall outcome of these feelings was an epiphany of self. This can be seen in Akinyi's account; *I've been very homesick and I miss my family and my boyfriend and everything; and it was very hard .... I think in those moments you really get to know yourself which you need and why you should be happy for all these you are missing.* Missing family and friends caused her

to reflect not only on the value of the family and friends but also on a deeper understanding of herself.

The realms of experience is the main category emerging from this research. In narrating their experiences, participants were describing that which happened on either the sensory, mind or spiritual level. The category therefore underscores that experience is realized on different realms which constitute the totality of a human being.

4.3 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the findings from the interviews and blogs. The presentation is along the core categories, and their respective themes and codes. These were developed from the coding process. The process yielded six core categories; travel patterns, the issue of identity, context, reasons for travel, destination profile and realms of experience. While not unexpected in a research process like this, some categories and themes bear similarities to the extant literature on youth or backpacker travels and travel experience. However, a key feature unique to this research is the more holistic schema of Generation Z travel experiences. The experiences may be realized physiologically, psychologically or spiritually. This is discussed in detail in the proceeding chapter five.

Participants were 13 females and four males. The participants are drawn from seven different nationalities. While the length of stay varied, all participants were on long stay ranging from three to 12 months. Participants tended to choose similar accommodation options and modes of travel. A common feature in choice between the options was affordability. This chapter sets the backdrop for the following chapter which discusses and synthesizes the findings.

5   CHAPTER 5 – Discussion and interpretation

This chapter is a discussion of the findings of travel experiences of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers. The structure of the discussion corresponds to the research objectives and overall aim. The questions have been assigned the corresponding categories and themes (see Table 7). In addressing the first research objective, travel patterns and reason for travel categories have been discussed. Research objective two is discussed under contextualizing experience, and under the issue of identity. The third research objective on aspects of New Zealand has been discussed within destination profile category and its related themes. The overall research aim has been discussed within categories on realm of experience and influencing factors. In addition, the table incorporates a column on interpretation. The column provides constructed meanings from the data.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	CATEGORIES	RELATED THEMES	INTERPRETATION
Analysing the travel experiences of New Zealand inbound Generation Z	a. Travel patterns	Accommodation Activities Places visited Transport	Services (Destination interfaces)
		Travel profile and career	Travel career and travel cycle
	b. Reason for travel	Adventure & novelty Attractions	Intrinsic
		Escapism Norm	Extrinsic
Identifying possible factors which help shape the experiences	a. Contextualizing experience	Global factors Socio-political factors ICT	Macro level factors Glocal (destination) level factors Linkage
	b. Identity	Definition Generation differences Future planning	Personal level factors
Identifying aspects of New Zealand which constitute the pull effect for Generation Z	a. Destination profile	Destination image and perception Attractions and facilities Expectations and appraisal	Destination influences
OVERALL RESEARCH AIM *Understanding travel experiences of NZ inbound Generation Z*	a. Realm of experience	Sensory/Senses Emotional/Mind Spiritual/Spirit	Physiological Psychological Spiritual
	b. Influencing factors	Global factors Destination factors Immediate factors	Global influences/forces Destination influences/forces Immediate influences/forces

Table 7 - Research questions and the corresponding categories

5.1 ANALYSING TRAVEL EXPERIENCES OF NEW ZEALAND INBOUND GENERATION Z

The analysis of the Generation Z travel experiences in New Zealand is discussed under travel patterns and reasons for which travel is undertaken. It has been noted that majority of the participants are from Europe. Emerging from the interviews and blogs is that most of them were also taking a *'gap year'* before venturing into university or further venturing into career paths. A gap year affords young people the opportunity to recuperate from arduous school experience and to resolve uncertainties about their future educational or career pursuits (Vogt, 2018).

Notably, the research was conducted during the summer period in New Zealand. This corresponds to winter period in parts of the Northern Hemisphere and Western Europe in particular. Although the length of stay in New Zealand for each participant was three to 12 months, the opportunity to enjoy summer was deemed a key feature of travelling too New Zealand. A participant noted that at the time when they left Germany it was getting to winter but by the time they were to return, it would be summer. This would give them a full year of warm weather hence their being here in New Zealand. However, there was a participant keen on skiing. For her, winter was considered the appropriate time to tour New Zealand. Importantly, travel was not tied to a single activity or purpose. Although the principal purpose to some might have been to think about their future, the participants also engaged in multiple explorative and adventurous activities.

It further emerged that some participants were accompanied by their friends and companions. However, none of them travelled with family. In addition, new friends and acquaintances were established in the process of travelling around the country. While to some, the friendships were not necessarily deemed lifelong, they were regarded a critical part of travel and exploring the world. Pearce (2008) considers the emphasis on meeting other travellers to be a strong indicator of the backpacker phenomenon.

A difference in travel patterns between the participants and their parents was highlighted by some participant. Chepkoech observed that she had travelled more than her parents have done; '*Yeah like for me like my parents didn't travel that much so I think like so far, I have done more travel than them*'. However, it was also noted that parents are engaged in travel more now than they used to. This was attributed to the technological advancement and lower travelling costs.

> *Like they travel more right now than they did when they were my age like, so they travel more now so I think it's because it's much more easier to travel nowadays so and for cheaper price as well.* – Chepkoech

Furthermore, this may be attributed to the popular concept known as Fear-of-Missing-Out (FoMO). This is a pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent (Przybylski, Murayama, Dehaan, & Gladwell, 2013). A survey by Smith (2018) corroborates this, reporting that 82% of Generation Z regretted losing out on chances to travel.

5.1.1 Travel patterns

In analysing the travel patterns, attention is paid to what the participants did, where the participants went, how they got to the different locations, and why they chose to travel. The former three correspond to the key category of travel patterns while the later corresponds to the key category of reason for travel. The themes corresponding to travel patterns relate to aspects of a destination which can be referred to as services (see Table 7). These services represent how the Generation Z travellers interfaced with the destination.

5.1.1.1 *Services (The destination interfaces)*

Destinations are an arena of multiple interactions to a tourist. The tourists interface with the destination through engaging with the spaces, places and cultures of the destination (Wearing & Foley, 2017). In this research, these engagements are regarded as the services which allow Generation Z to interface with the destination. The services discussed in this research include accommodation, the activities, places visited, and transport. These contribute to the experiences of the participants. A poor interaction with the above services may lead to an overall negative experience at the destination (Morgan et al., 2010).

As has been observed in the findings, the choice of accommodation varied. While preference was for camper vans, hostels and farm housing, other choices included apartments, flatting and Airbnb. The role of media advertising and word of mouth from fellow travellers were found to play a role in choice of accommodation and other services. Such was the case of a participant who decided to stay at The Base Hostels because of an online advertisement he saw while still in Germany, his home country. Another participant learnt of opportunities in the farm through conversation with fellow travellers at the hostels. The concept of farm work in exchange for accommodation, food, and learning is referred to as the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms - WWOOF (Wengel, McIntosh, & Cockburn-Wootten, 2018). This was common among participants as it complemented travel budgets.

Activities undertaken in the destination links the settings with the experience, and benefits derived from undertaking that activity (Schänzel & McIntosh, 2000). Participants sought activities which promised positive experience. To some, adrenaline filled activities were the main pull to participate in an activity. A blogger decided to participate in a research because it

offered the opportunity of swimming with dolphins. This was an activity of interest to another participant because of the 'once in a lifetime' opportunity. Knowledge of the fact that Maui dolphins were endangered provided further motivation to engage in this activity. This has been defined elsewhere as *last chance tourism* (Fisher & Stewart, 2017).

Places visited represented a different channel of interfacing with the destination. Participants were intent on visiting as many places in New Zealand as possible. However, some participants preferred certain places more than others while still being open to opportunities along their travel path. Some loved going to the beaches where others may have preferred nature walks. In some cases, the places also determined the type of activities to engage in. Such was the case with Chepkoech who indicated that '*the activities were really different like according to the places we were….we did a lot of hiking in like eeh more like eeh the mountain areas we would hike and then in the city's more like cafes and….shopping'*. Another criterion determining choice of places and/or activities is the type of experience which the participants were seeking. Such was a case where speed boat, and bungee jumping were sought by thrill seeking Generation Z travellers.

A functional means of transport and system is a critical component of travel. This is critical when touring remote places far from the cities and big urban centres. It was observed that personal cars/vans were preferred by majority of participants. This offered the required flexibility while doubling as accommodation. The modes of transport were as varied as the selection criteria. Budget was observed as one of the main criteria. It has been observed that young tourists tend to skip on travel and accommodation costs to spend more on the destination (Cavagnaro, Staffieri, & Postma, 2018).

Antecedents of service preferences

Several factors were found to influence the choice of service. These included affordability and budgets, convenience and accessibility to these services, the flexibility of the travel plans but also serendipity. This is in keeping with a study by Dellaert, Ettema, and Lindh, (1998) who concluded that, decisions made by tourists are complex and multi-faceted. The decisions and choices are said to be interrelated and to evolve in a decision process over time.

Generation Z were found to be budget conscious but also seeking to make the most out of the resources they had. The participant with the highest average budget amount per month was NZD4000. While this amount may appear substantial, it is minimal when compared to the number of activities and expense items to be allocated. In exploring backpacker tourist enclaves Howard (2007) pointed out that young tourists travel inexpensively and on off-beaten paths, are interested in local cultures and seek to meet locals. Since his research came too early to be focused on Generation Z, it seems to suggest to some extent that earlier generations shared

similar traits when it comes to traveling and that travel behaviour is might be more to do with life stage than with generation cohort. Majority of the participants planned to take up temporary work to supplement their travel budget. And adventurous and explorative attitude was evident in most participants. While the explorative nature of the participants could be attributed to the teenage and early adult years marked by curiosity, it may as well be associated with the earlier identified characteristics of Generation Z.

Another consideration emerging from the research was concern for safety and security. A participant lost their belongings in their hostel. Their investigation concluded that it was theft by one of the roommates since access to the room was by room key. This made them uncomfortable and more conscious of the safety of their belongings around strangers they had just met in the hostels. The environment was one of suspicion and was an unpleasant experience to them. As a result, alternative accommodation was sought with greater attention being on room configuration and lockers for belongings. A blogger expressed their fear of having to drive alone on rainy and dark evenings especially in remote places.

In some cases, choice of service was serendipitous. Serendipity includes 'chance' opportunities that were not planned for. In such cases, circumstances became conducive to allow for an activity, the undertaking of a journey to some attractions or an advantageous choice of accommodation. In other cases, participants were left with no other option but one. Such was Syovinya's observation stating; …..*because if we want to go to New Zealand for example there is no other way but by flight. So if you can't have like have another way to do it*….

Generation Z further exhibited considered and ethical choices, demonstrating concern for sustainability and environmental awareness. This may be attributed to global awareness and to contemporary macro societal movements. Further, one participant noted her preference for organic foods in the quest of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Finally, the above services are a critical link between the traveller and the destination, representing a point of interface. In order to market tourism destination services well, the marketers must understand factors that lead to decisions and consumption behaviour (Goossens, 2000). Such would facilitate effective destination positioning.

5.1.1.2 *Travel profile and career*

Travelling abroad is now part of the broad range of activities undertaken by young travellers (Frändberg, 2010). It was observed that most of the participants had toured other countries or were en-route to other destinations. Generation Z are keen on multi destination travel. They rationale is that the one-year break after school is considered the best opportunity to travel before settling to busy university years or employment life. One of the participants indicated

that they had been to at least 10 different countries. This matches arguments that at different stages in life individuals tend to prefer different kinds of travel and different types of experiences (Blichfeldt, 2007). This is advocated further by Pearce (2005) in his Travel Career Ladder and its newer version the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) – see further discussion in reasons for travel.

The impact of transitions on travel patterns has been studied. Major transitions in travel career are associated with transitions in everyday lives of individuals. As people's everyday contexts change during their lives, travel motivation and experience aspirations may also change. An example is when a person transitions from being single to married life. This transition may result in changed travel patterns and the type of experiences the couple now seek. Blichfeldt (2007) concurs with this, stating that, both motivation and experience aspirations will draw heavily from the individuals' everyday life contexts and especially on the phase of life that the individual (and his/her family) are in at present.

Travel was not without constraints and setbacks at times. A helpful guide on constraints which may affect travel profile is provided by Dellaert et al., (1998) and Hägerstrand, (1970) . They distinguished three categories of constraints;

(1) Authority constraints which are imposed by law or institutions for example opening hour
(2) Coupling constraints which relate to family, friends and colleagues
(3) Capability constraints which are caused by availability of travel options and/or resources such as money

It was felt among some participants that New Zealand was restrictive in rules and regulations. This is a case in authority constraints. However, in other areas such as travel document processing, New Zealand was considered to have easier processes than other parts of the globe. Such was the case in acquiring an Inland Revenue Department (IRD) number, opening bank accounts, and mobile SIM cards. Secondly, some decisions among the Generation Z travellers were pegged on companions or family and friends, an example of coupling constraints. A recurrent concern among participants was the cost of commodities and services. In one of the cases, the respondent opted to hitchhike because taking a bus was considered expensive. Hotel accommodation was considered an unnecessary expense while cheaper options were available in hostels and more commonly, cars being used both as a means of transport and a place to sleep. This corresponds to the third constraint – the capability constraint.

The travel cycles

Experience is not only that which is realized at the destination. The gestalt of pre, during and post trip provides an enhanced understanding of the overall experience. These can be referred to as the phases of a tourist experience and can be paralled to Clawson and Knetsch's, (1966) five-phase model which starts with anticipation, travel to site, on-site activity, return travel and recollection. In this research on Generation Z, trip planning was found to be a significant element of the overall experience for Generation Z. Majority of the participants had been saving for several months to make the trip. Several of them sought jobs (mostly menial work) to raise funds towards their trip. The length of stay and the travel distance from home country to New Zealand could be regarded as being proportional to the level of planning. This seems to agree with observations by Gitelson and Crompton (1983) who note that the length of stay and distance from home are some of the key factors in trip planning intervals. The further the distance and the longer the stay, the longer in advance travellers planned their trip.

Furthermore, observations made by Huh and Park, (2010) indicate that, the type of accommodation, the number of attractions visited, the modes of transport, and the trip budget are tied to longer trip planning. A similar study by Yoon (2000) found that, activity participation, travel distance, purpose and duration of trip, and expenditure are key determinants of the length of trip planning. However, exception is made in Wambugu whose decision to travel to New Zealand was seemingly abrupt. He said;

> *I really didn't do much research before I came like I just kind of was looking for a spot to come and somebody told me NZ was pretty incredible so I decided to just buy the tickets, I kind of bought it 2 days later and I flew out here but I did go through a programme called the Interexchange which essentially just helps you expedite the visa process so you can get there quicker and they provide you with a couple of you know useful items but, I didn't really plan much I still don't have much planned I just kind of flew out here.*

On-site activities and travels were pre-planned, spontaneous and flexible or serendipitous.

> *After the fair we went to the harbour where someone proposed us a tour on his sailing boat. We couldn't resist. When we came back to land, the America's cup was there. New Zealand won it last year. Jack got autographs from his favourite sailors and was really happy.* - Mumbua

People and culture contributed to the overall experience at the destination. In their interaction with the residents, Generation Z travellers experienced both negative and positive encounters. Indeed, Nickerson (2006) observed that the local population fosters attitudes and sense of place ultimately impacting on the tourist's experience. Participants were still engaged in travel or had

just come to the end of their travel at the time of interviewing or data collection from blogs. This meant that a post travel enquiry was not possible at the time. However, the capture of events in photos, diaries, and social media and blog posts provides a bank of memory retrievable in future. This may offer a basis for planning repeat travel or serve as a critical element in nostalgia and reminiscence.

5.1.2 Reasons for travel – the push factor

Several reasons for travel were evident among the Generation Z participants. While the reasons for travel to and within New Zealand in this research are varied, they could be classified as either being intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic are internal and person centred while the extrinsic have their genesis in more external factors. Furthermore, these reasons could be identified within the extant literature on motivation. Different theories advocate for different perspectives on reasons why people travel. The Family Life Cycle, for instance, assumes that individuals go through distinct evolutionary familial phases which influence their travel careers and experience aspirations (Blichfeldt, 2007). Considered from such a perspective, Generation Z would be within the bracket of youthful travel which is associated with freedom seeking and progressive detachment from parental oversight. This was evident in some of the participants. It was considered a time to '*fly the nest*' as described by one participant.

Furthermore, since the reasons for travel as identified by individual Generation Z travellers were varied, these may fit in the multiple levels proposed by Pearce's (2005), Travel Career Ladder (TCL). He tiers motivation on five levels: relaxation needs, safety/security needs, relationship needs, self-esteem and development needs, and self-actualization needs. Individuals travel to satisfy these needs. At different levels of their travel, Generation Z had to make decisions relating to choice of destination, accommodation, activities, places and attractions. Argued from this perspective, the concept which describes a set of interrelated travel choices – the trip frame - as presented by Woodside and MacDonald (1994) would best describe the reasons for travel. However, Crompton's (1979) conceptual framework may also apply. As has been earlier mentioned, this framework produced two categories of nine motives; the socio-psychological and the alternate cultural categories. Within the first category are escape, exploration and evaluation of self, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships, and facilitation of social interaction. The second category comprised novelty and education.

While it is possible to locate Generation Z multiple reasons for travel within different models in literature, an intrinsic-extrinsic classification is preferred for this research. Among the intrinsic factors are, seeking for adventure and novelty. The extrinsic factors included attractions, escapism and engaging in travel because it is the popular culture (norm). While it could be

argued that escapism is also intrinsic in nature, it is generated by external circumstance such as undesirable events in country of residence or workplace. The reasons discussed below represent the push factor. Goossens (2000) explains that push factors are socio-psychological in nature and explain the desire to travel.

5.1.2.1 Attractions

Attractions relate to destination and could be regarded as pull factors as opposed to push factors, which are more people specific. While different participants might have been attracted to the same places or activities, the reasons (motivations) and experiences thereof were different. Accordingly, the same attraction may elicit different experiences. Numerous attractions were identified; beaches, glow worms, ninety miles beach, national parks, nature trails, ski-fields, cultural villages among others.

5.1.2.2 Escapism and break

Escapist seek experiences that differ from their accustomed daily experiences (Thanh & Kirova, 2018). Empirical studies posit that travel and vacation are motivated by a *going away* rather than by *going towards* something (Blichfeldt, 2007). The former relates to escapism and taking a break. Both aspects were observed among the participants. In the former, the participants were travelling to escape conditions in their country of residence. Travel was a time to take a break from stressful environment, be it educational or politically instigated. To some others travelling was an opportunity to escape from harsh winter conditions.

Weather was also a determinant of engaging in travel at the destination or engaging in an activity. This was demonstrated by Katunge and Makau. They said;

> *Mid-April I drove to Raglan, which is THE surfer spot. I stayed more or less one week as I obviously wanted to surf there but unfortunately the weather conditions were rough. That's probably why I didn't enjoy it too much when I surfed the first time. However, it was great fun when I tried it a few day later when it was sunny* – Katunge.

> *It's not good because winter is starting in Germany. This is also the reason I came here because in like November till March it's always cold and I don't like it…* - Makau

Dann (1977) identified two basic internal motivations; anomie and ego-enhancement. The former relates to getting away from or escapism while the latter relates to need for recognition. Katunge and Makau demonstrate an escape from unfavourable conditions.

In addition, teenage years and early adulthood are characterized by the urge to detach one from parents and to discover self. This can also be classified as a going away and escaping from parental control. However, it could also be argued that it represents a going towards freedom. It

has been argued that people engage in tourism and/or in travel to get away from everyday experience and/or in search of new experiences (Blichfeldt, 2007). Elsewhere, a blogger noted an instance they almost decided not to travel from Raglan due to an outbreak of a virus among the group members she was travelling with.

Several of the participants indicated that part of the reason why they chose New Zealand was the long distance from their home country. However, the idea that long-distance mobility mainly concerns the exceptional 'break of routine' to visit exotic places has been challenged (Frändberg, 2010). Emphasis is now on the increasing role of long-distance travel as part or ordinary, necessary and expected engagement. Indeed, New Zealand's geographical isolation does present a pull effect.

> *I think I'm a bit more naive maybe I'm as well; I did not like, for me going to NZ it was like we may be stepping out of this craziness happening in Europe because as we said it's quite easily fearful all of that* - Chepkoech.

This agrees with the research findings indicating that Generation Z preferred to travel to places they considered far from their country of residence. Further indications are that they are engaging or planning to engage in future travel to different destinations.

5.1.2.3 Adventure and Novelty

Participants were seeking to experience something new and different in their travels. Driven by this urge of novelty, some went explored remote places and kept off places that they considered familiar and touristic in nature. This type of exploratory behaviour is considered an overt expression of curiosity that is aroused by an environment perceived to be novel (Crompton, 1992). However, it was found that in the quest for something new, some ended up surrounded by extended familiarity of home even in remote places (Wilson & Richards, 2008). One of them commented that everywhere she turned there were fellow German country men and women. While at times this was viewed favourably as it cushioned against too much anxiety from unfamiliarity in a new place, it did yield feelings of disdain in some of the participants. However, to some participants the similarity of New Zealand to their country of origin enhanced a sense of being at home and made it easy for them to settle down.

5.1.2.4 Norm

While some engaged in travel for novelty, others were found to engage in travel because it was the norm among peers.

> *New Zealand is a very popular destination for Germans they really want to come here and Australia as well* – Akinyi.

This phenomenon maybe likened to New Zealand outward bound young travellers' overseas experience (OE). The OE has become part of the culture and is seen as a young adult's rite of passage (Wilson, Fisher, & Moore, 2008).

Travel companions were also observed to impact on travel decision as pointed out by Mutuku's – "*because of my travel mate, I travel together with another woman and we buy the car together and we travel around, and she arrived yesterday so I had to wait for her*". Indeed, Dellaert et al., (1998) observes that, individuals may be limited by time schedules of their travel companions.

5.1.2.5   Internship

It is observed that some participants were travelling in New Zealand on internship. However, even in such cases these participants were intent on using internship as the means to get to New Zealand and have some travel. While the participants expressed a desire to tour more places in New Zealand, the time limit on their internship prevented them from undertaking longer trips. As has been commented, time and duration of trip may depend on school or work holiday schedule (Dellaert et al., 1998). Furthermore, specialization in programmes for example marine biology, tourism among others, has seen travel abroad as part of the education (Frändberg, 2010). It was also noted that some participants travelled here to extend their knowledge of a chosen fields. The diversity of flora and fauna, for example, motivated one of the travellers to visit and immerse themselves in the country's nature. This agrees with research which shows that 15-24 year old age group are more likely to travel for educational purposes when compared to older age group (Collins & Tisdell, 2002; Huh & Park, 2010).

Further, travel was also linked to a transnational connection between organization (Frändberg, 2010). This was noted in the case of two participants (Akinyi and Apondi) who travelled to New Zealand as interns through partnership of an organization in Germany with a New Zealand based organization;

> *I decided to do an internship here and my organization helped me very much with the organization and with the first accommodation and with everything* - Akinyi

This form of operation is supported by Frändberg, (2010), who opines that mobility and communication across large distances should be part of normal practice and integral to how society is organized.

5.1.2.6   Serendipity

Travelling within New Zealand was also serendipitous. Chelangat comment; '*Yeah true, cause there was a sign that said seal colony and we had no idea, we were like - let's do it! You know'*. Another respondent commenting on their impending travel in parts of New Zealand divulged that '*the plan is to have no plan*'. Generation Z preferred serendipity over a structured itinerary.

With the increasing usage of smart phones and mobile navigation devices travellers are able to wander off and explore the destination with minimal planning and more spontaneity (Huang et al., 2014). This may increase the element of surprise hence contributing to the overall experience.

5.1.3 Conclusion

While motivation has been analysed as either intrinsic or extrinsic, alternative classification would be on a hedonic-utilitarian continuum. Hedonic motivations have to do with emotional and experiential aspects while utilitarian are benefits driven (Asraar, 2015). Generation Z behaviour and choices were not only consistent with the search of travel experiences, but also with the quest for value for the resources invested in the travel. There had great expectations in their choice of New Zealand. To them, travel is also a time of conviviality, socialisation and empowerment (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). In travelling, new friendships were forged, interactions with locals and fellow travellers craved, and deeper meanings to personal life and self-development sought.

5.2 FACTORS SHAPING GENERATION Z TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

In seeking to understand the possible factors shaping Gen. Z experiences, it was necessary to gain some background context of the environment from which they came. As has been earlier mentioned, significant events shape a generation. Table 8 below identifies significant events in each of the participant's country of origin.

5.2.1 Contextualizing experience

The context within which travel behaviour of any group occurs is important to understanding the behaviour (Wilson et al., 2008). These contexts include historical, temporal, institutional, social, global, and cultural. Similar observation is made by Jennings (2010a) noting that, evaluation of tourism experience requires a consideration of local, glocal, national and global environment. Participants were drawn from seven different nationalities. The implications of this from a generation cohort perspective are varied. First, it could be argued that each participant would exhibit unique characteristics, values and behaviours because of the unique circumstances within their own country. This, it can be said will differ from a member of the same age location but from a different nation where he or she experiences a different set of circumstances.

A study of Millennials by Bernardi (2018) supports this view. In the study, differences relating to country of origin were observed. The Chinese were found to be the largest spenders, while Singaporeans and Indonesians were more budget conscious, seeking budget flights and accommodation (Bernardi, 2018). This would put to question the cross cultural and cross

border generation cohort validity of shared behavioural and attitudinal patterns; each nation would have its own generation cohort. It seems to be an opinion of Read and Truelove, (2018) who report that Generation Z are not a homogenous cohort. Corbisiero and Ruspini (2018) repudiate this in their observation that due to ubiquitous connectivity, this Generation has more in common with their international peers than any previous generation.

Furthermore, the significant events listed below tend to suggest a pervasive global culture. While the manifested events might be different for each country represented, the underpinning macro level principles and themes are predominantly the same. This view is echoed by Khan and Estrada (2016) who note that ISIS has created fear and insecurity not only in Iraq and Syria, but in the rest of the world. From the table below, the period between 2001 and 2005, is marked by an underpinning theme of rising insecurity. This, it could be argued, engenders a sense of self preservation. Whereas at that time there doesn't seem to have been any terrorist attack in Netherlands, the self-preservation attitude might appear to manifest in the voters' rejection of the EU constitution. The selected significant events shown below highlights the context from which the participants of this research have come. While it is outside the scope of this research to explore the detailed impact upon the individual participants, the information provides important explorative avenues for future research. For instance, valuable insights may be gained from comparing the values of World War 1 and World War 2 generations cohorts and those of Generation Z since the global environment is replete with war tensions.

COUNTRY	SIGNIFICANT EVENTS			
	1995-2000	**2001-2005**	**2006-2010**	**2011-2015**
ENGLAND	- Princess Diana's death	- Bombings in London	Financial crisis	
FRANCE	- Won the soccer world cup - Conducts a series of nuclear tests in the Pacific	- Compulsory military service abolished - Euro replaces franc - Controversial reforms to pension system	- Bans face covering - Financial crisis - Military and nuclear accord with UK	- ISIS attack in Paris -Demonstrations against terrorism and for freedom of speech
GERMANY		- Euro replaces Deutsche Mark - Immigration bill to allow limited number of non-EU workers - EU constitution ratified - First female democratic chancellor	- Declared to be officially in recession - Reversed 2001 decision to phase out nuclear energy by 2021	- Pro-Greece financial bail out - Military right to use weapons in event of catastrophic assault - Surge in immigration - Withdraws most troops from Afghanistan - Adopts minimum wage for the first time - Suspends compulsory military service
ICELAND		- Re-admitted to the International Whaling Commission after 12 years	- Volcanic ash disrupts air travel in Europe - Last US military personnel leave after presence since 1951	- Awards two licences for oil and gas exploration
LUXEMBOURG	- Maastricht Treaty	- Euro as national currency	- Bailing of struggling bank	- First Oscar for

	- Euro monetary system - 1992	- EU constitution ratified	- Questionable banking systems – 'Grey list' - European capital of culture	animated film *Mr Hublot* - 175 years of independence
NETHERLANDS	- Flooding forcing evacuation of 200, 000 people - First school shooting in Dutch history - Began using Euro monetary system,	- Euthanasia legalized, Same sex marriage bill passed, Brothels legalized - Euro officially replaces Dutch guilder, 18-judge world court inaugurated in The Hague, - Pharmacies allowed to fill prescriptions for marijuana, - Bird flu epidemic, - 200,000 people demonstrated to protest welfare reforms, - Voters reject EU constitution	- Sent additional troops to Afghanistan, - First nation to use completely digital signals	- Terrorist attack in a mall
USA	- President Bill Clinton and Monika Lewinsky Scandal	- World Trade Centre attack - War against terrorism - O.J. Simpson verdict	- Barack Obama - USA's first African American president Death of Michael Jackson	- Barack Obama re-elected - Twin bomb blasts in Boston marathon - US and Cuba improved diplomatic relations
GLOBAL	- Maastricht Treaty - Euro system - EU set common foreign, security policy – Amsterdam Treaty - First cloned mammal	- Terrorist attacks - Wikipedia launched - Enron files for bankruptcy - International Criminal Court established - Protesting the US prospective	- Financial Crisis - Petroleum price hits all time high - Death of Michael Jackson - Haiti earthquake kills over 230,000	

| | - Release of Harry Potter
- Death of Mother Teresa
- Kyoto Protocol adopted by UN committee
- Founding of Google | invasion of Iraq
- Facebook is founded
- Approximately 230,000 people killed by a Tsunami | - Volcanic ash in Iceland
- Crude oil spill from explosion in Gulf of Mexico
- Wiki-leaks | |

Table 8 - Summary of significant events between 1995 and 2015

5.2.1.1 Global factors – The macro level

Terrorism is a major global concern for the tourism industry, the tourists, and for the host communities (Liu & Pratt, 2017). The regular frequency of terrorist attacks has seen increased measures by governments to curb the menace. This has significantly changed the mind-set of international tourists. However, security threats did not appear to deter Generation Z from travelling. Some believed destinations have become safer because of terror attacks. Reasons presented included the resultant increase in surveillance and security procedures. Indeed, Mansfeld and Pizam (2006) have observed that, some tourists are less concerned with security threats and remain undeterred in their travel to destinations. Others have been known to avoid affected destinations until security in these destinations improves. Some Generation Z travellers projected elements of self-efficacy and psychological warfare. They believed shrinking back from travelling would mean a triumph of terrorism. In a quarterly interview, the American Management Association International listed Generation Z formative events as including the Great recession, Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), marriage equality, the first black US president, rise of populism and terrorism (Read & Truelove, 2018). It would therefore appear that, Generation Z has become accustomed to and adapted to the volatile global environment.

Respondents expressed concern about environmental issues. A participant thought it contradictory that New Zealand is portrayed as this pristine green environment but there appeared to be a crisis with plastic bags. This participant also considered it paradoxical that there were issues with harsh sun rays, but that protective sunscreen was expensive or at least higher than at her home country. This relates to the global environmental concerns. Observably, young tourists are becoming sensitive to the protection of the environment (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018).

5.2.1.2 New Zealand socio-political factors – The glocal level

Generation Z reported some social aspects of New Zealand which contributed to their experience of the destination. Commenting on social structures a participant reported discrimination against indigenous people. There was a feeling that the Maori were treated unfairly. Separately, some participants felt exploited by their employers. Another participant felt extorted by mechanics and car dealers. While there were negative experiences, overall participants felt that New Zealand was a friendly and welcoming society.

The use of English as an official language contributed to a seamless and fulfilling experience as it eliminated possible language barriers. However, this might be different to participants who are drawn from non-English speaking regions. To them, translations may be required resulting to a challenging experience when navigating around the destination.

Immigration policy permitting work is critical to the long period of stay. Participants needed work to supplement their travel budget or subsidize on spending such as accommodation. The socio-political factors can be said to alter and modify a traveller's behaviour.

Seasonality and weather patterns were factored before and during travel. To some the timing of the trip was to coincide with summer season in the destination. Locally, some participants altered their schedules to fit to the weather patterns of the time. Whereas majority favoured summer, there were some who because of their passion for skiing thought winter months would be good time to plan a visit to Queenstown. A study in Romania showed that seasonality was a determinant of type of adventure and sport tourism practiced by the youth (Demeter & Brătucu, 2014). New Zealand statistical data shows a preference for the warmer autumn and summer months by international travellers. In the year 2017, international arrivals during the autumn-summer months were 57.8% while spring-winter months were 42.2% (Smiler, 2018). In this regard, socio-political factors appear to alter or modify the travellers' behaviours.

5.2.1.3   *Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) – The linkage*

Participants indicated that use of internet was critical to their travel and a necessity. This was especially evident in some participants' efforts to be connected to Wi-Fi shortly after arriving in New Zealand as was the case with Mukoli. Her host ensured that she was connected to the national grid and assisted in downloading useful apps. Applications such as campmate were mentioned and so were other social media platforms. The role of travel agents as a major source of official tourist information has diminished (Mansfeld, 1992). Information uploaded on social medial platforms is influencing how travellers make their travel decisions (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012). Tourists in general and younger generation in particular are increasingly using social networks to prepare their trips, and to share their experiences during or after their visits (Thanh & Kirova, 2018). Furthermore, Generation Z has not lived in a world without internet (Goh & Lee, 2018).

ICT was used as the linkage to services and to the outer world. A participant reported often keeping contact with the parents on Skype. This was to keep them updated on his travel experiences and to get to know what was happening at home. Generation Z has been characterized as being highly digital, social and mobile (Read & Truelove, 2018). Their world has been surrounded by technology and the internet, smart phones, video games and screens (Haddouche & Salomone, 2018). These technological advancements facilitate ease of access to information, facilities and places. Therefore, Generation Z behavioural patterns in a destination and their experiences may be impacted or influenced by ICT advancements.

5.2.2 Identity

People attach meanings to a place and feel a sense of belonging to that place which eventually plays a role in formation of identities for the individuals (Morgan et al., 2010). This has been described elsewhere as the 'sense of place' (Tuan, 1980). According to Eyles (1985), sense of place is influenced by physical landscape (ecological), relationship with others (social) and the prevailing social economic systems (ideological) (Morgan et al., 2010). The sense of connection to place is elicited by Mwikali who blogs about the activities of Abel Tasman, a fellow countryman. She blogged, "*Next stop was the Abel Tasman national park … named after the first European (a Dutchie!) to see New Zealand. … So, in honour of his courage (but mostly because I just really wanted to), I decided to go canyoning! It was absolutely amazing*". The ancient exploits of Tasman enhanced her sense of identity and nationhood in Mwikali. Authors observe that sense of place could be affective (emotional), cognitive or conative (behavioural) (Chen & Šegota, 2015; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2006). Historical events here are also seen to contribute to the experience of the participant. Knowledge of historical events may also cause one to redefine their identity or life perspectives.

Furthermore, it was observed that, most participants travelling to New Zealand were on a break from student life. This was a time to plan their future career and life course. The possible association of an important milestone such as, the decision to take up a lifelong career path, to the place where such a decision was arrived at may heighten the connection of the traveller to that place; this by way of reminiscing on nostalgic moments. Consequently, the sense of place and belonging is enhanced. This may result in future repeat visits to re-live the moments.

Meeting and talking to fellow travellers of the same age group and sharing the same story was described by one participant as '*nice*'. This may be described as individuals locating themselves within the group. The social interaction amongst group members may be an opportunity to discover oneself. Furthermore, engagement in challenging activities and travelling to unfamiliar territories was regarded to be a time to discover new things about oneself as evidenced in comments by Wayua; '*being in unfamiliar territory is so exhilarating and I always learn so much about the places I am traveling to and about myself as well. Getting out of your comfort zone is where your true personality shines*'. It was also considered exhilarating.

While participants are Generation Z, they equally referred to themselves as backpackers. It was observed that there was no homogeneity in Generation Z. Reporting that some of the hostel mates decided to prematurely leave New Zealand, Syovinya pointed to the difference in work ethics between the 18-year olds and her older ilk. She said, '*it's all those 18 years old people because they don't really work back in the country and now they are here, and they need to work and they see it's pretty much complicated, especially because most of the time they get job in*

construction which is hard so they just give up and like I prefer to coming back to my country and having more easy life I think'. Lack of homogeneity in the cohort has been reported by Read and Truelove (2018). Equally, backpacker phenomenon has been regarded as having different manifestations thus lacking homogeneity (Pearce, 2008).

As previously mentioned, Generation Z are technology savvy and spend long hours online. They are known to be keen on sharing their photos, opinions and experiences on social media. This research entailed use of blogs as a method of data collection. Each of the studied bloggers had numerous photos posted online. Bernardi (2018) observes that the exercise of sharing travel experiences on social media is part of the experience and is a way of building personal identity. Observations were made by some participants of how their travel patterns were different from their parents'. This may be considered as self-identity.

Separately, the traveller's identity may be viewed differently by the residents in the host nation. By travelling, one enters the host culture which replaces individual identity with the stereotypes of the tourist (Wilson & Richards, 2008). To the farm owners, Generation Z and the youth travellers in general represent affordable labour. While the traveller may regard themselves as embedded in the host community, a different view and attitude may characterise the host. The nature of interaction between the two (the tourist and the toured) will determine how the traveller experiences the place.

5.2.2.1   Future planning

It is observed that travel offered the opportunity to plan one's life. Being far away from accustomed way of life, the destination provided the requisite environment for definition of self. This purpose may affect travel behaviour and patterns, such as places to visit. Preference may be towards serene places which allow for deep thinking. Additionally, this led some participants to engage in conversations with other travellers in the hostels.

5.3   NEW ZEALAND 'PULL EFFECT' FACTORS FOR GEN. Z TRAVELLERS

Understanding how people choose destinations reflects on their travel attitude (Crompton, 1979; Mansfeld, 1992). Destinations constitute the away-from-home locales where attractions and activities are located (Ryan & Cave, 2005). The choice of a destination is shaped by both external and internal forces. The internal factors are the motives and set of criteria used by the traveller to evaluate a destination. These have been discussed above under reasons for travel.

Crompton (1992) identifed the external forces as previous experience, prior knowledge, information obtained from friends, advertisements, and other sources. In chosing New Zealand as their destination elements of each of these external factors were observed. For some of the participants in this research, a choice had to be made between destination. Such included instances where choice had to be made as to whether to travel to New Zealand or Australia as alluded to by Syokau, "*Yea, it's easy for us to get the visa and yeah everybody told me that New Zealand has most beautiful scenery and nature in the world so I decide to go to New Zealand because I thought Australia will be more party than New Zealand and here it's like more spiritual travelling so I thought yeah New Zealand*". To this traveller, the two countries possesed competing offers. A determination had to be made as to which option best suited the participant's need. This relates to psychological process. Information was critical in forming mental pictures in the participant. This is supported by (Crompton, 1992) who observes that travelers start off with a cognitive set of possible destinations and wittle this down in the decision making process to a final selection.

Dellaert et al. (1998) identified two categories of destination characteristics in a tourist's decision-making process: (1) the possibility to undertake certain activities at the destination and (2) the attributes of the destination itself, such as prices, scenery, accommodation, language barriers. The first entails prior information gathering and ensuing comparison amongst potential destinations. It further presupposes the notion of expectancy.

5.3.1   Destination profile

There is a strong linkage between travel motivations and destination choices (Jang & Cai, 2002; Mansfeld, 1992). Theories relating to motivation suggest that individuals constantly strive to achieve a state of homeostasis (Goossens, 2000). The author argues that need deficiency disrupts this state. The need requires satisfaction. The existence of a product or service with perceived qualities to satisfy this need motivates the person to seek out the products. The importance of knowing people's travel motivation has been highlighted by Jang and Cai (2002) who opine that it plays a critical role in predicting future travel patterns. This would be of particular interest to a destination's tourism industry stakeholders. While motivations are important, they do not fully explain the tourist experience (Cohen, 1979). Motivation can be viewed as behavioural intentions towards tourism attractions – rather than motives (Goossens, 2000).

5.3.1.1 Destination image

A destination is not just a geographical unit but is also subject to people's judgement and evaluation (Chen & Šegota, 2015). Implied are not only the evident physical features, which are easily observed, but also the abstract and subjective psychological elements as perceived by the tourist. Elsewhere, this dichotomy is observed by Echtner and Ritchie (1993) who opine that destinations have functional (tangible) and psychological (abstract) characteristics. In the data collected, respondents expressed both aspects in their views on New Zealand. Several media were responsible for communicating and enhancing New Zealand's image as perceived by Generation Z. They included agencies and organizations, film and the movie industry, social media as well as referrals. A participant observed; '*online, yea and I think our generation is more using online things, also I have some friends back in France they travelled already in New Zealand, so they told me about it, they told me it was amazing let's go there*'. Some participants were weary of organizational or company websites because they perceived them to have ulterior motives of selling a product or service to them. Preference was therefore given to private blogs and websites.

As earlier observed with one of the participants and as studies show, an audience's attachment to a location of a TV show can significantly affect their perception of the destination (Fu, Ye, & Xiang, 2016; Tessitore, Pandelaere, & Van Kerckhove, 2014). The success of a tourist destination not only depends on generic factors of competitive advantage such as amenities, attractions, and infrastructure but also on the perception of the destination (Matiza & Oni, 2014). The perceived destination image is a significant factor in influencing travel choice, satisfaction, and behavioural intentions (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). From a management perspective, destination development and marketing activities should be planned around factors that uniquely motivate travellers to the specific destination (Jang & Cai, 2002). A destination image exists, whether or not the practitioners in that destination consciously manage it (Matiza & Oni, 2014). Accordingly, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) should seek to create a competitive destination image to influence tourist perceptions.

Additionally, the role of residents in destination branding and creating a destination image is important. The interaction of locals and the tourist may confirm or nullify perceptions and stereotypes about a destination. Furthermore, interaction of Generation Z travellers with the residents resulted in travel choices to certain parts of New Zealand as was the case with; '*we listened to local advices actually*' – Chepkoech. Appreciating the importance of the local residents, Chen and Šegota (2015) propose the need to understand residents' sense of place attachment, their perceptions of their place as a tourist destination and what they eventually

communicate to the tourists. In this regard, regional tourism organizations within a destination may prove an effective management and marketing proposition.

Participants were awed by the sceneries around New Zealand. Scaling Mt Fyffe in the coastal town of Kaikoura though torturous was regarded worth the pain because of the panoramic view the participant enjoyed when they got to the top. Aesthetic features of a destination are known to contribute to the destination's image formation (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Kirillova, Fu, Lehto, & Cai, 2014). New Zealand is diverse in typography which invites multiple interpretations and judgements on beauty and aesthetic appeal. Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) generalize the multiple elements to convey one national destination image. However, Kirillova et al. (2014) have suggested that due to diverse aesthetic judgements among tourists, it is important to focus on an area in order to capture its multi-faceted dimensionality. Similarly, Echtner and Ritchie (1991) concluded that a destination's image comprises a holistic component and attribute-based components. Each of these components has functional (tangible such as scenery) and psychological (abstract such as friendliness) characteristics. Furthermore, the image could be based on common to distinctive/unique features. The model is applied below (see Figure 21) to selected cases of New Zealand based on Generation Z participants' responses.
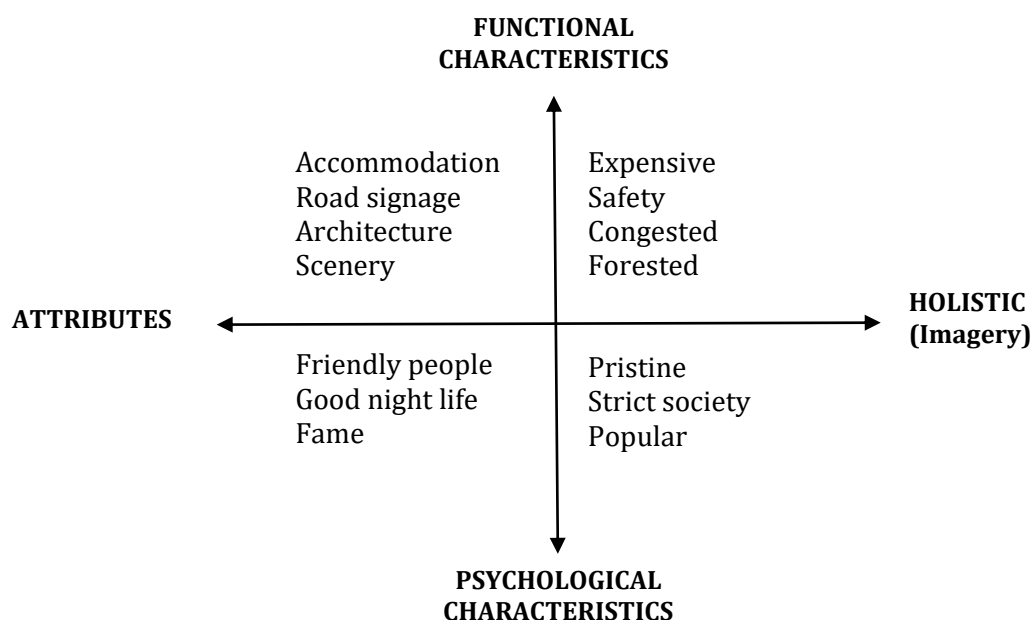

Figure 21- Four components of New Zealand's destination image

However, Stylos et al. (2016) did provide a more popular approach where destination image consists of cognitive, affective and conative components. Similar levels have been proposed by Jorgensen and Stedman, (2006). Consequently, a holistic image of destination as suggested by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) will constitute the these three components. The levels of destination image formation for this research are identified along Avraham and Ketter's (2008) suggested categories:

a. Cognitive (what tourists know about the destination)

While some of the participants had limited knowledge of New Zealand, others had conducted research on the destination. Social media, Television programs, the Hobbiton movie, advertising are some of the sources of information. Internship organizations and social gatherings also provided requisite information to some of the participants. New Zealand is seen as a safe and environmentally friendly destination. This might be traced to the efforts of Tourism New Zealand's 100% Pure campaign. Furthermore, there was reference of New Zealand being the youngest civilization; which can be traced to the destination marketing campaign. Environmental awareness was also voiced by one participant who noted that New Zealand has an issue with the sun. Historical and cultural awareness was also observed with some expressing the desire to visit a local Maori cultural place.

b. Affective (how Gen. Z feel about the destination)

Majority of the travellers felt that New Zealand residents were exceptionally friendly and ready to help. However, there were also negative feelings about some of the local employers. It was felt that they were exploitative and took advantage of the travellers by subjecting them to long hours of work and minimal pay. In visiting forested areas and nature trails, some participants expressed being fearful especially when people approached them. Paradoxically, the destination was regarded as being very safe among the unfolding chaos in the global arena. Few felt that the system was very restrictive, for example on issues of alcohol taking. The requirement for passports in most outlets was perceived negatively. While out in the nature, participants expressed being at peace and tranquil. This allowed them to reflect on their lives and plan their future. Majority expressed their awe at the beautiful and expansive land with exceptional attractions.

c. Evaluative (how Gen. Z evaluate the destination)

It was felt by some that New Zealand was an expensive destination. A common commendation was the beautiful scenery and the diversity of options in activities or places to visit. To one of the participants, Auckland's architecture was unappealing. Others alluded to the traffic lights

system being confusing compared to parts of Europe where lights turn from Green to red and *vice-versa* without the amber lighting. There was an appreciation of the multi-cultural society with authentic foods from different cultures. These have been identified by Matiza and Oni (2014) as some of the components of destination brand identity. Availability of free camping sites and free access to some of the national parks was rated highly by most participants. Some considered sectors of the society to be discriminative against Maori people.

   d. Behavioural (decision to visit or engage in activities)

It has been suggested that tourists belonging to the same social class are attracted to the same kind of destination by the social image attached to that destination (Mansfeld, 1992). It was noted that some of the participants engaged in travel or in certain activities because their fellow colleagues were involved in similar activities. A participant from Germany noted that New Zealand was a popular spot for Germans of his age. While there were some who felt New Zealand was like Australia and therefore did not meet their high expectations, majority felt that it was worthwhile to visit. They alluded this to the long distance travelled just to get to New Zealand and the need thereof to maximize the opportunity by visiting numerous places and engaging in numerous activities. Their commitment to this was evident in the fact that they took time to work to finance their travels and activities. To some, this was a lifetime opportunity and therefore warranted investment. Perceptions are important to behaviour. With change in perception comes a change in behaviour (Fisher & Stewart, 2017). Further, behaviour is important to how individuals experience a destination.

5.3.1.2 *Facilities and attractions*

Among the attractions visited by participants are beaches, nature and scenery, marine and wildlife. Facilities include thrill activity places, ski fields, parks and camping grounds. Other factors mentioned included the safety and security of the country and opportunities to work. Individuals tend to place a high value on what initially attracted them to a destination. Furthermore, emotions and feelings about a destination attributes may motivate tourists to travel to the destination (Goossens, 2000).

While facilities and attractions are a major consideration for travel, ease of communication may be vital to enhancing the quality of expereince at the destaintion. English as a language of communication in New Zealand was an important aspect in one of the participant's experience. To the participant, it was regarded "nice" to not have to translate signs for meaning to be understood. This increased ease of transaction and enhanced the sense of satisfaction.

5.3.1.3 *Expectations and appraisal*

The research unearthed multiple expectations and consequent evaluations by New Zealand inbound Generation Z. These related to what they conceptualized as being offered or available in New Zealand. Predominantly, Generation Z travellers came to New Zealand expecting to find landscapes and beautiful scenery. Some of the participants expected a spiritual retreat and a place that would allow them to plan their future. Consequently, these participants went out in search of secluded places which would fit definitions of off-the-beaten path.

Beyond the expectations, is the actual interaction with the destination and engagement in activities attracting assessment or appraisal. Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory is applied to tourism to analyse tourist behaviour through the application of two factors; expectancy and valence (Gnoth, 1997). Expectancy pertains to anticipation of an outcome while valence pertains to the anticipated value thereof. In literature, terms used to appraise experiences have tended to convey notions of quality and comparative distinction (Jennings, 2010a). Such include Arnould and Price's (1993) "extraordinary", Csikszentmihalyi's (1988) "optimal", and Ritchie and Hudson (2009) "memorable". However, tourists are known to use multiple standards and factors when adjudging satisfaction (Sirgy, 1984). These, according to LaTour and Peat (1979), may include prior experience, situational expectations resulting from adverts and promotions, and referents (experience of others). An example of this is when one of the Generation Z travellers used their home environment as a reference point to assess New Zealand as being incredibly beautiful and better than their home country. This supports a view by Bosangit et al. (2015) that, in particular, bloggers frame experiences in relation to their worlds – their personal history, the realm of experience, everyday norms, personal goals and aspirations. These are compared and contrasted with the activities and events, people and cultures that they encounter during their travels(Bosangit et al., 2015).

Interaction with a destination's environment and the internalization of what is seen and sensed could play a key role in overall trip satisfaction (Kirillova et al., 2014). Generally, most theories on customer satisfaction suggest that satisfaction is relative and is always judged in relation to a standard (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). Most human behaviour is goal-oriented or aimed at need satisfaction (Schänzel & McIntosh, 2000). Motivation arises whenever an individual wishes to satisfy a need (Lee, Jeon, & Kim, 2011). The Expectancy-Disconfirmation Paradigm (EDF) is the dominant framework used to assess satisfaction in hospitality and tourism (Oh & Parks, 1997; Yüksel & Yüksel, 2001). Tourist satisfaction is regarded as the comparison between the tourist's expectations and his/her experiences, with expectation being the yardstick. Consequently, the tourist is either satisfied or dissatisfied depending on whether there was a positive or negative variance between expectations and perceptions. A positive disconfirmation (satisfaction) occurs

when service exceeds expectation. Where service is as expected, the result is a confirmation and leads to satisfaction. Conversely, a negative disconfirmation (dissatisfaction) occurs when service is below expectation.

Some participants expected to find opportunities with the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF) programme. This was a means to get free accommodation as well as to save some money to facilitate further travel. They chose to work in places they wanted to tour to maximize on the opportunity. The primary motivation is therefore not an interest in organic farming but rather to travel (Deville, Wearing, & McDonald, 2016). However, some considered the places they worked in exploitative. Long hours and congested or unsanitary conditions were cited as negative aspects noted by some of the participants. Indeed, Wengel et al., (2018) have reported exploitation of volunteers in these farms and host-guest tensions. Despite this, the opportunity was cherished as it allowed the travellers to not only learn new things but also to engage in activities around the place where the farms were located. Other farm owners were reported to be friendly and supportive of the Generation Z travellers engaged in their farms.

In conclusion, there was both positive and negative appraisal of New Zealand as a destination. Positive appraisal was predominantly about the scenic landscapes and the friendly people. Negative feedback was associated with costs and unpleasant encounters.

Issue of authenticity

A factor expressed by participants was the desire to visit 'un-touristic' areas to experience the authentic local culture. MacCannell (1973) offers that, society is in search of authenticity of experience. To one blogger sharing a '*hangi'* (Maori traditional dish) and learning how it is prepared was a memorable moment. This is akin to MacCannell's observations of the visitor being allowed to sample the backstage. To some New Zealand was regarded un-touristic as compared to Australia. By this was meant that the experience was more authentic. Some other participants deliberately avoided visiting certain places as they considered them touristic hence not expressing the real local culture and way of life. This seems to affirm MacCannell's (1973) labelling of a tourist as someone who is content with his/her inauthentic experiences. Still others went out of their way to seek out places they considered to be indigenous to have an authentic experience with the locals.

> *We don't really like to do the touristic stuff and we maybe go out for off the beaten track we really like to go off the beaten track and we really like special, original, unique trip. –* Chelangat

Consequently, places frequented by tourists were sneered at and thought of as orchestrated experiences, being predictable, and less authentic and therefore less valuable (Gram, 2005).

Hottola (2008) holds a similar perspective noting that package tourists only experience a superficial understanding of the host society. Earlier work by Boorstin (1961) described this as tourists staying in environmental bubbles far removed from the hosts and enjoying pseudo-events rather than the authentic.

Describing this, one of the participants commented that they enjoyed the food in Auckland because it was authentic. He qualified this to the fact that the chefs/cooks preparing meal were from the countries where the dish originated.

> *I would have to say probably one of highlight of being here so far is all the different kind of food you can get, I mean you can get all sort of different type of everything in the USA but here is like there is always some sort of cultural flavour to it out here you know it's not like Thai food made by a bunch of white dudes. It's really got some cultural background here so it's nice to experience all the food from the food origins.* - Wambugu

However, questions do emerge as to whether the experiences realized because of such encounters are authentic. Wang (1999) differentiates between two aspects of authenticity in tourism; the tourist experiences (authentic experiences) and that of the toured object. He argues that while a tourist may at times regard their experience as authentic, it still may be judged as inauthentic should the objects be false or staged. The issue of authenticity for most participants rests on Wang's (1999) third proposition of 'existential authenticity' wherein the individual perception is the determining factor.

5.4   A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF NEW ZEALAND INBOUND GENERATION Z TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

In literature, there is a diversity in defining and interpreting experiences (Jennings, 2010a; Ritchie & Hudson, 2009; Volos, 2009). This research was about understanding travel experiences of New Zealand inbound Generation Z. In this section, the preceding discussions are integrated to present the overall Constructivist Grounded Theoretical argument. Emerging from the thesis is a theoretical framework of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers (see Figure 22).
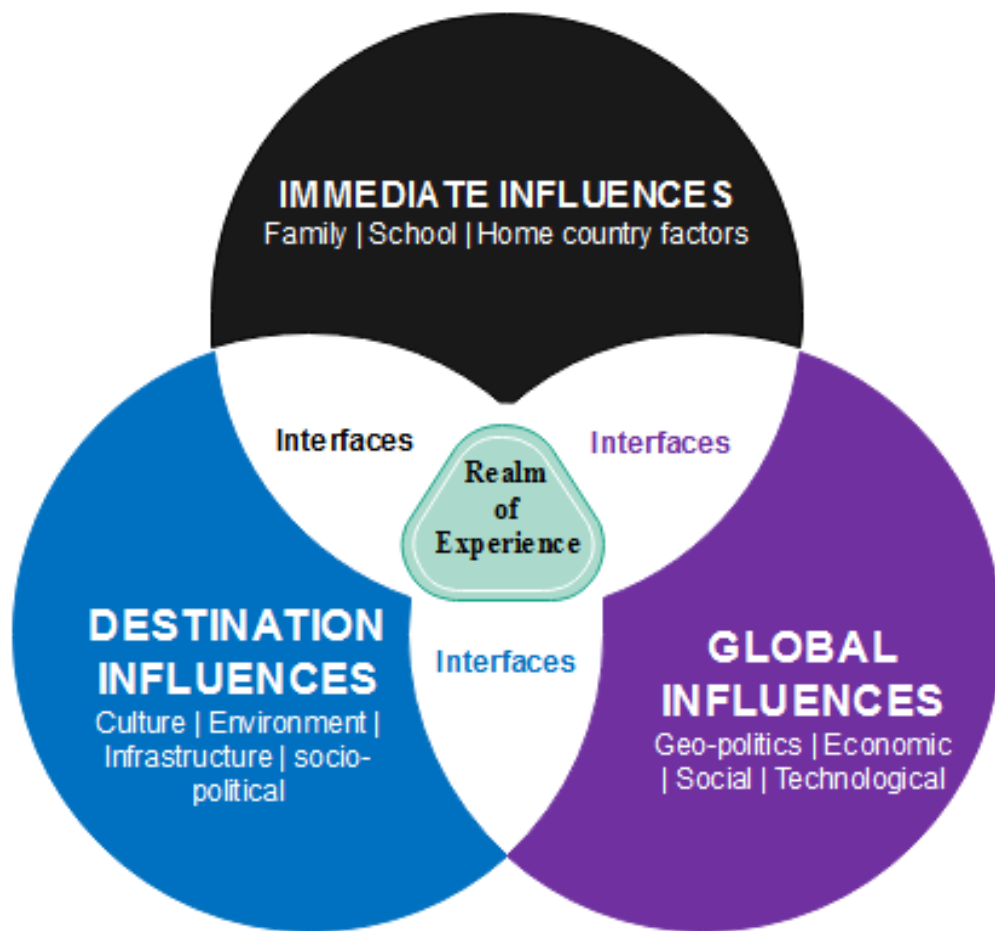

Figure 22 - A theoretical framework of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travel experiences

In the above model, the realm of experience is the intersection of immediate influences, destination influences and global influences. This could otherwise be described as the context of Generation Z travel experiences. Each of the influences has corresponding interfaces (denoted in the model with similar colour). The influences overlap and interconnect to each other. Geo-political shifts such as the forming of European Union, for instance, could have resulted in relaxed travel documentation among member states. This may further encourage cross border travel. A pivotal observation among the inbound Generation Z participants was the need for jobs to raise additional funds for travel within New Zealand. The implication is that, should the visa regulations bar them from work, fewer numbers may plan to visit for such a long time as 12 months. Therefore, experience of New Zealand is significantly enhanced by these forces.

5.4.1   Realm of experience

Generation Z experiences in New Zealand were varied and explained in multiple ways. However, these experiences related to aspects of the individual. These aspects are the body (sensory experience, the soul (cognitive, affective and conative experiences), and the spirit (spiritual experiences). This agrees with Walls' (2013) definition of tourist experience as a blend of many individual elements that come together and may involve the tourist emotionally, physically and intellectually. Furthermore, this argument shifts the arena of experience from being the destination to being the individual. Everything tourists go through at a destination can be experience, whether behavioural or perceptual, cognitive or emotional, expressed or implied (Oh et al., 2007). In addition, experiences are subjective, and no two people share the same experience.

5.4.1.1   *Physiological (sensory) experiences*

These relates to experiences on the sensory level associated with sight, smell, taste, tactile or auditory. A common theme among the travellers was the landscape and scenery in New Zealand. Participants were travelling to seek out landscapes as portrayed in different media. They described what they termed as 'amazing views' or 'breathe taking views'. Kirillova et al., (2014) argued that, an observer and all his/her senses are engaged in the process of aesthetic appreciation. However, a sensory experience may elicit an emotional experience. A panoramic view of a mountain may result in feelings of joy and excitement. This corresponds to the emotion theory argument that when a physiological response is recognized, a person can feel an emotion (James, 1884). This suggests that to feel an emotion, there must first be a bodily response, such as increased heart beat (Lee, 2016). Equally, one type of scene or landscape may elicit different emotional responses to different people. The converse of it is that different types of scenes or landscapes may elicit same emotional state for different people (Chhetri et al.,

2004). Individuals judge beauty based on personal values such as religious beliefs, cultural background, political views, and other normative beliefs (Kirillova et al., 2014). Elsewhere, multisensory techniques such as music, poetry, lighting, films, and artefacts have been used to invoke an emotional experience (Lee, 2016).

Furthermore, it has been argued that aesthetic responses elicited by exposure to sensorial properties of a product rather than its functional characteristics tend to have a long-lasting effect on the consumer (Kirillova et al., 2014). According to the authors, this is because the product becomes part of the user's sensory environment. For destinations, the same authors observe that, marketing of sensory experiences can contribute to a destination brand identity. New Zealand as benefited from this aspect with numerous portals portraying the aesthetic appeal of the country to the world.

5.4.1.2 *Psychological (cognitive, affective, conative) experiences*

Psychological experiences are multi-level being cognitive, affective or conative (Hilgard, 1980). Cognitive experiences related to knowing and intelligence, affective related to emotional experiencing while conative related to will and desire. Each of these forms was exhibited by the Generation Z participants. Katunge, one of the participants speaking about her experience in Matamata, the Hobbiton and the Lord of the Rings movies posed that, '*Even though I haven't seen the movies it was soo interesting and I've started watching the movies because this place knocked my socks off*'. The Mehrabian-Russel model explains the effect of physical environment on human behaviour. It posits that emotional response is a mediator in the relationship environmental stimuli and human behaviour (Liu & Jang, 2009). However, hedonic consumption which concentrates on the intrinsic value of feelings, fun and fantasy should be contrasted with utilitarian consumption (Thanh & Kirova, 2018). Relatedly, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) observes that hedonic experiences relate to multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects. Emotional experiences will include feelings of joy, fear, anger and elation.

While this may seem contradictory, it corresponds to observations that emotional responses are both psychological and physiological realized in both the mind and the body (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Ornstein, 1977; Schachter & Singer, 1962). Emotions can be operationalized by subjective emotional experiences, affective appraisal, and verbal reports of feelings about a touristic attraction (Goossens, 2000). In the case of Syokau, she felt restricted by choosing to travel with in an arranged tour and regretted her decision – '*So I travelled with Kiwi, at the end I think it wasn't the right decision for me because like I think Kiwi was more like fast trip and you couldn't do things on your own and they was plans made for you and you always have to do what the bus is doing so I think if I could do it again, I would definitely buy a car, do it on my own with good friends, because you can learn much more than with Kiwi experience*'.

In a display of conative experience, Mumbua posts, 'w*ell, I would call it a pretty bad job. But it was bearable. I didn't have to pay for accommodation and the hostel was in the city centre of Dunedin and a 10 minutes' walk from the university.* Knowing is one mode of experiencing (Woodbridge, 1905).

Majority of literature about experience is about positive experience (Gram, 2005). However, experiences can also be negative and traumatic. Equally, meaning-based gratification (happiness arising from the fulfilment of meaningful goals) can arise from events that provoke negative emotions (Bosangit et al., 2015). '*The water was freezing cold, under 10°C. It was really hard to breathe because of the shock and my body hurt so much when I had to swim to the rope to get up again. But the feeling, once out of the water, can't be described. Joy and adrenaline mixed together*' - Mumbua. While it was hard to breath in the cold water, the activity eventuated to pleasant experience. Nonetheless, tourism providers should strive to engineer positive emotions to create enjoyable and memorable experiences (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010).

Importantly, studies show that emotional experiences significantly affect behavioural intentions (Lee, 2016). Places and activities which promise a high degree of emotional arousal may be favoured by the travellers. This is especially so to the adrenaline seeking Generation Z.

After my adrenaline overdose, it was time to do some less intense activities – Mumbua

5.4.1.3 Spiritual (meaning) experiences

This set of experiences relate to personal and inner developments. This was realized through different activities and in different places. Participants alluded to the fact that travel to New Zealand was a time to discover self. To one of the participants New Zealand offered a more spiritual retreat to them hence their choice to travel to New Zealand rather than to Australia which was considered a touristic destination. Other participants sought connection and experiencing a new culture leading them to a path to remote places. The perceptions of New Zealand as a pristine natural setting offered the conducive environment to some who sought to get away to quiet places and be in touch with nature. Travel may also be regarded as a time to affirm one's values and identity. A participant rebutted enticement from other travellers to engage in hedonistic behaviour as part of 'new experiencing'. It can be argued that a traveller's values will impact on their experience in destination.

5.4.2 Influencing factors

In presenting a tourist conceptual model, Morgan et al. (2010) describe what they referred to as influential realm. These were categorised as physical aspects, social aspects and products/services. They encompassed elements outside of an individual which can impact upon the experience of a destination. While agreeing with the influencing aspect, this research

considers different elements which impact on and define an individual's worldview and behavioural patterns. This is recognition that the individual is subjectively disposed as he or she undertakes travel. The influencing aspects maybe referred to as forces and include – (1) Immediate influences/forces, (2) Destination influences/forces, and (3) Global influences/forces. The immediate forces are the proximate aspects surrounding the individual such as the family and the society in country of residence. Destination forces relate to local aspects within the place to be visited. Global forces relate to macro level phenomena which crosscut national boundaries and cultures and have international ramifications.

The directional flow of the three forces is towards the person. These forces are multilevel and will influence or define the individual. For this to happen, interface between the individual and the factor of influence is required. The immediate force interface is through parenting, schooling system, social-cultural systems as well as significant events in the individual's personal life or in their country of residence. Interface with a destination is through utilization of goods and services, attractions and facilities. On the global level, the interface is mediated and may involve rules and regulations, and utilization of ICT. The increased frequency of terror attacks, for instance may result in stringent travel documents which may be repugnant to the traveller. The interplay of the three afore mentioned three forms the person and influences the travel experiences. Notably, the contexts of everyday lives profoundly impact the experiences that people aspire for during their vacation (Blichfeldt, 2007). Relatedly, Wilson et al. (2008) concluded that it is needful to consider the context in which travel is practiced.

While these aspects relate to the context which shapes the individual, the individual on the other hand is the context for experience. Invariably, to understand the individual's 'experience' (in this case the Generation Z traveller), regard must be given to the context of life that shaped the person, and the interface with the tourist destination. This argument agrees with Generation Theory in that significant events shape a people. Furthermore, it can be argued that it applies to the Family Life Cycle Theory in that the influence of family upon the individual is also recognized. While some of the influences may be superficial, others may have a deeper impact upon the individual. The degree to which either impacts an individual will determine, to a greater or lesser degree, the travel experience. Underscored is the multidimensional and multidisciplinary nature of investigation and studies on experience.

Indeed Cavagnaro et al. (2018) have noted that, in order to understand travel experience one must consider both the individual and the social frame of reference of the traveller. Framing of experience, they argue, depends not only on the individual's characteristic but also the social structure in which he stems from and the network of interactions he has established (Cavagnaro et al., 2018). Whereas numerous literatures exist on experience, this study is indication that

point of saturation is yet to be reached. Collaborative work is required across the disciplines. Tourism is multidisciplinary phenomenon.

5.4.2.1   *Immediate influences (forces)*

These relate to the immediate environment of the individual. Included are family and the society in home country. They constitute the accustomed environment and bear a significant formative effect upon the individual. Family upbringing embeds values and behavioural patterns upon an individual. These may influence travel behaviour and consequently determine how the individual experiences a destination.   Notable, is that the global environment may superimpose upon the immediate for example through phenomena such as globalization, and colonization.

While some participants felt that they travelled differently to how their parents travelled when they were of the same age, there was recognition of their input in terms of advice and financial support. The input may impact on the overall experience that the participant has at the destination. Taking away the stress of running out of money in a foreign country and not being able to meet travel expenses, for example, may lead the traveller to experience a more fulfilling visit.

5.4.2.2   *Destination influences (forces)*

The destination culture, environment, infrastructure, and socio-politics constitute a second influence upon the individual's travel experience. The nature of interaction between the individual and the features of the destination is integral to how Generation Z experienced the destination. The participants came to New Zealand with expectations and perspectives about the destination. Interaction with the destination, therefore, became a contributor to the experience realized by the participants. Importantly, Kirillova et al. (2014) argue that, experience may trigger the human senses to become more responsive to outside stimuli which brings about more complex human-environment interactions and exchanges. However, it is noted that while the environmental qualities of a destination can impact a tourist experience the tourist-environment exchange has not been fully investigated (Kirillova et al., 2014; Lehto, 2013).

5.4.2.3   *Global influences (forces)*

In this category are the macro level forces such as geo-politics, global economics, social trends or events, and technological advancements. From a generation theory perspective, these factors shape the values, perspectives and behaviours of the youth in their formative years. It has been noted that tourism changes along with other social transformations (Monaco, 2018). This implies congruence between the changes in society and the developments in tourism. In a society living in an age of globalization, for instance, the traveller may visit a destination

expecting connectivity. This was evident in participants of this research. Numerous photos were shared on blogs. Social media is shaping the attitudes and behaviours of travel consumers as well as travel and tourism marketers (Yoo & Gretzel, 2012).

5.4.3 Summary

This chapter provided an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the research. Discussions have centred on the research questions and relating these to the key categories and their corresponding themes. Consideration has been given to existing body of knowledge. Attention was given to a reconceptualised interpretation of tourist experience. The key categories are travel pattern, the reasons for travel, context (contextualizing experience), identity, destination profile and realm of experience. Research question one is related to travel patterns and the reasons for travel. The second question related contextualizing of experience and identity. The third question related to destination profile. In addition, the section discusses influencing factors which impact on the experience.

Interaction with services in a destination is key to travellers' experience of place. Choice of services such as mode of transport or accommodation type varied among participants and so did the determining factors. The determining factors included affordability, budget, and serendipity. These were enhanced by word of mouth and multiple media. The reasons for travel are either intrinsic or extrinsic in nature. Data reveals an underlying adventurous and explorative behaviour among Generation Z travellers. Furthermore, this generation exhibited sensitivity to environment and inclination to issues of sustainability. Although travel appears to have become part of life for Generation Z, it is not without constraints. These are either authority constraints, coupling constraints or capability constraints. Experience maybe viewed from three phases; pre-travel, at the destination and post-travel. This implies that experience is realised not only at the destination but extends to pre-trip planning as well as post travel memories and nostalgic episodes.

Global concerns such as terrorism and environmental degradation were important in shaping Generation Z attitudes and behaviours. Seasonality, immigration policies among other socio-political factors in New Zealand impacted on Generation Z travellers' experience of the destination. New Zealand is favourably perceived due to the attractive landscapes and seclusion. These have been reinforced by several media such as movies, advertisement, and word of mouth. The destination image has functional or psychological characteristics which could be attribute based or holistic. These have been classified as either cognitive, affective, evaluative or behavioural in nature. Destination image creates expectancies. Expectancies are further linked to the appraisal of the destination by the traveller. Generation Z demonstrated a desire for what is authentic. The realms of experience are identified as sensory (physiological), Psychological

(cognitive, affective or conative) and spiritual. These are influenced by global, destination and immediate forces/factors.

While literature abounds on backpacker studies and previous generation cohorts, no literature was found on New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers. This research provides a new perspective on generation cohort studies while providing insights on an emerging tourism market segment. The research resulted in a new theoretical framework based on Constructive Grounded Theory from interviews and blogs. Furthermore, understanding the decision-making process and consumption behaviour of Generation Z may help marketers to position New Zealand effectively to an emerging tourism market.

6 CHAPTER 6 – CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Generation cohorts and experience are not new phenomena. While literature on the two abounds, there is paucity of research on Generation Z. This is explained by the fact that, the oldest members of this generation have only recently attained the legal age, can travel independently and require no parental consent to participate in research. This research aims to contribute explorative insights into a generation of emerging adults.

To achieve this, a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach has been used. Through 12 face-to-face interviews and five blogs, New Zealand inbound Generation Z travels experiences have been explored resulting to a theoretical framework. This chapter provides the conclusions of the key findings as they relate to the research questions. The implications of the research are considered with various recommendations being proposed. In addition, the contribution of the study to the current body of knowledge on experience is discussed with considerations extending to generation cohort studies. The section also acknowledges the limitations of the research and concludes with reflections from the researcher.

6.1 RESEARCH SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Research question one was to analyse the travel experiences of Generation Z. It emerged that members of this generation exhibited similar preferences in choosing services at the destination. These services constitute the interface with the destination. The services are accommodation, activities, visit to places and transport. Choice of service was further influenced by the affordability and budget, proximity, flexibility, media, and envisioned value to be derived from the service. In addition, this generation sought jobs to supplement budgets and had plans to travel to other destinations as well. Constraints to travel are classified as relating to authority, coupling or capability. Reasons for travel were found to be either intrinsic or extrinsic. The extrinsic reasons are attractions, escapism and norm, internship, and the issue of serendipity. Majority of the participants were in New Zealand for their gap year. Their travels were considered as time to discover self and to plan about their future. This further, determined places they chose to visit and the social interactions. Experience encompassed the pre-travel, onsite travel and post travel.

There was both positive and negative appraisal of New Zealand as a destination. Finally, travel patterns and motivation for travel did not deviate much from extant literature. However, it emerged that a more holistic comprehension of experience requires contextualization. To understand the travel experiences of Generation Z entailed consideration of their travel patterns and the reasons for travel.

Research objective two was to explore possible factors shaping Generation Z experiences. Three factors are considered as shaping Generation Z experiences. These are:

1. Immediate influences (forces)
2. Destination influences (forces)
3. Global influences (forces)

On the immediate level, Generation Z was found to be influenced by family, friends as well as events on the national level. Factors within New Zealand as a destination, such as, ease of travel documentation, ease of communication, local culture, availability of farm work and seasons impacted on Generation Z experiences. Globally, Generation Z is coming of age in an environment characterized by global insecurity and volatility. Concerns such as climate change pervade nations. It appears that Generation Z members have developed coping mechanisms, perspectives, and values. These have shaped how they experience destinations. Further, technological advances have aided sharing and communication. This has had impact on Generation Z having been born in the internet and social media era. The ability to plan travels online without using travel agents and the ability to share travel experiences through social media has contributed to how this generation experiences destinations.

Research objective 3 was to identify aspects of New Zealand which pulled Generation Z. The research finds that destination image is a critical element in pulling members of this generation to New Zealand. It emerged that some participants had several destination options before settling on New Zealand. Choices were tempered along what New Zealand had to offer in terms of activities and attributes. Critical to these criteria is the destination image as communicated through numerous platforms such as films and movies, social media, agencies but also personal referrals. The destination image is categorised as either;

1. Cognitive which constitutes what the tourist knows about the destination
2. Affective which relates to feelings about the destination
3. Evaluative which describes destination appraisal
4. Behavioural, which is tied to decisive actions to undertake an activity or to visit a place

The pull motivating factors and the destination image are responsible for forming expectancies in the traveller. These are critical to how Generation Z appraised the destination and their experiences.

Finally, the overall aim of the research was the understanding of Generation Z travel experiences. In this research, the aim involved a synthesis of the different strands of findings into one meaningful interpretation. This constitutes the main research contribution which is a new

theoretical framework offering a more holistic understanding of Generation Z travel experiences, and by extension generation cohort understanding. This has been represented in a new theoretical framework in Figure 22. Three realms of experience relating to the makeup of a human being emerged:

1. The physiological realm,
2. The psychological realm, and
3. The spiritual realm

These realms are influenced by the earlier mentioned factors; Immediate influences, destination influences, and global influences. The interplay of the three influences upon Generation Z individuals constitutes the holistic understanding of travel experiences. The interplay is mediated through interfaces between the individual or group of individuals with the mentioned influences. A destination's services and attractions may be regarded as the point of interface between the traveller and the destination. However, a person travels to a destination replete with physical attributes, psychological perspectives and spiritual persuasions. Psychological attributes include perspectives, behavioural patterns, as well as expectations. Physical attributes include health and fitness. Spiritual aspects include meaning in life. These attributes define an individual and are instrumental in shaping the experiences realized by that individual.

To effectively understand the individual's experience requires an appreciation of the context of life from which he/she has come. This entails awareness of both historical and contemporary influences in the life of that individual or group of individuals. While it is a logistical and practical impossibility to fully profile each individual travelling to a destination, an understanding of the multiple channels that contribute to the individual's ethos would lend additional credence to understanding and managing tourist experiences. Staging places may be an important investment for tourism purveyors. This research proposes a worthwhile investment towards understanding shifts within society and building capacity to effectively respond to these shifts.

6.2   IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

6.2.1   Theoretical implications

This research recognises the totality of a person – body, soul and spirit. While these have been studied in different fields and discipline, a gestalt of the three in 'experience' literature is required. The research agrees with the definition of tourist experience as advanced by Schänzel and Mc-Intosh (2000), in as far as experience being the mental, spiritual and physiological outcomes of travel. However, these outcomes result not only from on-site engagements as

proposed by the authors, but also from the pre-trip planning and the after-trip engagements. Extant studies tend to focus on a componential approach emphasizing either or. While not diminishing the validity of such an approach, this research proposes a more holistic approach which considers other influencing factors and their impact on the human construct. The implications of these are far reaching not only on the theoretical and disciplinary level but, also on the practical and functional level.

However, from an anthropological perspective, the three do not function independently of each other. Rather, the function of each is seamlessly embedded in the others. Seeing a snow-capped mountain may be considered an amazing view, cause an emotional response, and lead to a sense of contentment or accomplishment. The gestalt of experience on the three realms here is triggered. Consequently, this research proposes a theoretical model which encompasses the interplay of the three and the multiple factors impacting them to arrive at a more precise definition and appreciation of the phenomenon 'tourist experience'. It is acknowledged here that the requirements for such a rigorous, thorough, and multidisciplinary undertaking is beyond the research aims and objectives of this study. Indeed it is decried that, whereas experience remains pivotal to tourism, it defies a unifying definition and operationalization (Oh et al., 2007). Indeed, authors have called for a multidimensional, multiphase and dynamic approach to research (Jennings, 2010a). This research is a further invite to such a level of discourse.

Similarly, events are important influences on the experience realized by a person. However, there is a need for commentators to depart from western-centric bias which focuses on events in the West as the most compelling. As an example, a phenomenon such as colonization will have different effects and outcomes upon the parties involved. The resultant posture, perspectives, views and behaviours in the youth of the perpetrators may be diametrically opposite to those of the affected party. Travellers from these two ends of the spectrum will eschew different characteristics, behavioural patterns, and perspectives redounding on the individuals' overall experience of a destination. Indeed, Jennings (2010a) noted western and developed world individualistic societies' perspectives in interpreting experience and quality. The effect of this is perceptual and conceptual blindness (De Mooij, 1998). Remedying this may requires incorporation of perspectives from other cultures and regions. The impact of events could be considered not only from the privileged perspective but also, from the less privileged in the balance of power. Furthermore, a multi-disciplinary approach may prove more valuable.

6.2.2   Practical considerations

Marketers tend to concentrate on psychological aspects to appeal to their target consumers. This systematic approach of targeting either of the three (the sensory, psychological or

spiritual) could correspond to the niche marketing parlance. Furthermore, there have been limited attempts of bridging the gap and obtaining better integrations between different schools of thoughts on travel motivation and experiences in tourism research (Jensen et al., 2015). In particular, these limitations have been observed between the primary individualistic psychological orientation and the wider sociological orientation (Jensen et al., 2015). Significant events and other influences discussed in this research embed perspectives and values in individuals or a group of individuals. Values are considered stable determinants of behaviour, thus offering an insight not only in present but also in future choices (Cavagnaro et al., 2018). This may be of interest to planners and practitioners within the tourism sector.

6.2.3 Methodological implications

This research employed semi-structured interviews and netnography (blogs) as methods of data collection. While it was considered suited for the technologically savvy and social media frenzied Generation Z participants, internet-based research proved a viable tool as it provided more rich data than face-to-face interviews. However, each method complemented the shortfalls of the other. While blogs lacked the personal cues possible in interviews, they did provide rich data. Although the methods are pivotal to understanding tourist experience, the challenge of measuring or quantifying experience remains. Theoretical variables such as arousal, memories, overall quality, and satisfaction are quite subjective (Oh et al., 2007). Much of the research on quality has been through tools such as Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry's, (1988) SERVQUAL and Raajpoot's (2004) non-western, Asian culture suited PAKSERV. However, these have not been without critics especially on their homogeneity across cultures. With the advent of technological advancement, a more versatile tool is recommended.

6.2.4 Recommendation for future research

Studies are recommended for not only the different ephemeral factors but also longitudinal studies. Several questions to consider for further investigation include:

1. Do destinations offer/give experience? Is there a direct linkage between the destination and experience devoid of human agency? These questions may imply that destination is the vendor, experience the commodity on sale and the traveller the buyer thus, relating to Pine and Gilmore's experience economy, and commoditisation of experience.

2. If so, then shouldn't every traveller expect to get the same experience when they visit New Zealand? What are the systemic implications of such reasoning? Is that a practical possibility? Are experiences the same everywhere? This invites for a hypothetical reasoning; Suppose the same attractions were transferred to the travellers' home country, would they result in the same experiences? These reasoning seemingly, relates

to what has been termed *macdonaldization,* and may be a critical underpinning philosophy driving virtual reality (VR) in tourism wherein individuals need not travel to a destination for a tour. Destinations are availed virtually.

3. To what extend do the three forces identified in this research influence the person? How should these be investigated and measured over time?

4. How have the various significant events affected Generation Z and their experiences now? What are the possible future scenarios? How will the effects of these events be measured in the future when Generation Z is elderly?

6.3 CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

There being no known research on New Zealand-inbound Generation Z travellers, this research portents significant contribution to the extant literature on experience and Generation cohorts. This research reconceptualises the notion of experience. The realm of experience is shifted from the destination to the individual. The model further incorporates factors which may influence the individual's travel experiences at a destination. These factors are immediate, destination specific or global in nature. Their influence upon an individual is realized through multiple interfaces. The interfaces allow interaction between the individuals and the system to take place. This invites debate, not only on the practical level but, also on the philosophical and theoretical underpinnings of such a shift.

A second contribution is in the methodological approach taken. While netnography and use of blogs in research is on the rise (Chandralal et al., 2015; Stainton, 2018), use of two methods, interviews and blogs, does not appear prevalent. In the utilization of the two methods, complementarity was achieved. Indeed, it has been noted that for there to be quality information for analyses, interviews may require other forms of data collection (Turner, 2010). Furthermore, technological advances are fuelling an increasing reliance on the internet, smart gadget and social media. This is evident among Generation Z members. Therefore, it seems that, future research methods will increasingly rely on data posted online.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Any research project will have limitations. The explorative nature of this research portents limits to its generalization. Secondly, the interviews were all conducted in Auckland city centre. However, in utilizing blogs the scope of audience was significantly broadened. This enabled data capture from seven different nationalities. In addition, blogs may be used for theoretical sampling or targeted sampling because they provide the researcher the ability to select out specific blogs or what is valuable.

The impact of significant events upon the participants is assumed. While significant events may be considered apparent, their specific impact may vary from person to person. A specific analysis of the events and the magnitude of their influence on the individual participant is required. This could help in ascertaining the level to which the different lived events shaped the individual. Finally, the lack of post visit investigations is further limitation of this study. Follow up investigation with the same participants after their departure from New Zealand may provide further clarity into the experiences. This is vital in assessing the long-term effects of travel.

6.5 FINAL REFLECTIONS

The use of face-to-face interviews and travel blogs in this research proved valuable. Each method complemented the other. The benefit of face-to-face interviews was in the use of prompt questions and following up on observed cues such as facial expressions and mannerism. Probes were valuable since participants' unstated purposes in telling you what they 'think' may be more significant than their stated thoughts (Charmaz, 2006). By using probes, these unstated reasons may eventually emerge. While interviews were valuable to the research by ensuring in-depth interrogation into travellers' accounts of experience, it may pose a challenge to novice researchers due to *halo effects* whereby judgement of a participant is generalized due to a singular observed characteristic (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977; Thorndike, 1920). Furthermore, and as noted by Hine (2011), participants may respond to questions with a diplomatic or socially desirable answer and adapt their behaviour in consciousness of being under scrutiny. Such undermines the trustworthiness of the data for lack of honesty. This underscores the necessity for the researcher to be aware of and take note of the surrounding environment during the conduct of their study or investigation. Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p.30) describe this as "observation and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field".

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Appendix I   Ethics Approval

AUTEC Secretariat

Auckland University of Technology
D-88, WU406 Level 4 WU Building City Campus
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316
E: ethics@aut.ac.nz
www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics

AUT

28 August 2017

Heike Schanzel
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Heike

Re Ethics Application: 17/285 A new face of tourism: Understanding the New Zealand travel experiences of inbound generation Z

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Subcommittee.

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 28 August 2020.

Standard Conditions of Approval

1. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using form EA2, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics.
2. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using form EA3, which is available online through http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics.
3. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form: http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics.
4. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
5. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

AUTEC grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval for access for your research from another institution or organisation then you are responsible for obtaining it. You are reminded that it is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard.

For any enquiries, please contact ethics@aut.ac.nz

Yours sincerely,

Kate O'Connor
Executive Manager
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: robinsonmueke@gmail.com

Appendix II Participant's information sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Date Information Sheet Produced:

2nd August 2017

Project Title

A new face of tourism: Understanding the New Zealand travel experiences of inbound Generation Z

An Invitation

My name is Victor Mueke Robinson, a Master of International Tourism Management student in AUT University Auckland. As part of the Generation Z (born after 1995), your travel experiences in New Zealand are extremely important to future tourism development in this country. You are therefore invited to participate in an interview about your travel experiences here in New Zealand. The minimum age to participate in this research is 18 years old. Choosing to participate or not will neither advantage nor disadvantage you in any way.

What is the purpose of this research?

The main aim of this qualitative exploratory research is to understand the tourism experiences of New Zealand inbound Generation Z travellers. The insights gained from this study may provide important practical implications for New Zealand as a tourism destination. The study is part of a Master of International Tourism Management at AUT University. The results will be part of a thesis and will be used in academic publications, journals and conferences

How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are invited to participate through a recruitment poster or through referral by other participants. The study focuses on 18+ year old Generation Z individuals (those born after 1995). Only participants able to communicate in English are selected.

How do I agree to participate in this research?

Complete the Consent Form provided by the researcher conducting the interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

What will happen in this research?

We will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to conduct a one on one interview on your experiences in New Zealand. The interview will be conducted in a quiet space of a nearby café or the hostel lounge. The interview will be audio recorded and then transcribed. Transcripts of the interview will be available to you for confirmation. Indicative questions have been prepared to guide the process. However we seek to gain a deeper understanding of your experiences as a traveller into the country. In this regard an in-depth conversation to this end is beneficial to this study.

What are the discomforts and risks?

Your participation and the interview questions should neither cause any discomfort nor is there any potential risk or harm. However should you opt not to answer any question, you may say so and I will ask a different question.

How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?

All the questions in this research interview are optional.

What are the benefits?

This research will help better understand the experiences of inbound Generation Z travellers and hopefully influence better future development of tourism services and products. The research will also assist me in obtaining a Master of International Tourism Management degree.

How will my privacy be protected?

The answers you provide in this research study are confidential. A code number is assigned in the consent form Analysis of your responses will be on the assigned code.

What are the costs of participating in this research?

Apart from your time (approximately 30 minutes) there is no further cost of participating in this research.

What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?

A mutually agreed upon schedule will be followed. My contact details are given below to allow you time to decide.

Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?

You are able to receive feedback on the results by contacting my supervisor or me on the contact details listed below.

What do I do if I have concerns about this research?

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the Project Supervisor, Dr. Heike Schänzel, Email address: heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz, Phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6923

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTEC, Kate O'Connor, ethics@aut.ac.nz , 921 9999 ext 6038.

Whom do I contact for further information about this research?

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

Researcher Contact Details:

Victor Mueke Robinson

Email: robinsonmueke@gmail.com

Project Supervisor Contact Details:

Dr. Heike Schänzel

Email: heike.schanzel@aut.ac.nz

Phone: +64 9 921 9999 ext 6923

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *28th August 2018-06-14*, **AUTEC Reference number** *17/285*.

Appendix III   Participant consent form

Consent Form

Project title: *A new face of tourism: Understanding the New Zealand travel experiences of inbound Generation Z*

Project Supervisor: *Dr. Heike Schänzel*

Researcher: *Victor Mueke Robinson*

○   I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated dd mmmm yyyy.

○   I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.

○   I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.

○   I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.

○   I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.

○   I agree to take part in this research.

○   I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): YesO   NoO

Participant's signature: ....

Participant's name: ....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

....

....

....

....

Date:

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 28th August 2017 AUTEC Reference number 17/285

Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

2 July 2015   page 1 of 1   This version was last edited in June 2016

Appendix IV   Recruitment poster

Appendix V   Indicative interview questions

INDICATIVE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

EXPERIENCES

How much have you travelled around?

How did you research about and plan your trip?

Can you please tell me of your travel experiences here in New Zealand?

Thinking about your travel, what would you say is the aim/reason for your visit to New Zealand?

In choosing New Zealand, what did you expect to find here?

Is that what you found?

What are the highlights of your travel?

What examples do you have of positive experiences of your travelling in New Zealand?

What examples of negative experiences did you encounter?

In travelling to and around New Zealand, what mode/s of transport did you use? Why did you choose this mode of transport?

Which type of accommodation have you used during your stay and why?

In comparing your travels to your parents' and the older people what would you consider to be different?

TRAVEL INFORMATION

How long are you staying in New Zealand?

Are you travelling alone?

Which places in New Zealand have you visited/planning to visit?

What activities have you done/planning to do?

What is your estimated travel budget?

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Tell me about yourself?

When were you born?

Which is your country of residence?

Are you currently studying in country of residence?

Are you currently employed?